Examining Colonial Photographic Archives: What do the current practices of colonial photographic archives tell us about how archival practices need to develop as archives begin to digitalise?

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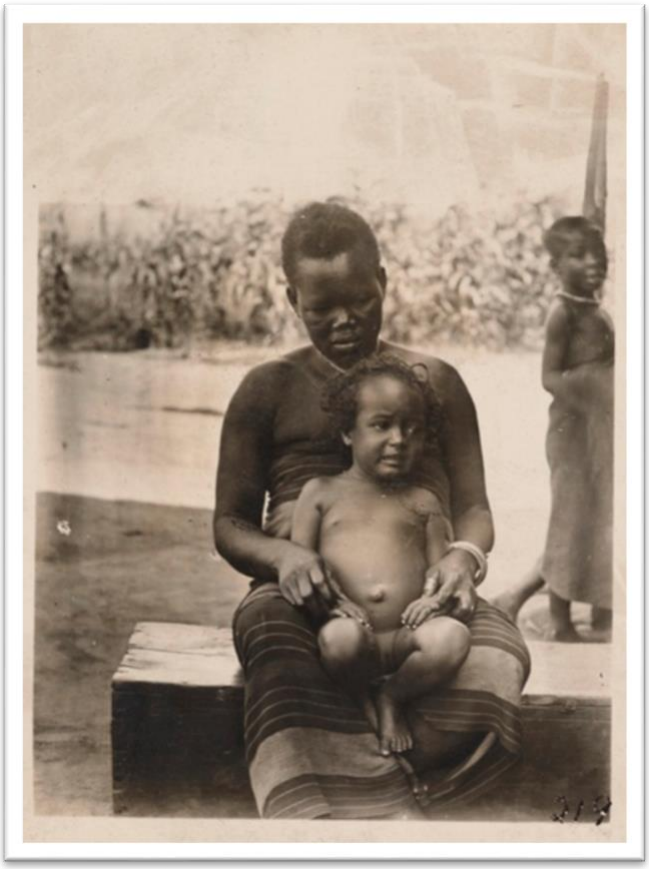

EXAMINING COLONIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVES

WHAT DO THE CURRENT PRACTICES OF COLONIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVES TELL US ABOUT HOW ARCHIVAL PRACTICES NEED TO DEVELOP AS ARCHIVES BEGIN TO DIGITALISE?

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines colonial photographic archives and emphasises the necessity of an ethical and comprehensive approach, particularly during their transition to digital formats.

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[1] Cover Page image: Alice S. Harris. *Half-cast[e] child of Belgian trader, Kasai* Photograph. *Antislavery Usable Past*. (1911-1912)

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INTRODUCTION

As colonial archives increasingly digitalise their collections, questions about their contents, descriptions, and context surface. Following the research question of 'what do the current practices of colonial photographic archives tell us about how archival practices need to develop as archives begin to digitalise?', this thesis will explore colonial photography's archival processes and how digitalisation impacts them. Using three archives as case studies, it first will examine the creation and archiving of colonial photographs, surveying their colonial context and language and how archivists influence this. All the archives focus on African colonial photography, and the images used are dated between 1880 and 1930. Secondly, an analysis of the archival contexts of colonial photographs will be done, studying the purpose and intent of archives, the archival methods, and how colonial contexts are presented to users. Lastly, this thesis will examine how archives have gone digital, which encompasses considerations done by archivists and institutions in decolonising their archival holdings, what efforts are being made to preserve heritage, and how issues of repatriation and ownership are addressed.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The invention of the camera and its subsequent popularity coincided with the height of European colonial power in Africa.[2] The first camera was invented by Louis Daguerre and presented in 1839. Photography soon became popular with the high societies of Europe.[3] However, Daguerre's camera was not very easily handled, so it was not until George Eastman introduced the Kodak camera in 1888 that photography became the skill of the everyman.[4] Thus, Europeans who travelled or lived in African colonies could capture their experiences in a new medium. Through colonial-era cinema and colonial exhibitions, images of Africa's exoticism were carefully curated for European audiences. As a result, the media's representation of overseas empires greatly impacted European knowledge production and

[2] JB Brager. 'The Trophy and The Appeal: Colonial Photography and the Ghosts of Witnessing in German Southwest Africa.' *Refract: An Open Access Visual Studies Journal*, 3. (2020): p. 215.
[3] *Britannica Academic*, s.v. "Louis Daguerre," accessed December 4, 2023, https://academic-eb-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/levels/collegiate/article/Louis-Daguerre/28529; Jens Jäger. "Elective Affinities?: History and Photography" In Global Photographies: Memory - History - Archives edited by Sissy Helff and Stefanie Michels, (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2018): p. 39-40.
[4] Agbenyega Adedze. "Portraits in the Hands of Strangers: Colonial and Postcolonial Postcards as Vignettes to African Women's History" (2011): p. 2

understanding of life in the colonies.[5] This thesis will focus on photographs taken by colonial actors. This encompasses European travellers, missionaries, merchants, and agents for the colonial government.

As with many material objects at the time, photographs became objects used in Europe to further the inflexible view of the exoticism of the colonies.[6] However, Europeans were not the only ones to wield the camera. Throughout the 1880s, African photographers advertised in local newspapers 'offering photography courses and seeking apprentices' as well as publishing dates they were available for taking photographs for customers.[7] The customers of these services were from diverse backgrounds, illustrating how photography was not inherently European or colonial.[8] These images taken by Africans did not reach Europe and the mass media circulation European photographers received. However, they offer insight into the ambivalence of the European photographic hegemony in colonial Africa. Nevertheless, the widespread use of photography by Europeans travelling in Africa changed how European audiences saw the colonies and significantly impacted the knowledge production regarding African society.

OUTLINE

The first chapter of this thesis examines photography's complexity as a primary source within history. Much of the chapter will be devoted to understanding the context of colonial photographs when utilising them and how the message of the pictures goes beyond what is depicted, using a selection of images from three key archives: The Alice Seeley Harris Archive research-led Antislavery Usable Past project based in the UK. The Frobenius Photographic Archive is held by the Frobenius Institute in Germany, which focuses on cultural anthropology, and the World Through a Lens: Africa Archive is held by the National Archives in the UK. The first chapter will outline the research framework and the moral implications of studying

[5] Paul S. Landau "An Amazing Distance: Pictures and People in Africa" in Paul Stuart Landau and Deborah Kaspin. *Images and Empires : Visuality in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa*. (Berkeley, CA, etc: University of California Press, 2002): p. 5
[6] Hans Peter Hahn. "On the Circulation of Colonial Pictures: Polyphony and Fragmentation" In *Global Photographies: Memory - History - Archives* edited by Sissy Helff and Stefanie Michels, (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2018): p. 94.
[7] Jürg Schneider. "African Photography in the Atlantic Visualscape: Moving Photographers – Circulating Images" In *Global Photographies: Memory - History - Archives* edited by Sissy Helff and Stefanie Michels, (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2018): p. 23.
[8] Stefanie Michels. "Re-framing Photography – Some Thoughts" In *Global Photographies: Memory - History - Archives* edited by Sissy Helff and Stefanie Michels, (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2018): p. 10.

colonial photographs, looking at current historiography. The second chapter explores the archive as a memory collection and creation site. This section will dive deep into the case studies. All three archives are open-source databases of colonial photography. However, how they have digitalised and shared their information varies vastly. Because of this, they allow for contrasting and comparing methods and successes. Using the case studies, the second chapter will look at archival theories and practices used for colonial photographic collections. This section will also examine the increased focus on humane research – considering the moral implications of research and how it potentially affects groups – and memory politics in colonial research. The third and final chapter will investigate how the digitalisation of colonial photos is accomplished, looking at the selected case studies and beyond. This will include how the ethical and moral concerns raised in previous sections are addressed and what is overlooked throughout the digitalisation process. Lastly, the thesis will summarise its findings and remark on how the digitalisation movement needs to be more responsible and reflective regarding how collections are published and what individual context is provided.

THE ARCHIVAL CASE STUDIES

The archives were selected based on the criteria of being open-source archives focusing on colonial photography. Further narrowing was achieved by adding the parameters of collections of photographs taken in Africa by colonial agents from 1880 to 1930. All the images selected contain individuals as the main subject, focusing on African subjects. Various digitalisation methods and differing methods of providing situational contexts were also evaluated. Having a governmental, an academic, and a freestanding research institution further inspired the selection. Furthermore, these archives all allow for the use of their collections for educational use, falling within the scope of the thesis, meaning they can be incorporated and assessed individually.

THE ALICE SEELEY HARRIS ARCHIVE OF THE ANTISLAVERY USABLE PAST PROJECT[9]

[9] Antislavery Usable Past, "Alice Harris Archive", AUP and Nottingham University. Accessed September 7, 2023 - December 4, 2023, http://antislavery.nottingham.ac.uk/solr-search?facet=collection%3A%22Alice+Seeley+Harris+Archive%22

The Antislavery Usable Past project is an online archive run by the University of Nottingham in partnership with the Universities of Hull and Queen's Belfast. Their primary function is a movement against contemporary global slavery. Their archive encompasses several collections of colonial photographs, which serve the purpose of this thesis. In particular, the Alice Seely Harris collection will be one of the main collections used throughout the thesis. Alice Harris was a missionary travelling in the Congo Free State in the early 1900s, documenting the hypocrisy of King Leopold II's promise of colonial benevolence. Her collection is one of the best-documented colonial photography collections available online. What makes this collection unique is the focus on information sharing and the context provided for each photograph. The researchers for the project provide guidelines for the use and interaction with the images, highlight how the captions further inform the photographs and warn of the colonial gaze, which underpins many colonial pictures. The second and third chapters will explore the broader community-led strategies for creative and heritage-based interventions of the project. Overall, this archive's digitalisation and open access were meticulously planned, and ethical considerations of potential misinterpretation and misconstruction of events have been addressed.

THE FROBENIUS PHOTO ARCHIVES HELD BY THE FROBENIUS INSTITUTE[10]

The archives are based on the research and photography of the German anthropologist and ethnographer Leo Frobenius. The archive has been available online since 2010 and holds over 65,000 photographs and negatives and some 40,000 drawings and paintings. While the entire collection cannot be used in one thesis, selected photos from Frobenius' research will be utilised throughout the thesis. Through his travels, Frobenius collected 'unique documentation of objects and customs, folk tales and myths, as well as images of everyday scenes, portraits, material culture, crafts and architecture.'[11] However, Frobenius omitted to include signs of modernity in his collection, such as the 'railways, plantations, bridges and western architecture' found throughout the continent at the time of his travels.[12] Whilst not directly unusual,

[10] The Frobenius Institute "Fotoarkiv." Image Database. FI, March 29, 2023. http://bildarchiv.frobenius-katalog.de/start.fau?prj=isbild_en&mob=0.

[11] Richard Kuba. "Portraits of Distant Worlds: Frobenius' Pictorial Archive and its Legacy" In Global Photographies: Memory - History - Archives edited by Sissy Helff and Stefanie Michels, (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2018): p. 109.

[12] Kuba. "Portraits of Distant Worlds": p. 119.

Frobenius' photos thus capture a different view of African society at the time, than other photographic collections from the same area.[13] This information is not to be found in the archive but through secondary reading written by the collection curator. The extensive cultural and societal context seen in the Alice Harris archive is lacking from this archive, making it less user-friendly. Nevertheless, this archive is selected as it provides excellent examples of how photographs taken out of their context can easily construct misinformed realities due to the nature of Frobenius' photographic omissions. The archive holds vast information, and almost every photograph is catalogued with the photographer, expedition, country, region, ethnic group, and descriptive titles. With proper preparation and research into the archive's background, it holds many valuable sources. Nevertheless, despite being open access, the Frobenius Photo Archive is tailored towards academic use and is best suited for critical research.

WORLD THROUGH A LENS: AFRICA ARCHIVE- THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM[14]

This thesis will use The National Archive in the UK as an example of a national archive publicising its colonial collection. The National Archive holds donated collections, including the online collection 'World Through a Lens', with a specific album of African colonial photographs. This is one of the many collections the National Archive has mass-digitalised. What makes the World Through a Lens collection interesting to this thesis is their unique approach to covering information gaps, which was to publish photographs with the caveat: 'In many instances, we know little about the people or contents of the photographs, and this is one of the reasons why we have published them online and asked people to comment and share their knowledge'.[15] Whilst the Antislavery Usable Past archive holds abundant information regarding the images and their context, many of the World Through A Lens series pictures lack most forms of contexts, including dates, photographers, countries and information regarding the subjects. This approach is an ideal case study of the ethics of what should be published, how context can be found and provided, and the historical value of context-less photos.

[13] Kuba. "Portraits of Distant Worlds": p. 120-121.

[14] "World Through a Lens: Africa." Flickr. The British National Archives, February 7, 2011. https://www.flickr.com/photos/nationalarchives/collections/72157625827328771/.

[15] "World Through a Lens: Africa." Flickr. The British National Archives.

LITERATURE REVIEW

CHAPTER ONE

The first chapter, examining colonial photography and the methods of assessing colonial photographs, is influenced by the collection of essays within *Global Photographies: Memory – History – Archives* (2018), edited by Sissy Helff and Stefanie Michels. *Global Photographies* encapsulates the current research within the fields of colonial photography, highlighting how historians are 'unearthing […] stories that need to be added to the history of photography'.[16] In her chapter 'Re-framing Photography – Some Thoughts', Stefanie Michels emphasises the prevalent history of colonial photography is not necessarily *wrong* but somewhat *incomplete*. This formed a hegemonic story of the West, reducing other world regions to objects of the Western gaze.[17] The ambivalence of photographic objectivity makes the photograph's role as a material source difficult for archivists to navigate. Michels endeavours to clarify that the pragmatism of archival practice must contend with the aesthetic approaches to photography.[18]

Images and Empires: Visuality in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa (2002), edited by Paul S. Landau and Deborah D. Kaspin, further informs the writing of chapter one. A selection of essays surrounding coloniality and photography, the book situates itself amid the debate of how colonial photographs were created and utilised and their continued impact today.[19] The deconstruction of nineteenth and twentieth-century attitudes towards 'Image-Africa' makes this collection relevant to this chapter, as it encapsulates how Western audiences at the time used colonial photographs to inform their views of African societies and culture.[20] This happened through European audiences viewing photographs and their limited information, making assumptions and judgements based on racialised ideas. These attitudes then informed the language of cataloguing and archiving colonial photographs, thus influencing how knowledge has been kept, stored, and reproduced. By pinning down where the Western classification of indigenous Africans originated and thus situating them within the creation of European hegemony over African narratives, one can begin to disentangle it, revealing a more balanced approach to colonial photographs.

[16] Michels. "Re-framing Photography": p.10.
[17] Michels. "Re-framing Photography": p.10-11.
[18] Michels. "Re-framing Photography": p.11-12.
[19] Landau and Kaspin. *Images and Empires.*
[20] Landau "An Amazing Distance": p. 2.

CHAPTER TWO

The second chapter uses theories and methods presented in *The African Photographic Archive: Research and Curatorial Strategies* (2015), a multidisciplinary collection of essays which explores the methodological and analytical challenges of researching colonial photographic collections and archives. The book's collection of essays situates the archive as a contested site of collection, discovery, and memory. In the introduction, the anthropologist Christopher Morton and the historian Darren Newbury lay out the development of research into colonial photography, illustrating how the historiography and critical methodology developed.[21] In particular, it lays out three distinct methodological movements which this thesis will explore further. The first involves going beyond the focus of a singular photograph and 'individual image-audience encounter[s]' and instead highlights the importance of the collection and archive within their provenance and collective context.[22] The Alice Seeley Harris Archive is an example of this; where the photographs were used as a collective to show the inhumane conditions of the Congo Free State under the rule of King Leopold II. The second methodological movement is to rethink and expand the category of the archive beyond the institution and the state archives to include the local and personal collections of photographs.[23] Morton and Newbury highlight how, in recent decades, a myriad of online collections have been posted, created and curated, and that these collections in and of themselves are archives, with the providers, 'be they museums, archives, private collectors or photographers,' are the creators and curators of these archives.[24] New contexts and narratives emerge from reimagined collections, creating and strengthening the cultural heritage of communities that have long had their histories inaccessible. The third and final methodological movement involves acknowledging the practices of researchers, artists and curators as being situated within the history of the archive and not analytically separated.'[25] The motivations of the archive, its organisation, and the choices of the individual archivist impact how histories are presented and understood. By examining and deconstructing these motivations, a greater understanding of the

[21] Christopher Morton and Darren Newbury. "Introduction: Relocating the African photographic archive" in Christopher Morton and Darren Newbury. *The African Photographic Archive: Research and Curatorial Strategies*. (1st ed. London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2015): p. 1.
[22] Morton and Newbury. "Introduction": p. 3.
[23] Morton and Newbury. "Introduction": p. 3.
[24] Morton and Newbury. "Introduction": p. 5.
[25] Morton and Newbury. "Introduction": p. 3.

objects within the archive can be reached. These methods will influence the analysis of the archives and their purpose.

