

I<sup>st</sup> DRAFT

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# **Subject Repositories Decolonial**

**Open Access for Academic Documents  
on International Cultural Relations**

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## Short Abstract

Open-access subject repositories are mostly operated in the ‘Global North’. Can these digital libraries do justice to the global diversity of requirements? With decolonial sensitivity and cultural humility, this project looks for systematic flaws in typical governance structures, technical infrastructures as well as collection guidelines and cataloguing standards.

## Abstract

The production of knowledge for international cultural relations takes place globally in institutions of different type, not only in research institutions. Those involved in international cultural relations, globally, who need access to the relevant documents are not always immediately provided with comprehensive library services. These documents can appear as classic publishers’ publications or in periodicals, but also on institutional websites and in other places where so-called ‘grey literature’ is found.

In order to meet the information needs of subject experts, the open access community has offered so-called subject repositories since the early 1990s, which make relevant documents available as a collection. These repositories are still largely operated in the ‘Global North’. How do they work? Can they meet the global diversity of requirements? To answer these questions, different aspects have to be examined: collection guidelines, governance, technical infrastructure, workflows and cataloguing.

On the one hand, this project formulates demands for subject repositories with decolonial sensitivity and cultural humility, without assuming specific requirements. Rather, it looks for systematic flaws. On the other hand, existing approaches are analysed and documented experiences are applied for the case of a subject repository for the field of international cultural relations which currently is under construction.

The research design includes a workshop to which different experts are invited to comment on a draft of the study. These experts should include, firstly, a representative of the analysed structures/technologies/repositories, and, secondly, a expert on the subject of ‘digital libraries’ located in the ‘Global South’. Thirdly, a user perspective is relevant, ideally with a background in international cultural relations, based in the ‘Global South’.

## **Message to the Reader of This Draft**

This is an early draft, prepared for the expert workshop, leaving the recommendations section blank for the experts' contributions. The language and structure are not polished yet. Comments, however, are invited on all aspects of the text.

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# 1 Introduction

Technically, an open-access subject repository is a platform that allows authorised users to upload any document that the content policy of the repository admits, in order to archive it and to make it freely accessible, downloadable, and preferably reusable, on the Web.<sup>1</sup> Amongst other things, the repository's content policy outlines the subjects of the materials that the repository aims to collect.

In a narrower sense, ideally, a subject repository service is addressed to all authors of a certain research field globally, not limited to affiliates of specific institutions, by geographic position nor by language. After the upload, which is usually done by the author, the service provider checks the compliance and integrity of the file and its descriptive metadata, especially the license under which the document is supposed to be published. We will return to all these issues in the course of the study.

Outlining the study, this chapter formulates its aim, and identifies the parties who are supposed to be supported by its results – the repository's community. Further, I explain the motivation that grounds the study, especially, why I chose a decolonial approach. Then, I define the basic concepts that are used, position myself, the author, and guide through the following chapters.

## 1.1 Aim

According to its Statement of Intent,<sup>2</sup> the *International Cultural Relations Research Alliance* (ICRRA) agreed 'to develop a digital platform for knowledge sharing' to support the research in the field – an open-access subject repository for the field of international cultural relations. The study aims to support its setup, with decolonial sensitivity, by analysing existing guidelines and practices, identifying pitfalls that reproduce the domination of 'Global North' positions in scholarly communication.

## 1.2 Community

'Community' is a key term of this study. With Chodacki, Cruse et al. (2018), its definition here is interest-based, meaning a 'set of parties that care enough to claim a stake and to contribute to shared systems'. It is important to emphasise that the term can be

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<sup>1</sup> Pinfield 2009 defines a repository 'as a set of systems and services that facilitates the ingest, storage, management, retrieval, display, and reuse of digital objects'.

<sup>2</sup> See [https://www.ifa.de/fileadmin/Content/docs/forschung/ICRRA/icrra\\_statement-of-intent.pdf](https://www.ifa.de/fileadmin/Content/docs/forschung/ICRRA/icrra_statement-of-intent.pdf), London, 19 Nov. 2019, visited on 3 Dec. 2022.

easily misunderstood as synonym to ‘group’ which ‘is often designed to produce, the “us” that inevitably suggests a “them”’ (Fitzpatrick 2019). The stakeholders summarised by ‘community’ are naturally diverse, have different backgrounds, different motivations to be interested in the project and dispose over a broad range of skills to contribute.

The numerous ICRRRA members are situated in diverse countries, mostly in Europe, but also beyond. *British Council* and ifa (*Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen*, Germany) cooperate in initiating ICRRRA activities. Of the thirteen institutional members, because of political and financial restraints, at least four, being situated in South Africa, Turkey, Uganda, and Ukraine, might currently be especially challenged to facilitate access to research documents and distribute the research output of their organisations. Additionally, individual experts for cultural relations from Brazil, Hungary and India signed the mentioned Statement of Intent, while there are individual ICRRRA members, e. g. from Montenegro and Mexico, whose organisations have not yet signed the statement.<sup>3</sup>

Currently, the service provider of the repository is *ifa library*, which commissioned the regional German library service centre SWB with the hosting of the repository software OPUS 4. SWB is a not-for-profit cooperative association of libraries for IT services in Southwest Germany which itself cooperates with other regional German library service centres to provide its services.

Both *ifa* and the library service centres, and most, if not all, ICRRRA members rely on public funds. Therefore, within current public funding frameworks, governments are foundational stakeholders of the subject repository.

The documents that are supposed to be uploaded to the repository are not only of value to the ICRRRA members, but to anyone involved in international cultural relations. By making the documents openly accessible, institutions and authors contribute to the transparency of their operations and their research for the interested public. Without the documents, the content of the repository, the infrastructure is useless. Therefore, the backbone of the repository’s community are researchers, practitioners, and students of international cultural relations.

### 1.3 Motivation

The diversity of the ICRRRA members and the addressed research community, but also the subject of international cultural relations in itself might require more decolonial sensitivity

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3 For a full list of the members see ifa, Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, International Cultural Relations Research Alliance (ICRRRA), Members of ICRRRA, <https://www.ifa.de/en/research/icrra/#section3>, visited on 4 Sept. 2022.

than other fields. This is because international cultural relations are succeeding historical colonialism, characterised by violent cultural oppression and appropriation conducted by the European colonisers and settlers. Since today's nations have been constructed under considerable influence of European colonialism, *international* cultural relations are inseparable from this history.

Even after most formerly colonised lands gained political independence, European culture is presented with a gesture of supremacy worldwide. Post- and decolonial thinking recently raised awareness of this beyond academia. This study is based on the responsibility of institutions situated in countries which profited and continue to profit from colonial exploitation, namely the responsibility to continue this trajectory and actually work towards social justice and the dismantlement of privilege. Cultural relations should be based on respect, trust and non-judgmental recognition of differences. Communication infrastructure can support this endeavour by levelling the playing field as much as possible.

Currently, there is almost no analytical literature on subject repositories. Moreover, there is only scant literature on a decolonial critique of digital libraries and archives (mostly on archives of cultural assets). However, underlying topics such as open access, research infrastructures and its governance etc. have been discussed at length, and somewhat even towards the idea of social justice. The study refers to this existing body of literature and offers analyses and ideas filling the obvious gaps in order to provoke thinking about open access digital libraries beyond the standards set in the 'Global North'. Decisions should be arrived at together with everyone affected by them, at least via proper representation, not by those who pay for the process or who are supposedly faster or smarter.

## **1.4 Positionality**

The study's perspective is located in Germany. The standpoint from which it is undertaken is that of a white woman, born and educated in Europe, from a non-academic middle-class background in the former GDR. My career included years of working at different university libraries in Austria, and as a funded doctoral student at a Swedish elite university with a project on decolonising European academic libraries (Schmidt 2020) that this study builds on. My position is enormously privileged. The focus of the study is clearly related to my standpoint and during writing, I will carefully reflect on it. Since I am not a specialist for international cultural relations, the case of the specific subject repository is looked at from a general social sciences perspective that I feel able to take on since I studied sociology as well as library and information sciences.

Professional and scholarly discussions predominantly take place on a local level in local

languages. Therefore, my insights are mostly limited to the German-speaking professional community and scholarly contributions in English which prevalently address the situation in North America.

## 1.5 Concepts

Following concepts are of high importance for the reasoning of this study and require up-front descriptions: reachability/connectivity, related expectations of communication quality, 'Global South/Global North', coloniality and social justice. More concepts will be introduced as we go.

### 1.5.1 Reachability/Connectivity & Quality

Since the outlines of the earth's landmasses and their surfaces are largely undisputed, and especially since the Internet reaches also less visited places, it is save to suppose that everyone could be reached by a communication attempt. However, it still makes a difference in which sociogeographic context this attempt is made and in which sociogeographic context those addressed are situated. It can be really hard to reach out.

First of all, connectivity varies a lot: '95 per cent of the world population is now within range of a mobile broadband network' (ITU 2022). Yet 32 per cent of them remain offline. There is a strong correlation between connectivity and level of education. In low-income countries, the rate of Internet users is only at 22 per cent (ibid.).

Secondly, sociogeographic position is closely related to expectations of quality. For instance, the distinction between 'international' and 'local' journals is often used to differentiate "western"/European/North-American journals' (Haider 2008, p. 131 and also see Canagarajah 2002; Medina 2013; Shearer and Becerril-García 2021) from 'the rest', even though the latter is much more 'international', geographically speaking.

Common definitions of 'international journal', if they are given at all, point at indexing in citation databases (e. g. Tijssen, Mouton et al. 2006) which are all edited in the 'Global North'.<sup>4</sup> To make a publication count for promotion at the University of Ibadan, for instance, it is sufficient if the journal is not edited in Nigeria, and preferably 'off-shore'.<sup>5</sup> As I concluded in my thesis (2020, 134ff.), no definition was ever validated empirically –

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4 For an extensive discussion of definitions for the distinction see Buela-Casal, Perakakis et al. 2006.

