Bibliography on social justice: sources on the topic in Library and Information Science

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to compile a selective bibliography on social justice in Library Science and Information Science from 1960 to 2020. To that end, the study conducts bibliographic, descriptive, and qualitative-quantitative research using the classification concepts proposed by Dias and Pires (2005) to locate documents in national and international databases on social justice in Library Science and Information Science. After refining the data, the results were presented in a bibliography, in the form of a selective list of documents, with signal presentation, international coverage, specialized subject, retrospective focus, alphabetical and systematic arrangement, divided into three categories: education for social justice, libraries for social justice, and librarian practice aimed at social justice.

Keywords: bibliography; social justice; scientific production; library and information science.
INTRODUCTION

The lack of equitable information availability for different social and racial groups influences decision-making processes, behavior, and access to rights, goods, and services, affecting these individuals’ well-being and quality of life.

In order to meet informational needs equitably, it is necessary to adopt conduct based on social and informational justice, both fields of study within LIS\(^1\). Social justice “fornece um mecanismo para a educação em BCI para examinar e abordar a diversidade em um sentido amplo, garantindo a inclusão de todos os tipos de grupos diversamente rotulados” (Bonicci et al., 2012, p. 125)\(^2\). Moreover, fighting for social justice goes beyond seeking equal opportunities for all but strives to fully develop structures and systems that enable more just and less restrictive actions. Thus, it enables individuals not only to “aprender uns com os outros e serem capazes de criar novos conhecimentos, mas também compartilhar esses conhecimentos para o benefício da humanidade” (Britz; Ponelis, 2012, p. 472)\(^3\).

This paper will compile a selective bibliography on social justice within the Library Science and Information Science (LSIS) field from 1960 to 2020, based on Dias and Pires’ (2005) concepts for classifying bibliographies\(^5\). The primary purpose is to present a list of sources and research approaches on social justice in LSIS.

A bibliographic, descriptive, and qualitative-quantitative study was conducted to achieve this goal. Relevant documents were retrieved surveying the keywords/entries “social justice,” “bibliography AND social justice,” and “Information AND social justice” in Portuguese, Spanish, and English. The survey was performed in national and international databases that address information studies, namely: Journal Storage (JSTOR), Web of Science (WoS), Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts (LISTA), and Periódicos em Ciência da Informação database (BRAPCI). The survey selected the databases based on their relevance to the LSIS field, both nationally and internationally. The search term “bibliography” was included to find possible existing bibliographies on the subject. We conducted searches in the simple search fields using the terms mentioned above and their equivalents in the main languages of the databases. After collecting and analyzing the data, a selective bibliography on social justice was compiled and presented as Appendix 1.

FROM EPISTEMIC (IN)JUSTICE TO SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE BIBLIOGRAPHY

“Epistemic injustice leverages mental phenomena to act, distort, and limit ‘o conhecimento que os indivíduos têm, tanto da realidade político-social circundante quanto de si próprios’ (Dalaqua, 2020, p. 214)\(^6\). Drawing on Miranda Fricker’s insights, Castro (2020) contends that this form of injustice has repercussions that extend beyond the individual who is victimized, affecting both the person and the broader practice or epistemic system as a whole.

In her epistemic injustice theory, philosopher Miranda Fricker established that epistemic injustice involves “mal causado a alguém em sua capacidade enquanto um sujeito conhecedor e, assim, em uma capacidade essencial para o valor humano” (Fricker, 2007, p. 5, tradução nossa)\(^7\). Such harm deepens with the occurrence of injustices with structurally marginalized groups who are “injustificados em sua capacidade de conhecedores” (Ottinger, 2017, p. 42)\(^8\). It is, therefore, an exclusion that hinders the ability of individuals or groups to actively participate in the construction, dissemination, and preservation of knowledge in society (Fricker, 2007; Gabriel; Santos, 2020; Silva; Garcez; Silva, 2022).
When a person is not recognized as capable of providing information, they do not feel confident in obtaining and transmitting knowledge, and this form of injustice is fundamentally epistemic since “we offer testimony by making assertions; assertions are understood as expressing knowledge; and the victim of epistemic injustice is not recognized as able to express (and perhaps possess) knowledge.” (Hookway, 2010, P. 153).