'Unsilencing Colonial Archives Via Automated Entity Recognition' (2022) by Mrinalini Luthra, Konstantin Todorov, Charles Jeurgens, and Giovanni Colavizza explore how records collected and archived under colonial conditions mirror the views of their creators. Those creators judged what was important, dictating what perspectives and narratives would be preserved for the future.[26] Luthra et al. thus exemplify how archives are inherently political and problematic sites of knowledge production, not objective sites of knowledge preservation. Furthermore, they highlight the role of the archivist in creating labels and categorising objects, reminding readers that the role of the archivist is not neutral nor impartial in how knowledge is extracted from the archives.[27] The choice of naming specific individuals pictured while others remain nameless is one of the methods showing the influence archivists have on the presentation of historical records.[28] These archivist choices, often seen in archiving the original Frobenius photographs, for example, reinforce the colonial structure of imposing relevance and importance, removing the agency of those who remain nameless. The discussion of the archival case studies in chapter two will involve assessing how they address their coloniality and questioning if colonial frameworks are still present within the archive.

CHAPTER THREE

Chapter three of the thesis examines digitalisation and its implications for colonial photographic archives. It discusses how to broaden access to colonial archives and how a feminist 'ethics of care' should be in place for digitalising collections of colonial images. This encompasses approaching colonial photographs and archives with a focus on the accuracy of representation, moral responsibility to consider the colonial nature of the photos and respect for those silenced within the archives. This is based on the feminist ethics of care framework that Carol Gilligan and Nel Noddings developed.[29] In 'Archival Encounters: Rethinking Access and Care in Digital Colonial Archives' (2019), Daniela Agostinho grapples with the

[26] Mrinalini Luthra, Konstantin Todorov, Charles Jeurgens and Giovanni Colavizza. "Unsilencing Colonial Archives via Automated Entity Recognition." (2022): p. 1-2.
[27] Luthra et al. "Unsilencing Colonial Archives": p. 2.
[28] Luthra et al. "Unsilencing Colonial Archives": p. 2-3.
[29] Virginia Held. "The Ethics of Care as Moral Theory." In *The Ethics of Care*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005): p. 5, 10, 27.

debate surrounding ethically approaching digitalisation and access to colonial archives.[30] Looking at the colonial power structures that shape colonial archives, Agostinho emphasises how these must be dismantled before archives digitalise.

Moving beyond these power structures encourages archives to seek a broader understanding of their narratives. Agostinho highlights the need for post-custodial archive theory, which advocates for including indigenous communities within the scope of provenance and the engagement of these communities and their descendants to interpret and contribute to archival holdings.[31] This can be seen in chapter three, where the Alice Seeley Harris photos have engaged Congolese communities in Congo and throughout the diaspora to reflect on their shared heritage and history. Accessing colonial archives is more than just making records digital; it also encompasses challenging prevalent colonial narratives and legacies. 'Unsilencing Colonial Archives Via Automated Entity Recognition' (2022) further looks at how images' tags and digital metadata base themselves on biased colonial criteria, which bring colonial ideas into the digital space. Digitalising without decolonising narratives makes the colonial archives inaccessible to those to whom the records pertain and their descendants. In assessing the archival case studies in the third chapter, their accessibility will be evaluated based on their decolonial efforts.

Regarding an 'ethics of care', Agostinho emphasises how some sections of the archival community have begun to foreground feminist 'ethics of care' to approach digitalisation and open access to colonial archives. This approach puts a responsibility on the archivists to move beyond Western archiving approaches and follow ethical frameworks of preserving and presenting archival materials. This encompasses 'acknowledging, honouring and redressing (not only legally) record subjects and communities of descendants.'[32] An important point raised by Agostinho is regarding the digital afterlife of colonial documents in digital spaces. Images uploaded online with a set categorisation and metadata might migrate away from their context and provenance. There are substantial ethical implications to this posthuman curation, especially when these images depict violated subjects who did not consent to having their images taken in the first instance.[33] As algorithms assess images for their contents, the

[30] Agostinho "Archival Encounters': p. 151.
[31] Daniela Agostinho "Archival Encounters: Rethinking Access and Care in Digital Colonial Archives". Arch Sci 19, (2019): p. 151.
[32] Agostinho "Archival encounters": p. 158.
[33] Agostinho "Archival Encounters": p. 162.

depersonalised methods of colonial categorising risk furthering stereotypical colonial ideas. Chapter three will explore how ethical frameworks can mitigate these post-custodial consequences and assess the archival case studies on how they address these issues.

The third chapter further explores how the digitalisation of photographic archives has led to a greater engagement with the creation of heritage. In their chapter 'Vital Signs: Twenty-First Century Institutions for Photography in Africa' within *The African Photographic Archive: Research and Curatorial Strategies* (2015), Erin Haney and Jennifer Bajorek discuss how 'traditional approaches to the archive have become inefficient' and that the digital world has allowed for broader access to African photographic collections, allowing for archival projects to be framed and realised outside the conventional institutional structures.[34] The Alice Seeley Harris archive, in particular, exemplifies how its photographs have allowed visual histories to be enriched and made accessible to broader audiences.[35] This idea is also prevalent in Celeste Pedri-Spade's '"But They Were Never Only the Master's Tools": The Use of Photography in De-Colonial Praxis (2017).' Pedri-Spade highlights how artists use digital historical colonial photographs to reengage and reclaim their personal histories. Arguing that by having communities rely on institutions for access to their own histories and heritage, agency and power are compromised.[36] This connects to the broader discussion of ownership and repatriation throughout the third chapter, especially regarding the shortfalls of digital repatriation.

METHODOLOGY

Photographs are a unique form of primary sources within history. They hold a multiplicity of historical value. However, no uniform method for scholars to evaluate photographs as historical sources has been devised. Art historians, anthropologists and historians all have individual criteria based on what it is they are researching. This is primarily due to the nature of photographs. As objects, they hold physical traces of where they have been and how they have been handled. More than this, however, the image's caption, author (photographer), and its

[34] Erin Haney, "Vital signs: Twenty-first-century institutions for photography in Africa" in Christopher Morton and Darren Newbury. *The African Photographic Archive: Research and Curatorial Strategies*. (1st ed. London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2015): p. 216.
[35] Haney, "Vital signs": p. 218.
[36] Celeste Pedri-Spade. "'But They Were Never Only the Master's Tools': The Use of Photography in de-Colonial Praxis." *AlterNative : an international journal of indigenous peoples* 13, no. 2 (2017): p. 111.

place in the broader collection are all significant to understanding its context. Photographs must be assessed using a wide variety of criteria. The broader context of all the photographs examined throughout this thesis is the colonial era on the African continent. The images selected are mainly part of the 'ethnographic photography' movement, which became popular in the late nineteenth century. This movement was closely tied to anthropology, capturing rituals and peoples' natural states. The focus was on the day-to-day, the mundane and cultural realities. Some images used in this thesis clearly show how colonialism impacted the daily realities of the African peoples, such as Alice Seely Harris' photographs of the Congo Free State. Other images, such as Leo Frobenius's, avoid picturing colonial influences.

This thesis will use an analytical method to evaluate the archival case studies. This process is devised to fit the scope of the research, illustrating how images change context when removed from their provenance, the importance of archival methods, and the moral implications of digitalising specific photos. The photographs will be assessed within this context based on their visuality, situational and archival context, and ethical implications.

In the first chapter, colonial photography as a field will be evaluated, and a selection of photographs will be assessed according to criteria. This evaluation encapsulates exploring the subject and captions visible upon inspections. Taking the image at face value and evaluating the contents based on visuality and caption alone will illustrate what the passive observer will understand from the image. This assessment is necessary when assessing the message a photograph presents when removed from its situational context. Furthermore, in chapter one, the broader situational context of the photograph will be evaluated. What is meant by this is the examination of the photographer's intent and the societal context of the collection during its creation and presentation. This criterion explores what the photographer intended to capture and the broader context of the photograph. Photographers travelling in the colonial era often took photographs as part of more comprehensive collections illustrating what colonial expansion looked like to European audiences. Alice Seely Harris's photographs of the Congo Free State, for example, must be seen in the context of her being a European missionary who generally viewed Congolese life and society as unequal to Europe.[37] Her images generally capture the daily rituals and surroundings of the Congolese, including the processes of rubber collection, in a 'primitive' light.[38] When viewing the images, one can sense the voyeuristic

[37] Antislavery Usable Past, "Alice Harris Archive."
[38] Antislavery Usable Past, "Alice Harris Archive."

'colonial gaze', which has a broader effect of legitimising colonial rule by categorising the Congolese as 'different'.[39] The broader context of the photographs thus situates them within their colonial contexts.

The second chapter examines the archival context of colonial photographs. Archivists and historians have had a longstanding ambivalence towards photographs as historical sources. This has led to photographs having what Margit Prussat puts as a 'very fragmentary documentation structure compared to other archival objects.'[40] Many collections of colonial photography available for study lack provenance. The collections available have inevitably shaped research agendas. This is also due to the nature of how collections came to be. Colonial photographs were often the result of private individuals travelling and documenting rather than institutions or state agents. These collections only sometimes get donated to institutions that catalogue and curate them, making them available to scholars and researchers. Furthermore, these donations are not always supplemented with their textual counterparts, leading to contextual gaps.[41] In theory, almost all archival practice follows the principle of provenance, endeavouring to keep documents and objects within their original context.[42] However, due to the neglect of photographic archival collections, several collections lack contextual information about their origin. The second chapter will evaluate how the three archives have mediated this information gap and what efforts are made to address heritage and memory studies within the individual archives.

The third chapter explores the moral considerations historians and archivists should have when digitalising extensive collections of colonial photographs. This chapter argues that scholars and academics have a moral obligation to provide context which can demarcate interpretations of colonial photographs and dispel ambiguity and misinterpretation. A central issue will be what considerations should be taken when archives digitalise 'sensitive' photographs representing violated subjects who did not consent to be photographed or for that photograph to be circulated. Through exploring the motivations for digitalisation and its connection with decolonisation, this chapter evaluates the digitalisation methods and the potential ethical

[39] Antislavery Usable Past, "Alice Harris Archive"; Michels. "Re-framing Photography": p. 13.
[40] Margrit Prussat "Reflexions on the Photographic Archive in the Humanities" In *Global Photographies: Memory - History - Archives* edited by Sissy Helff and Stefanie Michels, (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2018): p. 134.
[41] Prussat "Reflexions on the Photographic Archive": p.143.
[42] Prussat "Reflexions on the Photographic Archive": p 141.

conflicts that may arise from open-access online archives. The digitalisation efforts of the three archival case studies will then be assessed according to criteria, including any ethical considerations done by the archives.

The conclusion will evaluate the findings across the three archives and suggest methods for archives to adapt to the changing trajectory of archives and colonial photographs in a continuously digitalising world.

CHAPTER 1: COLONIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

Colonialism was not static in its hegemony. In the last few decades, scholars of postcolonialism have turned towards examining nuances of the interests that came with imperialist expansion. What has become increasingly clear is that the colonial expansion and rule were full of tensions and contradictions on the global and local levels.[43] European agents, including government officials, missionaries, and merchants, had distinct interests and influences that intersected with those of local populations, resulting in negotiations of histories, narratives, appropriations, and transpositions.[44] These tensions extend to the field of colonial photography. Alice Harris' photographs captured the overt colonial cruelty and control of the Congo Free State during that era in images such as 'Mr Harris and the mutilated Congo lad, Impongi', which alludes to the harsh methods the colonial government used to increase rubber production.[45] Other archives, such as the images in the Frobenius archives and the World Through a Lens: Africa Archive of the British National archives, do not provide this context alongside their pictures; however, the realities of colonial rule can still be glimpsed when read in tandem with colonial reports. Looking through any archive with colonial photography, it becomes clear that the camera was not a neutral entity during the age of colonialism.

In the last decade, an 'archival impulse' has drawn scholars to archival collections to engage with the past.[46] For decades, there was no common framework for scholars to understand and interpret photographs as historical sources; thus, they were often waylaid and forgotten.[47] As scholars have taken on multidisciplinary methods of examining photographs, they have emerged as valuable material sources when examining the colonial past.[48] The 'archival turn' has coincided with the resurfacing of an increasing number of colonial picture collections.[49]

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[43] John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff. *Ethnography And The Historical Imagination*. 1st ed. (New York: Routledge. 1992). p. 183.
[44] Comaroff and Comaroff. *Ethnography:* p. 6.
[45] Alice S. Harris. *Mr Harris and the Mutilated Congo Lad, Impongi*. Photograph. *Antislavery Usable Past*. (1911-1912); Edgar Canisius and Guy Burrows, 'A Campaign Amongst Cannibals: The Rubber Regime' in *The Curse of Central Africa*, (London: C.A. Pearson,1903): 63-80.
[46] Hal Foster. 'An Archival Impulse.' MIT Press. no. 110 (October 2004): p. 3.
[47] Daniel Foliard. *The Violence of Colonial Photography.* 1st ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2023): p. 15.
[48] Morton and Newbury. "Introduction": p. 1.
[49] Hahn. "On the Circulation of Colonial Pictures": p. 89.

Scholars continuously work to catalogue and gain a precise overview of these collections of pictures from the former colonies.[50] However, to be able to examine these findings critically, a framework for understanding colonial photographs must be in place.

This chapter examines the field of colonial photography, how the camera became a tool for imperialist agendas and the purpose of colonial photography in the late 1800s and early 1900s. This will broaden into a more comprehensive discussion regarding the changing trajectory of colonial photographs and the subsequent need for context to understand and interpret their significance. Furthermore, the chapter looks at the colonial bias within colonial pictures and how to approach colonial photographs ethically in a post-colonial world. Lastly, the chapter will systematically evaluate a selection of photos from the three archival case studies according to the criteria. This aims to illustrate the need for scholars to approach colonial photography coherently and systematically and continuously evaluate the ethics of using potentially sensitive materials throughout their research.

COLONIAL PHOTOGRAPHS

In *Global Photographies,* Sissy Helff and Stefanie Michels encapsulate the current research within the fields of colonial photography, highlighting how historians are discovering 'new stories that need to be added to the history of photography'.[51] Paul S. Landau also agrees with Helff and Michels and argues that the prevalent history of colonial photography is incomplete, leading to a static hegemonic story of the West and overlooking the subaltern narratives.[52] The complexity of images as historical sources is rooted in each image's various narratives. In *The Echo of Things,* Christopher Wright writes, 'Photography produces interconnected networks of objects, meanings, and social relationships.'[53] Wright argues that photographs are 'social objects and visual images simultaneously', where the visual context is closely linked to the oral history of the image.[54] European photographs of Africa were, and continue to be, varied in purpose and interpretation. Many photographs conceived as ethnological data, political propaganda or tourist advertising at the time were easily repurposed and circulated anew in

[50] Hahn. "On the Circulation of Colonial Pictures": p. 89-90.
[51] Michels. "Re-framing Photography": p. 10.
[52] Landau. "An Amazing Distance": p. 2.
[53] Christopher J. Wright. *The Echo of Things: The Lives of Photographs in the Solomon Islands*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013): p. 2.
[54] Anne Maxwell. "Framing the Non-West: New approaches to the history of photography." *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 16, no. 1 (2015): p. 6.

Europe to suit different agendas.[55] As Celeste Pedri-Spade puts it, 'The meanings we attach to photographs are shaped by our relationships to its maker, subject or content, and its temporal and physical placement.'[56] Because the photograph is a medium that is easy to reproduce, indeed, meant to be reproduced, the context in which images are viewed may shift over time.

The primary function of colonial photography from the 1880s to the 1930s was to present the world according to colonial ideology. Photography became a tool for the coloniser to further propaganda and show the African continent from a European cultural perspective. To contemporary observers, however, photography was often seen as objective statements, illustrating 'as-is' representations of people, events, and nature.[57] Today, this is happening with collections, as most photographs have been archived without context on the cultural realities they illustrate.[58] Navigating these objects and materials can have ethical implications scholars must consider. Various methodological and theoretical approaches are currently applied in historical analyses of photographic images.[59] An example is Peter Burkes's *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence*. Burke argues that 'photographs have the same historical value as texts and oral testimony', for they record 'acts of eyewitnessing.'[60] However, it is essential to note that for photographs to be valuable as historical evidence, suitable context must be provided to understand what the image portrays. This context includes when, why, and how the photograph was taken. By understanding the context in which the photograph was taken, we can better understand the interaction between the photographer and the subject and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the image's historical significance. By taking these steps, scholars can better understand photographs' role in historical research and their value as evidence.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT

[55] Holland Cotter. "Scenes of Colonial Africa with Racist Overtones." The New York Times, (14 February 2003): p. E44.
[56] Pedri-Spade. "'But They Were Never Only the Master's Tools'": p. 107.
[57] Jäger. "Elective Affinities?": p. 39.
[58] Kokou Azamede. "How to use Colonial Photography in Sub-Saharan Africa for Educational and Academic Purposes: The case of Togo" in *Global Photographies: Memory - History - Archives* edited by Sissy Helff and Stefanie Michels, (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2018): p. 57.
[59] Jäger. "Elective Affinities?": 49.
[60] Peter Burke. *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence*. 1st ed. (London: Reaktion Books, 2005): p. 17.

Photographs can be systematically assessed by classifying them and noting their socio-cultural context. Photographs used as historical evidence are often classified into three separate categories. These categories are 'records of social conditions', 'documentary photography', and 'industrial photography'.[61] All these categories have some required context to them. Records of social conditions are often - or should often be - seen in tandem with colonial reports or descriptions, the image's provenance. The same can be said for documentary photography, which is the other category of colonial photography this thesis deals with. The contexts of the images are often complex, reflecting racial biases and promoting colonialist thinking. The contextual materials alongside colonial photographs are often similar. A strong European hegemony is still present when writing and researching colonial Africa, shaped by the available resources. Because of this, using and editing these images outside of their contexts can easily cause misinformation or perpetuate negative stereotypes. Therefore, providing information to guide observers' understanding productively is vital.

