



Commonwealth of uncertainty: How British and American professional models of library practice have shaped LIS Education in selected former British Colonies and Dominions

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Abstract

Worldwide the library and information profession has been the focus of competing social and political agendas that have contributed to the shape of the profession. From the late 19th century to the present in countries aligned to the former British Dominions and Colonies (today part of the Commonwealth of Nations) these external influences were predominantly from two cultural arenas, that of the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US). The result in many Commonwealth countries been two competing and at times contradictory models for LIS pedagogy which have been labelled the British and American 'models or patterns' of education. The convergence of these two influences has had a role in shaping LIS education and has left a complex legacy. This paper will examine how the legacy of this convergence continues to shape the aspirational agenda of local professional communities and will discuss how this has influenced the delivery and the educational model for librarianship. This paper will examine as a series of case studies how the legacy of this convergence has shaped the aspirations of the LIS profession and influenced the delivery and the educational model of librarianship in a number of Commonwealth countries.

Keywords

library and information education, cultural influences, Commonwealth countries

Exploration of the foundations of modern library and information science (LIS) worldwide reveals a discipline which has been the focus of competing international agendas seeking to influence education and practice at the local level. These international influences can be seen clearly in many of the countries which constitute the Commonwealth of Nations¹. From the late 19th century to the present in many former British Colonies and Dominions² these international

influences were derived predominantly from the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US) and have been variously called the British and American

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'models' or 'patterns' of education and practice (Bramley 1975; Bryan 1972; Keane 1985). As a consequence of this duality of influence in many local professional communities there exists an uneasy convergence of two competing and at times contradictory models of LIS. The outcome in countries where this has occurred can be professional tensions and uncertainties and complex, and at times contradictory, models for education and practice within the one jurisdiction. This paper will examine as a series of case studies how the legacy of this convergence has shaped the aspirations of the LIS profession and influenced the delivery and the educational model of librarianship in a number of these Commonwealth countries.

Models of education

The British model

In the late 19th and early 20th century the LIS profession in many of the former British Colonies and Dominions derived its educational and professional structures principally from UK precedents. This so called 'British model' for LIS included training in the workplace in an apprenticeship mode and eventually involved examinations in both general and specialist knowledge set by the local professional association or the Library Association (LA) of the United Kingdom. In the second half of the 20th century this model evolved into one which initially included local training schools catering for these examinations and later first or undergraduate degrees in librarianship with some of the LIS professional associations acting as course accrediting rather than examining bodies. These changes were in response to a variety of factors including increasing accessibility of education, growth in the number of libraries, changes in government policy and lobbying by professional associations for education to support practice and promote the status of their professions.

Despite these changes in the second half of the 20th century, educational conditions in the United Kingdom and many of its former colonies and dominions remained very different from those of the United States and consequently the pathway to professions such as librarianship was equally dissimilar. Access to libraries and the conditions under which they operated in the US were also very different as was the role the library was seen to play in society. In the US public libraries were widespread thanks to the work of philanthropists such as Andrew Carnegie and they, like education, were entwined with wider social and political agendas. In the US

Education for librarianship follows this pattern. The first recognized professional degree is the master's;

admission to most library schools requires the four-year bachelor's degree, following the twelve years of elementary-secondary education (Asheim 1971: 43).

The concept of librarianship as a postgraduate profession in the US style was not favoured however by British trained librarians working nationally and internationally in the many former colonies and dominions and was viewed as inappropriate to local needs and conditions. It was argued these differences in education and library infrastructure made a postgraduate model neither appropriate to the needs of local communities, nor sustainable, aimed as it was towards producing library leaders rather than workers. The British based apprentice and undergraduate model of education for librarianship held sway in many Commonwealth countries for a large part of the 20th and 21st centuries. Yet in many countries US based influences and practices ran parallel to these British practices.

The promotion of US library practice

Historically US standardized work practices and systems such as Dewey Decimal Classification began to make inroads internationally in the second half of the 19th century (though not without some resistance³). The exportation of these standardized practices and systems was to be a harbinger of a broader promotion of US style professional principles and practice internationally in the 20th century. Led by the American Library Association and supported by both US philanthropic and government agencies, the promotion of an American model of 'modern' library practice and education abroad was part of a broader agenda to provide a living example of democratic culture at work (Kraske, 1985: 3).

In this 'American model' education for librarianship occurred in tertiary institutions and followed the precedents of professions such as law and medicine as a graduate profession. The professional association acted as an accrediting body for tertiary programmes rather than an examination body and the establishment and promotion of professional associations was seen as central to promoting the status of the profession.