Miranda Fricker (2007) discusses the duality of epistemic injustice, which is linked to testimonial and hermeneutical injustice. Testimonial injustice “[...] é causada pelo preconceito na economia da credibilidade” (Fricker, 2007, p. 1, tradução nossa) when a lack of reliability in what the speaker declares leads to a biased judgment by the listener. Hermeneutical injustice, on the other hand, “[...] é causada por preconceitos estruturais na economia dos recursos hermenêuticos coletivos” (Fricker, 2007, p. 1, tradução nossa), which occurs prior to communicative activities between subjects since the hermeneutically marginalized subject is at a disadvantage because they do not have the tools to give meaning to their social experience (Fricker, 2013).

In addition to the concepts presented above, Patin et al. (2021, p. 1308) identify two more epistemic injustices that occur in our field, namely: curricular injustice, which “[...] acontece quando os recursos físicos não estão disponíveis para ajudar a sustentar o crescimento epistêmico”; and participatory injustice, related to the “the exclusion of one’s participation in their own epistemological development” (Patin et al., 2021, p. 1308).

The work of information professionals (archivists, librarians, digital preservationists, information scientists) has “consequências reais para as pessoas marginalizadas porque quem é lembrado e como eles são lembrados dita quem recebe a violência perpetrada contra eles” (Jules, 2016, p. 1).

A history of using civility, neutrality, and silence as tools for marginalization characterizes the library and information sciences fields. These instruments of power and control permeate the field in spheres such as: a) undergraduate courses that render invisible students and teachers belonging to marginalized groups and their demands for fairer and more representative curricula; b) faculty with a lack of teachers from different ethnic-racial backgrounds other than white; c) graduate programs whose admission control is coupled to processes of social and racial exclusion, among others problems. In this sense, the university and the field incorporate inequalities and exclusions of relations, epistemes, and practices in ways that are both structural and structuring. (Gibson, 2019; Silva; Silva, 2022).

Professional neutrality has historically been seen as a value in the profession and in libraries that is understood as being impartial and not supporting or favoring any side in conflict, disagreement, or war. The values of professional neutrality are linked to the defense of white racial supremacy and therefore contribute to depriving marginalized communities of their rights (Chiu; Ettarh; Ferretti, 2021).

Thus, libraries and information units, in addition to being white spaces (Honma, 2021), also become places of epistemicide. When referring to epistemicide or knowledge assassination, we understand that “o privilégio epistemológico que a ciência moderna concede a si mesma é [... ] o resultado da destruição de todos os conhecimentos alternativos que poderiam eventualmente questionar tal privilégio” (Santos, 2016, p. 152-153). To reverse this situation, we understand that social justice, equity in the representativeness of collections, services, and offering of products for marginalized communities, and the democratic values of the librarian profession are of the utmost importance. According to Dadlani and Todd (2015, p. 333), it is the library’s duty, as an information unit, to embody the principles of social justice, since libraries are a collective construction of all the individuals, organizations, or systems to which they belong. Mathiesen (2015) advocates the same perspective and argues that the main point is not whether information professionals can be neutral, but whether their assumed neutrality embraces the values of social justice.
He emphasizes that these values are only achieved when “os profissionais da informação fornecem o mesmo nível de serviço a pessoas cujas crenças discordam violentamente e àquelas com quem concordam” (Mathiesen, 2015, p. 5-6).

Social justice and human freedom in the global flow of knowledge should not be based and presented considering only one nation or dominant group but rather on the epistemic plurality derived from various groups scattered around the globe (Britz; Ponelis, 2012). The inclusion of this plurality will allow for the epistemic reparation of historically silenced, erased, or excluded knowledge from library collections while proposing new perspectives to read and perceive the world through different theoretical lenses. One way to achieve this reparation is by disseminating information sources that explore these issues. For that, we opt for bibliographies precisely because one of their functions is to retrieve necessary information for the production of knowledge and composition of scientific, technical, or cultural works (Dias; Pires, 2005), thus, working against epistemicide and supporting the dissemination of the bibliography related to social justice, which is dedicated to reflecting the thinking about and by marginalized groups in societies, as we will see next.

THE INSURGENCY OF A BIBLIOGRAPHY ON SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE LIBRARIAN-INFORMATIONAL FIELD: RESULTS

A bibliography refers to “um produto, uma atividade, um campo disciplinar” (Lara, 2018, p. 128). In our research, we adopted the perspective of a product, through which we can “inventariar a produção intelectual humana, produção essa expressa em diferentes livros e manuscritos espalhados por diferentes bibliotecas” (Araújo, 2014, p. 100). Different authors present their views on the typologies and classifications of bibliographies.

