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Macdonald, S. and Birdi, B. (2019). The concept of neutrality: a new approach. *Journal of Documentation*.

This is an Accepted Manuscript published by Emerald at https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-05-2019-0102

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The Concept of Neutrality: A New Approach

Purpose: Neutrality is a much debated value in Library and Information Science. The 'neutrality debate' is characterised by opinionated discussions in contrasting contexts. The study reported here fills a gap in the literature by bringing these conceptions together holistically, with potential to deepen understanding of LIS neutrality.

Methodology: Firstly, a literature review identified conceptions of neutrality reported in LIS literature. Secondly, seven phenomenographic interviews with LIS professionals were conducted across three professional sectors. To maximise variation, each sector comprised at least one interview with a professional of five or fewer years' experience and one with ten or more years' experience. Thirdly, conceptions from the literature and interviews were compared for similarities and disparities.

Findings: Four conceptions each were found in literature and interviews. In the literature these were labelled: 'Favourable, 'Tacit Value', 'Social Institutions' and 'Value Laden Profession', whilst in interviews they were labelled: 'Core Value', 'Subservient', 'Ambivalent', and 'Hidden Values'. The study's main finding notes the 'Ambivalent' conception in interviews is not captured by a largely polarised literature which oversimplifies neutrality's complexity. To accommodate this complexity, it is suggested that future research should look to reconcile perceptions from either side of the 'neutral non-neutral divide' through an inclusive normative framework.

Value: This study's value lies in its descriptive methodology which brings LIS neutrality together in a holistic framework. This framework brings a contextual awareness to LIS neutrality lacking in previous research. This awareness has the potential to change the tone of the LIS neutrality debate.

Introduction and Scope

Neutrality is a core – yet controversial - value within Library and Information Science [LIS], and the literature on the subject constitutes a theoretical or opinionated discussion of the merits or demerits of its application. This debate casts neutrality as the property of a dominant positivist conception of LIS (Radford, 1992) a shield for the 'status quo' in collection development (Iverson, 2008) and a democratic value that eliminates bias (Hart, 2016). To date, these ranging presentations have neither been mapped nor related. As a result, neutrality has become an elusive concept, arguably poorly understood.

In an attempt to address this omission, this investigation takes a different *descriptive* view, executed in three stages. Firstly, conceptions of neutrality in LIS literature provide a descriptive guide of existing conceptions. Secondly, cross sector phenomenographic interviews give rise to qualitatively distinct conceptions of neutrality, related via three dimensions of variation. This broadens the level of descriptive by sampling views of current practitioners. Thirdly, categorisations from literature and interviews are compared for structural similarities and disparities. The overall aim is to produce a *descriptive* guide charting the varied uses of the concept within three LIS sectors. The breadth of a descriptive approach, spanning different sectors and contexts, enables neutrality to be viewed holistically; a perspective arguably lacking in previous research.

Research Objectives

The study reported here had five objectives:

1. To conduct a holistic literature review charting conceptions of neutrality within LIS.

2. To conduct phenomenographic interviews with a purposeful sample of librarians across academic, public and workplace sectors asking four 'variation evoking' questions:

- In which professional contexts - if any – does neutrality arise?
- Is it possible to be completely neutral?
- How important is neutrality compared to other professional values?
- What influence - if any - does neutrality have on 'day-to-day' work?

3. To use data transcripts to describe qualitatively distinct conceptions of neutrality

4. To compare categories with literature, looking for structural similarities and disparities.

5. To consider the normative implications that arise from the descriptive process.

Literature Review

This review charts the varied understandings of neutrality in existing debate and forms a backdrop for the following phenomenographic study. Firstly, the conceptual origin of neutrality is outlined. Secondly, a favourable conception of neutrality in LIS is examined. Thirdly, it is argued that critical literature breaks down into three distinct conceptions. For clarity, these four broad conceptions – one favourable and three critical - are then summarised.

Conceptual Roots

A common definition of neutrality is "not taking any side in a war or dispute" (Collins Dictionary, 1999, p.501). Johnson's definition is near identical, "neutrality…means not having a position or not taking a side" (Johnson, 2016, p.25. Montefiore (1975) elaborates: neutrality takes place "between two or more…actual or possible policies or parties" (p.4); it involves affecting "various parties…in an equal degree" (p.5). These piecemeal definitions reflect an egalitarian commitment to not favour one entity over another.

Conceptually, neutrality's origin lies in Political Liberalism - the view that "an individual has the right to make choices" (Beckwith and Peppin, 2000, p.68). The pluralistic state is neutral; citizens can pursue any reasonable conception of the good, as Jones (1989) states: "the neutral state deals impartially with its members and their…commitments" (p.9). This neutral commitment is a hallmark of contemporary liberal thought; Kymlicka (1989) notes "a distinctive feature of contemporary liberal theory is its emphasis on "neutrality" – the view that the state should not reward or penalize particular conceptions of the good life" (p.883).

For Dworkin, neutrality ensures "equal concern and respect" (Jones, 1989, p.10); Neal (1985) notes that Dworkin defends a "neutrality thesis" in which "government must be neutral on

the question of the good life" (p.665). Similarly, for Rawls, the concept plays a central, yet controversial and changing role, in the development of his thought. In *A Theory of Justice,* Rawls constructs the 'original position'; members of society are placed behind a 'veil of ignorance'; stripped of personal characteristics, individuals collectively advocate principles of justice, the first of which confers "equal…liberties compatible with a similar system for all" (Rawls, 1972, p.302). Consequently, Kymlicka (1989) argues that Rawls adopts a justificatory neutrality by which "the state does not take a stand on which ways of life are most worth living…as a justification of government action" (p. 883-884). Put another way, "government is neutral between different conceptions of the good" (p.886).