5 University of Ibadan, Appointments and Promotions Committee for Academic Staff, Regulations and Guidelines of Promotions for Academic Staff, 2019, <https://www.ui.edu.ng/sites/default/files/2019%20Promotion%20Guideline.pdf>, visited on 4 Sept 2022. For a discussion of the policy see Omobowale, Sawadogo et al. 2013.



on the contrary: tested, they sometimes revealed the opposite of what was expected from a supposedly ‘international’ or ‘local’ journal. Therefore, those expectations are based on prejudices towards places in the ‘Global South’, places which had been colonised. In the ‘Global North’, appearances, formats and categories communicate tremendously much, so that actual contents which have been intended to be communicated, are covered.

An example for this is bibliometrics, which is usually understood as statistics about publishing. Those numbers have serious effects: used by science managers and funders, they can make projects and careers happen – or not. Contents hardly count, because they cannot be counted.

A large majority of bibliometrics’ results rely on data gathered from citation databases. Even though the most often used database, *Web of Science*, changed some of the journal inclusion criteria<sup>6</sup> since I analysed them in 2020 (pp. 91ff.), some of them still are primarily formal and, at the same time, have an excluding effect for some journals published in the ‘Global South’. Regular appearance is one of them, because journals edited under poor environmental conditions are excluded, no matter its content. Sticking to the schedule in any event necessarily compromises quality. Sadly, regular appearance is also required to reach a badge for good *Journal Publishing Practices and Standards* (JPPS)<sup>7</sup> – even though JPPS aims at supporting ‘local journals’ from the ‘Global South’.

Another risk to fail on account of formalities is the ‘idiosyncratic form of writing used by each national or linguistic educational community’ (Martín 2017) which might lead to rejections by ‘international’ journals (also see Vessuri, Guédon et al. 2014; Beaudry, Mouton et al. 2018). Martín fears ‘deleterious effects of national academic cultures’ (2017). For the study at hand, it is essential to keep in mind that any prescriptions of formalities bear the risk of excluding effects, which is undermining what the repository aims at achieving: to support the sharing of knowledge materialised in publications.

### 1.5.2 ‘Global South/Global North’ & Coloniality

I have been using the distinction ‘Global South/Global North’ several times now. It is important to stress that it refers to a social problem and global power relations, and to processes that deal with them, not to categories of countries (cf. Kloß 2017). However, a correlation between a low *World Bank* income class and lack of privilege in the research

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6 Web of Science Group, Web of Science Journal Evaluation Process and Selection Criteria, <https://clarivate.com/webofsciencegroup/journal-evaluation-process-and-selection-criteria>, visited on 5 Sept. 2022.

7 JPPS, A New Framework for Assessing Publishing Practices and Standards, <https://www.journalquality.info/en>, visited on 5 Sept. 2022.

system is undisputed, and low- and middle-low-income countries are currently mostly found south of a latitude of 30° north. This could be subject to change. To make the processual and the emancipative character (historically tied to the *Non-Aligned Movement*, see e. g. Kalb and Steur 2015) of the terms tangible, I will continue to put them in quotes.

The central concept that will be used to highlight the social problems pointed at by using the ‘Global South/Global North’ distinction is ‘coloniality’. It stems from the decolonial school of thought developed in South and Middle America (see e. g. Mignolo 2000; Escobar 2007). ‘Coloniality’ denotes social injustices which follow from colonial violence, exploitation and disrespect towards people and nature. It lived on since the zenith of colonial power was overcome, especially in structural forms of racism, patriarchy, and paternalism. Coloniality is practised by growth economy and environmental hazard. It does not only concern descendants of historically affected people, since it is a social structure reproduced and renewed in countless ways, affecting everyone. The concept is double-sided: ‘modernity’ usually has a positive connotation, but its underlying structures are the just the same as of coloniality. When there is social injustice, there is always someone profiting. To develop decolonial sensitivity, to actually see when coloniality is reproduced, is the precondition to oppose it.

### **1.5.3 Social Justice**

Prominently, social justice is defined by Fraser (2005) as ‘an outcome where all the relevant social actors [can] participate as peers in social life and a process in which procedural standards are followed in fair and open processes of deliberation.’ This justice has several dimensions: distribution, recognition, and representation (ibid.). The concept was supplemented by Fricker (2007) with two types of another dimension, namely the epistemic: firstly, hermeneutical injustice which happens ‘when a gap in collective interpretative resources puts someone at an unfair disadvantage when it comes to making sense of their social experiences’. This can even lead to, secondly, testimonial injustice, occurring when credibility is therefore deflated. Patin, Sebastian et al. (2021) added two more types of epistemic injustice: curricular injustice impedes epistemic growth by denying necessary resources, and participatory injustice excludes the epistemic subjects from their own development.

In scholarly communication, the dimension of epistemic injustice with all its divisions seems to describe the ‘Global South’ situation quite well. Fricker (2007) also conceptualised the harm done by injustice, where primary harm is experienced by an individual, and secondary harm by a collective. When harm is institutionalised and can therefore be

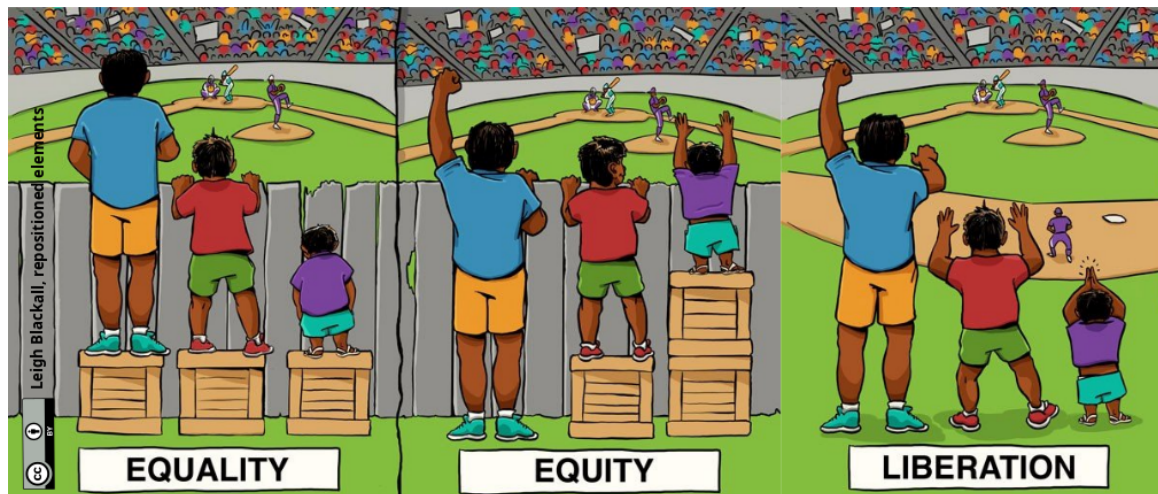


Figure 1. Illustration of the concepts equality, equity and social justice (= liberation). Original by Leigh Blackall, used under the terms of <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>, with repositioned elements.

expected also in the future, Patin, Sebastian et al. (2021) suggest to even introduce a third level of harm. As will increasingly become clearer, the problem this study deals with is certainly causing institutionalised harm.

How can we imagine the ideal of social justice? As the illustration in Figure 1 shows, firstly, social justice is different from ‘equality’, since giving equal support or opportunities to everyone also means ignoring their differences. Secondly, social justice also differs from ‘equity’: support according to different needs might allow participation, but it does not deconstruct barriers. What the illustration captions with ‘liberation’ is an actual barrier-free place that also allows someone even shorter than the shortest of the three spectators to watch the game: this is social justice. However, what we see are still two different groups: baseball players and spectators. The baseball game has defined rules – just like research. It is not impossible to change them, but since the game is already going on, it would not please any of the groups to change them immediately, so, for instance, the spectators should not run on the playing field, even though there is no fence preventing it. It is in their own interest to stay on the side, but with the best possible view.

What the illustration cannot catch is that social justice is not only about distribution and barriers, but also about opportunities and engagement. This is why Gomberg (2007) suggested to differentiate between distributive and contributive justice. In the context of archival work, Sangwand (2018) made use of the concept to draw back paternalistic relationships between ‘Global North’ project leaders and ‘Global South’ partners, who

usually provide the objects. In these relationships, it is likely the former who benefits more from the cooperation, since the information extracted from the objects is of more value to them than the digital copies and metadata offered to the latter. Many projects might even be impossible to follow through under the terms of contributive justice, because the ‘Global North’ institution cannot provide basic open channels of communication, starting with the language spoken by the ‘Global South’ partners.

The call for contributive justice reaches wide, deep down inside the way service providers speak about the people they design their services for: the ‘users’. The concept of passive users has been criticised, i. g. by Oliphant (2021) who suggests seeing them as contributors, or widening the perspective to all people, to address non-users as well. I agree that both users and non-user contribute to the development of the service, since communication (and non-communication) takes place that push decisions, trigger ideas, etc. However, I am afraid that this text will be harder to understand when I avoid the term ‘user’ and/or replace it by ‘contributor’ or some other term with similar meaning. The debate just started.

## 1.6 Outline

*To be added later.*

## 2 Open Access & Subject Repositories in the World

Open-access publishing has become at least an equal standard to reader/library-pays publishing over the last three decades. Based on the *Unpaywall* dataset that includes all papers with *Crossref*’s *Digital Object Identifiers* (DOI)<sup>8</sup>, approximately 31% of the total 70 million research articles published 1950-2019 are available somewhere for free download now, with an expected rise to 44% in 2025 (Piwowar, Priem et al. 2019, preprint). However, as Shearer and Becerril-García (2021) note:

when we talk about decolonizing scholarly communications, we must avoid focusing on the dichotomy of opening or closing access to published science. Rather, the discussion should be about who controls or will control scholarly publishing, who dictates or will dictate the agendas, where the economic investments will be made – especially where public resources will be – and what new restrictions will be created with new OA models.