Dias and Pires (2005, p. 70) consider that bibliography is a “lista completa ou seletiva de documentos sobre um assunto determinado” that can be classified according to the following typologies: nature of the material, geographic scope, subject, arrangement, period, presentation of information, and document handling. Based on these typologies, we organized a bibliography on social justice in Library and Information Science (LIS): it consists of a selective list of documents with a sign presentation, international scope, specialized subject, retrospective temporality, and alphabetical and systematic arrangement, divided into three categories, as described below.

After conducting searches in the selected databases, we retrieved 342 documents, which, after refinement and removal of duplicates, resulted in 180 materials. For a systematic arrangement of the bibliography, we used three categories to present some approaches to social justice studies in the field, namely: a) education for social justice: 14 documents; b) libraries for social justice: 41 documents; and c) librarian action for social justice: 35 documents.

The Education for Social Justice category encompasses different theoretical-pedagogical approaches to social justice studies in LIS, covering aspects such as its integration into the curriculum of courses and teaching-learning actions within the professional practice, such as the creation of Information Literacy programs with a focus on social justice. The second category, Libraries for Social Justice, focuses on the role and actions of different types of libraries, particularly public libraries, in their territories and communities. In this latter case, we addressed initiatives aimed at vulnerable groups and informational services that meet the specific needs of their communities. The last delimited category, Librarian Action for Social Justice, centers on the agenda and role of the librarian, with a focus on social justice, their needs, and practices resulting from changes in attitudes and knowledge acquired on the subject, struggles, and advocacy.
The context of this category involves professional practice and social responsibility, the librarian's actions to understand their role in society, and the understanding of the non-neutrality of the profession.

The Education for Social Justice category has 14 documents. The research approach for these documents involved topics such as higher education curricula and integration of diversity (Alajmí; Alshammari, 2020), Social Justice as a tool for transforming the curriculum, librarian education, and culture in LIS (Cooke; Sweeney; Noble, 2016), Social Justice, diversity, and LIS curriculum (Kumasi; Manlove, 2015), Indigenous ecology in LIS education (Roy, 2015), Information Literacy program, social justice, and student agency (Gregory; Higgins, 2017), race, ethnicity, and diversity in information classification and organization (Adler; Harper, 2018), information literacy (Pegues, 2018), among other topics.

In the category of Libraries for social justice, the research returned 41 results. The research approaches were related to themes such as social justice, public libraries, and informational needs of the LGBTQIA+ population (Vincent, 2015), public library systems, services, and materials for the LGBTQIA+ population through the analysis of intersectionality theory (Hicks; Kerrigan, 2020), the evaluation of characters and settings reflecting LGBT identities in fiction on Coutts ‘OASIS and Smashwords library acquisition platforms (Sandy; Brendler; Kohn, 2017), public libraries and the experiences of Hawaiian people in illustrated children's books (Zettervall, 2012), recreational reading, literacy, libraries and social justice (Dewan, 2016), informational justice, libraries and informational services (Mathiesen, 2015), decolonization of collection development in libraries (Blume; Roylance, 2020), public libraries and support for businesses in rural communities (Mehra; Bishop; Partee, 2017), the relationship between library services and vulnerable groups (Tello, 2008), racism and white culture in academic libraries within public space, staff, and reference service provision (Brook; Ellenwood; Lazzaro, 2015), among others.

Lastly, in the category of Librarian performance for social justice, 35 documents were found. Some of the topics addressed were the deracialization of classification schemes in librarian performance (Furner, 2007), recruitment and retention strategies of individuals from underrepresented groups in the librarian profession (Harper, 2020), critical cataloging focused on social justice (Watson, 2020), librarians with disabilities, barriers, and confronting stereotypes in the workplace (Oud, 2019), promotion of sexual minority equality through community action and raising social awareness (Mehra; Braquet, 2007), social justice agenda, and racial and ethnic diversity in the academic libraries of the future (Morales; Knowles; Bourg, 2014), practical and generalizable skills of reference librarians for promotion of civic engagement and social justice (Bruunvand, 2020), political neutrality of librarian professionals (Cheshire; Stout, 2020), prisonal librarianship and the paradigm of intellectual freedom and social justice (Šimunić; Tanacković; Badurina, 2016), teacher perceptions about information literacy education (Dawes, 2019), among others.