The selected Alice Harris photographs generally fall into both categories, and through the context provided, the images shape a 'reality'. The selection from Frobenius's collection falls under the category of 'social conditions', as they endeavour to capture the cultural 'reality' of African societies through the eyes of Leo Frobenius. The national archive selection is more difficult to classify due to insufficient context. However, assuming an inevitable overlap between social conditions and documentary categories is possible. After establishing the category to which an image or collection belongs, one can explore their socio-cultural context. This can be understood by evaluating the photos' purpose, intent, use, and relationship between the photographer and the subject. Using these methods as concrete starting points can establish a framework for understanding colonial photography.

COLONIAL BIAS AND LANGUAGE

The unequal power dynamics of the colonial era and the symbolic power that the colonisers held over the colonised impacted what photographs were taken and how they were archived. Failure to consider the attitudes and beliefs of contemporary photographers can significantly affect how scholars interpret sources. In practice, this can be seen in the caption or information given of images in the online archives. With many archival photographs from the colonial era,

[61] Jäger. "Elective Affinities?": p. 51.

European subjects are often mentioned by name, whilst the indigenous Africans are identified by ethnicity or profession.[62] Throughout various contexts and photographers, Africans in pictures have consistently been de-individualised and nameless as opposed to their European counterparts.[63]

Captions are vital for leading the understanding of the observer. Without a year, name, place, or broader context, it can be impossible to learn the origins of an image. Furthermore, captions can allow for further research, as shown in this chapter. Colonial photographs change hands, collections get split up, and textual documents can be separated from their image counterparts. Photography has long been overlooked and devalued as adequate historical source material, so the proper way of preserving provenance has fallen to the wayside.[64] This has resulted in large quantities of colonial photographs without their historical context. It is in cases such as these that captions are of great aid. For images in which large parts of the context are missing, such as many of the World Through a Lens: Africa archive at The National Archives in the UK, the aid of captions and descriptions is vital.

ASSESSING THE IMAGES

A selection of images from each archive will be assessed based on four criteria derived from the theoretical discussion. This assessment aims to determine how colonial photographs should be approached and how the colonial contexts are presented within the pictures taken from the archival case studies. The criteria are:

What do the visuals of the image show?

What is the colonial context of the image?

Can colonial bias be detected within the image?

Each assessment will be summarised, and a judgement based on the accessibility of the analysis will be made.

[62] Paul S. Landau 'Empires of the Visual: Photography and Colonial Administration in Africa' in Paul Stuart Landau and Deborah Kaspin. *Images and Empires : Visuality in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa*. (Berkeley, CA, etc: University of California Press, 2002): p. 151.
[63] Landau 'Empires of the Visual': p. 151.
[64] Prussat "Reflexions on the Photographic Archive": p. 134.

THE ALICE SEELEY HARRIS ARCHIVE

Alice Seeley Harris's archive photographs all have the same photographer and are all from her missionary travels within the Congo Free State. Her role as a missionary influenced her photos and impacted the way she experienced the atrocities towards the Congolese people. Because of this, it is beneficial to see the images as one coherent collection, illustrating one photographer's view of a different society. Three images from the Alice Seeley Harris archive will be examined based on the criteria of visuality, context, colonial bias, and ethical considerations. Each photograph will relate to a specific question.

THE IMAGE AND ITS VISUALS:

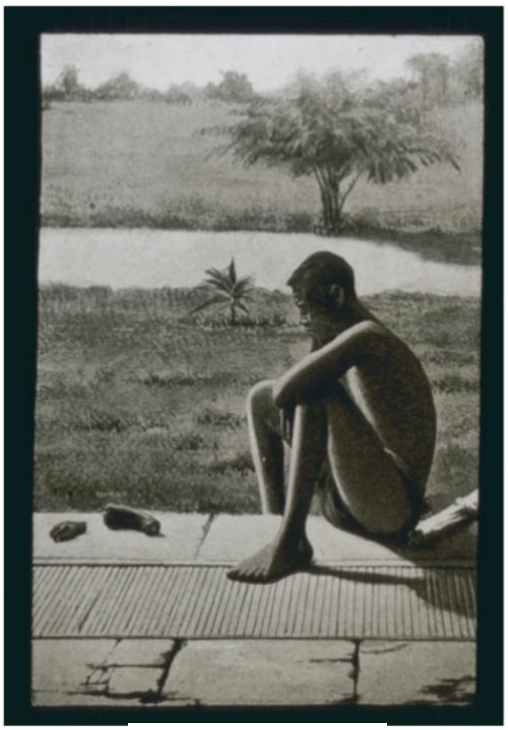
Looking at the photograph 'Lulua natives pounding rubber at Mpolo, near Sanuru, Kasai', the image depicts one young adult and seven children posing whilst using tools to pound the rubber out of a tree, a laborious and challenging task. [65] They all wear indigenous clothing, and most have some form of jewellery. The image has a description attached, which helps the observer understand what is happening in the image. There is no colour to the image, yet the forest in the background suggests an area full of greenery, rural, and with no sign of modernisation. The image also suggests a culture where everyone takes part in work, young and old, and that people often cooperate with their tasks. This is the visuals of the image, with just the context of the caption. From this,

[65] Alice S. Harris. *Lulua Natives Pounding rubber at Mpolo, near Sanuru, Kasai*. Photograph. *Antislavery Usable Past*. (1911-1912)

very little substantial information can be gained, but a tentative understanding of the scene can be considered.

THE COLONIAL CONTEXT

To understand and interpret images from the colonial era, one must understand the context in which they were created and the channels in which they were distributed. What an image shows and what it communicates can often differ widely. The photographs taken by Alice Harris are uniquely well-suited to illustrate how context can change interpretation. Harris and her husband travelled as missionaries in the Congo Free State in the late 1890s. During this time, Harris photographed the Congolese people, nature, and architecture. Her images portray the impact of colonial expansion in different ways.



NSALA OF WALA

The further context of the Congo Free State during Harris's and her husband John's visit brings a new understanding to the image. To fully access the territory's abundance of ivory and rubber, King Leopold II of Belgium implemented forced conscription of the Congolese people.[66] Rubber quotas were assigned, and if the targets were not met, villages could be burned, and workers shot. [67] Floggings and mutilation were commonplace. The Congo Free State became infamous among European audiences for the widespread removal of hands or feet.[68] Judy Pollard Smith, in her book on Alice Seeley Harris, cites Harris' diary regarding Nsala, a father in the village, who 'hadn't made his rubber quota for the day, so the Belgian-appointed overseers had cut off his daughter's hand and foot'.[69] Alice Harris photographed 'Nsala of Wala' perched on a patio looking at the severed hand and foot of his daughter.[70] At the time, these images were

[66] Robert G. Weisbord, 'The King, the Cardinal and the Pope: Leopold II's Genocide in the Congo and the Vatican', *Journal of Genocide Research,* 5:1, (2003): p. 36.
[67] Weisbord 'The King, the Cardinal and the Pope': p. 36.
[68] Robert M. Burroughs, *African Testimony in the Movement for Congo Reform: The Burden of Proof.* (New York: Routledge 2019): p. 87.
[69] Judy Pollard Smith, *Don't Call Me Lady: The Journey of Lady Alice Seeley Harris,* (New York: Abbott Press, 2014): p. 54.
[70] Alice S. Harris. *Nsala of Wala*. Photograph. *Antislavery Usable Past*. (1911-1912)

part of Harris' collection and reflected her lived experience in the Congo Free State. However, once back in Europe, rumours of Leopold's atrocities led the British journalist E.D. Morel to form the Congo Reform Association, a widespread, media-based crusade against Leopold and his rule of the Congo Free State.[71] Alice Harris proved invaluable to this, bringing physical proof of unfolding violence in the form of photographs of the cruelty of the regime.[72]

COLONIAL BIAS

Although Alice Seeley Harris and the Congo Reform Association intended to raise awareness of the atrocities unfolding in the Congo Free State, the members of the organisations were still contemporaries of their time, and their beliefs often held strong racial bias, which needs to be acknowledged—the photograph *'Mr. Harris shewing [sic] portrait of the late Lord Monkswell to Kasai natives'* illustrates this point.[73] As the only named individual in the photograph, Mr. Harris stands out. Holding an image and wearing all white makes him a contrasting figure to all the others in the image and sets him further apart. This subtle but present framing can strongly impact the viewer and their interpretation of the subjects. It is, therefore, important for researchers to clarify how colonial images are skewed towards an idea of Western hegemony.

ASSESSMENT

The photographs provided by Alice Seeley Harris that did not overtly point towards colonial violence became meaningful when seen in addition to written and oral testimony provided by other witnesses of the Congo atrocities. Circulated by the Congo Reform Association, these photographs took on a new, more in-depth context of

[71] Dean Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism, and the Congo Reform Movement*, 1896-1913 (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015): p. 181.
[72] T. Jack Thompson, 'Light on the Dark Continent: The Photography of Alice Seeley Harris and the Congo Atrocities of the Early Twentieth Century', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* (October 2002): 146–49.
[73] Alice S. Harris. *Mr. Harris shewing [sic] portrait of the late Lord Monkswell to Kasai natives*. Photograph. *Antislavery Usable Past*. (1911-1912)

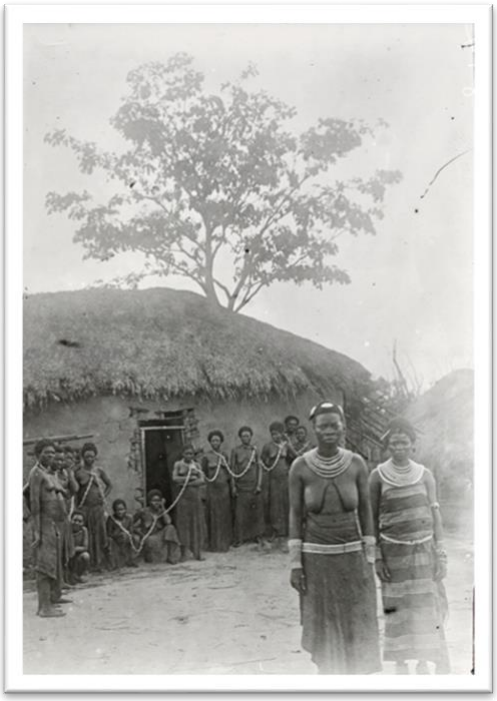
widespread violence and the brutality of the rubber craze. To use these images without this context, however, would be ignorant of the pain and suffering of the Congolese and could perpetuate misleading interpretations.

THE FROBENIUS PHOTO ARCHIVE

The selected images from the Frobenius Archive, like the ones from the Alice Seeley Harris Archive, are also the product of one photographer. Leo Frobenius, however, was an anthropologist and not a missionary. His intent of travelling to Africa was out of cultural and academic curiosity. Frobenius endeavoured to capture images of African cultures untouched by European influence. His methods were self-devised and systematic, yet his personal biases towards other cultures can be seen in his pictures and captions.

THE IMAGE AND VISUALS

The image *Basonge-Gebiet: in der Stadt Lupungus. Das Frauengefängnis des Fürsten Fullu Matamba. Vorn seine beiden ersten Frauen* is visually catching.[74] It captures two standing women in the foreground staring at the camera, with several women tied to each other with ropes around their necks in the background, some sitting, some standing.



BASONGE-GEBIET: IN DER STADT LUPUNGUS. DAS FRAUENGEFÄNGNIS DES FÜRSTEN FULLU MATAMBA. VORN SEINE BEIDEN ERSTEN FRAUEN

Almost all the women are bare-chested. Nobody is smiling, and the mood is sombre. From the title, it is clear the women in the background are prisoners, whilst the ones in the foreground are the wives of one of the town leaders. None of the women pictured are named. The women in the front are set apart by the jewellery they wear, perhaps signifying their status. All the attention is on the photographer, and the image feels staged and stilted. The emotional quality of the image is hard to replicate in text, and this is what makes colonial images so important: their role in communicating what words cannot.

COLONIAL CONTEXT

[74] Leo Frobenius. *Basonge-Gebiet: in der Stadt Lupungus. Das Frauengefängnis des Fürsten Fullu Matamba. Vorn seine beiden ersten Fraue.* Photograph. *The Frobenius Institute.* (1904-1906)

At the time of Frobenius' travels, Cameroon was a German territory. The German colonial agents pressured the Cameroonian population to produce bananas, rubber, palm oil and cocoa. However, this is not seen in any of Frobenius's photographs. As Frobenius intended to capture the 'native cultures', all signs of African interactions with modernity have been omitted in his photography. It is only through images which contain Europeans that signs of modernity can be found.

STREIFZUG DURCH BANANA

The *Streifzug durch Banana* image shows a typical scene captured by Frobenius.[75] A bare-chested woman is captured beside a little boy in the nude. They are both barefooted, and the image seems to be caught 'in situ' where the woman is heading somewhere with her son. There is no sign of colonial influences on the image apart from the image itself. Nevertheless, the intentional omission of certain photo aspects is essential to consider when using them.

COLONIAL BIAS

Gitarrenspieler der Durru is another Frobenius photograph. It was taken in Cameroon or Nigeria between 1910 and 1912.[76] The caption can narrow the location. The man is 'Duru', suggesting he is from a region spanning Northern Cameroon and Eastern Nigeria.[77] Naming and categorising indigenous subjects based on their ethnicity or trade can be seen in several colonial photographs. The non-naming and reducing individuals to a trade depersonalised the subjects and further set the African populations apart from the white Europeans. Despite not being the central part of the image, the man in the background is identified and named in the image.

GITARRENSPIELER DER DURRU

[75] Leo Frobenius. *Streifzug durch Banana.* Photograph.*The Frobenius Institute.* (1904-1906).
[76] Leo Frobenius. *Gitarrenspieler der Durru.* Photograph. *The Frobenius Institute.* (1910-1912).
[77] Ulrirch Kleinewillinghöfer. "Samba-Duru Group." Adamawa Language Projects. Johannes Gutenberg-UniversitäT Mainz, Accessed November 2, 2023. https://www.blogs.uni-mainz.de/fb07-adamawa/adamawa-languages/samba-duru-group/.

This careful consideration of including European names whilst omitting the name of the main subject illustrates how colonial agents travelling in Africa did not see themselves as equal to other cultures.

ASSESSMENT

Despite Frobenius' intention to preserve the 'culture' of Africa, he classified and categorised people according to pseudo-scientific methods, removing personalities and creating caricatures of his experiences to showcase a distilled version of his 'Africa'. One risks furthering the colonial sentiment and racial inequality by replicating these images without considering their situational context or providing more information regarding the style and background of the photos.

THE WORLD THROUGH A LENS: AFRICA ARCHIVE

The World Through a Lens: Africa Archive is a variety of albums, stand-alone photographs, and fragmented collections from different countries, decades, photographers, and subjects, all donated and passed down through the National Archives in the UK. As the images have been kept separate from textual sources, very little information is available through the collection. Therefore, it is difficult to find photographs with enough information to assess them according to the set criteria. Nevertheless, the World Through a Lens: Africa Archive exemplifies the importance of research and situational context to interpret colonial photography.

THE IMAGE AND VISUALS

The first image from the World Through a Lens: Africa Archive is untitled. It is catalogued as *CO 1069-2-25*, and the written date is '[1880-1910?]'.[78] No country or region is specified, meaning the image can be evaluated only visually. The image is taken in what resembles a fenced-in yard, with a cauldron-like pot in the centre. Around it sits two figures, possibly women, either cleaning or cooking. In the background, along the fence, sits three men, watching the two people around the cauldron. In the far left of the image, what seems to be a woven hut made from branches and leaves is situated. It is a domestic scene, showing everyday tasks within a village. Nothing in the image can further narrow the date or region, so unfortunately, little context can be gained from the image.

CO 1069-2-25

COLONIAL CONTEXT

Colonial context can sometimes be hidden or removed unintentionally from an image. Take, for example, an image known as *CO 1069-33-34* from the National Archive.[79] The image is given with the caption *Returning from Anamabu*. The image portrays two sitting women and one standing man in the front, with a handful of men in the background. Except for the woman

[78] Photographer Unknown. *CO 1069-2-25.* Photograph. *The National Archives UK (*1880-1910)
[79] Photographer Unknown. CO 1069-33-34: *Returning from Anamabu.* Photograph. *The National Archives UK (*1880-1910)

seated to the far right, all the subjects are African. The further description mentions 'Mrs Kemp,' the only person identified by name, whilst all other individuals in the image are referred to by their functions such as 'steward', 'maid', and 'carriers.' From this, the racial bias of the photographer and original archivist of this image, whether the same person or not, is clear. As no further information is provided, scholars and historians must undertake steps to mediate this incomplete narrative. As an incomplete narrative, this image reflects European understanding and attitudes rather than giving historical information. Further research into the contemporary origins of the photograph is required to understand the value of this colonial photograph as a historical source.