Ongoing issues

Within many international professional groups the complex legacy emerging from this historical context can be seen in local professional and aspirational struggles as attempts are made to reconcile the competing influences and contrasting educational structures. Such struggles have, in some instances, resulted in ongoing uncertainty and tension over best practice in education,

preferred professional entry points and persistent and unresolved debate associated with what constitutes appropriate education for the LIS profession. These debates encompass issues such as apprenticeship versus degree models of education, the role of professional associations in education and defining standards—including the question of examination versus accreditation; the appropriateness of undergraduate or postgraduate education as an entry point for the profession and to meet local labour needs; whether paraprofessional training (that is for library technicians or library technical assistants) is necessary in the industry, and; if those trained in such a way should be given access to, and credit for, their training towards professional undergraduate or postgraduate qualifications (Carroll 2011). Each of these issues reflects a tension between the two different and contending educational paradigms which can be seen running through the development of professional librarianship internationally. This legacy and its implications for professional practice will be discussed in this paper as they relate to four LIS communities: Australia, Jamaica, Nigeria and Pakistan.

Australia

European Australia has long been exposed to various cultural pressures from beyond its own shores and has been profoundly influenced by its colonial heritage—resolutely and proudly part of the British Empire and Commonwealth yet pragmatically looking elsewhere for inspiration, identity and a sense of independence. Despite its strong cultural and emotional ties to the former British Empire, from the late 19th century onwards Australia began to look frequently to its increasingly influential Pacific neighbour, the United States, for cultural, political and educational inspiration.

Historical trends in Australia

The first decades of the 20th century were to see increased exposure to US popular culture through media such as popular fiction, film and radio and the increasing engagement of influential Australian professionals with their US counterparts. Nationally, educational historian Richard Selleck believes that there was ‘significant cultural change’ during this period, as ‘Australian educationalists were beginning to seek inspiration in the United States rather than Britain’ (1982: 272). The increasing presence of US philanthropic bodies and other non-government agencies in Australia also provided opportunities to Australian professionals for and exposure to new ideas and modes of practice emerging from the US.

Importantly for the library profession in Australia (and elsewhere) amongst the US philanthropic organization making their presence felt in Australia, was the CCNY. The influence of the CCNY on the Australian education and library community in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s is considered significant (Horrocks, 1971; White, 1997). The years prior to World War II saw the CCNY become actively engaged in Australian professional life, funding the establishment of the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) and the Australian Institute of Librarians (AIL) later known as the Library Association of Australia (LAA). The CCNY also funded the international travel of many key men and women to both Europe and the United States. CCNY funding in Australia was to align with emerging US government agendas in promoting the US abroad and the opportunities provided by the CCNY also exposed key influential Australian librarians to new templates for practice and ambitions for Australian LIS education. While not uncritical or all-embracing in their acceptance, these influential practitioners were to place in the Australian arena ambitions for a mode of education and practice often at odds with Australian educational conditions, which at this time more closely resembled those of its traditional mentor, the UK. In Australia the activities of the CCNY were to lay the ground for the work of other US agencies in the construction of the library profession.

Ensuring democratic librarianship was the benchmark for professional practice and an essential part of the broader defence of democracy was to become an integral and overt element in wider US diplomatic efforts. In 1944 the Australian library fraternity welcomed a number of high-profile US Office of War Information (OWI) librarians to its shores as part of an effort to establish OWI libraries in strategically important locations in the Pacific. The Australian OWI libraries were established in Melbourne, Victoria and Sydney, New South Wales and were part of a broader information effort by the US government involving news services, films and intelligence gathering, as well as library service. The Australian OWI librarians included Helen Wessells, later editor of the *Library Journal* and Harriet Root, librarian of the US Information Service in Washington. Their arrival was to continue the promotion of US practice started by the CCNY in Australia and was aligned to the US war efforts and the role defined for libraries and librarians identified these efforts as being critical in the defence of freedom and in supporting democracy. In the time they were to spend in Australia, these librarians had a lasting impact on local library practice. The US democratic vision presented by these librarians was to

have a hold in the imagination of many of the elite of the library profession who had benefited from CCNY travel grants in Australia, and ambitions emerged for a US model of professional education. This was an agenda to be pursued in the coming decades.

The activities of the US library fraternity did not mean that the influence of the UK had ceased entirely. In November 1946, sponsored by the British Council, well-known British librarian Lionel McColvin⁴ arrived Australia in somewhat controversial circumstances⁵ to follow up progress on the conditions of public libraries in Australia. McColvin was known to view US librarianship as an opportunity for “useful guidance” but “not of a character to completely meet our needs” (1939: 60) and promoted a system for Australia closely aligned to the UK model in his resultant report, *Public libraries in Australia: present conditions and future possibilities* (1947). Perceptions of the degree of influence of McColvin’s Australian report vary, but what McColvin’s visit accomplished was to reinforce perceptions of UK modes of practice and their appropriateness for Australian conditions to Australian professionals in a period which was to see the arrival of many British-trained librarians to Australian shores. The consequences of this were to engage the Australian profession for the following decades.