Rawls' later thought rejected the 'original position' put forward in *A theory of Justice* because its justification rests on a non-neutral Kantian interpretation of human goodness where "acting justly is something we want to do as free and equal rational beings" (Brake, 2004 , p.297). This hidden premise led him to conclude his justification would be rejected by those whose good is incongruent with the Kantian doctrine, leading to political instability (Dreben, 2003, p. 317). Instead, Rawls' later thought – developed in *Political Liberalism* – distinguishes between a 'comprehensive doctrine'; a view of "value in human life" including "ideals of character…friendship and of familiar…relationships" (Rawls, 1993, p.13), and a narrower 'political conception' grounded in 'reasonableness'. Consequently, Rawls' justification in *Political Liberalism* rests on 'overlapping consensuses' between comprehensive doctrines within a narrow public, political sphere (Brake, 2004, p. 298). For the Rawls of *Political Liberalism,* therefore, Dreben (2003) notes "it is absolutely essential…that public reason…be neutral with regard to comprehensive doctrines" (p.326).

Despite neutrality's core place within contemporary liberalism, the concept has drawn criticism for its conceptual incoherence. Neal, targeting Dworkinian neutrality, argues government cannot be neutral because it constitutes an essential "social fabric" that limits the choices people make (Neal, 1985, p.671). Whilst the state may be neutral between becoming a doctor or lawyer, some ways of life i.e. those that cannot be realised in a developed "industrial nation state" will be precluded (p. 674). Neal concludes "although a liberal government might be neutral amongst preferences M to N, it cannot be in a strong sense, for it acts to produce preferences M to N and not some other set" (Neal, 1985, pp.674-675). Likewise Kymlicka (1989), criticising Rawlsian neutrality, draws on Schwartz and

Nagel's argument that neutrality between comprehensive doctrines is itself a non-neutral position (p.886); "communal ways of life" are precluded by a Rawlsian state steered by individualist values (p. 887). Similarly, Mulhall and Swift (2003) note the criticism that Rawls "is guilty of asocial individualism" (p. 466); a non-neutral conception of society where "society is nothing more than a cooperative venture for the pursuit of individual advantage" (p. 467). In sum, Rawlsian individualism is a value-laden concept which sidelines communal conceptions of the good (p. 467; see also MacIntrye, 1981 and Sandel, 1982).

Favourable Conceptions: Library and Information Science

In LIS, neutrality is core to professional codes. The CILIP (the Library and Information Association) Ethical Framework (2018) condones "impartiality and the avoidance of inappropriate bias". Internationally, IFLA's code of ethics states, "librarians…are strictly committed to neutrality" (IFLA 2012, cited in Johnson, 2016 p.26). This neutral trace is integral to European codes (see VVBAD, 2017; ABF, 2003; AIB, 2007; Public Library Section of the Netherlands, 2001), and to the American Library Association (ALA, 2008).

Neutrality illuminates ideas through the objective librarian who articulates, yet never advocates, polarised opinions: objectivity 'gives us strength' (Foskett, 1962, p.10), and allows librarians to 'see all viewpoints' (McMenemy, 2007, p.179). Berninghausen (1972) argues that political bias compromises intellectual freedom, and Hart (2016) that "public librarians are public servants and must remain politically impartial". Likewise, Crook (1999) argues that, to maintain support across the political spectrum, libraries must be non-partisan.

Each of these viewpoints describes a favourable conception of neutrality in LIS; firstly, neutrality is a professional strength; secondly, it guards against censorship and thirdly, it promotes political freedom.

The 'Tacit Value' Conception

LIS literature frequently notes that tacit values hide behind neutral claims. Firstly, Ideological State Apparatus (ISAs) – i.e. educational establishments - enforce dominant attitudes (Bales and Engle, 2012). Secondly, the academic library is an ISA, "promoting the status quo through…petty bourgeois of all kinds'' (Althusser, 2011 cited in Bales and Engle, 2012, p.19). Thirdly, this is fostered by librarians who "maintain a neutral standpoint" (Bales and Engle,

2012, p.19). Similarly, Jensen argues that neutrality is "a code word for the existing system" (Horton and Freire 1990, p.102, cited in Jensen, 2008, p.91). Stoffle and Tarin (1994, p.47) note that "institutions are not neutral…[but] structured round the…rules of…dominant white…society". For Farkas, who attacks tacit bias in US academic libraries, neutrality is "harmful to oppressed groups". It supports a white male Christian status quo (Farkas, 2017). Likewise, Williams (2017) argues that neutrality - enforced by a "white majority population" – assumes librarians are merely "vessels" to "pass information"; a neutral attitude is an excuse to sidestep bigotry. In short, these writers underline the tacit values left unchecked by neutral façades.

In the 'Berninghausen Debate' a tacit value argument is used by critics of neutrality to promote social responsibility. Sellen (1973) argues that Berninghausen's claim that neutrality preserves intellectual freedom overlooks pre-existing societal bias, and for Robbins (1973, p.29) rather than demeaning intellectual freedom, socially responsible librarians are "in its pursuit".

This 'tacit value' argument attacks a neutral attitude caused by 'professionalisation' (Birdsell, 1982, p.223): "librarianship has embraced political neutrality as a means toward acquiring professional status" leading to "an unconscious adoption of dominant values" in a service based economy (Blanke, 1989, pp. 39-40). This paradigm is epitomised by the view that information has a market value, facilitating an environment where "patrons become clients" (Blanke, 1989, p.40). A neutral façade masks these values: "by perpetuating the myth that their profession should be politically neutral, librarians have created a value vacuum…being filled by the prevailing political and economic ethos" (Blanke, 1989, p.40).