In the case of *Returning from Anamabu*, the national archives do not provide any further context surrounding the images other than placing the image in the 1890s. It is, however, possible to approach the image systematically and explore it from the context provided. By researching the name Kemp alongside keywords such as 'Anamabu' and within 1880-1900, it is possible to find a book written by Reverend Dennis Kemp: *Nine Years on The Gold Coast*, published in the late 1890s. From the context, one can assume that Mrs. Kemp of the image is Rev. Kemp's wife. In the book, the Reverend Kemp writes, 'After ten months of bachelor life, I had the joy of welcoming my wife, who was accompanied by Miss A. I. Jackman, the principal of our proposed girls' school.'[80] The image accompanying this anecdote is the same as from the National Archives, although with the caption 'a halt in the forest.'[81] The relation between Rev. Kemp and Mrs. Kemp is thus confirmed. Furthermore, Rev. Kemp writes of the death of Miss Jackman only three months after arriving on the Gold Coast. [82] Miss Amelia Jackman died on

[80] Rev. Dennis Kemp. *Nine Years At The Gold Coast*. (London: Macmillan And Co. Limited, 1898): p. 208
[81] Kemp. *Nine Years At The Gold Coast.* p. 210.
[82] Kemp. *Nine Years At The Gold Coast.* p. 214.

13 December 1894 after a short illness described as 'West Coast Fever'. [83] These all point towards a tentative date of 1894 for the image. Other textual sources are also made available by uncovering the backgrounds of Dennis Kemp, Mrs (Harriet) Kemp and Miss (Amelia) Jackman. From Dennis Kemps' book, it is clear he was interested in documenting his time in Africa, and the image is likely a part of this personal documentation.

Despite all this, the names of the other individuals in the image are still unknown, as they were not seen as significant enough to have their names written down, and instead, they are reduced to the positions in which they served Mrs Kemp. Uncovering this context from a single image is as much a stroke of luck as research. Most images, such as *CO1069-2-25*, do not have enough information to uncover who the individuals in the image are, nor the year of capture. However, it does illustrate how further research could help close the knowledge gaps in the archives.

COLONIAL BIAS

Image CO 1069-162-1, also known as *Tanganyika Territory. Sultan Ikoma and His Wives*.[84] Is a staged image of Sultan Ikoma and his household, including his five wives. The image itself is captivating, showing beautiful fabrics and jewellery. Within the cultures of the Tanganyika Territory, polygamy was widely practised, and the wives of Ikoma most likely held essential roles in their community. However, the cultural differences between Tanganyika and Europe in the early 1900s were stark, and images such as these could easily be misused and fetishised due to the exoticism of different marital practices. To represent Ikoma and his family rightfully, more context should be provided to dispel any potential colonial bias and further strengthen the narratives of those pictured.

TANGANYIKA TERRITORY. SULTAN IKOMA AND HIS WIVES

[83] Ann Cotterrell. "A Single Woman in West Africa." History Matters. History Today, July 10, 2018. https://www.historytoday.com/history-matters/single-woman-west-africa.
[84] Photographer Unknown. CO 1069-162-1: *Tanganyika Territory. Sultan Ikoma and His Wives.* Photograph. *The National Archives UK* (date unknown)

ASSESSMENT

The Through a Lens: Africa collection raises several ethical concerns when assessing them within the framework of these criteria. The images are often without context, depicting unknown and unnamed individuals and with little information on how to research the photographs further. The photos, whilst removed from their context, are not necessarily without it. As shown in *Returning from Anamabu*, the research has not been undertaken. Whilst the images can be assessed visually, the visual aspects of colonial photography are inadequate for critical research. And critical research is needed for the photos not to be misused or misinterpreted.

CONCLUSION

Although primarily a tool to present the African continent from a European cultural perspective, colonial photographs are vital historical sources, illustrating colonial rule with a depth not seen through textual sources. However, they can also be easily misconstrued when context is not provided. The Alice Seeley Harris photographs are inexplicitly tied to their context of the atrocities uncovered in the Congo Free State, and it is through this framework they need to be assessed. Similarly, without knowing the background of Leo Frobenius' photographic methods, his images can be used to replicate harmful stereotypes of African society. The lack of provided context does not mean there is no information about colonial photographs. The image *Returning from Anamabu* from Africa: Through a Lens Archive exemplifies this, showing how critical research might uncover hidden or disconnected contextual materials. As shown in this chapter, the context of colonial images is often complex, impacted by the intent of the photographer and the subject and influenced by the methods by which it is shared. Contexts can change, and meanings can be altered by adding textual materials, image descriptions and altered captions. Therefore, scholars must approach colonial photography coherently and systematically and continuously evaluate the ethics of using potentially sensitive or misleading materials throughout their research.

CHAPTER 2: THE ARCHIVE

INTRODUCTION

As the previous chapter established, colonial photographs have an inherent power imbalance. Many social, political, and cultural settings motivated colonial photography in their capture and later uses for the images. 'Hierarchies in terms of religion, race, gender, and class' mirror the sentiments of the photographers and colonial administrators.[85] The photographs located in the colonial archives were produced, catalogued, and preserved by colonial agents in some form or other. Often, these photographs have not been altered since they arrived in the archive. While the view of colonialism and its history has changed, these photographs and their original context might not have. This is not to say the idea of the archive has not changed. Private photographic archives are becoming more widespread in addition to national and institutional archives.[86] Researchers are frequently presented with previously unseen albums and collections depicting former colonies and donated to institutions or trusts for research or preservation. Adding new archival materials enriches the historical memory of the past and adds to the knowledge production of the archive. Archives are constantly evolving, and the idea of a colonial photographic archive may conjure up images of formal curatorial processes and institutional frameworks.[87] However, such archives can also have a more informal meaning, representing an entity that is not stable or a single phenomenon.[88]

A framework of understanding must be in place before approaching African colonial photographic collections. This encompasses critical approaches to postcolonial thinking, Indigenous rights movements, and institutional change, and debates about the potential meanings and uses of these materials have emerged, especially around photographic records.[89] This chapter aims to evaluate how the uses of the colonial photographic archive have changed, shifting perceptions of how we deal with colonial images both culturally and institutionally. This encompasses exploring the archives, their role as a knowledge production site, the role of the archivists, and the challenges of provenance in archival research. Furthermore, the chapter

[85] Luthra et al. "Unsilencing Colonial Archives": p. 1.
[86] Hahn. "On the Circulation of Colonial Pictures": p. 89.
[87] Morton and Newbury. "Introduction": p. 9.
[88] Morton and Newbury. "Introduction": p. 4.
[89] Brook Andrew and Jessica Neath. 'Encounters with Legacy Images: Decolonising and Re-imagining Photographic Evidence from the Colonial Archive,' History of Photography, 42:3, (2018): p. 218.

will examine different criteria used to evaluate what is archived and preserved and, using the case studies, provide a systematic evaluation of the selected archives, their uses and how they best benefit historical research.

WHAT IS THE ARCHIVE?

Critical and methodological literature regarding colonial photographic archives is still emerging. Historians Charles Jeurgens and Ton Kappelhof define colonial archives as 'process-bound information that flows from the constitution, maintenance, direction, management, exploitation and development of the territories and populations which have a relationship of administrative dependency on an external ruling power.'[90] Over the past two decades, scholars have shown increasing interest in the colonial archive, not only as a source of historical research but also as an object of study in its own right. Laura Ann Stoler's *Along the Archival Grain* (2008), James Lowry's *Displaced Archives* (2016), and J.J. Ghaddar and Michelle Caswell's "To Go Beyond: Towards a Decolonial Archival Praxis (2019) are some works that have contributed to this field."[91] Archives thus play a vital role in understanding colonial expansion and offer necessary primary materials that depict historically significant events and individuals. The critical interventions of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault suggest that the archive is a 'doubly inflected' concept, encompassing the material in its institutional location and immaterial in how it wields the power of framing and classifying historical knowledge.[92] This idea is built upon and developed by Laura Ann Stoler, who approaches the archive as a 'subject' rather than a source itself, setting aside preconceived ideas and focusing on the concept of the archive as a site for contesting knowledge. She urges scholars to read sources 'along the grain', to interpret the original context of the source, and then to read it 'against the grain' to dispel any preconceived or assumed knowledge of the reader and to locate the more hidden subaltern

[90] Charles Jeurgens and Ton Kappelhof, "Colonial Archives," in Charles Jeurgens, Ton Kappelhof and Michael Karabinos (eds.), *Colonial Legacy in South East Asia. The Dutch Archives* (The Hague: Stichting Archiefpublicaties, 2012): p. 11.
[91] Laura Ann Stoler. *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); James Lowry, ed. *Displaced Archives*. (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017); J.J. Ghaddar and Michelle Caswell. ""To go beyond": towards a decolonial archival praxis." *Arch Sci* 19, (2019)
[92] Anjali Nerlekar and Francesca Orsini. "Introduction: Postcolonial Archives", South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies, 45:2, (2022): p. 212; Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, A.M. Sheridan Smith (trans.) (London/New York: Routledge, 1989); Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, Eric Prenowitz (trans.) (Chicago, IL/London: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

narratives.[93] These methods will be used to examine archival photographs and their surrounding documents, which can offer a more nuanced viewpoint of colonial contexts.

Methods of archiving are not unbiased. As Verne Harris aptly put it, archives only offer 'a sliver of a sliver of a sliver.'[94] The materials not in the archives are just as relevant as those that are present and accounted for. As Marisa J. Fuentes puts it, the archive 'conceals, distorts and silences as much as it reveals.'[95] Ghaddar and Caswell reflect critically on the role archivists and archives play in describing and contextualising colonial records in terms of perpetuating or adjusting one-sided perspectives and power imbalances.[96] Archivists wield the power of knowledge, controlling how information retrieval from the archive is facilitated through descriptions, indexes, and categorisations.[97] Archivists and archival institutions need to be held responsible for establishing guidelines for using and navigating the colonial archive and accounting for the materials they have and the ones they do not.

The archive is a highly politicised site of knowledge production. Colonial photographic archives are not just repositories of historical images; the preservation and presentation of these objects are an inherent part of their purpose. At the time of their creation, it was European administrators who selected what was significant and should be put into archival collections, often without more than fleeting knowledge of the cultural or social context of the images, let alone of the indigenous or enslaved people pictured.[98] The uses of these materials were tailored towards preserving the colonial agenda, whether through science, administration, or cultural control. To use colonial photographic archives accurately and ethically, one must consider how photographs accumulate and the contexts in which they reside, including the archival situations in which those using the archives find them. Although its limitations and blind spots are well-known, colonial archives remain the primary documentation source for most histories of the colonial era, providing unparalleled coverage and detail.[99]

THE ARCHIVAL LANGUAGE

[93] Stoler. *Along the Archival Grain:* p. 43-44.
[94] Luthra et al. "Unsilencing Colonial Archives": p. 1.
[95] Marisa J. Fuentes. *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016): p. 48.
[96] Ghaddar and Caswell. "To go beyond": p. 85.
[97] Luthra et al. "Unsilencing Colonial Archives": p. 2.
[98] Luthra et al. "Unsilencing Colonial Archives": p. 1.
[99] Nerlekar and Orsini. "Introduction: Postcolonial Archives": p. 213.

Colonial archivists imbued their cataloguing with language and classifications, which enforced European hegemony. The language and methods used in colonial photographic archives objectified and dehumanised the subjects, defining people according to 'types' based on ethnic markers and pseudo-scientific racial typologies.[100] As established in Chapter One, photography became a tool for portraying 'truthful' and 'objective' representations, reproducing the state-sanctioned ideas of colonial society.[101] The imbalance of colonial knowledge is seen throughout the colonial archives, and care must be taken to avoid furthering colonial agendas and racist beliefs. As Laura Ann Stoler puts it, scholars who navigate the archive use reading methods 'against the grain' and 'from the bottom up' to locate alternative and hidden narratives.[102] Archives today must acknowledge this political agenda for researchers and students to understand and navigate the formulations of the archives.

Captions and image descriptions influence how users interpret the photographs in the archives. Therefore, how the archives address this is vital for a clear understanding of the colonial archive in the modern age. Most archives and all those used in this thesis – when known - are catalogued with original captions and image descriptions. The language used is often outdated, using colonial names for locations. For example, the use of Gold Coast, now Ghana and German West Africa, now known as Cameroon.[103] Racist beliefs often influence the original archival descriptions, and the terminology used is inappropriate. Removing these would ignore and cover the realities of colonial history; however, context should be provided to situate these descriptions within the colonial frame and not as a representation of current beliefs.

Methods of archiving fundamentally determine memory. As David Zeitlyn has recently argued, 'Archives represent the liminal phase between memory and forgetting'.[104] The narratives of the colonised and the enslaved are sorely lacking in the archives despite their presence in photographs and records.[105] There is an increased need for colonial images to represent

[100] Leora Farber. "Beyond the Ethnographic Turn: Refiguring the Archive in Selected Works by Zanele Muholi." Critical Arts, 31:2, (2017): p. 18.
[101] Farber. "Beyond the Ethnographic Turn": p. 18.
[102] Stoler. *Along the Archival Grain:* p. 47.
[103] Jennifer Scott. "Decolonising the Archive: Colonial Language in Our Archival Catalogue." Library, Archive & Open Research Services Blog. *London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine*, January 23, 2023. https://blogs.lshtm.ac.uk/library/2023/01/23/decolonising-the-archive-colonial-language-in-our-archival-catalogue/. Accessed. 20.10.23
[104] Michels. "Re-framing Photography": p. 12; David Zeitlyn. "Anthropology in and of the Archives: Possible Futures and Contingent Pasts. Archives as Anthropological Surrogates". *Annual Review of Anthropology*,41:1, (2012): p. 465-466.
[105] Luthra et al. "Unsilencing Colonial Archives": p. 3.

narratives and memory accurately. African photographs in Western archives and collections have had limited interaction with African culture and society, which is reflected in the language of remembering.[106] This is the reality of the displacement highlighted by James Lowry. For these photographs, their 'Africanness' somehow lies in their subject matter, at the level of the image, and yet also upon resilient Western ideas of Africa.[107] As archived objects, colonial photographs exist within a restricted sphere of social activity.[108] However, this also restricts members of the public from engaging and developing the context of these images. Until recent decades, colonial archives largely remained inaccessible to the indigenous people they portray.[109] Today, archivists must evaluate their holdings and the inherent context of their collections, evaluating the traces of colonised voices and enhancing them to present an accurate history of colonialism and its impact on African society.

PROVENANCE, OWNERSHIP, AND HERITAGE

The principle of provenance is one of the most essential categorising methods within archiving. It consists of keeping material in its original context, such as images in an album or alongside diaries or colonial reports. Provenance can encompass the context of a collection on a specific topic, a particular person or institution, or the situation in which it was created. The term is relative and not bound to a fixed category.[110] The idea of provenance in historical research is long-standing. However, the view of photographs as valuable historical sources is more recent. Less defined archival attention to colonial photography has led to the loss of provenance, further alienating images from their original contexts.[111] Having been long neglected as adequate historical sources, a very fragmentary documentation structure has developed. Issues of provenance within the colonial archives have received increasing attention. James Lowry establishes a 'state of affairs' in the historiography of colonial archives, emphasising how the turn towards critical examination of colonial archives is still being established, with materials continuously emerging. He engages in the repatriation debate and the politics of shared memory and heritage in a world where archives are often displaced from the regions to which

[106] Morton and Newbury. "Introduction": p. 5.
[107] Morton and Newbury. "Introduction": p. 5.
[108] Liam Buckley. "Objects of Love and Decay: Colonial Photographs in a Postcolonial Archive." *Cultural Anthropology* 20, no. 2 (2005): p. 251.
[109] Andrew and Neath. "Encounters with Legacy Images": p. 218.
[110] Prussat. "Reflexions on the Photographic Archive": p 140.
[111] Prussat. "Reflexions on the Photographic Archive": p 134.

they pertain.[112] Lowry's assertion can be transposed to the state of historiography concerning colonial photographic archives. The photographs in colonial archives often illustrate scenes far removed from their situational contexts.

Photographs from colonial endeavours enter the archive from a vast array of sources, as part of personal papers, whole collections, or as personal remains. And sometimes, these images have little to no context. In these cases, the archivist must incorporate specific criteria for evaluation, as well as document and communicate this lack of context, to make the history of the archive transparent.[113] Valuable information, such as time, place or photographer, is vital for interpreting the context of individual images. With whole collections, the lack of provenance makes historical research nearly impossible, as archival research bases itself around knowledge of the creation of the collection or the context in which it entered the archive. [114] Furthermore, the place and time-dependent context is often determined by provenance. However, some items or whole origins remain unknown due to the long neglect of photographs as an adequate historical source material. As illustrated in the previous chapter with the Mrs. Kemp image, this does not mean there is nothing to discover about these images and their more extensive collection. This goes a long way to prove that provenances can be reconstructed with the help of critical research and supportive documents from within and outside the archive.[115]

Ownership and authorship within the colonial archives need to be reevaluated. Colonial photographic collections are often donated to archives, and rights are transferred to the relevant institutions. For the photographed subjects and their descendants, agency regarding using these images is not usually considered. As Ghaddar and Caswell argue, 'colonial legacies and structures complicate claims over the ownership and custodianship of archives; raise questions about the necessity for archival repatriation and reclamation; call for more expansive notions of creatorship and provenance or a dispensation with provenance entirely'.[116] As archives face challenges of 'accurate' or 'truthful' representation, the repatriation debate has flourished. There are still challenges to the repatriation process, especially regarding colonial photographic archives where the issues of provenance are significant. Furthermore, the indigenous source communities are not a homogenous collective, unambiguously defined by ethnicity, as people

[112] Lowry. *Displaced Archives:* p. 1-11.
[113] Prussat. "Reflexions on the Photographic Archive": p 141.
[114] Prussat. "Reflexions on the Photographic Archive": p 140.
[115] Prussat. "Reflexions on the Photographic Archive": p 140-141.
[116] Ghaddar and Caswell. "To go beyond": p. 80.

move and identities shift.[117] repatriation projects offer new opportunities and widen participation in knowledge production surrounding colonial photographs. In Canada, initiatives based on shared ownership and authorship have been used in museums to 'pluralise, democratise and decolonise relations with, and representations of, Indigenous peoples'.[118] Museums have been encouraged to allow communities to speak for themselves, allowing more 'dynamic and authored polyvocal exhibits'.[119] As Haney and Bajorek emphasise, 'Repatriation projects are vivid gestures of goodwill and cooperation', allowing for new knowledge production.[120] For archives to follow this trend would broaden the narratives of the archives further, giving voice to the long-overlooked indigenous African communities and allowing for a more dynamic historical record.