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8 The coverage of globally published scholarly literature with DOI is unknown.

The debates do not any longer focus on *if*, but on *how* publicly funded research publications will be openly accessible. This chapter will concentrate on recent views of this development.<sup>9</sup> Further, the chapter provides an overview over existing subject repositories and the status quo of open-access activities in different world regions, in order to estimate roughly how much another world-wide open-access publishing infrastructure is needed and what type of advocacy and support might be required to make authors use it, which is the precondition that readers and aggregators use it as well.

## 2.1 Current Debates & Developments

Moore (2017) argues that separate histories have to be studied: one that emphasises openness and reusability, and another that primarily cares about accessibility. While the former is related to research communities interested in electronic, experimental publishing, and different ‘modes of organisation around openness’ (Kiesewetter 2020) from the early days of open-source computing and the Internet – not least in the humanities, the latter promotes repositories which soon were adopted by libraries and their funding bodies – governments – as a solution to the access problems that the skyrocketing subscription prices in the ongoing serials crisis saddled them with. The openness idea got stripped off many moral implications when the discussion’s core moved to financial concerns (Poynder 2019). Finally, commercial publishers took on the access argument to promote their now dominating pay-to-publish business models.

While there used to be a standing expression of ‘*the* open access movement’, currently, especially in the ‘Global North’, the movement split and debates might have reached a deadlock (also see Weisweiler 2021): buying into the major publishers’<sup>10</sup> fees<sup>11</sup> and contracts<sup>12</sup> to ‘transform’ subscription-based publishing,<sup>13</sup> or supporting the growing

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9 For an overview of the history and models of open access, see Tennant, Waldner et al. 2016.

10 Larivière, Haustein et al. 2015 studied 2013 *Web of Science* data to discover that 50% of all papers are distributed by five publishers whose profit margins are much higher than average. Disciplinary differences are curbed, with the humanities being an outlier at 20%, steadily increasing since the 1990s.

11 Khoo 2019 found that so-called article processing charges (APC) are subject to hyperinflation.

12 Those contracts, initially called ‘Read&Publish Deals’, now go by the name of ‘Transformational Agreements’, while it is questionable if the alleged transformation is in line with the initial motivation of the open access movement, since there is no evidence that library spending decreased since these agreements are in place.

13 This side of the split movement can i.e. be found at the *Berlin Open Access Conferences*, which started in 2003, creating the influential *Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities*, long before the movement split. The conference took place in 2021 for the 15<sup>th</sup> time. A summary of the its results can be found in a ‘Executive Summary’, linked on open access 2020, 15<sup>th</sup> Berlin

scholar-led approach which funds its publishing activities through a variety of models, for instance, institutional support, grants, donations, freemium services, and memberships.<sup>14</sup> According to an estimate by Bosman, Frantsvåg et al. (2021, p. 7) there are about 29,000 no-fee open-access journals, and only about a third is listed in the ‘Global-North’-managed *Directory of Open Access Journals* (DOAJ).

Because the focus is on the licensed materials, open-access materials are less discoverable with library search engines. They are not in noticeable demand of library users since they can be accessed without library mediation. Nevertheless, in order to support the library users’ literature research process, they should be part of the library’s curated collection of relevant materials. Instead, users can discover many of those resources only with the help of a search engine different from the libraries’. Paradoxically, while most libraries, for many years now, actively support open-access publishing at the research institutions they belong to, they tend to do rather little to support the discoverability of open-access materials, as if less value or quality would be attached to them since the library did not pay for access. Neither in English nor German language, a broad debate or development of solutions is noticeable (but limited to North America, see Bullock, Hosburgh et al. 2015; McCollough 2017; Scott, Harrington et al. 2021).

Other than the scholar-led publishers’ products, repositories are seldom characterised by innovation in scholarly communication, rather by delivering the technical necessities of archiving. Few repositories for publications allow container formats or applications which limits their use for publishing experiments marking the early days of the movement. ‘In a shift away from a diversity of forms of OA [open access] towards standardised OA platforms, OA has become inherently antithetical to the politics of OA publishing’ (Marczewska 2018; also see Lawson 2019). However, preprint cultures, that several fields of research developed, inspired some scholars, publishers and science managers to revise the processes of peer review, namely suggesting post-publication peer review (Heesen and Bright 2021; Sever, Eisen et al. 2019). This opportunity should be kept in mind while developing a repository service.

The Global Open Access Portal (GOAP) 2.0 of UNESCO, Redalyc, the *Indian Statistical Institute* and AmeliCA gives an overview of the status quo in different world regions.<sup>15</sup> In the following, if no other references are given, the region-specific information is derived from this resource.

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Open Access Conference <https://oa2020.org/b15-conference/>, 2021, visited on 7 Sept. 2022.

<sup>14</sup> This side of the split movement gathers i.e. at *AmeliCA*, <http://amelica.org>, and in the *Radical Open Access Collective*, <https://radicaloa.disruptivemedia.org.uk>, both visited on 7 Sept. 2022.

<sup>15</sup> <https://goap.info>, visited on 6 Sept. 2022.

Basically everywhere in the world, there is a lack of qualified staff to operate open-access platforms and train researchers and authors about formats, metadata, licenses etc.

South and Middle America dispose over a growing, publicly funded almost continent-wide open-access infrastructure. Non-commercial open access is the undisputed standard here; it can be seen as leading open access world region. There has been a tradition to give away free printed copies of papers to peers for a long time. This practice moved online in the 1990s with pioneering *SciELO*, basically a platform for open-access journals,<sup>16</sup> accompanied by other platforms. Recently, with the still minor, but growing adoption of fee-based open-access publishing (Appel and Albagli 2019) and *SciELO*'s collaboration with *Web of Science*, commercial publishing is taking root on the continent, especially since economic problems of several countries have been growing and government support is diminishing. This development is especially worrying looking at the strong correlation that Morrison, Borges et al. (2021) found between the rates – globally – and being indexed in *Web of Science* (not to speak of the general rise of fees they found).

Argentina and Mexico have nation-wide mandates for open-access publishing in place, so sustainable solutions must be publicly provided. In other countries, these mandates have been established on an institutional level. However, to my knowledge, the existing infrastructure does not include any subject repositories.

Asia, depending on the very diverse status of underlying technical infrastructures and research support and funding by country, hosts a number of activities which promote open access. However, many of these originate in the 'Global North'. There is more scepticism about open-access publishing in Asia than elsewhere, specifically because publication quality is doubted when no reputed traditional publisher bails for proper quality assurance. However, many universities have institutional repositories, while subject repositories are very rare (Shearer 2017; Sharma 2018; Shah 2019). A huge challenge for inter-continental and international cooperation is the diversity of languages and scripts on the continent.

China is exceptional in many regards. The government funds a large-scale publishing infrastructure, but other than *SciELO*, it is not open access per default. However, access to content in Chinese academic contexts has not been identified as an issue, rather, the issue is to demonstrate Chinese research competitiveness to the world (Montgomery and Ren 2018). Large public investments flipped flagship journals to open access, and recently, the *Journal Translation Project* even worked towards creating English versions and summaries of many papers. Even if Montgomery and Ren estimate that there are 1,000 journals in China that provide 'some form of OA' – a fifth of the total; and because of a different

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<sup>16</sup> <https://scielo.org/>, visited on 9 Sept. 2022

understanding of licensing, not to be confused with the ‘Global North’ definition of open access – only 200 are indexed in the DOAJ.<sup>17</sup>

In Sub-Saharan Africa, institutional repositories often are the only way to publish openly accessibly, since there are no fees, and publishing support is usually not available to authors. Running repositories requires stable power supply and broadband Internet as well as technical skills which are hard to find for usual salaries offered by academic institutions. Funding is simply too low (Singeh, Abdullah et al. 2021). In some places, poor connectivity requires print media. According to Nkolo (2016), this is one of the three key challenges for open science adoption, the others being lack of public support and policy, and, consequently, deficient sustainability of platforms and services. However, awareness of open access is growing and the verdict is often positive. Amongst others, as a large-scale infrastructure, *AfricarXiv* is collecting open-access content from the continent by open preprint submission and by cooperation with several global repositories.

The Arabic states host the least activities of all regions (also see Prost and Schöpfel 2018). There are some institutional repositories and open-access journals, but almost no support by governments. Not much has been written about open access in Arabic which results in a lack of participation in the debates.

## 2.2 Existing Subject Repositories

Author ‘self-archiving’ is no longer a hot topic in the ‘Global North’ debates about open access. Repositories receive support from research institutions, but mostly when they limit themselves to distribute and archive the publications by their ‘own’ authors. Institutional repositories therefore are easier to sustain financially than subject repositories. Germany is the only place that has seen a large expansion of subject repositories, since the major national funder *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (DFG) supported the establishment of around a dozen subject repositories. Many of those primarily hold content in German, sometimes even the platform is only available in German, and therefore these services are not addressed to the entire research field.

Globally, not many subject repositories exist which comply to the narrow definition of addressing a global subject community. Maintaining a repository is a demanding task since it includes constant updating of software, specifically interfaces for data exchange, keeping track of long-time preservation standards, curation, avoiding spam and legal problems with the content.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> <https://doaj.org>, queried on 13 Sept. 2022.

<sup>18</sup> For general guide see Faulder, DelRosso et al. 2022.



While Pinfield et al. note in 2014 that take-up of repositories by researchers has been relatively slow, the huge subject repositories *arXiv* and *PubMed Central*<sup>19</sup> are the exceptions. This did not change since.