This perception is closely connected to Radford's (1992) claim that neutrality is a property of a positivist paradigm of LIS. The positivist lens is characterised by a science-driven attitude; abstract theories of best practice are put forward against a backdrop of scientific experimentation. This positivism, itself a tacit value, advocates strict collection neutrality in a climate of technocratic improvement such as, for example, improving the efficiency of library services. This commitment is affirmed by Dick (1995, p.221) who notes that LIS has "embraced ideals of neutrality and objectivity" in attempts to become a viable social science.

The 'Tacit Value' Conception: Collection Balance

A subset within this conception argues that the 'neutral myth' skews collection decisions in favour of dominant values. Iverson (2008, p.25) argues that librarians have "embraced the principles of objectivity and neutrality". Neutrality consolidates a myth that collection development is 'apolitical'. A lack of awareness may, Iverson (2008) suggests, "be recreating censorship in selecting mainstream publishing houses" (p.27). This is substantiated by Samek (2001, p.382) who states that "ALA's stance on neutrality…conflicted with the concept of social responsibility".

McDonald (2008, p.9) echoes this sentiment by arguing that libraries are subsumed in a "corporate paradigm" where tasks are "dominated by…corporate decision making" (p.11). This is reflected by stock selection relying on journals that "favourably review the output of big publishers" (Cullars, 1984 cited in McDonald, 2008, p.13), ensuring alternative publications are "marginalized owing to their inability to compete" (Atton, 1994, p.59). Dilveko and Grewal (1997, p.372) tested political bias across Canadian research libraries, noting that the more marginalised a viewpoint, "the less it will be subscribed to". Marinko and Gerhard (1998, p.367) investigated holdings of titles listed in the Alternative Press Index in academic libraries finding that "only twelve libraries had holdings rates above 50 percent", and Coley (2002) also found a similar 'self-censorship' in school libraries. In short, these studies indicate a tacit bias in mainstream collections.

To summarise, neutrality is argued to encourage dominant value. Rosenzweig (2008, p.5) describes early libraries as "instruments of…control" noting that this has always been the case. This supports the notion of the neutral myth; libraries are political entities, shaped by contemporary values.

The 'Libraries are Social Institutions' Conception

A second strand of criticism argues that libraries are essentially social institutions "created and sustained by the resources of society" (Sellen, 1973, p.27). More recently, this stance is epitomised by Samek (2007, p.7) whose '*Librarianship and human rights*' is "a direct challenge to the notion of library neutrality". This interventionist position is crystallised by the ALA: "Institutions are surrounded by pollution and violence…to ignore these threats,

seems the height of folly. Yet we are advised…to eschew involvement…subject to tarnish our golden neutrality" (ALA, 1970, p.31 cited in Raber, 2007, p.685). Durrani and Smallwood (2008) concur; libraries are "unconnected to the social and political reality around them" (p.120) because of a bland neutrality, incompatible with positive social advocacy (p.123).

For Buschman et al. (1994) the "calls for ALA to purge social issues from its…agenda are unhealthy" (p.575); librarians "must engage the society they serve"; they ask "with such values, how can we turn a blind eye to…conditions in which human culture develops?" (p.576). The compartmentalisation between library and non-library is problematic. Noting wide ranging decisions informing library policy, they ask "who will define for us what is properly non-divisive and of primary concern to the profession?"; they suggest that "fictitious…neutrality" results in professional "impoverishment" and "irrelevance" (Buschman et al. 1994, p.576). Alfino and Pierce (2001, p.481) argue that information's value lies in its ability to enable users to "understand the world and make prudent decisions". Transposing this to society, they argue that libraries should "self-legislate"; neutrality should be shunned in favour of "discussion of issues affecting communities" (Alfino and Pierce, 2001, p.483). Similarly, Vester and Vitzansky (2004) propose that libraries should enter the "political sphere" (p.55) by lobbying politicians on library issues.

To summarise, this conception highlights arguments claiming libraries are institutions with non-neutral social responsibilities (see also Byam, 1973; Jaeger et al. 2013; Berry and Rawlinson, 1999).

The 'Value-Laden Profession' Conception

A third strand of criticism proposes that 'day-to-day' decisions are non-neutral. Summers (1973) argues that recommending literature is essential practice, and Doiron (1973, p.37) that "because we provide…media goods, we perform a social act based on…judgement. [We] discern what publications are worthwhile purchases". Likewise, Jensen (2017) argues "it's impossible to be neutral [and reach communities]"; essential outreach requires non-neutral values viz. "acceptance" "education" and "tolerance". Eckert (2016) argues that 'day-to-day' work is non-neutral; "dismantling gender prejudice" and targeting opportunities for advertising represent value-laden best practice, whilst Sonnie (in Porter, 2017), co-founder of

US radical librarianship collective 'Libraries 4 Black Lives', agrees that fulfilling a 'library value' constitutes a non-neutral stance against "marginalization and inequity".

Summary of the Literature

In sum, this review has identified four broad conceptions of neutrality.

The 'Favourable' conception has three components. Neutrality is an objective detachment that accommodates all viewpoints, prevents censorship and promotes political freedom.

The 'Tacit Value' conception argues that tacit values hide behind all neutral pretences; neutrality is conceptually incoherent; all arguments within this conception seek to expose values working beneath the surface.

 The 'Libraries are Social Institutions' conception posits that libraries are social institutions with non-neutral social responsibilities. Wider issues impact libraries and the societies they serve; librarians have non-neutral duties to educate and encourage debate.

The 'Value-Laden Profession' conception argues that 'day to day' activities may be non-neutral; professional neutrality is incoherent. Recommending literature, reaching users and promoting library values are irreducibly value-laden.

To summarise, there is a lack of empirical work describing the range of conceptions of neutrality across the LIS profession, and previous research has tended to focus on neutrality in one particular context. This study, by contrast, descriptively maps conceptions of neutrality and considers the relations between them in order to advance the 'neutrality debate'.