Repatriation and ownership influence how cultural heritage is maintained. Heritage is formed through how a community interacts with their histories, cultures, and variegated identities, and indigenous communities can reclaim parts of their heritage by engaging with archival records.[121] In *Uses of Heritage* (2006), Laurajane Smith agrees with this sentiment, stating that heritage is a discourse that is 'concerned with the negotiation and regulation of social meanings and practices associated with the creation and recreation of 'identity.'' [122] However when objects are owned and controlled by institutions and organisations, their influence and impact are limited. Jamila J. Ghaddar and Michelle Caswell weigh in on the heritage and repatriation debate, critically assessing the ownership and custodianship of archives and how this shapes colonial legacies, arguing there is an urgent need to reflect on the ethics of archiving and recordkeeping to meet broader societal needs.[123] For communities to use and interact with their histories, they require the agency to interact with these archival objects without institutional restrictions of use. Significantly, with their visuality, colonial photographs can be used to rediscover and connect with sites, people, and objects of cultural significance. However, for this to be possible, restrictions on using colonial photographs must allow for community

[117] Sophie Feyder. "Searching for the 'source community': The Ronald Ngilima photographic archive and the politics of local history in post-apartheid South Africa" in Christopher Morton and Darren Newbury. *The African Photographic Archive: Research and Curatorial Strategies*. (1st ed. London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2015): p. 151.
[118] Bryony Onciul. *Museums, Heritage and Indigenous Voice: Decolonizing Engagement*. 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2015): p. 1.
[119] Onciul. *Museums, Heritage and Indigenous Voice:* p. 7.
[120] Haney, "Vital signs": p. 216.
[121] Onciul. *Museums, Heritage and Indigenous Voice:* p. 8.
[122] Laurajane Smith. *Uses of Heritage*. 1st ed. (Florence: Routledge, 2007): p. 5.
[123] Ghaddar and Caswell. "To go beyond": p. 80.

involvement and influence. The legal framework of ownership of colonial photographs should be broadened to include ethical considerations and rights of representation. In this way, indigenous communities will have the agency to use and interpret archival materials and use them as foundations for self-representation and heritage formation.

EXAMINING THE ARCHIVES

As the uses and trajectory of the colonial photographic archive have changed, so have the frameworks of how researchers should approach the archives and how archivists manage them. The second section of this chapter will encompass an evaluation of the archival case studies according to a set of five overarching criteria informed by the first section of the chapter:

What is the purpose of the archive?

What information is provided about the images?

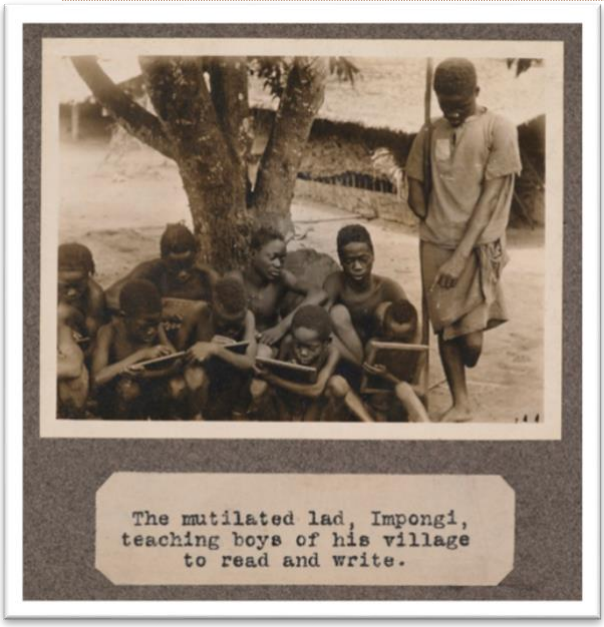
What context is available regarding individual images - photographer, date, subjects, and location?

How does the archive address the colonial legacies?

What work is being done to address provenance and memory research?

Each assessment will be summarised, and a judgement based on the accessibility of the archives, their addressing of colonial legacy and further engagement with provenance and memory research will be made.

THE ALICE SEELEY HARRIS ARCHIVE



The Alice Seeley Harris Archive consists of a collection of photographs produced by the British missionary Alice Seeley Harris (1870-1970) during her time in the Congo Free State at the turn of the nineteenth into the twentieth century. It comprises of 497 photographs, most from the Congo Free State, with a handful taken in Angola.[124]

THE PURPOSE OF THE ARCHIVE:

The purpose of the Alice Seely Harris archive is to showcase 'the lessons of historic abolitionism for contemporary use - providing the movement against contemporary global slavery with a usable past of antislavery examples and methods.'[125] The archive is a part of the Antislavery Usable Past project. It is run by academic researchers based at Nottingham University. However, the use of the archive is tailored towards more than just an academic audience. The website also dedicates a paragraph on the specific context situating the archive into the broader debate surrounding representation: 'Alice's photographs form part of an antislavery tradition in Britain that has

[124] Alice S. Harris. The Mutilated Lad, Impongi teaching boys of village to read and write. Photograph. Antislavery Usable Past. (1911-1912)
Alice S. Harris. Mr Harris shewing Portrait of Dr. Thomas Hodgkin to Bakuba Natives, Upper Kasai. Photograph. Antislavery Usable Past. (1911-1912)
[125] Antislavery Usable Past, "Alice Harris Archive".

spoken on behalf of enslaved people, rather than empowering them to speak for themselves.'[126] Furthermore, it emphasises how the photographs and their context 'photographs raise difficult questions about who has the power to represent, who has the power to bring about change, and who is denied this capacity both historically and in the present.' The purpose of the archive is clearly stated, and the broader contemporary and historical context is highlighted throughout. Furthermore, all contributors and collaborators have been acknowledged, illustrating the efforts towards transparency, and showcasing potential influences.

INFORMATION REGARDING THE IMAGES:

The starting page of the archive has an in-depth background on Alice Harris as the photographer, the purpose of her photography and how the images should be seen concerning the time at which the images were produced. It urges the archive users to see the photographs considering the 'history of the British empire and the racial thinking underpinning it'. Furthermore, the site explains how users should be aware that photographs taken by Europeans in Africa during the colonial era often 'presented the continent's rich and varied cultures as primitive' to legitimise colonialism and European cultural superiority.

A guide for users is provided before accessing the images regarding the language used for the photographs and their original captions. It explains how the original captions are used as each photograph's title. More significantly, the guide highlights how the language and concepts - such as '*half-caste'* - are not 'in common parlance today' and are not appropriate descriptors to modern readers. However, it is clarified that these captions are kept to understand how the use of racial language shapes the photograph's original meaning. Similarly, a disclaimer is made regarding using navigational tags and categorisations of the images; 'The images have been tagged using the generalised description of the individuals who feature in them, e.g., African child; or European man.' The archive, to be transparent, acknowledges that this does not allow for 'individual subjectivity' and removes peoples' right to self-definition. These

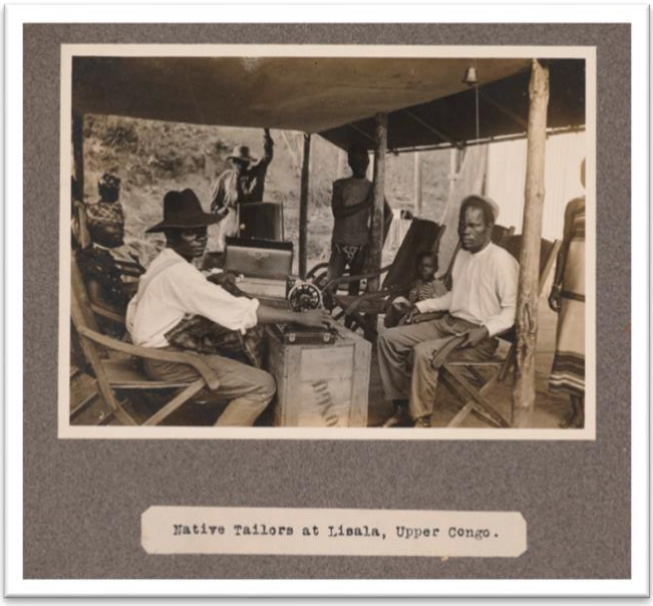
[126] Antislavery Usable Past, "Alice Harris Archive".

categorisations risk 'wrongly attributing or imposing meaning'. Nevertheless, despite these shortfalls, their use is required to make the archive searchable.

The information regarding the collection of images is well-structured, nuanced, and informative. With the information provided, users can assess the images with a basic understanding of their purpose and situational context within the archive. Furthermore, the overview situates the archive within the debate of colonial legacy, addressing and acknowledging the impact of colonialism on how the images are used and the power they hold.

INDIVIDUAL CONTEXTS

The lack of dates seen in the archive overview is present throughout the individual images. Despite stating that Alice Harris visited the Congo Free State during the late 1890s-early 1900s, no dates or years are specified. Furthermore, the subjects are rarely named and often categorised by ethnicity, trade, or locality; 'native tailors' 'Bakuba natives.'[127] The locations are almost always provided, however, and the images are sorted according to relation, meaning the same individuals can be traced through several images and tied to a location.



COLONIALITY, MEMORY AND HERITAGE

The archive directly addresses the prevalence of colonial legacies within the archives and the difficulty in balanced representation, emphasising the methods used to navigate these difficulties: 'The original Alice Seeley Harris Archive and the Congo Atrocity Lantern Lecture represented African people through the colonial gaze. In replicating these archives, we are aware of the potential to reinstate that way of seeing difference.'

[127] Alice S. Harris. *Native Spearing fish on Kasai River*. Photograph. *Antislavery Usable Past*. (1911-1912); Alice S. Harris. *Native Tailors at Lisala, Upper Congo*. Photograph. *Antislavery Usable Past*. (1911-1912)

However, to make a more balanced representation, the archive has commissioned two projects *Decomposing the Colonial Gaze: Yole! Africa;* and *You Should Know Me: Photography and the Congolese Diaspora.*[128] These projects are featured in the archive and include new material critically engaging with the archive and its materials. Furthermore, the archive has closely collaborated with the *Antislavery Knowledge Network* at the University of Liverpool, which 'seeks community-led strategies for creative and heritage-based interventions in sub-Saharan Africa.' A list of further reading regarding the research on the archives is attached to the information page, allowing users to easily locate secondary information and current research on the images portrayed.

ASSESSMENT

The Alice Seely Harris Archive raises questions about representation, power, and the potential for change across historical and modern contexts. Its primary objective is to educate on the history of humanitarian and anti-slavery movements, which it achieves by providing a comprehensive and contextualised view of its collections within their historical and situational backgrounds. The archive's commitment to transparency is evident in its archival process, which acknowledges any gaps in information, such as missing dates and names. Moreover, the archive provides additional secondary materials for further research, which can be accessed on its archives page. The archive's notable emphasis on recognising its contributors and collaborators is vital in promoting informational transparency.

[128] Antislavery Usable Past. "Decomposing the Colonial Gaze." Accessed September 7, 2023 -December 4, 2023 http://antislavery.nottingham.ac.uk/solr-search?facet=collection%3A%22Photography+and+the+Congolese+Diaspora%22.; Antislavery Usable Past. "Photography and the Congolese Diaspora" Accessed September 7, 2023 -December 4, 2023. http://antislavery.nottingham.ac.uk/solr-search?facet=collection%3A%22Photography+and+the+Congolese+Diaspora%22

THE FROBENIUS PHOTO ARCHIVE

The Frobenius Archive is a part of the Frobenius Research Institute into Cultural Anthropology. It was founded by Leo Frobenius (1873-1938) in 1898 by launching his *Afrika Archiv* (Africa Archive) as a private foundation focused on researching Africa and its cultures.[129] This thesis is concentrated on Leo Frobenius' photographs from his first two expeditions throughout the African continent in the early 1900s, his first in 1904-1906 to the Kasai region (Now part of the Democratic Republic of Congo) and the fourth to Nigeria and Cameroon in 1910-1912. Richard Kuba, a senior research fellow at the Frobenius Institute, describes Frobenius as looking for ancient origins and the 'old original African warm-blooded culture' and that Frobenius himself 'regarded it as his duty – as a 'rescue archaeologist' – to document as much as possible of this cultural legacy on the eve of its ultimate extinction'.[130] His goal with the *Afrika Archiv* was thus to 'record African cultural expressions on a continental scale' and preserve African cultures apart from colonial modernity.[131]

DIE BOYS (THE BOYS) KATARAJA, SCHAMBA, PALIA MESSA UND TSCHIKAJA BEIM MAHL IN MITSCHAKILA

THE PURPOSE OF THE ARCHIVE

The current iteration of the archive is much broader than what Leo Frobenius originally set out to establish, now spanning material from around the globe and continuously evolving. However, the purpose of anthropological research into world cultures is still present. The pictorial archive holds over sixty thousand images as of 2023. The archive's overall purpose is to further research into indigenous cultures, and the increasing globalisation of the world. It is an independent research institution, and their target user group is academics and scholars.

ARCHIVAL INFORMATION

[129] Leo Frobenius. *Die Boys Kataraja, Schamba, Palia Messa und Tschikaja beim Mahl in Mitschakila.* Photograph. *The Frobenius Institute.* (1904-1906)
[130] Kuba. "Portraits of Distant Worlds": p. 110.
[131] Kuba. "Portraits of Distant Worlds": p. 110.

Unlike the Alice Seely Harris archive, the Frobenius archive does not have a site to explain the use and purpose of the collections. This might be due to the larger scale of the Frobenius archive and the broader purpose of the archive's research. Almost no information about the collections or photographs is provided beyond their tags and classifications. It is only by using secondary material that researchers can fully understand Leo Frobenius and the intent of his photography.

Most significant is the omission of Frobenius' particular style of photography from the archive. As Kuba puts it 'What is almost entirely missing in Frobenius' corpus of images is any hint to modernity.'[132] Frobenius' images carefully avoid capturing any signs of modernisation and colonisation, such as 'railways, plantations, bridges and western architecture.'[133] Another note on the style of Frobenius' photography is how he endeavoured to document the people and cultures 'in situ' rather than staging them in traditional clothing and with indigenous objects to highlight their exoticism, unlike many colonial photographers at the time.[134]

IMAGE CONTEXT AND CATEGORISATION

The images are sorted into collections categorised by their expedition number: *001 Kongo (1904-1906)*; *004 Nigeria, Kamerun (1910-1912)*. These are also navigable tags which can be used to find illustrations and maps from the same collections. Each photograph is catalogued with its original context, photographer/author (if known), original title (in German), region, description, and any known individuals in the image. This method of archiving makes the archive easy to navigate and understand. However, whilst the archive is available in English and German, the original titles and comments are only available in German, meaning translation is needed for non-German readers to fully understand the archive.

The named individuals are predominantly white Europeans, whilst indigenous Africans are sorted by ethnic group. This can be seen in the below image, where the person in the foreground is not named, whilst the one in the background is, despite not being the focus of the image. Richard Kuba notes that the tag 'ethnic group' was originally a category of 'ethnic type', which

[132] Kuba. "Portraits of Distant Worlds": p. 119.
[133] Kuba. "Portraits of Distant Worlds": p. 119.
[134] Kuba. "Portraits of Distant Worlds": p. 119.

meant that photographed persons were 'not depicted as individuals but as specimens standing in for an entire ethnic group.' When this category was introduced is unknown, but Kuba estimates it as predating the Second World War. [135] The changing of the category's name indicates that the archivists actively use inclusive language and update their site to adapt to decolonising archiving methods.

LEGACY, MEMORY, AND PROVENANCE

The Frobenius archive does not directly address their colonial legacy or the one of Leo Frobenius. However, Richard Kuba outlines how the archive has undergone methods to bridge the colonial information gap in the archive, such as integrating the names of the indigenous individuals in the images where such a name was 'passed down in the records, thus connecting the photographs to the lives of their subjects.[136] Kuba furthermore emphasises how 'the way the material is ordered, indexed, described and presented can in itself perpetuate powerful Eurocentric narratives about the 'Other'.'[137] This, however, is not present in the archive itself, and the secondary material is not directly available through the archive.