In order to get an overview of the existing subject repositories, I tried to query the several repository registries, but they all lack filters that comply with my definition and data formats useful for analyses that can be obtained through Web services. Gaudinat et al. (2017) experienced similar difficulties when they compared six repository metacatalogs.

OpenDOAR is the only curated catalogue;<sup>20</sup> the main selection criterium being the availability of open-access resources.<sup>21</sup> The ‘Disciplinary’ filter of OpenDOAR,<sup>22</sup> combined with ‘Content Types’ matches ‘Journal Articles’ (to filter repositories for publications) results in 194 repositories which all have to be checked manually. The API does only allow the export of a hundred results, so I buried the approach.

Another comprehensive registry is ROAR.<sup>23</sup> It offers a filter for ‘Research Cross-Institutional’ which results in 296 repositories. Checking these for availability quickly revealed that many URLs are dead (about the automatic harvesting approach and resulting data quality see Pinfield, Salter et al. 2014). It was no option to manually clean this data according to my definition, so I decided to make use of a subject-specific guide for open-access publishing.

The German project and Website (English translation available) *open-access.network* was first established 2007, received a major update in 2021, and is supported since by many institutions which collaborated with experts to gather content and provide information as well as communication services to everyone interested in open access. The subject-specific information includes a paragraph about repositories each.<sup>24</sup>

I checked all repositories mentioned and excluded them if they did not allow single-author submissions, if submissions are limited to a certain author nationality or affiliation to an institution/funder, or if information about the repository was not available in English (or at all), except for linguistics, since it can be expected that the community understands the language it researches. It can very well be that my selection approach led to incomplete results, since all the information on that Website is based on the knowledge of subject experts mainly from German-speaking countries.

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19 While *arXiv* is open for submissions, *PubMed Central* cooperates with publishers and funders for content ingest.

20 The Website does not name any person who decides upon inclusion.

21 Jisc, About OpenDOAR, <https://v2.sherpa.ac.uk/opensdoar/about.html>, visited on 8 Sept. 2022.

22 See <https://v2.sherpa.ac.uk/cgi/search/repository/advanced>, visited on 20 June 2022.

23 Registry of Open Access Repositories, <http://roar.eprints.org/>, visited on 20 June 2022.

24 Discipline-specific content, <https://open-access.network/en/information/subject-specific-open-access>, visited on Sept. 2022. The research on the subordinate sites was done during Summer 2022.

However, this procedure resulted in 37 subject repositories.<sup>25</sup> I further excluded another 9 repositories, because they only accept preprints, and no documents which have been formally published before elsewhere. The resulting list, ordered by ‘Subject group’ is provided in Table 1.

I grouped the 28 repositories by major subject as much as possible, acknowledging subjects which fall out of the traditional division between humanities, social and natural sciences. The largest group consists of nine humanities repositories, second-largest of six for the social sciences, plus one accepting both. Four repositories can be allocated to the technical and quantitative sciences, and three each to natural sciences and linguistics. Finally, there is one repository each for gender studies and information science. This is quite a broad diversity subject-wise, but there are also larger subject communities which are not represented well, for instance, law, which have to make use of general social sciences and humanities or subject-independent repositories, such as *Zenodo*.<sup>26</sup>

For the international cultural relations community, depending on the specific subject, some of the repositories which accept social sciences contributions can be an option for open-access publishing. However, one of the major advantages of a specific subject repository is to bring the community together in a dedicated virtual space, so it can actually develop a sense of belonging and care. We will get back to this in chapter 3.

All of the 28 subject repositories are hosted in ‘Global North’ environments: 15 in Germany, seven in the US, two in Italy, and one each in Canada, France, and Norway. *Aquadocs* is a truly international enterprise by UN and other organisations, technically hosted by an internationally operating IT company. The explanation for the German dominance has been mentioned earlier: since 2014, DFG is funding research libraries to establish so-called *Fachinformationsdienste* (FID).<sup>27</sup> The program includes several research information services for subject communities. The core are special library collections, but publishing services such as repositories are also provided. This funding program led to many new subject repositories which sometimes are solely addressed to the German subject community, but those included in the analysis at hand are open to the global community.

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<sup>25</sup> The philosophy repository *Sammelpunkt*, <http://sammelpunkt.philo.at/>, was not reachable on 9 Sept. 2022 and was therefore excluded.

<sup>26</sup> *Zenodo* allows the creation of ‘communities’ by every user, see <https://zenodo.org/communities/>. *LawArXiv* stopped accepting submissions and is a closed archive now, see <https://osf.io/preprints/lawarxiv>, both visited on 9 Sept. 2022.

<sup>27</sup> DFG, The ‘Specialised Information Services’ Programme, [https://www.dfg.de/en/research\\_funding/programmes/infrastructure/lis/funding\\_opportunities/specialised\\_info\\_services/index.html](https://www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/programmes/infrastructure/lis/funding_opportunities/specialised_info_services/index.html), last updated 4 May 2021, visited on 3 Oct. 2022.

<b>Name</b>	<b>URL</b>	<b>Specific subject</b>	<b>Subject group</b>	<b>Country</b>
PhilPapers	<a href="https://philpapers.org">https://philpapers.org</a>	Philosophy	Humanities	Canada
AMAD	<a href="https://www.amad.org/jspui/">https://www.amad.org/jspui/</a>	Medieval studies	Humanities	Germany
ART-Dok	<a href="https://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de">https://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de</a>	Arts	Humanities	Germany
CompaRe	<a href="https://www.avldigital.de">https://www.avldigital.de</a>	Comparative literature	Humanities	Germany
CrossAsia	<a href="https://repository.crossasia.org">https://repository.crossasia.org</a>	Asian studies	Humanities	Germany
GiNDok	<a href="https://www.germanistik-im-netz.de">https://www.germanistik-im-netz.de</a>	German studies	Humanities	Germany
Propylaeum-Dok	<a href="https://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de">https://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de</a>	Classical studies	Humanities	Germany
The Stacks	<a href="https://theSTACKS.libaac.de">https://theSTACKS.libaac.de</a>	English & American stud.	Humanities	Germany
Humanities Commons	<a href="https://hcommons.org/core/">https://hcommons.org/core/</a>	Humanities	Humanities	USA
EconStore	<a href="https://www.econstor.eu">https://www.econstor.eu</a>	Economics & business	Social sciences	Germany
media/rep/	<a href="https://mediarep.org">https://mediarep.org</a>	Media studies	Social sciences	Germany
Munich Pers. RePEc	<a href="https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de">https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de</a>	Economics & business	Social sciences	Germany
peDocs	<a href="https://www.pedocs.de">https://www.pedocs.de</a>	Educational sciences	Social sciences	Germany
SocArXiv	<a href="https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv">https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv</a>	Social Sciences	Social sciences	USA
SSRN	<a href="https://www.ssrn.com">https://www.ssrn.com</a>	Social Sciences	Social sciences	USA
HAL-SHS	<a href="https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr">https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr</a>	Social sciences & hum.	Social sciences & hum.	France
ECCC	<a href="https://eccc.weizmann.ac.il">https://eccc.weizmann.ac.il</a>	Comput. complexity	Tech. & quant. sci.	Germany
arXiv	<a href="https://arxiv.org">https://arxiv.org</a>	Physics, statistics, etc.	Tech. & quant. sci.	USA
Cryptology ePrint Arch.	<a href="https://eprint.iacr.org">https://eprint.iacr.org</a>	Cryptology	Tech. & quant. sci.	USA
engrXiv	<a href="https://engrxiv.org">https://engrxiv.org</a>	Engineering	Tech. & quant. sci.	USA
PUBLISSO	<a href="https://repository.publisso.de">https://repository.publisso.de</a>	Life sciences	Natural sciences	Germany
AquaDocs	<a href="https://aquadocs.org">https://aquadocs.org</a>	Aquatic science	Natural sciences	International
Earth-Prints	<a href="https://www.earth-prints.org">https://www.earth-prints.org</a>	Geosciences	Natural sciences	Italy
Linguistik-Repository	<a href="https://www.linguistik.de">https://www.linguistik.de</a>	Linguistics	Linguistics	Germany
LingBuzz	<a href="https://ling.auf.net/lingbuzz">https://ling.auf.net/lingbuzz</a>	Linguistics	Linguistics	Norway
semanticarchive	<a href="https://semanticarchive.net">https://semanticarchive.net</a>	Semantics	Linguistics	USA
GenderOpen	<a href="https://www.genderopen.de">https://www.genderopen.de</a>	Gender studies	Gender studies	Germany
E-LIS	<a href="http://eprints.rclis.org">http://eprints.rclis.org</a>	Library & inf. science	Information science	Italy

Table 1. All 28 subject repositories open to the entire subject communities for submission of different research documents. Where URLs were too long, only base URLs of the hosting Websites are provided.

However, DFG expects the hosting institutions to run the repositories without its support when the grant funding ends after a few years, so it remains to be seen how sustainable they will be.

At this point, it is not possible to derive best practices from the information available on Websites, since success indicators are hard to find. It would be necessary to survey the subject communities about ‘their’ respective repositories. The number of archived documents alone says very little about the acceptance and popularity of the service, since it is possible to automatically harvest other open repositories and journals for openly licensed content. Even if usage statistics are available – which very often is not the case – they might not be comparable because they apply different or no standards.

*Additional data and analysis on these 28 repos could be interesting, i. e. year launched, curation procedures (publisher/journal cooperations?), involved institutions/individuals (there is at least one run and developed by a single person: LingBuzz), features and services, accepted languages, metrics ... if there were time.*

### **2.3 Coloniality of (Open-Access) Publishing**

Recent research showed that open science practices, and specifically open-access publishing, are not only ‘shaped by those in positions of power and privilege’, but that these practices might [...] even reinforce global dynamics of inequity (Cole, Reichmann et al. 2022). On the one hand, many reputable journals and book publishers ask for open-access publishing fees. Without institutional support, which is not available in the ‘Global South’, those fees cannot be afforded (see i. e. Sengupta 2021). On the other hand, it requires extra learning and time to consider a proper open-access publishing outlet, licensing, etc., and time to actually upload a certain version to a repository. Open access costs extra time which ‘Global South’ scholars would need to cut from other activities that they rely on to earn a living.