CONCLUSION

This study sought to organize a selective bibliography on social justice in Library and Information Science from 1960 to 2020. To that end, we surveyed documents in national and international databases using defined criteria to find documents related to the topic. The search retrieved 342 documents, and after refinement and removing duplicates, we selected 180 entries organized as a bibliography.

Regarding the classification of bibliographies, we adopted the typologies of Dias and Pires (2005). We organized the results in a bibliography of a selective list of documents with signage presentation, international scope, specialized subject, retrospective arrangement, alphabetical, and also systematic, due to the three categories adopted in the investigation for better describing some approaches of studies on social justice in the field: a) education for social justice: 14 documents,
b) libraries for social justice: 41 documents, and c) librarian initiatives for social justice: 35 documents. In conclusion, we highlight that, as shown in the results and bibliography, there is a breadth of research on social justice in the library information field. We reiterate that the bibliographies in this context may contribute to knowledge production and dissemination of studies on social justice, fight instances of epistemicide, and support the dissemination of knowledge about and produced by marginalized social groups.

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APPENDIX 1 – Table with the bibliography on social justice by categories

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<td>CHERISH, Kelsey; STOUT, Jennifer. The moral arc of the library: what are our duties and limitations after 45? JD-01-2020-0002.</td>
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We appreciate the support of the Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior - Brasil (CAPES) - Financing Code 001 for granting research scholarships to the authors.
1. **Library and Information Science**

2. Translation: “provides a mechanism for those studying LIS to examine and address diversity more broadly, ensuring the inclusion of all diversely labeled groups” (Bonici et al., 2012, p. 125, editorial translation).

3. Translation: “learn from each other and be able to create new knowledge but also to share that knowledge for the benefit of humanity” (Britz; Ponelis, 2012, p. 472, editorial translation).

4. Translation: “fair treatment of people and communities as sources and also subjects of information” (Mathiesen, 2015, p. 18, editorial translation).

5. Dias and Pires (2005, p. 70) categorize bibliographies based on their typologies and features. They establish 07 typologies, each with their respective characteristics: nature of the material (primary, secondary, exhaustive, or selective); geographic scope (national, international, or regional); subject matter (general or specialized); arrangement (systematic, chronological, or alphabetical); time period (retrospective, current, or periodic); information presentation (signage, analytical, or critical); and document handling (primary or secondary).

6. Translation: “the knowledge that individuals have, both of the surrounding political and social reality and of themselves” (Dalaqua, 2020, p. 214, editorial translation).

7. Original: “[...] any epistemic injustice wrongs someone in their capacity as a subject of knowledge, and thus in a capacity essential to human value” (Fricker, 2007, p. 5).

8. Translation: “wronged in their capacity as knowers” (Ottinger, 2017, p. 42, editorial translation).

9. Translation: “we offer testimony by making assertions; assertions are understood as expressing knowledge; and the victim of epistemic injustice is not recognized as able to express (and perhaps possess) knowledge.” (Hookway, 2010, p. 153, editorial translation).

10. Original: “[...] is caused by prejudice in the economy of credibility” (Fricker, 2007, p. 1).


12. Translation: “[...] happens when physical resources are not available to help support epistemic growth.” (Patin et al., 2021, p. 1308, editorial translation).

13. Translation: “the exclusion of one’s participation in their own epistemological development” (Patin et al., 2021, p. 1308, editorial translation).

14. Translation: “have real consequences for marginalized people because who is remembered and how they’re remembered dictates who gets violence perpetrated against them.” (Jules, 2016, p. 1, editorial translation).

15. Translation: “the epistemological privilege that modern science grants to itself is [...] the result of the destruction of all alternative knowledges that could eventually question such privilege” (Santos, 2016, p. 152-153, editorial translation).

16. Translation: “information professionals provide the same level of service to a person whose beliefs they violently disagree with as to those with whom they agree.” (Mathiesen, 2015, p. 5-6, editorial translation).

17. Translation: “a product, an activity, a disciplinary field” (Lara, 2018, p. 128, editorial translation).

18. Translation: “inventory human intellectual production, a production expressed in different books and manuscripts across various libraries” (Araújo, 2014, p. 100, editorial translation).

19. Translation: “complete or selective list of documents related to a specific subject” (Dias; Pires, 2005, p. 70, editorial translation).