ASSESSMENT

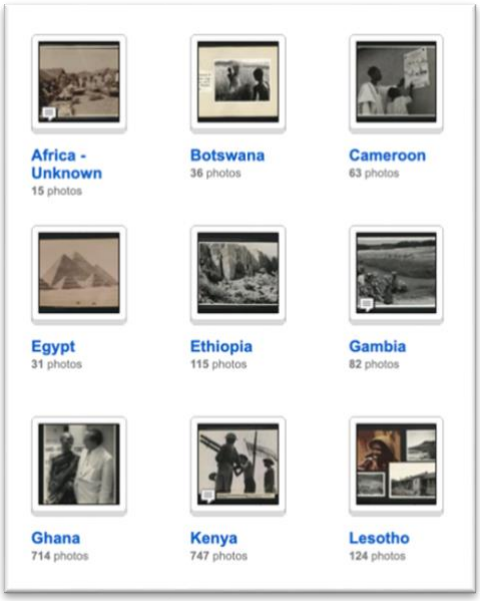
The Frobenius Archive holds a valuable collection of photographs that documents various aspects of African indigenous cultural and social practices. As a research-based archive, the use of the archive is tailored towards use by scholars. It is, therefore, important to note that the archive is not self-explanatory and requires supplementary materials to provide a comprehensive understanding of the images and their context. While the photographs provide

[135] Kuba. "Portraits of Distant Worlds": p. 120.
[136] Kuba. "Portraits of Distant Worlds": p. 121.
[137] Kuba. "Portraits of Distant Worlds": p. 121.

a visual representation of the practices, the archive does not explain the cultural significance or historical context of the photographs, in particular its colonial legacy. Navigation of the archive must take place together with textual sources not found in the archive, that can offer insights into the intent of Leo Frobenius and the nature of the photographs. Without this collaboration between visual and textual materials, the archive can be easily misinterpreted or misunderstood.

THE WORLD THROUGH A LENS: AFRICA ARCHIVE

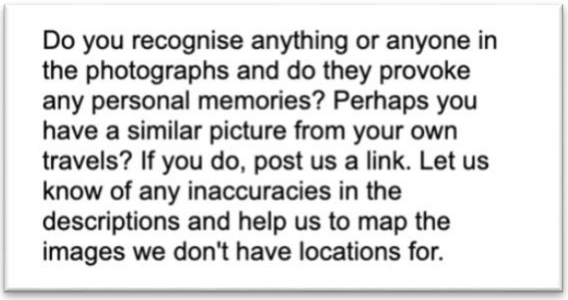
The Records of the Colonial Office in the National Archive comprises a series of colonial photographs and documents created or catalogued by the Colonial Office between 1854 and 1966. Particularly, the colonial photographs are sorted within a collection named *CO1069*. The National Archives is by far the largest photographic archive used for this thesis, and therefore, criteria needed to be implemented to narrow down the selection. A series of the images was selected in 2011 as part of a series on world cultures and publicised under the headline 'World through a Lens: Africa'. This archive is comprised of 26 albums divided by country. This thesis will explore a cross-section of this archive.



THE PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTION DIVIDED BY COUNTRIES.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE ARCHIVE?

The purpose of the World Through a Lens: Africa Archive is to gain more information on colonial images found in the archives. These images are removed from their original contexts and often have little to no information provided. The National Archives have published them to gain information from the wider public. The archival page site states, 'In many instances, we know little about the people or contents of the photographs, and this is one of the reasons why we have published them online and asked people to comment and share their knowledge.' [138] Whilst part of a governmental archive, the World Through a Lens: Africa Archive is intended towards both national and international use, and does not have a specific scholarly or educational target group.


Do you recognise anything or anyone in the photographs and do they provoke any personal memories? Perhaps you have a similar picture from your own travels? If you do, post us a link. Let us know of any inaccuracies in the descriptions and help us to map the images we don't have locations for.

PART OF THE ARCHIVAL DESCRIPTION FOR THE WORLD THROUGH A LENS: AFRICA COLLECTION

LANGUAGE, CAPTIONS, AND COLONIAL CONTEXTS

[138] "World Through a Lens: Africa." Flickr. The British National Archives.

As with the Alice Seely Harris Archive, the National Archive provides a disclaimer regarding the nature of the pictures and their original captions, emphasising how they are 'representative of the time they were taken'.[139] They further state that the preservation and presentation of these images and captions are necessary to 'preserve the integrity of the historic public record' as originally captured.[140] However, no more information regarding the colonial legacy, nor the situational contexts of the images are forthcoming. Interestingly, the subcategories of countries do not have any notes or descriptions regarding their specific ties to colonialism or the wider context of colonial rule in the territories, despite being run by the British National Archives, which holds all this information within their archives.

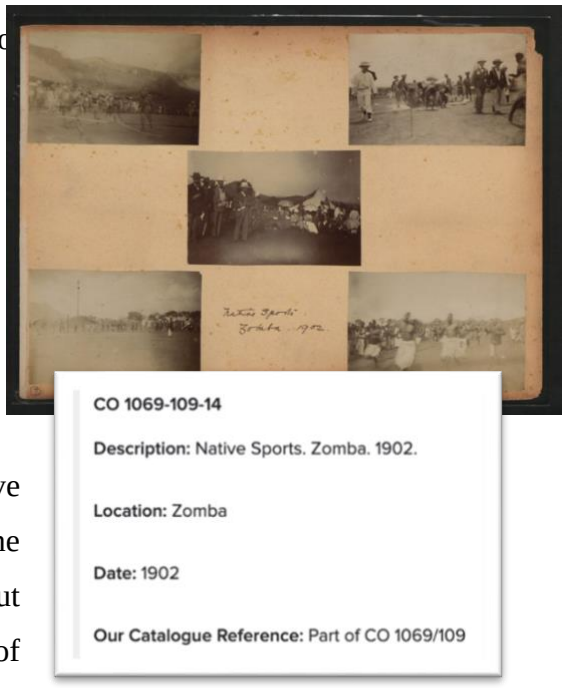
Photographs tagged with locations are often tagged with their colonial names, and these labels do not include updated information on current names. Using this colonial language without noting its implications might further colonial agendas and influence how contemporary viewers of the archive interpret the sources.

IMAGE CONTEXTS:

Few of the photographs within the Through a Lens: Africa archive have any specified dates, subjects or locations noted beyond the countries. A set of dates are estimated at points within a range of a decade. However, this does not narrow it down for research when all the other details are omitted. Sometimes, information can be gathered from looking at related items, such as from this scanned album page with three portraits and a group image, with the only context provided being the location: Zomba, a city within Malawi.[141]

Furthermore, by looking through the Malawi album, one can locate a scanned album page from what visually resembles the same album with the same location. Assuming these photographs

[139] "World Through a Lens: Africa." Flickr. The British National Archives.
[140] "World Through a Lens: Africa." Flickr. The British National Archives.
[141] Photographer Unknown. CO 1069-109-19 *The National Archives UK* (Date Unknown: possibly 1902)



are dated around the same date, a year can be derived: 1902. However, more than this is hard to locate through the archive itself.[142]

PROVENANCE AND MEMORY RESEARCH

Unfortunately, the photographs within the archive have been removed from their situational context, making the provenance of any of the images hard to locate. Without a note on who captures the photographs, nor the owner of the albums, and with a lack of dates and years, the images remain difficult to research critically. This also hinders any further research from the public, despite this being the main purpose of the publication of the archive.

ASSESSMENT

The World Through a Lens: Africa Archive is an initiative that aims to provide additional context for the colonial images held by the National Archive in the UK. However, the project falls short of achieving its intended goal. While it aims to provide context, the existing information gaps and lack of supporting documents make it challenging for researchers outside the National Archives to assess the photographs critically. The continued use of colonial language and tags without additional information, corrections, or interpretations reinforces colonial notions of race and control, a significant concern considering its intended purpose. The organisation of the archive highlights the importance of provenance, illustrating how difficult it is to restore photographs once they have been removed from it. The World Through a Lens: Africa Archive has a lot of potential to provide valuable insights, but it needs to address its gaps and provide more context to help researchers better understand the photographs' historical significance.

[142] Photographer Unknown. CO 1069-109-14. *The National Archives UK* (Date Unknown: possibly 1902)

CONCLUSION

To ethically utilise colonial photographic archives, it is crucial to have a comprehensive understanding of how the photographs were collected, their respective contexts, and the archival settings in which researchers may encounter them. By assessing their contemporary and historical purpose, researchers can place the archives within a colonial framework, unravelling the colonial narratives and discovering the unbalanced narratives within them. The curators and archivists of these archives have a moral obligation to control how information is accessed through descriptions, indexes, and categorisations. This chapter has illustrated how the Alice Seely Harris Archive and the World Through a Lens: Africa Archive serve as polarising examples of the importance of archivists in presenting information to further archival research. Furthermore, this chapter has touched upon the importance of archives to actively engage in repatriation and heritage projects. Due to colonial legacies and structures, it is challenging for indigenous communities to claim ownership and custodianship of archival objects. However, as shown throughout the chapter, repatriation projects offer new opportunities and broaden participation in knowledge production surrounding colonial photographs. Following this trend would expand the narratives of the archives further, giving voice to long-overlooked indigenous African communities and allowing for a more dynamic historical record.

CHAPTER 3: DIGITALISING COLONIAL PHOTOGRAPHS

INTRODUCTION

As the previous chapters have established, photography has always been a 'crucial site of interaction', revealing much about the relationship between the photographer, subject, and intended audience.[143] In the changing trajectory of colonial photography, digitalisation and the internet have made it possible to access colonial photography at a much larger scale than ever before. Images never seen in public may soon become accessible for the first time through exhibitions, online databases, catalogues, and books within the next few years. It is important to note that digitalisation has made colonial archives open and accessible to everyone, especially beyond the academic sphere. While this has been a challenge for researchers and critical historians looking to uncover contradictions of the colonial era, it has also provided a platform for 'colonial apologists to paint an idealised version of the colonial world.' [144]

The availability of primary sources has allowed for a more nuanced understanding of colonialism and its effects. Still, it has also given rise to debates over how to interpret the past and how archives should shape our understanding of history.[145] Photographs made publicly available may be subject to misuse through reconstructing an idealised world that ignores the injustices of colonialism. Scholars within the social sciences, including history and anthropology, are responsible for thoroughly analysing and providing well-supported interpretations that set the boundaries for plausible readings.[146] As Margit Prussat stresses, a series of questions arise in this changing trajectory of colonial photographs surrounding 'preservation and restoration, selection, description, digitisation, accessibility and rights management.' [147] This chapter will evaluate the current state of digitalisation by exploring how it is accomplished, how digitalisation engages with repatriation, and the creation of heritage and memory through digital media and beyond. Furthermore, it will critically assess the ethical concerns of open-access archives and the potential frameworks to be implemented on a moral

[143] Pedri-Spade. "'But They Were Never Only the Master's Tools'": p.109; Anita Herle. "John Laynard long Malakula 1914–1915: The potency of field photography." In Morton C., Edwards E. (Eds.), *Photography, anthropology and history: Expanding the frame*. (Burlington, VT: Ashgate. 2009): p. 241.
[144] Hahn. "On the Circulation of Colonial Pictures": p. 91.
[145] Hahn. "On the Circulation of Colonial Pictures": p. 91.
[146] Hahn. "On the Circulation of Colonial Pictures": p. 91.
[147] Prussat. "Reflexions on the Photographic Archive": p. 136.

basis. Through a set of criteria, the chapter will then evaluate how the three archival case studies have digitalised and explore to what extent their digitalisation has been ethical.

Hans Peter Hahn writes in his essay *On the Circulation of Colonial Pictures*: 'While the presence of these old pictures from all over the world grows more obvious, the intensity of the connection between politics, ideology, and new media is now becoming apparent.'[148] This chapter will argue that scholars and academics have a moral obligation to provide context which can define interpretations of colonial photographs and dispel ambiguity and misinterpretation. The problem arises when archives digitalise 'sensitive' photographs representing violated subjects who did not consent to be photographed or for that photograph to be circulated. The topic is highly controversial, with the artist and activist Nashilongweshipwe Mushaandja stating, 'It is incredibly triggering and traumatising to re-encounter these images and moments' when discussing colonial photographs depicting colonial violence. Temi Odumoso argues that 'there are clear gaps between what is legal to do and what is tolerable or just' when reproducing, recording and sharing sensitive images in 'this new data reality'.[149] Scholars should critically evaluate the moral implications of publicising images showcasing human remains or children with mutilated bodies and the context provided with these images. A framework should be established for the mass digitalisation of photographic archives.

DIGITALISATION

Digitalisation makes historical materials available to a broader audience who may not have access to the physical archives. This is especially beneficial for people who live far from the archives or may not have the resources to travel and visit them. Furthermore, digitisation allows for greater access to data and metadata, which is especially helpful for academic research. Critical analysis benefits from having all the information regarding an object at hand, both the object and its broader context. Additionally, digitalised materials offer opportunities for wider engagement beyond academia. This is especially the case for colonial photography, where the visual and artistic aspects draw the attention of both passive observers and researchers. Lastly, digitalising objects reduces the wear and tear of the original materials, as the need for handling and exposure to damaging environments becomes less frequent. For fragile negatives and film

[148] Hahn. "On the Circulation of Colonial Pictures": p. 89.
[149] Temi Odumosu. "The Crying Child." *Current Anthropology 61*, no. S22 (2020): p. 290.

rolls, this extends their lifespan tenfold. However, access to archival documents and photographs still primarily occurs through the reading rooms of archives, where researchers can examine the originals. One of the reasons for this is that the digitalisation of materials removes the physical factors of an object, which is not always beneficial. The primary sources offer unique perspectives and research methods unavailable in secondary or digital forms. For instance, the material aspects of historical items, such as annotated albums, can be better analysed by viewing the original rather than their digital versions, which is crucial in historical criticism.

Digitalisation is more than a series of technical processes. National and racial imaginations, power differences, and colonial legacies impact it.[150] The original aim of the colonial archives was not only to keep track of imperialist production but also to naturalise and justify the system of forced labour and racial subjugation.[151] This violence is still part of the colonial records in their classifications, captions, and descriptions. If not addressed, it can be reproduced in 'digital architecture' by archives mirroring the organisation of information created by colonial agents.[152] Jessica Marie Johnson highlights how this is already happening within databases on slavery, where enslaved Africans' biometrics are reinscribed by carrying 'the racial nomenclature of the time period (*négre, moreno, quadroon*) into the present and encode skin colour, hair texture, height, weight, age, and gender in new digital forms, replicating the surveilling actions of slave owners and slave traders.' [153] Within these databases, this replication of colonial organisational methods is complemented by categorisations and tags, which, in turn, 'further commodify and abstract already abstracted bodies'.[154] The options to zoom in or save thumbnail pictures of abused bodies distort the violence and distance the observer from the realities of colonial violence with no ethical repercussions.

A 'framework of care' must be in place for an ethical digitalisation process. The issue of handling the negative impact of open access to disputed and hateful records is becoming more prevalent in digitisation initiatives. In their article *From Human Rights to feminist ethics: Radical Empathy in the Archives*, Michelle Caswell and Marika Cifor outline how the changing

[150] Agostinho. "Archival Encounters": p. 162.
[151] Agostinho. "Archival Encounters": p. 155.
[152] Jessica Marie Johnson. "Markup Bodies: Black [Life] Studies and Slavery [Death] Studies at the Digital Crossroads." Social Text (December 2018): p. 58.
[153] Johnson. "Markup Bodies": p. 58.
[154] Agostinho. "Archival Encounters": p. 156.

trajectory of the colonial archives has developed a need for a feminist ethics of care within the archival practice.[155] They propose that archivists should be 'seen as caregivers, bound to records creators, subjects, users, and communities through a web of mutual affective responsibility'. [156] This approach also urges scholars and researchers to consider their perspectives in using and representing archival materials, going beyond the legal rights of records creators, considering the personhood of the subject and the relationship between them and the photographer.[157] Digitalisation must, therefore, happen in tandem with an intellectual decolonisation of the colonial archives. By acknowledging the colonial politics, gaps in knowledge, and instances of violence within archival materials, the dynamics of colonialism can be confronted, challenging narratives of colonial innocence and filling in the silences of the archive with materials and narratives that accurately reflect the experiences of documented communities.[158] Through decolonising digital archives, the individual histories of people and places can be reframed and rediscovered while acknowledging the silences still present throughout the colonial record. This entails incorporating the ethical approaches to archiving through language, access, and community engagement, as seen in chapters one and two.

Photography as a medium garners attention, and through this, digital photographic archives can aid viewers in confronting the colonial past, seeing how it relates to the modern world, and gaining a better understanding of the need for decolonisation across archives and academia. Roopika Risam suggests that the creation of digital archives should not simply be 'a matter of transcribing and digitising texts, but of producing new knowledge as well.'[159] A continuous dialogue between the archival sciences and academic humanities and involved communities needs to be in place to decolonise the narratives and actively create new inclusive practices. Thus, institutions and organisations digitalising their colonial photographic collections must acknowledge and question the inherited colonial influences within their archives, recognising and confronting them rather than re-quantifying them through digital mediums.