A society-wide preference for quantified communication (Mau 2017; Mennicken and Espeland 2019), the increasing demand for researchers to publish in large quantities, motivated by audit culture and bibliometrics, desisting from quality, is clearly related to the emergence of ‘predatory publishing’,<sup>28</sup> as I argued in 2020. Fee-based open-access pub-

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<sup>28</sup> The concept of predatory journals has been invented by the librarian Jeffrey Beall who, between 2008 and early 2017, curated a list of Open Access publishers who are, according to his criteria, laid out in Beall 2015, predatory. The list is offline since 15 Jan. 2017. On <https://bealllist.net/>, to my knowledge, the most recent version, from 30 Dec. 2016, is preserved and updated with comments, last on 8 Dec. 2021, last visited on 2 Oct. 2022. For a discussion about how to recognise those businesses see Grudniewicz,

lishing provided the base for this fraudulent business which demands relatively low fees, but promises to comply to all standards including peer review which is actually never undertaken. Ordinary peer review can take very long, and publications are needed for promotion – a potential life-saver in the ‘Global South’. It has been confirmed that many of the ‘predatory publications’ are written by ‘Global South’ authors (Xia, Harmon et al. 2014; Macháček and Srholec 2017) who lack privilege in the first place, and now again become the ‘academic Other’ (Bell 2017) – bias and prejudice are fed by discussing these relations. I suggest to rather looking into the content of the publications and trusting the own expertise and general research skills to judge the credibility – a portion of doubt is always advisable since ultimate truth is not available in science and research.

As I could substantiate for social sciences and humanities research from Southeast Africa (Schmidt 2020), local publication infrastructures like journals and book publishers are weakened by the oligopolistic commercial publishing industry which operates from the ‘Global North’, but attracts submissions globally. The premier reason for this are local career promotion policies – pointing back to what I said about bibliometrics earlier – and successful marketing of ‘international journals’. The drift of good submissions, lack of financial support for administration and editing, poor underlying infrastructures of electricity and Internet as well as insufficient IT skills make it hard to continue publishing activities that have been established over decades, especially in the years after liberation from colonial power, until the fatal *Structural Adjustment Programs* of the *International Monetary Fund* and the *World Bank* took effect in almost all low-income countries since the 1980s. Success stories about new services are rare and very much limited to certain world regions.

When it comes to scholar-led open-access publishing, researchers in privileged environments clearly are at an advantage once more. The constitution of open access as the new standard comes at a cost that often excludes ‘Global South’ participation, since it requires advanced IT infrastructure and considerable staff resources. While a group of mostly European funders set very strict requirements for open-access publications in much-discussed Plan S<sup>29</sup>, the ‘Global South’ is ‘a mere passive observer with no control’ (Debat and Babini 2020). The development and use of standards has many advantages, making technology and data interoperable and easier to maintain and adapt. However, it also is double-edged sword, because it demotivates the nurturing of welcome differences: bibliodiversity.<sup>30</sup>

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Moher et al. 2019; Strinzel, Severin et al. 2019.

<sup>29</sup> Plan S. Making full and immediate Open Access a reality, <https://www.coalition-s.org>, visited on 7 Oct. 2022.

<sup>30</sup> The term was made popular by the *Jussieu Call for Open Science and Bibliodiversity*, 2016, <https://jussieu>

Knöchelmann (2021) collected several incidents which demonstrate how the development of open access business models reinforces the knowledge hegemony of the ‘Global North’. While before the event of open access, ‘peripheral’ (for an in-depth discussion of the term, see Schmidt 2020, 115ff.) research results suffered from poor dissemination, they are now impeded before publication already. As Fitzpatrick 2020 argues, authors should consider publishing services which align better than commercial publishers with the interests and values they most likely hold themselves, and which their institutions represent, despite the advances of academic capitalism (a term coined by Slaughter and Leslie 1997): to foster knowledge production and circulation for the common good.

The platforms of the major publishers do not seem to follow these values at all. The reading and writing tools they offer require considerable bandwidth and are not developed to be used on mobile phones – often the only computers that early-career researchers in the ‘Global South’ have permanent access to. The *Dakar Declaration on Open Access Publishing in Africa and the Global South*<sup>31</sup> makes very palpable that if there is free access to information on the Internet this does not mean that there is free access to information for everyone. Taking us back to what has been said before about connectivity, the available means of access vary considerably depending on individual position.

The new type of contracts between ‘Global North’ research institutions, often represented by library consortia, and major publishers, have been mentioned before. Including both access to subscription content and open-access publishing fees, they further add to the consolidation of these publishers since authors receive incentives to submit their papers to journals residing at these contracted publishers. On top of that, ‘Global North’ research gets a chance to become ever more accessible that ‘Global South’ research is excluded from. Libraries in the ‘Global North’ do not seem to realise that ‘any model, driven purely by financial imperatives exacerbate the current exclusionary publishing practises and entrenches the one-directional flow of global north knowledge’ (Raju, Claassen et al. 2020). Instead, the authors argue, developments should be primarily driven by global social justice imperatives. If ‘Global North’ research does not care about access to ‘Global South’ research, I add, this is not only arrogant, but no understanding will develop about what is required to cooperate globally in order to reach the accessibility goal. Social injustices and dependencies of the ‘Global South’ are easily stipulated on ‘Global North’ infrastructures if no provisions are made. Projects with global reach and participation cannot succeed

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ucall.org, visited on 8 Oct. 2022.

31 Adopted by the 4<sup>th</sup> CODESRIA Conference on Electronic Publishing, the UNESCO, and the Latin American Social Sciences Council (CLACSO) in Dakar on 1 April 2016, <https://wiki.lib.sun.ac.za/images/s/5/50/Dakar-declaration-2016.pdf>, visited on 7 Oct. 2022.

without contributive justice.

Knöchelmann (2021), supported by Sengupta (2021), even argues ‘that OA and the narrow accessibility problem it is set to solve are ill-equipped: they do not lead to positive social change or a democratisation of knowledge but reinforce the Western knowledge hegemony’. This is due to the mentioned consolidation of major publishers and their tendency to acquire platforms used predominantly by ‘Global-North’ researchers throughout their workflows (Chen, Posada et al. 2019). Thereby, these information businesses control the means of scholarly communication to a large extent. The more open this communication is, the easier it also is for these businesses to sale services relying on the shared and combined data (and the data itself). A greater Web presence of authors using these platforms, ‘driven by the imperatives of rankings and the rhetoric of Western quality’ (Knöchelmann 2021), pushes those to the margins who cannot or do not want to use them (Ogone 2017).

The only way out seems to be stopping any kind of use and support of these information businesses’ services in the author’s, funder’s and research institution’s roles. Furthermore, open access should be understood as strictly context-specific process, instead of using the term synonymously for a publication with open license. The publication is only accessible if it is discoverable and can be reached and read without technical or ableist barriers.

Only recently, the approach to decolonise libraries, publishers, universities and the entire academic system started to arrive at some institutions. Even though, for instance, the *International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions* (IFLA) is very active facilitating a large annual conference and a range of publications, approaches to diversify contributions and panels have not led to a truly global representation yet. The same is true for associations such as the *Open Access Scholarly Publishing Association* (OASPA), with board members from the ‘Global North’ only, and the *Confederation of Open Access Repositories* (COAR), having no board members from Asia or the Arabic countries, and being chaired by professionals from the ‘Global North.’<sup>32</sup>

The central *The Principles of Open Scholarly Infrastructure* (POSI; Bilder, Lin et al. 2020) have been criticised by Hart and Adema (2022b) for the principle of ‘non-discriminatory membership’ which is indicative for the issues that boards and leadership of scholarly infrastructures have with representative justice:

the ‘opt-in’ approach is in danger of leaving in place a closed loop, where an organ-

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<sup>32</sup> As of 8 Sept. 2022, see COAR, Who we are, <https://www.coar-repositories.org/about-coar/>, and OASPA, Board, <https://oaspa.org/about/board/>. One of OASPA’s founding members is *Hindawi* which was established 1997 in Cairo, and is still partly operated there. However, it has been acquired by a major publisher from the US, John Wiley & Sons, in 2021.

isation appears to be inclusive and to reflect the demographics of its membership because it is making no attempt to extend its community to those habitually excluded. To those on the inside, the door appears to be wide open; to those on the outside, without active outreach, the reasonable assumption is likely to be that it is closed (Hart and Adema 2022b).

Supported by Skinner and Wiperman (2020), whatever commitment and organisation makes, it needs to be linked to actual activities that can be evidenced.

A less obvious aspect of the coloniality of open access has been pointed at by Kiesewetter (2020, also see the literature referred to there): the value of openness is well in line with other neoliberal ‘Global North’ values, such as individualism, competition and productivity. This value package often is in conflict with a sense of community and care. Research institutions are increasingly motivated to compete in order to succeed in rankings, audits, hiring and funding calls. According to Chodacki, Cruse et al. (2018) this leads

to a lack of desire, trust, or incentive to (re)use the infrastructure created by a competing institution. As such, the financial incentives for institutions tend towards a desire for control [...]. If little attention is paid to achieving sustainability, to being good community members, or to the broader impact on research infrastructure as a whole, this can produce an insular project that tends to focus on its own success and next funding opportunity. Typically this leads to a failure to promote the use of any tool connecting to an external platform for fear the project will appear weak.

In the following chapter, I will try to apply the idea of a ‘processual, relational, and context-specific understanding of openness’ (Kiesewetter 2020) to the actual operation of a subject repository.