Methodology: Phenomenography

Phenomenography was chosen as the research approach for this study; Marton describes it as "a research method for mapping the qualitatively different ways people experience, perceive and understand...the world" (Marton, 1986, p.31), and a means of mapping experiential "variation" in an "outcome space" (Marton and Booth, 1997, p.112). Primarily used in education, it is also used in other settings (Bowden, 2000), as epitomised by

Theman's research into political power (Marton, 1986, p.39). It is, therefore, ideal for investigating concepts like neutrality.

Four points clarify the methodological approach. Firstly, phenomenography measures relationships between subjects and phenomena; it captures "an internal relationship between the subject and world" (Marton and Booth, 1997, p.122). Secondly, this relational facet means phenomenography characterises "second order" perspectives or "ways of experiencing the world" (Marton and Booth, 1997, p.118). Thirdly, results are presented as "categories of description" in an "outcome space" (Marton and Booth, 1997, p.125). Categorisations present a unique facet of phenomenon and "logically relate" to one another; a holistic "structure" is formed in which "categories are related to other categories" (Marton, 1986, p.34). Fourthly, categories are developed holistically, whereby variation is recorded "between individuals or within individuals" (Martin and Booth, 1997, p.124). In this way individuals "are seen as...the bearers of fragments of different ways of experiencing phenomena" (Marton and Booth, 1997, p.114)

Interviews and Question Selection

Data was collected via semi-structured interviews; this ensured that the same key issues were raised in each interview, whilst allowing for flexibility (Bryman, 2015, p.315). In line with Akerlind (2005) three types of question were used:

Primary "open questions" (p.106) elicited direct answers to interview questions identified through literature. Chosen with the pragmatic aim of providing a gateway into discussion, the following four questions maximised scope for variation within participants:

Q1. In which professional contexts - if any - does neutrality arise? The literature presents a number of professional contexts linked to neutrality. Foskett (1962, p.10) conceives of a neutral objectivity "during reference services". Other writers conceive of neutrality in a theoretical context, arguing that the "neutral academic librarian works...in the controlling interest of society" (Bales and Engles, 2012, p.21). Others link neutrality to engagement in partisan issues or specific contexts (Iverson, 2008; Samek, 2007).

Q2. Is it possible to be completely neutral? This question was inspired by a variation in the literature between those who believe neutrality is a meaningful and coherent concept and

those who believe it is an incoherent myth; a façade that furthers pre-existing dominant values.

Q3. How important is neutrality compared to other professional values? The third question was informed by a perceived variation between those who hold neutrality to be an important professional value and those who prioritise non-neutral social responsibilities, as epitomised by the variation between the 'Favourable' and 'Libraries are Social Institutions' conceptions.

Q4. What influence - if any - does neutrality have on 'day-to-day' work? Finally, this question arose from the perceived variation between those who relate neutrality to everyday work, and the possibility that neutrality may be unconsciously bypassed in day-to-day decision making.

Interview questions were followed with requests for examples from participants' professional experience, and with "unstructured follow up questions" (Akerlind, 2005, p.106) which probed deeper meaning. Finally, "why questions" drew out attitudes (Akerlind, 2005, p.114).

Sampling

Seven interviews were conducted. This is in keeping with Wheeler and McKinney's (2015) six in a phenomenographic study conducted within an academic library context. Yates, Partridge and Bruce (2012) propose there is no ideal sample size in phenomenography, but that sampling must satisfy two conditions. Firstly, sampling needs to capture detailed variation; secondly, data must be manageable. Given that detailed variation *was* found amongst seven participants, both conditions were met in this study. This is supported by Trem's (2017, p.14) assertion that "large samples are not necessary" because phenomenography does not seek to be generalisable in the same way as a 'first order' objective methodology.

To maximise variation, a purposeful sample included information professionals from public, academic and workplace sectors (Gorman and Clayton, 2005, p.128). This approach is affirmed by Yates, Partridge and Bruce (2012) who note that purposeful sampling allows for targeting of participants likely to yield a variable sample. Information professionals were defined as having a CILIP-accredited postgraduate qualification. Interviews were planned with two librarians from academic, public and workplace libraries. Each sector comprised an interview with a professional of five or fewer years' experience and one with ten or more

years' experience. Participants were approached via professional networks and an invitation distributed via Twitter. The scope of the investigation was restricted to those practising in the UK.

A pilot interview was conducted and included in the data analysis, firstly, for its question structure (which was retrospectively consistent with subsequent interviews) and, secondly, because of a precedent in phenomenographic literature of including pilot data (see Prekert, Carlsson and Svantesson et al. 2017; Abelsson and Lindwall, 2012; Wheeler and Mckinney 2015). The value of the pilot stage in gauging the usefulness of 'methods or instruments' is noted by van Teijlingen and Hundley (2001, p.33), particularly with untested qualitative interview schedules. Overall seven interviews were carried out, one for each category plus an additional participant for the 'workplace more than 10 years' category, as the pilot interview participant was also from this group. **Table One** identifies participants by sector and experience categorisation.

Table One: Individual participants by sector

Sector	Academic	Public	Workplace
Participants	A, B	C,D	E,F,G

Analysis

Interviews were transcribed; data addressing research questions was analysed with meaning assigned in an 'interview wide' context (Marton, 1986, p.42). Categories were constructed to reflect logically related similarities and differences. There are two notable approaches to categorisation in the literature. In the first, categories are "constructed"; this creates a tension between "being true to data and creating…a tidy construction" (Walsh, 2000, p.21). In the second, categories are "discovered" i.e. constructed via similarities and differences rather than a theoretical framework (Walsh, 2000, p.25). 'Discovery', however, overlooks the theorising inherent in searching for collective meaning (Akerlind, 2005). Consequently, categorisation followed Akerlind's (2005, p.118) compromise of placing "equal weight on…logical and empirical support": each transcript may represent an incomplete category that relies on data from other transcripts to become a fully formed category. To be faithful to

the investigation's descriptive aims, categorisations were theoretically constructed in a looser, 'second order' way. Instead of representing a 'theory of LIS neutrality', for example, categories represented *one* informative way of describing data; it could, therefore, be possible to draw alternative 'second order' categorisations.