The 'digital afterlife' of the colonial archive is significant when shifting colonial materials to digital spaces. Digitalised colonial images risk being further extracted from their production

[155] Michelle Caswell and Marika Cifor. "From Human Rights to Feminist Ethics: Radical Empathy in the Archives". *Archivaria* 81 (May, 2016).
[156] Caswell and Cifor. "From Human Rights to Feminist Ethics": p. 24.
[157] Agostinho. "Archival Encounters": p. 159.
[158] Agostinho. "Archival Encounters": p. 144-145.
[159] Roopika Risam. *New Digital Worlds. Postcolonial Digital Humanities in Theory, Praxis, And Pedagogy.* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2018): p. 58.

and storage context. Colonial material, notably photographs, will be subject to posthuman curation processes through algorithms that will 'dictate new contexts for their reception.'[160] This is particularly problematic when these images represent violated subjects photographed against their will.[161] Critical assessments of the effects of digitisation on cultural heritage politics, practices, and values are not new. In 1981, F. Gerald Ham wrote about how technology paved the way for a new 'postcustodial' era.[162] Ham highlights how technology allows for rapid reproduction of any document, photograph, or data set.[163] However, with this improvement came questions of ensuring provenance is kept when objects could easily be singled out and moved, not to mention manipulated.[164] Digital archives must, therefore, not only avoid furthering colonial ideals but also develop methods for ensuring the material they hold is being ethically reproduced and used.

OWNERSHIP AND REPATRIATION

The debate over repatriation raises complex questions about the ownership, preservation, and accessibility of cultural heritage and the relationship between former colonisers and their former colonies. Digitalisation has become a central point within this debate. In most countries, the law privileges the rights of the photographer rather than the subject because a photograph is only viewed as 'a representation' of a subject.[165] Through donation, the rights to the photographs are transferred from the photographer to the institution that holds them without notifying the subjects of these changes. Digitalisation offers greater access to historical records and virtual reunification, particularly for descendants of the indigenous communities documented within them.[166] However, it is essential to note that this virtual reunification is not the same as repatriation, and the communities do not retain ownership of the photographs through these initiatives. They are, therefore, still dependent on the guidelines and requirements set out by institutions and organisations that own the originals.[167] In fact, only copies of photographs tend to be repatriated to individuals and communities. At the same time, originals remain within institutional archives. As Celeste Pedri-Spade notes, 'it may be challenging for

[160] Agostinho. "Archival Encounters": p. 157.
[161] Agostinho. "Archival Encounters": p. 162.
[162] Odumosu. "The Crying Child.": p. 289.
[163] F. Gerald Ham. "Archival Strategies for the Post-Custodial Era." *The American Archivist* 44, no. 3 (1981): p. 208.
[164] Ham. "Archival Strategies": p. 209.
[165] Pedri-Spade. "'But They Were Never Only the Master's Tools'": p. 111.
[166] Agostinho**. "**Archival Encounters": p. 142.
[167] Pedri-Spade. "'But They Were Never Only the Master's Tools'": p. 111.

an individual working through legacies of colonial trauma to negotiate the idea that their relative is still 'locked up' within the archive.'[168] This separation of photographs from the communities they portray mirrors that of colonial ownership, and mediation of who owns and influences these artefacts would be a step closer to decolonising the archives and the access to them.

There exists, to this date, no legal framework for Indigenous communities to exercise control and agency over colonial photographs of themselves or their ancestors.[169] There are, however, vigorous debates surrounding ownership of such images. Lynne Bell argues that pictures should become a community's cultural property, as they reveal a complex network of relationships between people, places, and ancestors.[170] Pedri-Spade agrees with Bell, emphasising that repatriating colonial photographs within indigenous communities can initiate a process of remembering, healing, and connecting with the colonial past.[171] This process is not straightforward, however, as what people encounter in the archives is not always what they seek to find, as ancestors may remain unidentified. At the same time, the memory of colonial violence will be rehashed. As Carolyn J. Marr puts it, 'The hundreds of unidentified people are a sad reminder of how their ancestors were treated.'[172] Nevertheless, by accessing and re-remembering these images, the personhood of those subjected to colonial violence and silences can be uncovered and re-established.[173] In opening up this dialogue and moving towards a more ethical approach to archival holdings, the discussions of transgenerational accountability, ownership and repatriation can move further.

HERITAGE AND COMMUNITY

Establishing a site of cultural memory and heritage is necessary for healing from the generational trauma of colonialism. For indigenous communities, re-visiting colonial photographs is a means of reviving and establishing ties with cultural and ceremonial sites; reclaiming suppressed histories, cultures, and places. This process is essential in promoting the

[168] Pedri-Spade. "'But They Were Never Only the Master's Tools'": p. 111.
[169] Agostinho**. "**Archival Encounters": p. 142.
[170] Lynne Bell. "Unsettling acts: Photography as decolonizing testimony in centennial memory" in Payne C., Kunard K. (Eds.), The cultural work of photography in Canada (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011): p. 237-240.
[171] Pedri-Spade. "'But They Were Never Only the Master's Tools'": p. 111.
[172] Carolyn J. Marr. "Marking Oneself: Use of Photographs by Native Americans of the Southern Northwest Coast." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 20(3), (1996): p. 62.
[173] Agostinho. "Archival Encounters": p. 158.

decolonisation of knowledge production within and beyond archival contexts.[174] In the last few decades, indigenous artists have used colonial photographs in immersive exhibitions and collections that showcase their experiences of subjugation, bearing witness to the brutal legacies of colonialism and critically engaging with their heritage. Beyond academia, galleries and commercial art sites partake in the increasing demand for a broader exploration of colonial photography.[175] Even museums, such as Oxford's Pitt Rivers Museum, which holds a vast amount of colonial and imperial artefacts, have created a digital project, the *Tibet Album*, which represents how the sometimes-fraught interests of the museum can work collaboratively with outside constituents. The project involves over 6000 photographs of British interaction with Tibet and Tibetans. The project results from close collaboration with Tibetan historians and anthropologists and offers translations and explanations for images in both Tibetan and English. [176] The photographs are situated within their narrative context and modern interpretations. This project highlights how colonial archives can move into new negotiated spaces with much broader value. [177] By actively engaging with colonial photography in new and creative ways, communities can produce new knowledge, decolonise their narratives, and bridge knowledge gaps and silences within their holdings whilst creating and establishing heritage spaces.

The movement towards creating cultural heritage is inherently political. The Museum of British Colonialism has launched several exhibitions regarding restoring artefacts to their countries of provenance. One of their projects, *Lost Unities: An Exhibition for Archival Repatriation,* calls out to return 2726 Kenyan Archival Records to Kenya and 15 items from their archive to Zimbabwe, listed in the catalogue as Southern Rhodesia. These are only a few requests from indigenous activists to the UK National Archives in an effort for them to relinquish control and access to archival material about their national history. *Lost Unities* is a virtual exhibition that 'repeats and makes visible the demands for repatriation' whilst also calling out the continuous furthering of colonial names and ideals of the National Archives in the UK.[178] Heritage projects

[174] Pedri-Spade. "'But They Were Never Only the Master's Tools'": p. 108.
[175] Haney, "Vital signs": p. 218.
[176] "The Tibet Album: British Photography in Central Tibet 1920-1950." The Tibet Album. *Pitt Rivers Museum and The University of Oxford*, (2006), Accessed November 17, 2023. https://tibet.prm.ox.ac.uk/
[177] Haney, "Vital signs": p. 218.
[178] "Lost Unities: An Exhibition for Archival Repatriation." *The Museum of British Colonialism*. MBC, (March 29, 2023) https://museumofbritishcolonialism.org/lost-unities/.

not only further knowledge production and access but also critically engage in repatriation debates and decolonisation of practices.

ASSESSING THE ARCHIVES

All three of the archives discussed throughout this thesis have digitalised their collections. The methods of how they have done this, their motivations and structures all vary due to the different natures of the archives. The following assessment will examine their digitalisation efforts based on four criteria based on the above discussion.

What was the reason for digitalising?

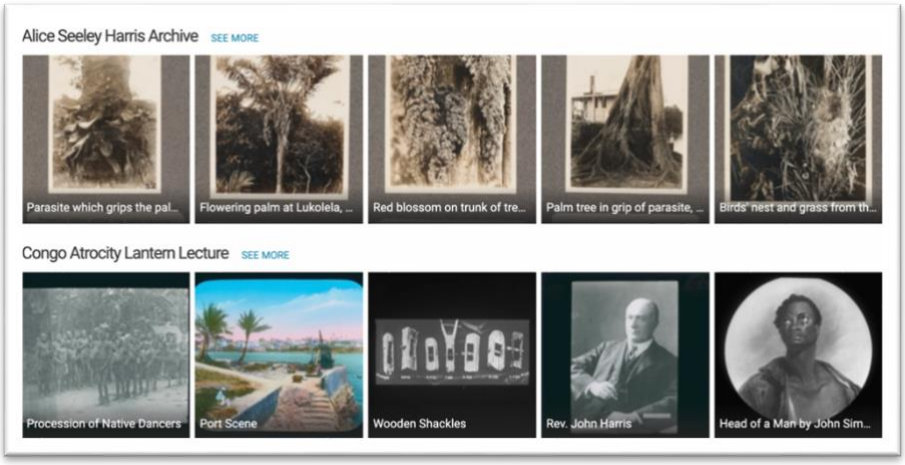
How does the archive address open-access use?

How does the archive address the ethical concerns of digitalisation?

How does the archive further engage with indigenous communities?

These questions are created to assess how each archive was digitalised critically, what considerations were taken to consider a decolonial narrative, and which ethical and collaborative efforts were undertaken to further indigenous knowledge production.

THE ALICE SEELEY HARRIS ARCHIVE



THE ALICE SEELEY HARRIS ARCHIVE IS FEATURED ON THE HOMEPAGE OF THE ANTI-SLAVERY USABLE PAST SITE, ALONG

WHAT WAS THE REASON FOR DIGITALISING?

The Alice Seeley Harris Archive is part of a greater project surrounding anti-slavery movements, both historical and current. The project was digitalised to showcase how anti-slavery campaigns in the UK have developed throughout history.

The 'Congo Atrocities' is often viewed as the first humanitarian crisis in which European audiences got engaged with the suffering of others in the colonies. To demonstrate what captivated European audiences at the turn of the 20th century, over 400 of Alice Harris' photographs have been digitalised. As established in previous sections, the narratives of these images hold greater context, which was used to raise public awareness of the violence of the Congo Free State.

In their statement of purpose, the Anti-Slavery Usable past site writes that their intention is 'unearthing and theorising the lessons of historic abolitionism for contemporary use - providing the movement against contemporary global slavery with a usable past of antislavery examples and methods.'[179]

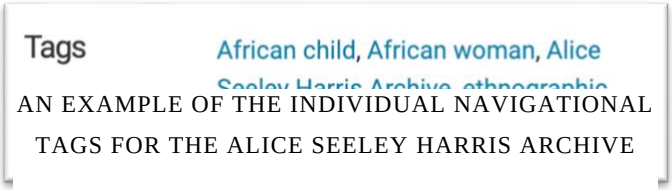
HOW DOES THE ARCHIVE ADDRESS OPEN-ACCESS USE?

The Alice Seeley Harris Archive takes great care in providing information regarding the nature of colonial photographs, their context, and original intent. Their guide for users addresses the implications of open access and the possibility of misuse and misinterpretation by emphasising

[179] Antislavery Usable Past, "Alice Harris Archive."

how 'Both the original Alice Seeley Harris Archive and the Congo Atrocity Lantern Lecture represented African people through the colonial gaze. In replicating these archives we are very aware of the potential to reinstate that particular way of seeing difference.'[180] The user guide and background information of both Alice Harris and the Congo Free State are there to minimise the opportunities for misinterpretation and misrepresentation.

Each image's available metadata and tags are visible to users, named for easy interpretation and interaction, showing the archiving methods used and the archive's navigational pathways.



AN EXAMPLE OF THE INDIVIDUAL NAVIGATIONAL TAGS FOR THE ALICE SEELEY HARRIS ARCHIVE

HOW DOES THE ARCHIVE ADDRESS THE ETHICAL CONCERNS OF DIGITALISATION?

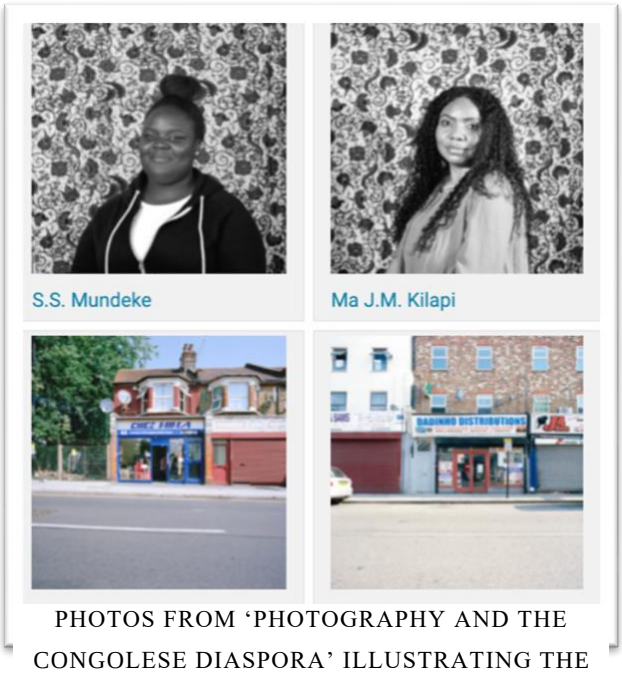
The scholars and archivists behind the project took great care in digitalising the archive with a feminist 'ethics of care' in mind. The navigation on the website has been carefully developed to humanise and engage with the decolonising debate. In particular, they note how 'Humanitarian photography has employed techniques which have tended to erase the individual and present a suffering mass. The zoom function has been included so that viewers can engage with the people represented as individuals.'[181]

Including a reading list based on decolonising archives and critically engaging with the decolonial debate further emphasises the methods used to treat the archive and its history with respect and morality beyond what the legal frameworks require. Furthermore, it highlights how the project has collaborated closely through community-led strategies for creative and heritage-based interventions in sub-Saharan Africa, illustrating how they are aware of the negative effects of policing narrative control of archival materials.

HOW DOES THE ARCHIVE FURTHER ENGAGE WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES?

[180] Antislavery Usable Past, "Alice Harris Archive."
[181] Antislavery Usable Past, "Alice Harris Archive."

Several projects have been undertaken to further engage with the Congolese diaspora. Two projects in particular have been created in response to the archive. The 'Photography and the Congolese Diaspora' collection is a series of 26 photographs taken by the British-Congolese photographer Letitia Kamayi in direct response to the photographs of Alice Harris. The project is 'a photographic dialogue with those images to think about the nature of the archive and the politics of representation.' [182] Kamayi's work endeavours to challenge ideas about Congolese identity and its roots in the representations of the colonial period.



PHOTOS FROM 'PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE CONGOLESE DIASPORA' ILLUSTRATING THE CONGOLESE COMMUNITY IN LONDON – 'AN ALTERNATIVE ARCHIVE OF LIFE AND LABOUR WITHIN THE DIASPORA.'

The second project is the 'Decomposing the Colonial Gaze' collection. This collection 'documents the work of a community-based partnership between the Antislavery Usable Past project and Yole!Africa in Goma and Lubumbashi.'[183] Also created as a response to the Alice Harris photographs, the project uses them to educate young Congolese on the legacies and history of colonialism, urging them to raise 'questions of power and representation.' The project emphasises the importance of 'Returning photographs from Alice's archive to the country in which it was produced' allowing Congolese people to evaluate the value and 'usable past' of the images. The project also urges young Congolese students to take images of Congolese society, 'reclaiming' their cultures and developing methods to 'self-represent.'

YOLE!AFRICA: STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHS

YOLE!AFRICA, 2016-2018

[182] Antislavery Usable Past. "Photography and the Congolese Diaspora."
[183] Antislavery Usable Past. "Decomposing the Colonial Gaze."

ASSESSMENT

Part of a wider project to raise awareness for anti-slavery campaigns, the Alice Seeley Harris Archive had a measured and ethical approach to digitalisation. The choices made in the language used, the context provided, and the user guide is indicated to users. The archive has made a conscious effort to address the issues of open-sourcing archives and engages with debates of representation and agency. Furthermore, the project uses the archive to involve the wider Congolese diaspora and communities to interpret, react and create their own heritage and cultural history in response to the Alice Seeley Harris photographs. The digitalisation project has created a long-term impact on the historiography of the archive and taken purposeful approaches to enriching the knowledge held within the archives.

THE FROBENIUS PHOTO ARCHIVE

WHAT WAS THE REASON FOR DIGITALISING?

LEO FROBENIUS - THE FOUNDER OF THE FROBENIUS INSTITUTE

The digitalisation of the Frobenius archive happened in 2010 to allow wider access for researchers within social anthropology. [184] As Germany's oldest anthropological research institution, its photographs now number around 60.000, all taken by researchers and other participants in various expeditions and research travels between 1904 and the 1980s. Whilst most photographs originated in Africa, photos from all continents are featured throughout the archive. These photographs all capture various indigenous cultures and peoples. The archive is unique in its focus and a valuable resource for anthropologists and historians. However, Richard Kuba, in his chapter 'Frobenius' Pictorial Archive and its Legacy within Global Photographies' (2018) notes the archivists 'had hoped that digitisation would reduce the negative conservatory effects of handling the originals, this was only partly true, as the demands to see the originals and display them in exhibitions also grew.'[185] From this, one can assume the move towards digitalisation was partly due to a need to preserve the original iteration of the images.

HOW DOES THE ARCHIVE ADDRESS OPEN-ACCESS USE?