### **3 Operating a Subject Repository with Decolonial Sensitivity**

Compared to institutional repositories, subject repositories have the potential to directly address and serve a global community and to be recognised globally. Even though there are many examples which might give the impression that this can be reached without involving ‘Global South’ representatives in the governance: the times when this was possible are reaching an end, welcomed by many. I am not aware of any valid conservative argument.

Working towards representative justice can be one of the first steps, but definitely needs to be a preparing step for contributive justice and bibliodiversity. Repository management against coloniality includes the setting of according values for the organisation.



Furthermore, submission workflows, content policies, metadata curation, technologies and collaborations with other services require analysis against these values.

This chapter is not a general guide on how to operate a repository. A quick overview is offered by the *COAR Community Framework for Best Practices in Repositories* (COAR 2022) and a reader-friendly handbook by Faulder, DelRosse et al. (2022), which is helpful even though it is clearly situated in the North American context of Cornell University. For a checklist approach, the *DINI Certificate for Open Access Repositories and Publication Services*<sup>33</sup> can give orientation. It is written from a German perspective. Some of the ‘minimum requirements’, however, are criticised by this study, and they have to be fulfilled for receiving a positive evaluation and a DINI seal. Depending on the compliance that the repository service wants or has to reach, i. g. as demanded by funders,<sup>34</sup> the degrees of freedom during implementation of the following considerations are limited.

### 3.1 Starting With Yourself

The increasing presence of the notion of ‘diversity’ in academic library contexts is indicative of a growing concern with social justice. In consequence, it seems like too often, a serious consideration is replaced by ‘diversity management’, a shortcut which can easily worsen the situation by singling out and continuing the stigma (Ahmed 2012) as a ‘heroes and holidays’ approach (Gilbert 2016). Instead, the concept of cultural humility has been introduced (Tervalon and Murray-Garcia 1998; Winkelstein 2017; Schmidt 2020). It shifts the focus from ‘the other’ to the self-evaluation of the privileged and their activities. To my knowledge, such an approach has not been described for digital library services so far. However, similarly, Keith and Taylor (2021) suggest a ‘liberatory digital library’, meaning polycentric governance, denial of dominance, mutual aid, and the acknowledgement of mutual dependency. ‘They refuse to choose between business serving society or society serving business; instead, they insist on keeping the two goals aligned’ (ibid.).

This study invites all digital library service providers to check their positionalities, use of technologies, governance, potentially exclusive policies, self-description of services and organisation. It cannot be emphasised enough that decolonising starts with self-sensitisation for cultural humility, and progresses with self-observation – both observations of what

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33 The most recent version is only available in German, so far, E-Pub 2022; the previous version also in English Müller, Scholze et al. 2020.

34 There might be the wish to comply to *Plan S* requirements for repositories, see Plan S, Technical Guidance and Requirements, [https://www.coalition-s.org/technical-guidance\\_and\\_requirements/](https://www.coalition-s.org/technical-guidance_and_requirements/), visited on 6 Oct. 2022.

everyone involved takes as given and how the organisation handles privileges, coloniality and social injustices. All staff, including technical staff and office managers, as well as volunteers need to be on the same page, even though there might be different opinions. Everyone should feel invited to raise concerns that are discussed in a friendly and patient environment. However, a settlement about self-understanding, goals of the service and resources available to reach those goals is a precondition for a continued decolonisation process. This settlement has to be reviewed and adapted on a regular basis. Only then, a change process with actual activities and outreach can start. Decolonisation is not a project, but a process that might never be completed.

By realising that decolonisation is a perpetual process and requires to slow down operations, this study also relates to the concept of ‘slow archives’ (Christen and Anderson 2019): ‘it is in the slowing down that we can start to see modes of ethical archives that reflect accountability, engagement, relationality, and reciprocity’.

### 3.2 Governance & Advocacy

‘Governance [...] refers to the structures and values that shape an organisation’s work, including the accountability and oversight of structures and values, [...] voting rights and bylaws’ (Moore 2021). Before tackling some details, I will start by summarizing the most important issues that are often not implemented, but crucial to avoid stipulation of social injustice and to build a community that trusts in the service. I collected these issues from studying the numerous guidelines on how to operate open scholarly communication infrastructures. They agree, if they mention them (Bilder, Lin et al. 2020; Chodacki, Cruse et al. 2018; Cousijn, Hendricks et al. 2021; COAR and Sparc 2019; COAR 2022; DJA 2021; Hart and Adema 2022a,b; Knowledge Exchange 2014; Lippincott and Skinner 2022; Rodrigues, Bollini et al. 2017; Skinner and Wipperman 2020)<sup>35</sup>:

- long-term public plan for running and funding the service is needed, so a migration of the data is possible at any time. Only an evidently sustainable service can be trusted. Lippincott and Skinner (Lippincott and Skinner 2022) argue that two, non-interdependent funding streams are required. Also, the software, including all adaptations and designs, should be available under open licenses in order to transfer the whole system seamlessly to another provider, if need be;

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<sup>35</sup> Skinner and Wipperman 2020 actually is a meta-study of nine values and principles documents related to scholarly publishing which have a broader perspective than most of the documents I included, because I focussed on repositories and social justice.

- the subject community should contribute to the conceptualisation of service and platform. It is more likely to happen when the repository is run by several organisations that are known and trusted by the community;
- full transparency of all processes, since this equips the community to participate;
- collaboration with institutions which have similar goals and critical re-use of their products instead of a do-it-yourself approach, because ‘where control is vested entirely in one institution, community governance is at best weak and at worst impossible’ (Chodacki, Cruse et al. 2018);
- networked distributed services should be built instead of monopolies to reduce the risk of buy-out or failure (Rodrigues, Bollini et al. 2017). Especially where the community is large, a single place to turn to for a certain purpose has a homogenising effect;
- maximum interoperability with other services, reached by the critical use of standards for technologies and metadata, persistent identifiers and controlled vocabularies;
- multiple ways to do things should be respected, both in internal operations and in regard to user contributions. Often, rules or strict workflows are created for no good reason. The need for a rule should be carefully assessed.

Which organisational bodies are needed to make this work at a minimum? Besides a service team that operates the day-to-day requests and administration, regular community input is needed. An advisory board is an important feature of any community-based organisation: it ideally represents the different stakeholders of the community, provides ideas and critique for decision-making and supervises the operations (Moore 2021). Even if the board members do not have any actual power, the organisation’s operators should take the advice very seriously and communicate the board’s role in any decisions to reach full transparency and credibility in the community. ‘Governance by a board of stakeholders helps to ensure that the organization does not confuse serving itself with serving its stakeholders. Trust in the governance can be built through openness and transparency’ (Clark 2021). It also makes sense to issue bylaws for the board, so its ‘function, rules around membership, joining, leaving, duration, rights and responsibilities [...] and how they relate to the organisation’s mission’ are clear to everyone involved, ‘including how these rules can be changed’ (Moore 2021).

DeEtta Jones & Associates (DJA 2021) published a three-part best practice document on board nomination, onboarding, and governance. For nomination, most importantly, goals and criteria have to be defined before thinking about actual people. Both practitioners and established leaders should be included; with as many different cultural backgrounds, different position titles and formal education paths as possible. Also users ‘should have agency in [...] development and governance’ of the service (Skinner and Wipperman 2020), either by representation on the board or as a specific organisational body that is consulted on a regular basis. Skinner and Wipperman even suggest to put the ‘users in the driver’s seat’. For all positions that are tied to an above-average amount of influence, these need to be circulated after a while, letting new ways of thinking arrive and making the misuse of power unlikely. This principle needs to be balanced with the need for continuity and memory, which can be satisfied by good documentation and by not exchanging several people at a time.

Relating to the ideal of ‘slow archives’, an onboarding processes takes about 9-12 months. New members have to connect to the rest of the board and reach clarity about ‘roles, expectations, operations, policies, and sources of support’ (DJA 2021). To be able to understand and participate in the common culture and current climate cannot be taken for granted. It also is a learning process to develop strategies for successful contribution. The third part of the best practise document, about the governance philosophy, includes the insight that ‘equity lives in the process. By developing processes and systems that naturally support the values we espouse, rather than working against them, we can make equity the default state’ (ibid.).

It should go without saying that especially board members from ‘Global South’ contexts need to be compensated for their board engagements. This is one of the regular costs that the organisation needs to provide for: ‘time-limited funds are used only for time-limited activities – day to day operations should be supported by day to day sustainable revenue sources’ (Bilder, Lin et al. 2020).

All relationships built around the service, within the organisation and out of it, will gain from applying ethics of care: ‘care for others, for processes, for the work involved in all aspects of the supply chain, and for the (content of the) publication – rather than being focused purely on the outcomes of the publishing process’ (Adema and Moore 2018). Relationships of care are fostered by personal contact. Technology is often used to automate and rationalise processes, built based on former person-to-person communication, then mediated through forms and checkboxes, sometimes leaving no room for the specifics of the case. Some of this rationalisation makes it possible to run a service on scarce staff

resources, but some of it creates even more work: correcting errors and imprecision created by too rigorous standardisation or lack of engagement. Always when this occurs, it is time to step back and question the rationalisation, replace it by personal contact or improve it considerably.

Another fundamental relationship that needs to be handled with outermost care is that between technical and service staff. When there is no maximum understanding for the other role, respectively, communication can easily break – a death sentence for the development of the service. Service staff needs to learn to estimate the effort it takes to change a system, workflow or design, and to formulate questions and requests extremely precise and in dialogue with the technical staff. The latter requires patience to make sense of the service perspective, translate it to the own technical terms, think it through and translate the options – and later the actual developments – back to a language that is understood by service staff. The required translation processes depend very much on the individuals involved, so the only universal advice that can be given is to exercise mutual respect and patience to build this maximum individual understanding. Since it takes time to create a relationship of care, outsourcing of technical services is a risk and should be conceptualised as a long-term partnership.