Whilst Marton (1986, p.46) notes there are no set "algorithms" for phenomenographic analysis, transcripts were analysed in accordance in with techniques reported in the literature. Firstly, similar passages were grouped; the meaning of passages was taken in an 'interview wide' context; passages were reread in an iterative process until four categories – each bound together by the meaning of their constituent quotes – were identified. This is in keeping with Marton's assertion that analysis begins by grouping utterances in a "data pool" of meaning "brought together into categories on the basis of their similarities" (Marton, 1986, p.43). Secondly, categories were broken down into smaller 'sub-themes' which provide a helpful structure to describe each category; Bowden (1986, p.26) notes the danger drifting into content analysis by listing details rather than focussing on the "holistic meanings" that hallmark phenomenographic categories. Consequently, 'sub-themes' are used to illustrate shared meanings across all passages that represent that particular category. Finally, three dimensions of variation logically relate similarities and differences between categories. The postponement of searching for relationships between categories is emphasised by Akerlind (2005), who warns a premature search for structural relationships may introduce a theoretical bias that knits categories together with a convenient tightness, yet fails to capture data in an "incomplete outcome space" (Akerlind, 2005, p.119). The example below illustrates this threefold process; categories and terminology unfamiliar to the reader will be fully explained in the subsequent results section.

Stage One: On initial readings, broad categories were identified; Participant A's assertion that "other professional values might be more important than neutrality" matched with other comments that suggested neutrality was 'subservient' to other values.

Stage Two: Having identified four broad categories, passages were read through to identify sub-themes in each category. For example, Participant E's statement that "legal obligations" were more important than neutrality matched Participant B's assertion that "data

protection" took precedence. Participant D's assertion that neutrality often gave way to political pressure brought these passages together in an 'external obligations' sub-theme.

Stage Three: In the final stage, the four internally stable conceptions were compared to one another in order establish logically related similarities and differences; this involved rereading conceptions to find common dimensions of variation. With the 'Subservient' conception, for example, neutrality is viewed as a more negative value, and it was found that all other conceptions related to this 'positive negative continuum'. Three dimensions of variation were found across categories.

Reliability and validity

The object of a phenomenographic study is not the phenomenon itself, or any shared conception of it, nor is it the conception of particular individuals. Rather it is the set of possible ways in which the phenomenon can be experienced. Reliability and validity are not concerned with the likelihood that the outcome spaces would be similarly generated by other researchers interviewing the same people, or with establishing consensually shared or agreed outcomes via, for example, an interrater reliability test. Strategies to verify the validity of data in phenomenography should be "paradigm specific" (Morse et al. 2002 p.5 cited in Cope, 2017, p.8), with a "full and open account of a study's method" (Cope, 2017, p.8). This study has therefore addressed five of Cope's (2017) criteria for transparent methodological rigour. Firstly, the purposeful sample has been justified by its propensity to capture the variation that hallmarks phenomenographic research; the choice of three LIS sectors and different levels of professional experience minimises potential bias. Secondly, interview questions have been justified as instruments with scope to evoke the phenomenographic ideal of variation. Thirdly, the process of analysis has three stages which negotiate the line between theorising and discovery in the construction of categories. Care has also been taken to use quotes to justify the categories and explain the rationale for their construction. Finally, unconscious bias was mitigated during data collection and analysis via "phenomenological reduction", a 'paradigm specific' approach advocated by Sandberg (1997, p.209) as a method for maintaining "interpretive awareness" by withholding preconceived "theories and prejudices to be freshly present to individuals...under investigation". Reduction involves staying "orientated to phenomena...during the research process" and giving equal

importance to all statements in order to prevent subjective disregard of material (Sandberg, 1997, p.210). This approach is affirmed by Bree (1999) who describes 'phenomenological Epoché' where "preconceived notions" are "stripped away" (p.240); reduction is completed via a 'horizontalisation' that "absorbs only the phenomena presented" (p.243). Similarly, Richardson (1999, p.59) describes reduction as a "bracketing" of pre-existing beliefs.

Results

Four qualitatively different conceptions of neutrality emerged from the interviews: the 'Core Value' Conception, the 'Subservient' Conception, the 'Ambivalent' Conception and the 'Hidden Values' Conception. These were logically related via three dimensions of variation: the perception of neutrality as a positive or negative value, the perception of neutrality as a coherent value, and the personal, institutional or societal level of engagement at which neutrality is conceived.

Table Two summarises categorisations and dimensions of variation, providing an initial snapshot of results which are fully explained subsequently.

Table Two: Description of categories via positioning on three common dimensions of variation

	Positive or negative	Coherence as a value	Level of engagement
'Core Value' Conception	**Positive:** Neutrality is viewed in a more positive light, preserving equality, fairness and balance	**Coherent:** Neutrality is talked about as a meaningful and coherent value	**Individual:** More emphasis on the individual; individual librarians should not let personal views interfere with professional judgement in user interactions or collection decisions. Librarians should refrain from making value judgements.