Despite a clear preference to follow US precedents amongst leading Australian librarians, much activity during the 1940s and 1950s followed models emerging out of the UK. In 1941 the Australian Institute of Librarians (AIL) *Board of Certification and Examination* was established making the AIL an examination rather than accreditation body much as was its British counterpart. Training schools were established in the major state libraries to conduct classes for employees and others wishing to sit the Institute’s exams and LIS training continued very much in the model of the UK with close links to vocational and applied education.

Issues of education and accreditation

The 1960s and 1970s were to see the expansion of Australia’s tertiary education, and the long-term impact and confluence of educational influences of the CCNY, the OWI librarians and visitors such as McColvin began to emerge. In the 1960s “the library workforce consisted of clerical level staff, trainee librarians, registration librarians, graduates without library qualification and graduate librarians” (Ennever, 1989: 167). This workforce was a reflection of a complex and divided vision for the profession. The balance, however, seemed to be tipping in favour of

a US model, with the first school of librarianship based on the ‘American model’ established at the University of New South Wales in 1960. At this time official LAA policy for LIS education—led as it was by many of those who had been influenced by US practice in the 1930s and 1940s—was also in favour of a postgraduate qualification from a university (Library Association of Australia, 1965). The wider LIS library community, however, became concerned with this direction for Australian librarianship and a divide began to surface between those who had been exposed to US practice, either through contact locally with prominent US librarians or through travel funded by organizations such as the CCNY, and the remaining library workers.

Despite the moves earlier in the decade to establish the Australian profession as a graduate one by 1965 the LAA had pragmatically adopted a different model other than its preferred graduate policy with the acceptance of 2-year diplomas from ‘second-tier’ institutions, such as the Royal Melbourne Institutes of Technology (RMIT) and Sydney Technical College (STC) as conferring exemption from some its registration exams. Reflecting on these activities, librarian Harrison Bryan states:

Prior to the recognition, in rapid succession, of the two non-university schools (STC and RMIT) it would have been reasonable to assume that what it really had in mind was in favour of university schools on the (basically) American pattern of education for librarianship (1972: 15)

From this point onward the LAA moved officially away from the concept of an entirely ‘graduate profession’ though this continued (and continues) to be fiercely debated and these ambitions were never fully relinquished. Encel, Bullard and Cass, in their sociological review of Australian librarianship, *Librarians: a survey* (1972), believed that an influx of British librarians into Australia in the years following World War II was largely responsible for a shift away from the previous graduate policy. According to Encel, Bullard and Cass,

Outside N.S.W. [New South Wales] the majority of librarians were non-graduates. This applied in particular to the large numbers of British librarians who came to Australia with the post 1945 War wave of migrants. Instead they had a background of solid training in a well developed Public Library system. The (British) Library Association, the professional body to which most of these librarians had belonged was predominantly an association of non-graduate librarians. Many of these librarians were opposed to

the concept of a graduate profession, and their influence has been strongly felt in the affairs of the Library Association of Australia (1972: 59).

To add to the complexity already evident, in 1969 US educator Lester Asheim visited Australia. Asheim was a proponent of the three-tiered model of librarianship consisting of untrained clerks, trained library technicians and graduate librarians. Such a model presumed the existence of a postgraduate US-inspired education model situated in a university. Many prominent librarians, particularly in the State of Victoria, continued to aspire to postgraduate education despite the official change of policy and resistance among its members. They had reason to be hopeful as there emerged positive moves at the University of Melbourne towards another postgraduate school. This, however, foundered in the face of what Harrison Bryan called the “general uninterest on the part of the universities” and “the distressing apathy shown by the University of Melbourne” and its reluctance to take up the funding of a Chair of Librarianship on offer from the philanthropic Myer Foundation (1972: 15). In 1970, with the ambitions for this three-tier model still influential amongst the executive of the Victorian branch of the LAA, a Library Technicians Certificate was introduced into the technical division of the Victorian Education department. The aim of such a certificate was to supply a body of trained clerical staff. In the same year, and in the same state, the first 3-year first professional award (Associate Diploma in Librarianship) was introduced at RMIT. It was at this moment that the two different approaches to LIS education met in one state and at the one time, setting the scene for the future.

The following decades were to see continued shifts in the broader social and educational forces driving Australian LIS education, yet the tensions and structures which emerged in the first half of the 20th century remained. Educationally a pendulum tipped back and forth over time, favouring at times the ‘British model’ then the ‘American model’. Of those who travelled during the 1930s and 1940s, prominent Australian librarian and educator John Metcalfe perhaps best typified the Australian approach when, in reflecting on his travels to the UK and the US, he states, “I want to see if I can strike something of a balance between British and American Librarianship (1996: 138).