When all members of the organisation are in place, Hart and Adema (2022b) suggest to create or to discuss and amend three public statements, subject to review on a regular basis: about the organisation's values, mission and vision. While a mission statement can easily consist of only one simple sentence about the organisation's purpose, a vision statement can be a bit longer, describing in more detail what the organisation aims to achieve.

Open, community-based infrastructures should take care not to lose credibility by acting non-transparently about their finances, even if they are officially not-for-profit or if the infrastructure is run by a larger institution which offers several different services which are hard to entangle. As an example, for the *Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)*, income and expenses are published annually.<sup>36</sup> With this information, organisations and individuals can make an informed decision about donating. The scholarly community gets an impression about what it costs to provide infrastructures and can compare these costs to other parts of the research enterprise, and put it into perspective of commercial infrastructure costs and profits.

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<sup>36</sup> Infrastructure Services for Open Access, DOAJ Finances 2013-2021, <https://is4oa.org/2020/10/05/doaj-finances-2013-2020-2021/>, visited on 7 Oct. 2022. The organisation relies entirely on donations which added up to £1,023,000 in 2021. The employed team consists of twenty people (cost: £436,000) and is supported by voluntary editorial and board work. In 2021, the director earned a gross salary of £96,000.

Looking at the advocacy environment for repositories, *Confederation of Open Access Repositories* (COAR) is the central organisation. While I already mentioned the lack of proper representation on the board, Shearer, the executive director of COAR since 2013, is speaking up for bibliodiversity. This includes community governance models and the development of shared infrastructures by collaboration (Shearer, Chan et al. 2020). The authors offer COAR as a forum ‘for collectively defining common standards and best practices that allow local, national and regional services across the world to connect with each other’.

### **3.3 Submission Policies, Content Acquisition & Licenses**

The following questions should be clearly and publicly answered in a submission policy:

- who can submit?
- are cooperations in place with publishers, journals and other repositories for content ingest?
- who is responsible for entering the metadata?
- what services are offered during the submission process?
- which publication and file types are accepted?
- which content and metadata languages are permitted?

The following notes are supposed to clarify these questions.

Anyone who feels related to the subject community should be invited to submit, the only barrier being a minimal registration process for security.

When the purpose of the repository is to collect as much relevant content as possible, cooperations with publishers, journals and other repositories are inevitable. Cooperating with ‘Global South’ partners first is an effective reconciliation policy.

Authors usually find it annoying to fill out submission forms. They tend to have no training in metadata curation, and it can be time-saving and increase work satisfaction for both parts when only the file is submitted by the author, together with information that is not included in the file, but already known to the author. From my personal experience as a manager of three different repositories over the course of six years, the majority of author submissions requires personal contact, especially to discuss licensing and barrier-free files.

This is an excellent opportunity to create awareness for these important topics and to establish a relationship of care.

In Section 2.1, I already pointed at the pre-history of open access, celebrating experimental forms of academic writing and publishing. As long as a piece appears to communicate knowledge in some form, it should be accepted by any repository that is not explicitly limited, for some good reason, to a very clearly defined publication type, such as preprints or published journal articles. The stricter the limitations, the more effort it takes to check compliance. To forestall Section 3.4, such experimental types need to be cared for when implementing a metadata vocabulary, in order to make sure they can be properly described.

The question about file types is mostly a technical one: which file types can be handled by the repository software and be preserved for the long-term? (The software manual helps to find out.) Should file previews be offered in order to allow everyone with a current Web browser software to view it, without installing additional software, for barrier-free use? It is a trade-off to either opt for maximum openness to submissions of different kinds or for maximum reader-friendliness.

Repositories are sometimes criticised as a place for resources of questionable quality. Since they usually do not perform any kind of quality assurance of the content, they often invite ‘grey literature’ (for details on history and definitions see Gul, Shah et al. 2021). Critique that focusses on this lack of reviewing the content can be met by making very clear to any user of the platform by which means quality is assured. It is important to involve the community in these questions since it is rather the authors and researchers who should feel responsible for the content, not primarily the service providers. This is also the reason why ‘predatory publishing’ – the distribution of publications which have not been quality assured while the publisher asserts it has – is a minor issue. A ‘predatory publication’ is not necessarily a bad publication.

More of a challenge is avoiding propaganda. A quick check for subject relevance might not be enough to recognise this type of text. It also is a question of criteria and individual evaluation to decide if it is propaganda or a value-driven academic text. Therefore, as with ‘grey literature’ and ‘predatory publishing’, it must be left to the reader to decide if the author can be trusted, and it is the author who takes all responsibility for the content.

Cooper, Marsolek et al. (2019) found in their survey that regardless of discipline, 84% of academic staff at the University of Minnesota used grey literature (some refrain from citing it), and 79% are creating it themselves. It is most important to health science and engineering, less so in the social sciences, and of minor importance to the humanities. Despite its popularity, the survey also found a ‘a lack of active curation [which] could be

due in part to librarians' assumptions concerning grey literature' (also see Okoroma 2011; Schöpfel and Rasuli 2018). With the establishment of open access and the improvement of circulation, 'grey literature now runs parallel to the white literature' (Gul, Shah et al. 2021). Still, classification and cataloguing remain demanding for libraries.

The value of 'grey literature' could be further increased by offering community review functionalities such as post-publication review. However, since 'Global South' researchers often do not earn a sufficient salary, and have very high teaching loads, they cannot dispose over a lot of time for reviewing. When their work is reviewed by 'Global North' researchers, biases easily lead to unfair reviews and according demotivation of the authors. With post-publication review, this distribution barrier could vanish. It could be put into practice by connecting to external reviewing platforms.

The question about accepted languages is one of the most difficult ones, since it is hard to gather broad language coverage within the team. However, being motivated to write in English instead of the local language 'prevents [... local communities] from using and taking advantage of research done where they live' (Shearer, Chan et al. 2020). Multilingualism in research is a reality that needs to be supported as the *Helsinki Initiative on Multilingualism in Scholarly Communication*<sup>37</sup> demands. Therefore, the community needs to contribute in order to reach this goal. For instance, machine translation modules are available for implementation in the informative Websites of the repository, inviting everyone to submit in their language, explaining that it could take some time to process the submission because of translation issues, and that publication cannot be guaranteed in case those issues are not overcome. Then, for a first check, again machine translation services might assist for a first impression about the text and metadata (also see Section 3.5). If this should be insufficient, a reach out to the hopefully language-wise diverse community could ideally establish long-term volunteer engagement to support certain languages. When this enquiry is unsuccessful, libraries situated in places where the respective language is spoken or special libraries worldwide which collect literature written in this language could help out. These contacts could develop into valuable long-term cooperations.

Thinking about which licenses to offer and how to promote openness, it helps to consider concerns that have been raised from indigenous positions: it might not always be in the interest of the authors to communicate their work to the widest possible audience, and give it the right to modify the work, since this could, for instance, open the doors to exploitive profiteers – it happened before. As Christen (2012) argues, 'general calls for "open access" undo the social bearings of information circulation and deny human agency'.

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37 <https://www.helsinki-initiative.org>, visited on 8 Oct. 2022.



However, the call for open access is usually limited to publicly funded research results. Still, especially indigenous people seem to feel pressured by ‘open everything’ calls. Open access advocates should take this objection seriously, and invite creators to use open licensing, but refrain from pushing them.

*Creative Commons Licenses* are most widely used in repositories, often with the only alternative of a ‘Deposit License’<sup>38</sup> which signals that the file can be used under the terms of copyright – the default that is legally not required mentioning, but should be mentioned to make these terms clear to machines and to any user who might not know much about copyright. The modular system of *Creative Commons Licenses*, developed for art and design shared on the Web, has been criticised for being both too complicated and too coarse to catch what kind of reuses a scholar wants to permit (for a discussion from the perspective of the humanities see Eve 2014, Chapter 3).

Other licensing systems disappeared from the scene of academic publishing, and are only kept in the vocabularies of repositories for back-reference. I am not aware of any ongoing debate about how to overcome the dissatisfaction with *Creative Commons Licenses* in the scholarly communities. Suggestions have been made, but again rather for the art context, for instance *Constant’s CC4r \* Collective Conditions for Re-Use*<sup>39</sup> which include respecting that ‘indigenous people, people of color, queer people, trans people, and women are particularly exploited for their creative and cultural resources’ within the framework of European intellectual property conceptions which have been imposed on the entire planet. CC4r also resolves the binary of ‘open/closed’ and takes precaution that the work is not reused in ‘oppressive arrangements of power, privilege and difference.’ The conditions prescribe that an effort needs to be made by the future author ‘to account for the collective conditions of the work’, the contributions that have been made to the work in the past, asking: what, who, where?

### 3.4 Descriptive Metadata & Identifiers

The undisputed metadata standard for repositories is the *Dublin Core Metadata Element Set*. Including only fifteen properties, it has been constructed for exchange, not for the granular initial description. The larger qualified set, *Dublin Core Metadata Initiative (DCMI) Metadata Terms* should be sufficient for general purposes, including the creation of Linked Data within the *Resource Description Framework (RDF)*, which is a standard that any repository should support since it increases discoverability and the reusability of

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38 The metadata should provide this URL: In Copyright, <https://rightsstatements.org/page/InC/1.0/>.

39 <https://constantvzw.org/wefts/cc4r.en.html>, developed in 2020, visited on 10 Oct. 2022.

bibliographic records enormously. However, these advantages are, at the same time, their downside, because any standard sets a certain structure of description in stone which could be inappropriate for parts of the community.