'Subservient' Conception	**Negative:** Neutrality is viewed in a more negative light; upholding legal and political responsibilities, espousing progressive values and community engagement is more important than neutrality	**Coherent**: Although neutrality is subservient to other values, it is still talked about in a meaningful and coherent way.	**Individual, Institutional and Societal:** Individuals actions, institutional goals, and societal pressures can be prioritised over neutrality.
'Ambivalent' Conception	**Ambivalent:** Neutrality is a difficult subject; participants understand arguments on both sides of the neutral/ non-neutral divide	**Coherent**: Whilst ambivalent about treading the line between neutrality and non-neutrality, it is still a coherent value.	**Individual and Institutional:** There is uncertainty when individuals should make non-neutral interventions and when institutions i.e. in stocking a particular book, should be non-neutral
'Hidden Values' Conception	**Neither:** Questions the coherence of neutrality rather than positive or negative effects	**Incoherent:** Neutrality – at least in an absolute sense - is not a coherent concept	**Individual, Institutional and Societal:** Neutrality in LIS masks hidden values at an institutional level i.e. classification, at an individual level i.e. personal subjective bias and at a societal level i.e. trends in publishing and the 'status quo' values that structure society.

Description of Categories

Categories reflect the phenomenographic ideal of "collective voices" spanning transcripts (Marton and Booth, 1997, p.114). They represent a "stripped description in which the structure and essential meaning are retained" whilst individual "flavours" and "colours" are side-lined. For clarity in the descriptions of the conceptions presented below, however, **Table One** can be used to identify participants by sector and experience category.

Conception One: Core Value

The 'Core Value' conception defines neutrality as a positive value; participants regard it as a preserver of equity and fairness. Neutrality is "open to all and…not favouring one position over another" (Participant A), "giving equitable access to people and not making judgement" (Participant E), "treating every request with the same level of professionalism and…importance" (Participant F). It embodies equal provision for all users: "it doesn't matter who walks through the door; that information [is] freely available to everybody" (Participant G). In short, neutrality is a means of ensuring that all users and viewpoints are treated equitably.

Within this conception, fairness and equity are manifested via three themes. Firstly, neutrality keeps personal views separate from professional practice. Participant A states

> *"I don't think…anyone in the library should really be showing that they support any particular political party or any movement".*

For Participant C, library literature should not be influenced by personal interest:

> *"I think neutrality and impartiality do influence me…some of it I put in my bulletin because I can see that it has relevance and some of it I don't because…it's not me that I am writing for".*

For Participant E, this neutral commitment mitigates subjective bias in reference interviews:

> *"One aspect in corporate libraries is if you're not careful you could misunderstand what someone wants by trying to overlay your understanding".*

For Participant F, compartmentalisation between personal and professional is expressed via an analogy with customer service:

> *"[You shouldn't] bring the personal into the professional, so if you do any kind of customer facing - OK you've had a really rubbish day - but that doesn't mean you can take it out on the next customer".*

This first theme embodies the belief that personal views should not interfere with professional practice.

The second theme relates to balanced collections. For Participant A, this is conveyed via a disambiguation with the researcher;

> *"Researcher: So in an academic library you think it's important to have a balanced collection?*
>
> *Participant A: Across the board, yeah.*
>
> *Researcher: And you would link that to neutrality in terms of not favouring one topic or subject matter over another?*
>
> *Participant A: Yes, definitely"*

For Participant C, collections should not be shaped by personal interest; they use an example of an ex-colleague with a passion for film:

> *"I worked with someone… he had a huge film library at home but he also had a parallel film library in the library, and it seemed to me wrong because it was treating the library like it was his own space".*

In this final theme, neutrality is consistent with engaging users, discussing sources, and teaching evaluative skills. For Participant A, neutrality involves teaching users to "evaluate sources better and not be misled" without "leading them to one particular view or another". Crucially, however, guidance stops short of judgement; "on a personal level you shouldn't express one way or another. I think it's important to make people aware of those issues rather than giving your opinion". Similarly, whilst Participant C was – in the context of an LGBT workshop for library users – prepared to discuss issues, they stopped short of an evaluative judgement: "I don't think the way to do it is to tell them what to believe." Similarly, Participant G states whilst "you can engage somebody in a conversation about what this document means" users must "draw their own conclusion".

In sum, the 'Core Value' conception conceives of neutrality as a positive value underpinned by equality and fairness for all viewpoints. This equality manifests itself in three guises; the

'personal professional divide', 'balance' and 'discussion not judgement'. Crucially, level of engagement emphasises the *individual* level; individual opinion should not cloud discussions with users.

Conception Two: Subservient

For the 'Subservient' conception, by contrast, neutrality is a primarily negative value that manifests itself via three themes: 'external obligations', 'progressive values', and 'serving communities'.

Firstly, external legal and political obligations take precedence. For Participant C, "if someone started…making racist comments…you cannot just let that go so you have to make a judgement". Similarly, Participant B described data protection as "more important than the absence or presence of neutrality". They state "if an academic rang me up and says I really need this book…I know 100 percent a priori…I won't tell them who's got the book".

For Participant D, externally imposed political pressure trumps neutrality; their comments do not connote negativity, but conceive neutrality as subservient to political will:

> "this was an occasion of non-neutrality thrust upon us, there was a notion that [X library] would be bought under [X county council] via devolution…the council had come out in full force saying 'just say no' 'don't vote' 'don't agree to this' and was really pushing its agenda".

In sum, neutrality is subservient to external requirements that necessitate a course of action.

The second theme within the 'Subservient' conception is the view that neutrality is subservient to promoting progressive values. Participant A states: "I think some of the other professional values might be more important than neutrality…social issues I think are probably the most important". Action taken by associations is also more important than neutrality:

> "CILIP…ignored the library cuts and the library closures…so I think to ignore those trends because you're trying to be neutral…is worse for the profession and everyone else" (Participant A).

Likewise, for Participant C, "pushing boundaries" to promote progressive values take precedence;

> "When I was a children's librarian in X [borough] I started doing work…on racism in children's books; I was perceived of as someone who was very difficult and awkward and gay…but [at] every meeting I chaired we talked about equality issues; I set a climate where people felt very comfortable".