The legacy

This theme of somehow ‘balancing’ the two models becomes a recurrent one throughout the following decades in Australian LIS literature and continues to

concern Australian LIS education into the 21st century, with many of these original debates remaining unresolved (Harvey, 2001; Myburg 2003). Tension and debate surrounding appropriate entry points to the profession and the preferred model of education to meet industry aspirations for professional recognition and status continue, and the legacy of Australia’s divided vision is still evident in the complex education system and structures in place for Australian LIS. Entry to the profession continues at baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate levels, with little distinction made between the two. Post-baccalaureate qualification do not necessarily mean a Master’s qualification, as they can include a postgraduate diploma, and paraprofessional training has continued uninterrupted from the 1970s onward leading to a porous educational structure. What is evident in Australian LIS education today is the unresolved legacy of two competing professional paradigms.

Jamaica

A British colony from the 17th century, Jamaica reveals a complex combination of colonial, cultural and geographic legacies. Jamaica’s historical and cultural legacies confirm the national motto, “Out of Many, One People”. While the country proudly presents a unified ‘creolized’ face that has been developed by multiple cultural influences ranging from Spanish, British and American to African and Asian, there remain the sometimes unspoken contradictions and tensions among dominant cultures. Similarly, while the country boasts a centuries-long colonial relationship with Britain, which has shaped its political, social and educational milieu, close proximity to the United States has presented another contending paradigm which has profoundly impacted cultural, economic and educational aspirations.

Library education in Jamaica, (and indeed in the wider English-speaking Caribbean), mirrors trends in the national education system, which is rooted in British practice and which remained predominantly British into most of the 20th century. Douglas cites major influences on the development of information professionals in the Caribbean and argues that the British practice has been the most influential model for educating Jamaican and Caribbean librarians, mainly because of the strong colonial relationship with Britain (1992: 12). However, with increasing cultural and economic relationships and travel between the US and Jamaica, North American standards and practice have led to major changes over the last 30 years. According to Douglas, the British influence was greatest in the earliest years but “British

progressive activity had less influence in later years” (p.13). The challenge to find autonomy remains today.

Historical trends in Jamaica

Similarly to what occurred in Australia, education for Caribbean librarians started in the 1940s, when would-be librarians studied for and sat examinations set by the Library Association, then the examining body for library education in Britain and the British Commonwealth. Early Jamaican and Caribbean librarians attended library schools in Britain as well as the Eastern Caribbean Regional Library School (ECRL School), which was established in Trinidad in 1948 by the British Council for Colonial Development and Welfare. A few also studied on their own under the guidance of those who had attended British library schools. The ECRL School was intended to train personnel to operate public libraries which the British Council was establishing in the Caribbean region (Bennett and Ferguson, 2000). Although not initially participating in the project, a number of Jamaican students utilized this option, as although a part-time facility, it prepared persons for the Library Association’s examinations which earned different awards namely the Associateship of the Library Association (ALA) and the Fellowship of the Library Association (FLA), which was awarded on the basis of a thesis (Mohamedali 2004: 103). Unfortunately, with reduced funding, the ECRL School closed in 1962 and Jamaican library personnel sat these examinations privately. Bennett and Ferguson declare that a hiatus was created with the closure of the ECRL School and with the revision of the Library Association’s curriculum towards full-time study. Intense lobbying by the Jamaica Library Association and other library associations in the English-speaking Caribbean region resulted in the creation of a local School of Library Studies in Jamaica. The aim for these librarians was to design a “programme suited to the needs of the Caribbean” (Bennett and Ferguson, 2000).

Mohamedali argues that when this independent training institution was established in 1971, it was “modelled largely on British concepts and practices because the University of the West Indies in which it was established was derived from a British institution and because the planners were oriented to this system” (p.103). The University of the West Indies (UWI), which started in 1948 as a College of the University of London, gained university status as the University of the West Indies in 1962 when Jamaica became independent. Modelling the British tradition, the newly developed library school, the Department of Library Studies, began with an undergraduate

3-year degree, rather than the North American graduate model.

At the time of its introduction, an undergraduate degree “was considered to be more suited to the existing situation in the Caribbean where this was the first attempt to provide professional education in the discipline at the local level and the majority of prospective students from the region had only high school certification” (Quality Assurance Self-Study Report, 2012: 10).

It was felt at the time that such a programme was suitable to provide graduates who are able to manage libraries and other information units to meet needs expressed by organizations in the public sector. Interestingly it seems that this apparently single British orientation to library education was seen as a means of building a cohesive regional library force, as Mohamedali states it “provided for the establishment of a sound, stable network of library systems across the region” (p.103). In 1973, also based on the British tradition, a Postgraduate Diploma was introduced for persons with a non-library university degree. Both programmes included mandatory internship components.