I am not aware of any more extensive decolonial critique of metadata standards. Also, I could not find a single critique of using exclusively Latin script for coding, or an example for metadata in other scripts applied in digital libraries. Moreover, the standard identifiers with their respective registries are seemingly no subject to decolonial critique – those of high relevance for literature repositories are all primarily created in ‘Global North’ environments: DOI for the entire digital object, ORCID for authors and their names, ROR for research organisations, *GeoNames* for places, and *Wikidata* subjects for basically everything else. The *Linked Open Data Cloud*<sup>40</sup> provides an overview of the many registries and vocabularies that work on the grounds of RDF and identifiers.

The use of identifiers where ever possible serves the disambiguation of data such as for names, on the one hand, and interoperability of the repository with other services, on the other hand. However, they also facilitate bibliometric analyses which can be misused for unfair comparisons of performance and impact of researchers and their institutions.

On top of the mentioned standards, Eurocentric submission forms, that the repository software might offer, can create pitfalls. An insightful example is a structured ‘Creator’ field, assuming that an author has a given name and a family name – in this order. Actually, this is only one case of many (W<sub>3</sub>C 2011). Unfortunately, bibliographic data very often has a Eurocentric name field structure, so the first W<sub>3</sub>C recommendation to just cut the structure and use a single field each for contributor’s names will create issues with interoperability and it will also irritate.<sup>41</sup> Being an imperfect solution, i. g. for Icelandic and some Asian names, the second W<sub>3</sub>C recommendation is to avoid any ‘first/last name’ labels, and use ‘family/given name’ instead. Working around the imperfection, ‘family name’ should never be a mandatory field. Beware that any decisions on how to deal with names also has consequences for the search form and list sorting. Finally, especially for personal names, it seems violent not to record them in their original script. In any case, there should be more debate about this issue amongst information professionals.

This leaves one huge topic to discuss in this section: knowledge organisation with the

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<sup>40</sup> <https://lod-cloud.net>, visited on 10 Oct. 2022.

<sup>41</sup> To share a personal anecdote, I was thinking about using full author names in this study, meaning both when I write names in the text and in brackets, and also in the bibliography. Unfortunately, I could not find a simple way of doing this with the software I use (BibLaTeX), plus all my references, managed with *Zotero*, have that two-field name structure, because that is how I import them from sources like *Crossref* and ISBN.

help of classifications, subject headings and thesauri. Hierarchical knowledge organisation systems like classifications naturally reproduce biases held in society: hierarchies denote which subjects are overarching, and therefore of huge importance, while subjects arranged very low in the hierarchy, or classes labelled with terms like ‘Other’, transfer their minor status to the materials which are filed here. For many materials, a precise class label catching the main subject is not available. For instance, intersectionality, meaning multiple intersecting identity categories manifesting as specific oppression (Crenshaw 1991)—an important subject in the social sciences for several decades now, is virtually impossible to represent in hierarchical knowledge organisation (Fox 2016). Also, the terminology always carries the language of the time the classification was reviewed, including terms which are increasingly agreed upon as being ableist, classist, racist, sexist, etc.

Changing those terms is cumbersome, since metadata specialists have a clear preference for standardisation, in order to allow collaborative construction of a common body of professional knowledge, sharing of records and low-effort staff mobility. This complex issue has been analysed and discussed a lot already, dominated by scholars and librarians from North America (see e. g. Foskett 1971; Olson 2002; Roberto and Berman 2008; Drabinski 2013; Szostak 2014).

Large-scale suggestions for actual intervention in knowledge organisation systems in order to improve the situation are rare, while smaller updates are introduced once in a while (see e. g. Green 2017). Well-meaning updates can also raise new critiques. Furner (2007), for instance, discusses the changes to *Dewey Decimal Classification*’s 22<sup>nd</sup> edition, Table 5, where the term ‘race’ was omitted, leaving its title to ‘Ethnic and National Groups’. According to Furner, ‘the implication is that any population defined in the work by racial characteristics should be treated, for classification purposes, as a group whose commonality resides in their *ethnic* (i.e., sociocultural) heritage’ or, I add, in their citizenship.

The development of classifications is guided by observing the ‘relevant’ material that is acquired for collections and therefore catalogued. This material itself often includes topical self-identification according to the scholarly debate, which is structurally oriented towards the disciplinary structures used by institutions of research and teaching. These institutions are embedded in sociocultural contexts.<sup>42</sup> All those aspects co-develop and have impact on one another.

Since classifications used for academic literature are clearly in service of research communication and education, it might not dispose over much innovatory power: the research

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<sup>42</sup> The sociocultural embeddedness of classifications such as the *International Classification of Diseases*—valid for all classifications—has been prominently established by Bowker and Star 1999.

and publication is first, its description second. In consequence, even a classification that does right to current social justice concerns will not do away with unjust structures of scholarly communication.

Weinberger's work (2007) invites us to think in more promising directions: 'the digital order ignores the paper order's requirement that labels be smaller than the things they're labeling'. Even though the described material sets certain limits to its description, the person who describes has a fair chance to be wiser than the author was at the time of writing, and this wisdom can influence the description of the material that missed out on the recent period of time, debate and events. In a digital environment, it is more likely that metadata is revisited and changed – and collection managers should make use of this opportunity.

The community is another source of wisdom needed for the description of the collection. Free-text fields for keywords are standard, and as soon as the collection reaches a critical mass, the terms should be publicly analysed. The social tagging or folksonomies approach was hoped – by Weinberger and others – to evolve as an equivalent which fulfils the functions of controlled subject vocabularies without carrying all the problems introduced above. So far, this hope was not redeemed, and replaced by the hope that both could complement each other (Yu and Chen 2020). Without being an expert on subject indexing, my hope is that even more vocabularies are ingested in *Wikidata*<sup>43</sup> and that they, through this process, both enrich *Wikidata* subjects and become better discoverable and more easily usable on their own terms. Prospectively, when repository records are indexed with *Wikidata* subjects, they could become linked in *Wikicite*, a promising project in the *Wikimedia* family.<sup>44</sup>

For the subject at hand, the *European Thesaurus on International Relations and Area Studies* is the leading vocabulary.<sup>45</sup> It has been created in Czech, English, French, German, Italian, Polish and Spanish. While currently not being ready for Linked Open Data, it is sustainably managed and updated on a regular basis. This study does not include an analysis of this thesaurus.

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43 Wikidata, Data donation, [https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:Data\\_donation](https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:Data_donation), visited on 10 Oct. 2022.

44 <http://wikicite.org/>, visited on 10 Oct. 2022.

45 <https://fiviblk.de/en/thesaurus>, visited on 10 Oct. 2022. I could not find a structured version for download.

### 3.5 Repository Software

When a repository is supposed to be set up all new today, with an out-of-the-box open-source software, the choices are very limited. Required are at least the in-built support of the *Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting* (OAI-PMH) for data exchange, a customizable user interface, submission management, discovery and preservation functionalities. For security and sustainability reasons, an active community of developers and users is just as important as functionalities are: with these limitations, the *SComCat Scholarly Communication Technology Catalogue*<sup>46</sup> lists only *DSpace* and *Eprints* software. There are other systems which are used by local communities, such as *OPUS* in Germany.

*DuraSpace*, developing *DSpace*, is a not-for-profit organisation. Its work is mainly supported by organisations which use their open-source software. The major contributing members, who provide more than \$20,000 annually each, are ten US universities. The single Supporting Corporate Sponsor is *Clarivate*, which owns *Web of Science*.<sup>47</sup> For additional influx of funds, *DuraSpace* offers several hosting services. The only non-US member of the board of directors is German.<sup>48</sup> *Eprints* is developed at the University of Southampton, and *Eprints Services* offers hosting of the software for some cross-financing.<sup>49</sup> It is an open question if this lack of diversity in the governance of software development and of global user communities is perceived of as problematic by those who are not represented.

The language of the interface of the platform is a tricky question. A selection of European languages would cement a Eurocentric approach. Because in-built translations are very limited for the available software, it could be a bearable compromise to offer the interface in English only and to motivate the use of or even implement Website machine translation which works best on the base of English (see Tiedemann and Thottingal 2020, for a starting point on which software to use). This comes with its own downsides in terms of social justice, for instance, the competition between commercial and open source software for machine translation, and the biases in the training data of the models (Mehrabi, Morstatter et al. 2021). An active reflection of those downsides within the community, documented on the Website, could tackle them.

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46 <https://www.scomcat.net>, visited on 16 Sept 2022.

47 LYRISIS, FinancialContributors, visited on 16 Sept. 2022.

48 <https://duraspace.org/about/board-of-directors/>, visited on 16 Sept. 2022.

49 About Us, <https://www.eprints.org/uk/index.php/about/>, visited on 16 Sept. 2022.

## **4 A Vision for Subject Repositories**

Caring for bibliodiversity also means to do away with the idea of a platform that lists all relevant contributions to a certain subject and makes them accessible. A realistic utopia could be that subject communities dispose over a limited, manageable number of subject repositories. These repositories should, by all means, appeal to the global community, starting by a name and a design that does not locate the service clearly on the globe. Furthermore, it should acknowledge local differences of publishing and research cultures as well as of preferred design and interface features. In order to reach that, the community needs to be involved.

While the repositories' primary role will remain open access archiving of publications which can also be found elsewhere, it will become clearer to researchers that this is an unnecessary double structure which uses up a lot of resources. When interoperability and the use of open licenses increase, repositories will become more relevant for literature research. Ideally, a repository is not like a silo hosting content, but a community on its own which contributes to the development of the scholarly communication cultures of the field.

I identified four functions which are derived from the competences ideally established while working on the platform together with the community:

1. (retrospective) preservation and opening function for contributions;
2. support of scholar-led initiatives and publication infrastructures in the 'Global South' for long-term preservation and licensing questions;
3. motivation and consolidation of the subject community (open communication; common helpdesk);
4. mediation of trans-disciplinary differences which is especially important in multi-disciplinary fields such as international cultural relations.

## **5 Recommendations for an International Cultural Relations Subject Repository**

*For open discussion during the workshop.*

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