The prioritisation of certain issues is described by Participant D who states "we do positively push certain political agendas; LGBT [groups] are working with libraries at the minute…you could argue that's taking a political stance". For Participant B, saving culturally important periodicals takes precedence; they raised an annual shortlist of periodicals cancelled in a cost-saving exercise, stating "we should become advocates for causes; I want to threaten our neutrality because I don't think we should have neutrality". In sum, the 'Progressive Values' theme conceives of neutrality as a value that is subservient to promoting socially responsible, progressive values.

Within the third and final theme, neutrality is subservient to empathetic engagement with local communities. Participant C states:

> "I think there is a value around having empathy for people… we should be socially responsible [and] have empathy for others…I think that mitigates completely against neutrality".

Similarly, for Participant F connecting with users overrides neutrality; "you can't just stand there and go 'I can't give you an opinion, I'm a neutral professional'". In summary, librarians have a responsibility to engage.

Via the three themes described above, the 'Subservient' conception represents the view that obligations and values are more important than neutrality. This differs from the 'Core Value' conception in two dimensions of variation: firstly, emphasis switches to negative aspects of neutrality, a value that grinds against social justice, and, secondly, the contextual level of engagement is at an individual, institutional and societal level.

Conception Three: Ambivalent

The 'Ambivalent' conception lies between the 'Core Value' and 'Subservient' conceptions with two salient characteristics. Firstly, the line between neutrality and non-neutrality is blurred and "quite slippery" (Participant C). Participant B is ambivalent about censorship, noting a Holocaust denying author whose books are still stocked by "the majority of university libraries", although "a few have decided not to…it's so hard to say…what the right thing to do is". For Participant F, the line between neutrality and non-neutrality "shifts around":

> "There are some circumstances, where other professional values would be more important than neutrality and then some cases in which neutrality would be more important".

The second characteristic gives direct weighing of the positive 'Core Value' conception and the negative 'Subservient' conception. As Participant B states, "my trouble with this subject is that there is almost no argument in either direction that doesn't have a solid counter argument". The 'Ambivalent' conception is – unsurprisingly - undecided about neutrality's place as a positive or negative value. The level of engagement is both individual and institutional; participants are unsure about individual interventions and institutional decisions such as self-censorship.

Conception Four: Hidden Values

The 'Hidden Values' conception notes tacit values lie behind neutral pretences; complete neutrality is impossible. This conception shifts emphasis from benefits and drawbacks to focus on coherence, undermining neutrality at an individual, institutional and societal level. For Participant A, libraries are non-neutral institutions: "The library profession have their own values at heart…so I think it is impossible [to be neutral] in that sense".

Similarly, Participant D suggests "I suppose we do stand for values in terms of literacy and access of information". For Participant C libraries endorse the 'status quo'; they portray a dominant value orientation that reflects society:

> "I'm not sure neutrality is possible…people for example talk about library stock being balanced and neutral…but inevitably, because of the way book publishing works, some voices will be [louder] than other voices."

To summarise, libraries that push against dominant values are accused of a bias, which then ignores pre-existing non-neutral positions. In addressing this bias, libraries "run into real difficulties if they…put on events that challenge that perception of what society is". Participant C refers to Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988:

> *"Section 28 was the horrendous legislation that the then government brought in. Some libraries thought they couldn't do anything about it because they thought they were neutral, but they weren't neutral because they abided by the law and…stopped stocking LGBT materials".*

Again, neutrality is a myth that overlooks an antecedent value-laden position. This conception is affirmed by Participant B who argues that libraries are biased towards a "white male" culture:

> *"You can aim for objectivity, but to remain completely neutral in a system that was already functioning at a time before neutrality was really aspired to [is impossible], because it was made by white men".*

Secondly, neutrality is impossible at an individual level; Participant E states, "I think you can't help yourself in the influences that have shaped you into the person that you are". Similarly, Participant F notes "I don't think you can ever find a truly neutral person or someone who is going to be objective". Similarly, Participant G states:

> *"We are all products of our upbringing the society we have been brought up in, the family situation we are brought up in…so they will all influence what we do".*

In short, neutrality is an unattainable goal; the actions of an individual have an irreducible human perspective.

To summarise, the 'Hidden Values' conception focuses on the shared perception that complete neutrality is impossible. Level of engagement is individual, institutional and societal; tacit values hide behind neutral pretences at all three levels.

Discussion

This section relates the research results to findings to the literature, and addresses the final two objectives, 'to compare categories and literature, looking for similarities and disparities' and 'to consider normative implications'. The word 'compare' is preferred to 'triangulate' due to ambiguity in literature in which triangulation is often associated with "validating evidence" (Ritchie, 2003, p.46). As phenomenography charts 'second order' conceptions, an unloaded 'comparison' describes the process of bringing together literature and categorisations, and structural similarities and differences between categories and the literature are discussed. Crucially – rather than correlating 'individual voices'- the purpose of this section is to link the structure of categories to literature; in other words, it examines which *categories* are evident in the literature, and which are not.

Structural Similarities
The features of three categories – the 'Core Value', 'Subservient' and 'Hidden Values' conceptions – are now compared to those within previous literature.

The **'Core Value'** conception closely mirrors 'Favourable' conceptions in the literature; it has four structural similarities. Firstly, participants' commitment to "not favouring one position over another" and providing "equitable access" closely mirror the 'neutral equality' espoused by liberal thinkers. For Rawls the state is neutral between comprehensive doctrines in a system that allows each to pursue their good (Dreben, 2003, p.326). Likewise, for Dworkin, neutrality ensures "*equal* concern and respect" (Jones, 1989, p.10). Here, similarity represents a shared conception of neutrality as preserver of equality.

