

# **“Just Do the Work”: Social, Restorative, and Reparative Justice at American Academic Archives**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The early 2020s have been years of great change across the USA – amid a global pandemic, George Floyd’s murder focused worldwide attention on anti-Black violence, and the subsequent spate of protests marked a shift in institutional acceptability of Black Lives Matter as a strategic priority rather than a “fringe” view. That movement has had direct impacts on the archival field, generating a wealth of talks and other disseminations that aim to shed light on the history of archives as institutions that uphold white supremacy and discuss the opportunities and challenges of conducting justice work.

Despite the steady increase of published work on the relationship between justice and archives in the last 15 years, and a more recent explosion of social, reparative, and restorative justice work within archives and by archivists, there have not been in-depth systematic studies of challenges to implementing and engaging in social justice as an archival imperative. This poster shares findings from the author’s dissertation, which examines the role of social, reparative, and restorative justice in academic archives, investigating the gap between published literature and practice through an interview study of archival practitioners at academic institutions that are engaging in justice work, supported by and triangulated with qualitative content analysis of a document corpus sourced from academic archives’ websites related to archival justice. This in-depth study of how these relatively new priorities have been carried out (or not carried out) on the ground provides insights into the myriad of ways archivists are engaging in justice work.

# **ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS**

Archives; Social justice; Education.

## **AUTHOR KEYWORDS**

Archival theory; Critical archival studies; Restorative justice; Racial justice.

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