AN EXAMPLE OF THE NAVIGATIONAL TAGS FROM THE FROBENIUS PHOTO ARCHIVE. EACH HEADING IS LINKED TO INDIVIDUAL GROUPINGS BASED ON SEARCH PARAMETERS.

Unlike the Alice Seeley Harris Archive, the Frobenius Archive does not directly address the open-access use of the archive. This might be due to the more scholarly focus of the archive, intended for researchers and academics to use rather than the public. The only

[184] "The Institute's History" The Frobenius Institute, Accessed. 04.12.2023 https://www.frobenius-institut.de/en/institut-2/geschichte; Karin Hissink 'Kairo. Pyramiden. Frobenius - FoA 12-1086' Image Database. The Frobenius Institute, 2023. http://bildarchiv.frobenius-katalog.de/start.fau?prj=isbild_en&mob=0

[185] Kuba. "Portraits of Distant Worlds": p. 121.

mention of access on the Archive's website states that 'The Frobenius Institute's online image database provides direct access', which does little to address the implications of open-access use of the archive.

Similar to the Alice Seeley Harris Archive, each photograph's metadata and tags are visible and navigable to users, with links incorporated within the labels, indicating each photograph's relation to the wider collection and individual groupings.

HOW DOES THE ARCHIVE ADDRESS THE ETHICAL CONCERNS OF DIGITALISATION?

The archive does not directly address the ethical use of the photographs within its collection. However, as exemplified in previous chapters, the archive's content can easily be misinterpreted; according to Kuba, this happened shortly after the archive went online in 2010: 'A selection of images was taken without written consent from the online database by the biggest German tabloid, the Bild-Zeitung. A selection of Frobenius' images was presented with the header 'This is how Africa looked 100 years ago'. The images portrayed were, according to Kuba, 'a compilation of common Africa stereotypes and certainly not the kind of use [the Frobenius Institute] would have wished.'[186]

Bild-Zeitung, Frankfurt, 3 march 2010, p. 6.

'THIS IS HOW AFRICA LOOKED 100 YEARS AGO'.

BILD-ZEITUNG, FRANKFURT, MARCH 3RD, 2010, P. 6.

HOW DOES THE ARCHIVE FURTHER ENGAGE WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES?

The archive does not directly refer to its further engagements with indigenous communities. However, Richard Kuba, in *Portraits of Distant Worlds* outlines how Frobenius's image archive has been brought back to their countries of origin on several occasions. In 2008 a local NGO in Ouagadougou worked alongside the institute to organise the exhibition 'Leo Frobenius à Ouagadougou: Les images du Faso il y a cent ans' at the Musée National, where 'printouts and digital copies of over 600 images produced in 1908 by Frobenius' second expedition on the territory of today's Burkina Faso were handed over to the

[186] Kuba. "Portraits of Distant Worlds": p. 122.

Museum as well as to the Centre National de Recherche Scientifique et Technique.'[187] Similar projects have been undertaken with the Nigerian National Commission for Museums and Monuments, with five different exhibitions taking place in Abuja, Ife, Makurdi, Minna and Yola under the title 'Nigeria 100 years ago through the eyes of Leo Frobenius and his expedition team.' These projects have had the goal of repatriating copies of the photographs within the communities of those in which the photographs originated, letting them engage with their cultural history on their terms.

ASSESSMENT

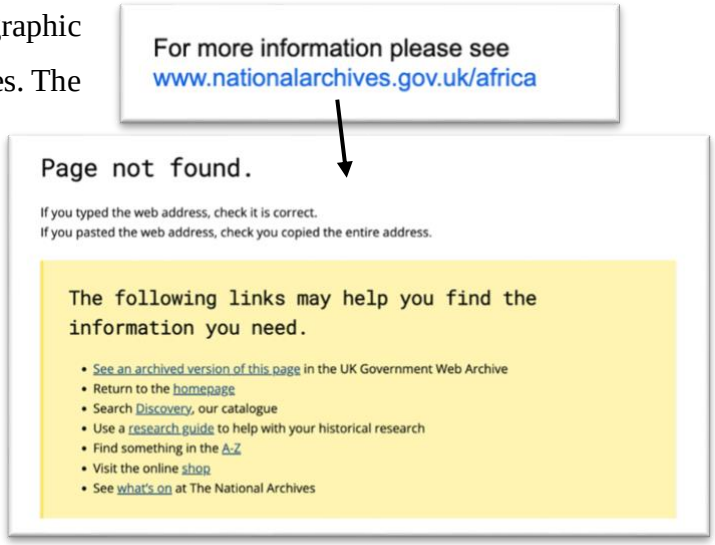
The Frobenius Picture Archive, as part of a research institution, has digitalised in order to make their collections more widely available for researchers within the field of cultural anthropology worldwide. Their scholarly focus is clear throughout the digital archive, through its accessibility and usability, as exemplified in previous chapters. Unlike the Alice Seeley Harris Archive, there is no clear indication towards consciously decolonising the archive during its digitalisation. Nevertheless, clear efforts have been made in order for the wider engagement of indigenous communities to view and interpret the photographs through collaborative exhibitions and digital repatriation efforts.

[187] Kuba. "Portraits of Distant Worlds": p. 124.

THE WORLD THROUGH A LENS: AFRICA ARCHIVE

WHAT WAS THE REASON FOR DIGITALISING?

The World through a Lens: Africa Archive digitalised to gather information about unknown images from within the National Archives in the UK. The photographs were all curated from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office photographic collection housed in the UK's National Archives. The digitalisation's purpose is succinct: 'These images, from The National Archives, have been added to Flickr so that you can comment, tag and share them easily.' [188] More elaborately, they write, 'In many instances, we know little about the people or contents of the photographs, and this is one of the reasons why we have published them online and asked people to comment and share their knowledge.' The online site has not been updated since its upload in 2011, and the informational sources linked to the page are no longer in use, so further information regarding the reason for digitalisation is unavailable.

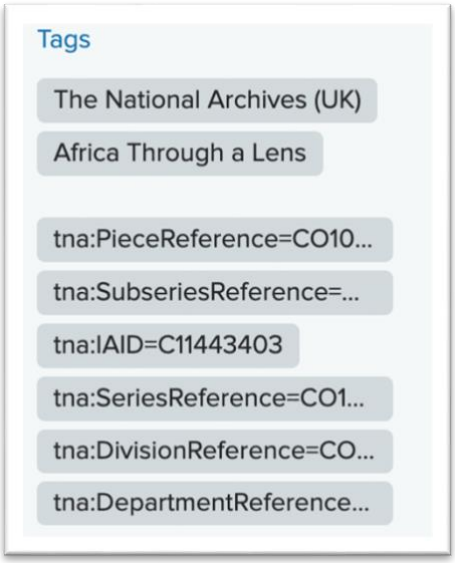


HOW DOES THE ARCHIVE ADDRESS OPEN ACCESS USE?

Like with the Alice Seeley Harris archive, the site has a declaration regarding the outdated language used throughout captions, however, where the Alice Harris archive has several paragraphs regarding colonial context of the images and their creator, the World through a Lens: Africa Archive more generally notes that 'the pictures and the captions attached to them are representative of the time they were taken. They frequently use terms that would not be used today.' Furthermore, the archive disengages with the decolonial debate by stating 'our role is to preserve the integrity of the historic public record, which is why they have been preserved and presented as originally captured.'

[188] "World Through a Lens: Africa." Flickr. The British National Archives.

A majority of the metadata for the images is lacking from the archive. The tags are navigable, however, where the Alice Seeley Harris and Frobenius Picture Archives tags were incorporated into the labels, the tags for the World Through a Lens: Africa images are less clearly indicative of what results they may yield, indicating they are not created for user interaction, and rather are created for internal navigation. The visuality of the tags may also be a result of little website maintenance since the site went up over a decade ago. Nevertheless, the tags, beyond the most general 'The National Archives' and 'Africa Through a Lens', do not provide easy navigation for visiting users.



AN EXAMPLE OF THE NAVIGATIONAL TAGS FOR THE THROUGH A LENS: AFRICA ARCHIVE

HOW DOES THE ARCHIVE ADDRESS THE ETHICAL CONCERNS OF DIGITALISATION?

The World through a Lens: Africa Archive does not actively engage in the ethical concerns of digitalising colonial photographs of indigenous peoples and the possibilities for misuse and misinterpretation this can create. This archive does the opposite, encouraging users to 'comment, tag and share' them with no caveat of context or information. As discussed in the second chapter, the language used in descriptions – when present – mirrors colonial ideas and classifications. The website's statement on the use of colonial language is not as impactful as intended, mainly due to the unavailability of alternative phrases or descriptions.

HOW DOES THE ARCHIVE FURTHER ENGAGE WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES?

The purpose of the archive indirectly calls for engagement from the wider audience to participate and provide historical background for the photographs within the collection. As addressed in the assessment of this archive in the second chapter, the images remain difficult to research critically due to the lack of metadata and context. However, the open access to the archive does mean that community organisations can locate and reappropriate the images for their needs if the context is found.

ASSESSMENT

The digitalisation of the Through a Lens: Africa Archive was set up as an initiative to gain potential historical context for images removed from their provenance in the National Archives in the UK. However, due to a lack of visible metadata and image contexts, as well as minimal digital maintenance and upkeep, the site encapsulates the disregard for the ethics of care within archival open-access collections and highlights the need for a change towards sustainable long-term archival methods.

CONCLUSION

It is essential to consider how digitalisation is neither neutral nor the only way to think about access. A continuous consequence of colonialism is indigenous people's lack of control over how relevant information and cultural knowledge about their communities is used and interpreted. The knowledge contained within colonial archives must be made accessible for these communities across the board, not just through digital methods. Digitalisation does not necessarily address the obstacles of insufficient digital infrastructures or digital maintenance, lack of metadata, or the loss of provenance seen throughout the archives. The assessment of the archival case studies within this chapter has exemplified several motivations for moving towards the digitalisation of colonial photographic archives. Furthermore, it has illustrated that, when preserving historical records in the digital era, it is crucial to prioritise indigenous power, control, and agency over colonial photographs. However, the reality is often more complex, and the motivations behind digitalisation and modernisation are not always driven by decolonisation. Institutions should consider ethical considerations alongside legal compliance when digitalising their collections. Therefore, supporting and engaging with initiatives prioritising ethical frameworks is essential as part of their efforts to digitise and decolonise.

RESULTS

This thesis has explored the intricate nature of colonial photographic archives, highlighting the crucial need for a careful and ethical approach, particularly as these archives transition into digital formats. The first chapter highlighted how colonial photography during the late 1800s and early 1900s was a potent tool for colonisers, shaping a European perspective of the African continent. These photographs carried inherent power imbalances, mirroring the societal, political, and cultural hierarchies prevalent during the colonial era. While these images offer invaluable insights into Africa's colonial past, their meaning hinges upon a nuanced understanding of their context. Factors like the photographer's intent and the dynamic between the photographer and subject significantly shape the interpretation of these images. Scholars can rectify biases, challenge stereotypes, and contribute to a more comprehensive historical narrative by contextualising these images.

The first chapter examined the context, visuality, and colonial bias of a set of photographs from each archival case study. The analysis of the Alice Seeley Harris Archive, the photographs rooted in her missionary experiences within the Congo Free State, sheds light on the horrors endured by the Congolese people. Yet, the bias within these images and the need for comprehensive contextual understanding remain critical for responsible interpretation. Similarly, the Frobenius Photo Archive, shaped by anthropologist Leo Frobenius's cultural curiosity, presented a distinct perspective of African cultures untouched by European influence, at risk of perpetuating colonial sentiments and inequality if used without situational context. Contrastingly, The World Through a Lens: Africa Archive, an assortment of diverse images from different times and regions, lacked substantial contextual information, posing challenges for interpretation. The colonial context often concealed or inadvertently removed from images underscores the importance of thorough research to comprehend the historical significance. For instance, while some pictures, like 'Returning from Anamabu,' lacked explicit context, traces could be found by researching outside the archive, highlighting how extensive research could bridge archival gaps.

Colonial photographic archives mirror the complex power structures of the colonial era, as highlighted in the second chapter. The archives encapsulate multifaceted power dynamics between colonisers and the colonised, embodying hierarchies based on race, religion, gender, and class. Preserved and curated by colonial agents with Eurocentric perspectives, the use of the archives requires deliberate interrogation of their inherent biases, limitations, and the

contexts in which the images were captured and stored. However, by acknowledging these archives' limitations and biases, historians can use a nuanced interpretation of colonial history, going beyond surface-level narratives to embrace subaltern perspectives, offering a more comprehensive understanding of colonial history. The assessment of the archives in the second chapter presented distinct challenges and strengths in contextualisation, transparency, and accessibility, emphasising the importance of comprehensive information, language use, and collaborative efforts to interpret colonial photographs responsibly. The Alice Seeley Harris Archive showed significant contextual information, providing insights into Harris's purpose, photographic intent, and the broader debate surrounding representation. Furthermore, the archive stresses the complexities of representation, acknowledging its limitations in empowering voices and addressing the impact of colonialism on the images' interpretation. The archive transparently handles language use, guiding interpretation while recognising the shortcomings of the categorisations and original captions. Overall, the Alice Seeley Harris Archive demonstrates a commitment to transparency, education, and contextualisation, fostering a nuanced understanding of its contents. On the other hand, the Frobenius Archive, focusing on cultural anthropology and indigenous cultures, lacks an explanatory site and comprehensive information about collections and photographs. Significantly, the archive lacks detailed captions in English, posing a barrier for non-German readers. Furthermore, the coloniality of the archive is seen in the use of ethnic tags to identify the indigenous Africans pictured. However, it also attempts to bridge colonial information gaps by integrating available indigenous names. The National Archives 'World Through a Lens: Africa Archive' falls short in providing sufficient information, relying on original captions, and lacking details on colonial contexts or historical ties. The use of colonial language without contextualisation or corrections perpetuates colonial notions, and the absence of provenance details and limited situational context makes research challenging for the public, contrary to its intended purpose of engaging broader knowledge.

The third chapter deals with the challenges and promises accompanying the digitisation of colonial photographic archives. The transition to digital formats transforms accessibility and engagement, raising ethical dilemmas and perpetuating colonial legacies. As these images become more accessible, they invite broader communities to explore and confront their historical implications. However, this accessibility raises ethical concerns, especially regarding the potential misuse or misinterpretation of images, especially considering the digital afterlife of colonial photos, which urges scholars to confront colonial violence within metadata and

subject categorisations. This necessitates a feminist framework advocating for ethics of care, which encourages intellectual decolonisation and challenges narratives of colonial innocence. Moreover, digitisation extends to the digital afterlife, challenging scholars to confront colonial violence within metadata and subject categorisations. Furthermore, the chapter discussed issues of ownership and repatriation, emphasising the necessity for revised ownership structures and transgenerational accountability. In reclaiming colonial photographs, Indigenous communities can rediscover suppressed histories, bridge knowledge gaps, and establish heritage spaces, revitalising cultural memory and decolonising knowledge production. Balancing accessibility with ethical responsibility is pivotal for a more inclusive, ethical, and accurate representation of historical narratives while confronting and rectifying the legacies of colonialism within colonial photographic archives.

The third chapter's assessment of the digital archives highlights the importance of ethical digitalisation, contextualisation, and community engagement in preserving and presenting historical archives. The Alice Seeley Harris Archive's purposeful approach to digitalisation is evident through its user guide, which provides context and acknowledges potential misinterpretation of colonial narratives. The archive actively engages with ethical concerns, employing a language mindful of colonial representations and incorporating tools like zoom functions to humanise individuals in photographs. Collaborative projects with Congolese communities and diaspora further enrich the archive, fostering reinterpretation and self-representation. The archive's long-term impact on historiography and its ethical digitalisation approach underscores its commitment to enhancing knowledge while respecting the represented subjects.

On the other hand, the Frobenius Archive, focused on scholarly research in cultural anthropology, underwent digitalisation to facilitate more comprehensive academic access. The archive's digital approach lacks explicit engagement with ethical concerns, leading to potential misinterpretation and misuse of its content. Despite repatriation efforts with indigenous communities, the archive lacks a clear decolonising agenda during its digitalisation. While beneficial, its focus on scholarly use indicates a missed opportunity to address ethical considerations and engage more deeply with represented communities. Contrarily, the World through a Lens: Africa Archive, meant to gather information about unknown images from the National Archives in the UK, demonstrates a neglect of ethical concerns in its digitalisation. The archive's purpose for open access lacks contextualisation, and its language often mirrors colonial classifications. Limited metadata and minimal digital maintenance diminish its value

for critical research, reflecting a disregard for ethical practices in preserving and presenting colonial photographs. While the Alice Seeley Harris Archive sets a standard for ethical and purposeful digital curation, the Frobenius Photo Archive and the World through a Lens: Africa Archive falls short in addressing ethical concerns and engaging with the represented communities, detracting from their potential impact and understanding of historical representations.

In conclusion, the thesis advocates for a multifaceted archival approach that challenges dominant historical narratives, prioritises ethical considerations and amplifies marginalised voices in preserving, digitising, and presenting colonial photographic archives. This approach aims to achieve a more nuanced and truthful understanding of historical narratives while rectifying the prevalent colonial influences ingrained within these archives. Scholars should expand their archival practices beyond the traditional rigid, archival framework to encompass feminist ideas of care and ethics. By incorporating accountability and foregrounding access and decolonisation, digitalisation will facilitate a more inclusive and accessible historical discourse.

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