While the UK model was seen as the more suitable for developing Caribbean librarians, US influence was inescapable. Although the new programme was shaped on the British model, the initial grant from UNESCO for developing the school provided for two UNESCO experts who would fill posts of Professor and Senior Lecturer. One came from Columbia University in New York and the other from Loughborough University of Technology School of Librarianship in Britain. These experts would bring different approaches to bear on the direction of the programme. In addition, since the library school was situated in an academic research institution, the programme was not entirely professional, but combined librarianship and academic subjects to meet the requirements of the UWI.

Further, there were a few Jamaican professionals who received education and training from US universities during those early years. It was felt, however, that their impact was insignificant and that there were “obvious incompatibilities between what was learned and the needs of the region” (Mohamedali, 2004: 103). Many of these sentiments would change over time with demands for curriculum revisions and for international accreditation. The increasing influx of US trained faculty via the Organisation of American States (OAS) and Fulbright funding would see changes towards the inclusion of alternative approaches and a US-based model of education. Douglas contends that

the “information science” approaches and the “facilitator” aspects were derived from North American influences (p.13).

In addition, when the UWI decided to change from the traditional academic year system to the US semester-based system in 1988, major reviews of the curriculum were initiated by the Department, which enabled greater specialization at the upper and graduate levels (Bennett and Ferguson, 2000). Given the growth of information technology, the Department introduced new courses to reflect the trends. Mohamedali states that American practices in the areas of automation and audiovisual work have influenced practice in the Caribbean (p.103).

Curriculum and programme revisions

Major revisions were brought to bear on the curriculum from the changing influences. In 1987, adopting a US approach, the Department introduced the Master in Library Studies (MLS) which was intended to upgrade the Postgraduate Diploma. The programme now included a research component. Eleven years later, in keeping with the British tradition, honours graduates of the undergraduate Bachelor’s degree were able to enrol in the Master of Arts in Library and Information Studies (MALIS), an advanced degree with a research component.

Also reflecting changes in library education in North America, the Department’s name was changed in 1996 from the Department of Library Studies to the Department of Library and Information Studies. The introduction of courses in records management, information literacy, information technology and information resources management, to name a few, underscored the need for the name change. Later a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) programme was also introduced, reflecting the British educational tradition. Despite the pull between American and British influences, balance is somehow maintained by a system of external examiners in which LIS professors from both jurisdictions monitor standards in the two Masters programmes.

In 2011, in another major curriculum review process, extensive revisions were introduced in all programmes, based primarily on the evolving trends in LIS education globally and particularly in North America. Cognizant of the demands of employers, and increasing competition in the library and information science landscape, the Department embarked on a repositioning of the Department to emphasize the information aspect of Library and Information Studies (Kerr, 2012). A new undergraduate major in Information Management and Technology was

proposed, reflecting current trends. The process also included a benchmarking exercise of courses against the American Library Association (ALA) Core Competencies for Librarianship. New courses developed include digital libraries, advanced metadata and resources discovery, information literacy for graduate students as well as digital curation and law librarianship.

Currently there are demands from internal and external stakeholders to benchmark the education of librarians in Jamaica and the English-speaking Caribbean against US and North American standards. Yet there is a challenge to maintain the British model of an undergraduate degree parallel to two Masters Programmes. The undergraduate programme continues to be essential to the Department because it still attracts the highest number of students, the majority of whom do not have the required first degree for entering graduate programmes. There are demands for increased specializations and programmes in line with North American traditions.

Issues of education and accreditation

Until recently, the Royal Charter status of the University of the West Indies negated the need for accreditation of its programmes. However, influences relating to globalization and the emergence of competition from offshore institutions and the proliferation of online degree programmes emphasize the need for institutional as well as programme accreditation. Change matters coalesce around benchmarking the programmes of the Department, particularly against North American standards, particularly in light of geographical proximity and expectations of job opportunities in the USA and Canada. Recognizing the challenges associated with accreditation by the American Library Association outside of its territories, the way forward for the Department will be to explore accreditation from both sides of the Atlantic and maybe this will result in the best of both worlds.

The greater aim, however, is to develop programmes which reflect the mission of the Department to

provide the highest standard of teaching and research to produce library and information professionals equipped to face the challenges of the dynamic information environment capable of managing the information needs of the Caribbean for the twenty-first century and beyond. (2012: 3)

Nigeria

This section will discuss the influence of the Anglo-American systems of library education on library

pedagogy and practices in Nigeria, uncovering many similar themes and influences to those evident in Australia and Jamaica. Like in many other Commonwealth countries, Nigerian LIS education and its development make apparent to the observer the broader socio-political influences at work in the country. The trends which emerge in post-war library education in Nigeria mirror the previously explored themes emerging in Australia and Jamaica of apprenticeship versus professional education, examination versus accreditation, and professional entry and undergraduate versus postgraduate education models for the discipline discussed elsewhere. As will be discussed, the story of library education in Nigeria serves to illustrate many of those tensions discussed previously.

Historical trends in Nigeria

Nigeria became a British colony in 1861 and under British rule the country was divided into two administrative protectorates: the Southern and Northern protectorates. However in 1914, the two protectorates were administratively joined. In 1960 Nigeria gained full independence and was politically administered under a federal system of government with three regions: the Northern region, South region, and Eastern region. Today Nigeria is divided into 36 states and a Federal Capital Territory.

During the post-World War II period, similarly to what occurred in Australia, the many British librarians in Nigeria favoured a part-time apprenticeship model for library education, reflecting their own experience, and did not see a great need for a full-time library school (Bramley, 1975: 138). The mode of library training in the country up until 1960, therefore, was largely conducted through short courses organized for the staff of local reading rooms and the Native Authority libraries. In some instance library staff were sponsored for training to go to the United Kingdom by the British Council (Hood, 1962). The short courses and sponsored training enabled participants to sit the British Library Association (LA) examinations. In the years immediately after World War II the influence and resources of the United Kingdom were depleted and the influence of British practice lessened. Newer influences began to be felt, including that of philanthropic organizations such as the Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY) and the United States Government as they began to take a much more active role in this region.

The first moves towards the full-time professional model for LIS education arose out of recommendations for the establishment of a system of professional library schools emerging from a seminar organized in

1953 by UNESCO on the future of public library service provision in the region. One of the outcomes of recommendations made at the UNESCO seminar was that the Carnegie Corporation of New York commissioned a study to assess the library needs of West Africa. Conducted by Harold Lancour, Dean of the University of Illinois Library School, the report recommended the establishment of a library training institute at University College, Ibadan, in southern Nigeria. A grant of US\$88,000 was provided by the CCNY to establish this new school, which commenced operation in 1959. Bramley claims Lancour's report "presaged the end of British influence on library education in West Africa" (1975: 140). While the school initially offered training leading to the certificate of Associate-ship of the British Library Association (ALA) and Fellowship of Library Association (FLA), by 1963 it had changed to the American model of graduate library training (Aina, 2007; Nweke, 1995).

Subsequent to the establishment of the first library school in southern Nigeria; the northern Nigeria regional government, under the auspices of the Special Commonwealth African Assistance Plan, undertook a survey of the library needs of northern Nigeria in 1963. This report was conducted by F.A. Sharr, State Librarian of Western Australia from 1953 to 1976 and a librarian trained in the British tradition. The survey recommended the establishment of a library school in northern Nigeria to train librarians at diploma and bachelor's degree levels and in 1967 the second library school was opened in Nigeria based on British practice.

Issues of education and accreditation

The establishment of the second library school in Nigeria marks the beginning of new controversies and heated debates over the appropriateness of undergraduate versus graduate qualification as an entry point into the profession. While the Ibadan library school situated in southern Nigeria was premised on training librarians at graduate level, the Zaria library school in northern Nigeria was founded on training librarians at diploma and bachelor's degree levels. Those who favoured graduate level qualification as an entry point into the profession argued that the country needed high level leaders who would provide the direction for library development in Nigeria after independence, and that only the holders of a first degree in an academic subject should be considered for admission to library schools. Those working in the region, including leading British librarians, opposed graduate level library qualification on the basis of Nigerian educational and developmental realities in the 1960s. Such

opposition was based on a view that a graduate school and librarians with postgraduate qualifications had very little to offer a Nigerian quest for rapid development, and argued that what Nigeria needed was library professionals at undergraduate and diploma levels who could manage existing libraries (Onadiran, 1985). The resultant debate over appropriate professional qualifications and the subsequent addition of technician level qualifications to the Zaria programme “added another confusion in the philosophy and curriculum of education and training of library professionals in the country” (Mohammed, 2008).

From these arguments it can be seen that the conflicting trends in library education in Nigeria are in many ways a mirror of those influences and conflicts discussed previously in the Australian context and show the influences of Britain and the US in shaping the local professional model for education. Controversies surrounding library education in Nigeria were explicated by Gerald Bramley in his book *World Trends in Library Education* (1975). The author has identified a number of contradictory trends and divergent thinking in the development of library education in English-speaking countries of West Africa, including Nigeria. In the context of countries such as Nigeria, however, the struggle between old and new for cultural and strategic influence was in many ways more overt than in Commonwealth countries such as Australia and New Zealand. According to Bramley, by 1975 the “struggle between the old and new colonists had not been resolved in any clear cut way” and was the result of conscious attempts by new and old colonial powers to “extend their authority in Africa” (Bramley, 1975: 137). The trends which emerge in post-war library education illustrate once again the recurring themes of apprenticeship versus professional, examination versus accreditation and undergraduate versus postgraduate education models for the discipline discussed elsewhere. In addition, Bramley identifies a number of unique concerns in the development of education in this region. These include debate around the perceived purpose of Nigerian LIS education – if its purpose was to educate leaders and academics, or the emerging workers needed to expand and sustain the nation’s public libraries. Tension also emerged around the issue of the need for independent national LIS schools in preference to a regional school of librarianship. As will be discussed, the story of library education in Nigeria serves to illustrate many of these tensions.

However, controversies still exist as to who is a professional librarian in Nigeria. For instance

The NLA (Nigerian Library Association) ... accepted the recommendation made by the Education Committee that holders of HND (Higher National Diploma) in Library Science are registrable as professional librarians. This decision was overturned by the Librarians Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN). The LRCN observed that the Polytechnic Library Science education programmes lack subject’s specialization and that the courses offered are not enough. A librarian without any subject background, cannot offer specialized information service to any given specific subject specialist group (Chukwuma-Nwosu, 2009: 22).

Presently there are over 50 institutions that offer library training in Nigeria at universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education. Courses offered include Certificates in Librarianship, National Diploma; Higher National Diploma in Library Science; Bachelor’s Degree, Master’s and Doctorate degree (Saleh, 2012). Today in Nigeria the body responsible for registering librarians to practice as professionals is the Librarians Registration Council. The body was established by Decree 12 of 1995. It is conferred with the responsibility of determining who is a Librarian, and to determine the standards of knowledge and skills for the library profession in Nigeria. Accreditation of library programs in Nigeria is, however, done by many government agencies, depending on whether the program is run in a university, polytechnic, or college of education. Library courses offered in universities are accredited by the National Universities Commission. Library courses offered in polytechnics are accredited by the Nigerian National Board for Technical Education, while library courses offered in colleges of education are accredited by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (Nigeria. Federal Republic, 1995; Nigeria. National Universities Commission, 1995).

The legacy

The legacy of the Anglo-American library system of education is apparent in the courses that are offered in Nigerian library schools and in the mode of library practices in the country. The core courses of Nigerian library schools reflect Anglo-American library philosophies that are based on transfer of explicit knowledge. The core courses are: cataloguing and classification, reference and bibliography, collection development, library administration, and automation (Aguolu 1985; Ajidahun, 2007; Saleh, 2012).

Also inspired by the Anglo-American mode of providing library services via information and communication technology (ICT), many librarians in Nigeria

are strongly advocating for ICT and digitization to be the cornerstone for Nigerian library training and practices (Saleh, 2012; Ozioko and Nwabueze, 2010; Nzotta, 1984; Salman and Olanrewaju, 2005). It should be observed that while the teaching of ICT in library schools in Nigeria has the potential of producing manpower for the profession that is proficient in modern technologies, it should however be treated with caution within the economic, social, technological, educational, and cultural realities of the country.

The future

To move forward in the provision of effective library services in Nigeria, library schools in the country require a new paradigm of librarianship. This new paradigm should be rooted in the sociology of knowledge and should take into account the uniqueness of Nigeria in respect to the following: societal ontology, societal epistemology, patterns of knowledge flow among communities in Nigeria, and how knowledge is constructed within each segments of the Nigerian polity. This can be achieved through curriculum restructuring and will require Nigerian library schools to include as part of their core curricula courses on Oral and Indigenous Knowledge Transfer. This recommendation is premised on the fact that Nigeria is predominantly an oral society with an estimated 50 million adults who cannot read or write (UNESCO, 2011; Olden, 1999). The recommendation is also consistent with the Nigerian National Policy on Education and UNESCO which states that “the goals of education in Nigeria shall be to develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local environments” (Edegbó, 2011; UNESCO, 1976: 36). Therefore library curricula that are based on Anglo-American traditions will not effectively serve the needs of the majority of Nigerians who cannot read and write. By not adequately servicing the non-literate population in Nigeria, library professionals negate the principles of equity of service which underpin the profession.

Afolabi has observed that when the departments of library and information science were established in Nigeria in the early 1960s, their aim was “to produce librarians for libraries” in accordance with the British and American library philosophies (Afolabi, 1994). However, today library schools in Nigeria should aim to produce librarians that will serve the developmental needs of every citizen wherever and whenever. Roberts’ observation is as relevant in Nigeria as it was many years ago “To educate librarians to think only in terms of a place called the library as we currently

know that institute is to do them a disservice and probably doom them to ineffectuality” (1979: 1879).

Pakistan

Pakistan came into being as an independent nation in 1947. Before 1947, Pakistan was part of United India which was ruled by the British for almost two centuries. During this rule various administrative norms and institutional structures developed in the Indian Subcontinent that reflected the British way of governance. There was, however, a finer and more subtle permeation of British cultural practices into Indian culture, and educational practices were no exception. Many high schools and convents were established primarily in the big cities of United India. These schools were in addition to a large number of religious schools already operating. These religious schools were normally part of mosques and students were educated both in religion and contemporary sciences. Religious education included training in morphology, syntax, principles of jurisprudence, theology and other traditional sciences, including logic, philosophy, astronomy, arithmetic (Zaman, 1999) leading towards a well-seated understanding of religion as informed by the education in contemporary sciences.

After independence, the inherited educational structure as well as the needs dynamics of a newly born nation shaped the education system as a whole. The schools that were established during British rule continued to conduct education using the English language as the medium of instruction while the new schools established by the government of Pakistan started to use Urdu (the national language of Pakistan) as the medium of instruction. In this way a dual education system developed representing two parallel streams of education, one looking to a colonial past and another to an independent future.

This duality of systems penetrated the administrative structure also. For instance, the official language for administrative documentation is English, whereas the national language is Urdu. As a result anyone trying to get a job as a civil servant should have a good command of the English language and the schools set up either during the British rule or afterwards but following the same model do a good job in preparing students to compete for these positions. However, students trained in the schools where Urdu is the medium of instruction usually have to exert extra effort to compete for opportunities in a system reminiscent of the British tradition.

Colleges and universities represent also a very novel educational environment. Due to widespread development of educational institutions in the private

sector and especially for imparting business education, there have been tremendous inflows of the American way of education – including semester system, credit hours, grade point averages (instead of first second or third divisions or pass, fails, distinctions, etc.). These influences, which were limited primarily to private business educational institutions, started to permeate and influence educational institutions at large, and LIS institutions were no exception to this. It can be argued that LIS education and profession in Pakistan represent a convergence of the British and American influences, although the British influence can be identified more prominently with the way in which the school system prepares a student for higher education. That is, the British influence is acting more as a mediating factor rather than a direct influence on the design of LIS education and development of professional practice in Pakistan. On the other hand, American influence in terms of LIS education (its content and underlying pedagogy) and in a felt need among LIS circles in Pakistan to have some sort of national accrediting body (Mahmood, 2003) can be identified. It is important to note that LIS education in Pakistan presents a unique situation in that some of the educational credentials awarded depict a very British influence. For example, postgraduate diploma, certificate level of education, and MPhil – all of these educational awards are customary in the British educational tradition but almost foreign to America's. Universities imparting LIS education have the semester system, requirements for students to have apprenticeship (Warraich, 2008), the option to write a thesis, availability of MPhil leading to PhD, and different certificates and postgraduate diploma programs. These practices clearly represent a convergence of two significant traditions – one British and the other derived from the United States.

A Commonwealth of uncertainty

This exploration of LIS education in Australia, Jamaica, Nigeria and Pakistan provides a vignette of what Bramley (1975) called “new” and “old” colonialism and its impact on local practice, and provides insights into how professions have been shaped internationally. As has been shown by these case studies, the tensions running through LIS education are not unique and resonate across communities and continents with recurring debates and themes evident from country to country. The complex legacy of competing influences in countries such as Nigeria, Australia, Pakistan and Jamaica continue to engage these local communities as they attempt to reconcile their professional traditions with the new, emerging and future

needs of their communities. LIS education has been accused of being “a harp of the winds responding to every slight breeze” (Harper, in Mulvaney 1989:12) but if it is to survive and to meet both the many challenges confronting it in the 21st century and engage and meet the needs of local communities then it is essential we recognize and reconcile this legacy.

Notes

1. The Commonwealth of Nations, formerly known as the British Commonwealth, is an association of 54 sovereign states, historically British colonies. The Commonwealth was first officially formed in 1931 when the Statute of Westminster gave legal recognition to the independence of the British dominions.
2. A territory constituting a self-governing commonwealth and being one of a number of such territories united in a community of nations.
3. At the Melbourne Public Library (now the State Library of Victoria), Australia for example in 1910 the issue of the appropriateness of the US Dewey Decimal System for the research library led to such acrimonious debate that it was raised in State Parliament and led to long-term divisions amongst the staff. This debate came to be known as the “disaffection at the library”.
4. Lionel McColvin was Secretary of the Library Association and undertook a three-month visit to Australia.
5. For further discussion of these events see Jones, D. (2005). Great minds: Metcalfe, McClain and Public libraries in Australia. *Australian Library Journal* 54(4), 386-412.

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