Secondly, the 'Core Value' theme of keeping the personal out of the professional is echoed by Foskett who argues that the "librarian ought to…vanish as an individual" (Foskett, 1962, p.10). This closely resembles participants' assertion that libraries should not "be showing that they support any particular political party", and that "[You should not] bring the personal into the professional". This professional detachment is echoed in by the ALA code of ethics; "we…do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere" (ALA, 2008), and in the CILIP Ethical Framework's (2018) commitment to "impartiality and the avoidance of inappropriate bias". Thirdly, the importance of balance is also captured; in interviews, the assertion is made that

personal views should not "overload" the library. This embodies Berninghausen's (1972, p.3676) conception of neutrality as defender of intellectual freedom, whereby "it is the social responsibility of librarians to…represent all points of view". Fourthly, the theme 'Discussion not Judgement', in which neutrality is consistent with teaching evaluative skills, mirrors Foskett's assertion that objectivity "widens the horizons of the reader" (Foskett, 1962, p.11). In interviews participants assert that librarians have responsibility to ensure users "evaluate sources better and not be misled". This symmetry is expanded by McMenemy (2007, p.180) who interprets Foskett's 'widening' as a neutrality enabling "the librarian [to use] their knowledge of reader's interests to offer alternative viewpoints"; he affirms this connection by stating "within this [widening] we can identify…information literacy and reader development". This captures the evaluative skills endorsed in interviews, with a shared conception of neutrality widening reader viewpoint.

The **'Subservient'** conception mirrors the 'Libraries are Social Institutions' and 'Value Laden Profession' conceptions in literature; two core parallels emerge. Firstly, there is a shared belief that neutrality is subservient to promoting progressive values. In interviews, participants prioritise "political agendas like LGBT" (Participant D) and becoming "advocates for causes" (Participant B). There was a collective sense that librarians had non-neutral responsibilities to "push boundaries" (Participant C) and promote social justice (Participant C). This theme neatly aligns with the activism espoused in 'Libraries are Social Institutions' conception. Sellen (1972) - for example – argues that the ALA has a non-neutral responsibility to counterbalance "racist or sexist" facilities (p.27). Similarly, Eckert (2016) argues that "dismantling gender prejudice" represents value-laden best practice, Samek (2007, p.7) that librarians should be "active participants…in social conflicts", and Durrani and Smallwood (2008, p.137) state that librarians should eliminate "causes of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and inequality".

Secondly, the 'Serving Communities' theme also is also represented within the 'Subservient' conception. In interviews, this includes the belief that neutrality is subservient to community engagement. This prioritisation is emphasised by Alfino and Pierce (2001, p.482), who argue that neutrality should be shunned in favour of "leading communities in discussion", and that librarians should help society "self-legislate" via autonomous decision making (p.483). Whilst

differing in detail, there is a shared conception here that librarians should prioritise community engagement, perhaps having become "unconnected to the social and political reality around them" (Durrani and Smallwood, 2008, p.120).

The **'Hidden Values'** conception also mirrors literature, this time in the guise of the 'Tacit Values' conception: neutrality – at least in a complete sense - is conceptually incoherent. Participant C's comment that in book publishing ''some voices will be more prevalent than other voices" strongly resembles Iverson's (2008, p.27) view that librarians "may be recreating racist censorship" by favouring "mainstream publishing houses". There is shared acknowledgment that mainstream views reflect bias, as affirmed by Atton's (1994, p.57) comment that favouring mainstream publishers "unwittingly [sustains] a status quo". In short, the conception that neutrality is "code for the existing system" can be found both in the empirical data and the literature (Horton and Freire 1990, p.102 cited in Jensen, 2008, p.91). There is also consensus about antecedent 'white male bias'; Participant B states that neutrality is impossible "in a system made…by white men". This echoes Stoffle and Tarin's (1994, p.47) assertion that "institutions are not neutral… [but structured] round the…rules of…dominant white…society" and Farkas' (2017) position that neutrality "supports a status quo dominated by a white…male ethos".

To conclude, this section noted structural similarities between categorisations and existing literature, analysis revealing prominent features of three conceptions – 'Core Value', 'Subservient' and 'Hidden Values' – are present in previous research and ethical frameworks.

Disparities

In contrast to these salient similarities, the **'Ambivalent'** conception identified in the empirical data is largely missing from the literature: firstly, the conception itself exhibits an indecision and appreciation of context not widely discussed. This indecision is apparent, for example, in Participant D's comments that "it's so hard to say with confidence what the right thing to do is" and "I just find it incredibly difficult and complicated". With respect to neutrality, appreciation of nuanced ethical dilemmas is not typically characterised in the literature, although Burgess (2016) is an exception discussed below. However, this ambivalence is strongly reflected in interviews: "it depends on how you look at it and what context it's in"

(Participant E) and "there are some circumstances, where other professional values would be more important than neutrality, and then some cases in which neutrality would be more important" (Participant F).

Secondly, the variation *within* participants – brought to the fore by phenomenographic analysis - adds further ambivalence. All participants spanned multiple categorisations as the emphasis of questioning changed, this fluid understanding of neutrality is not reflected by existing literature which is generally rooted in a 'for or against' camp. Such polarised arguments – characterised by assertions that neutrality either negatively "affirms existing societal value" (Byam, 1973, p.39) or positively strengthens objective detachment (Foskett, 1962) – fail to appreciate the variety of contexts in which it may either help or hinder professional practice, whereas understanding these ranging conceptions is a vital first step in evaluating neutrality's worth. The present study thereby contributes to the 'neutrality debate' by descriptively mapping these ranging conceptions in a holistic framework that brings them into view.

Contribution to practice

The polarised nature of the 'neutrality debate' in literature indicates a need for need for further discussion across the profession to raise awareness of differing conceptions of neutrality. This lack of awareness has resulted in all-encompassing conclusions about neutrality's worth from small pockets of professional experience in specific contexts. The beginning of a non-judgmental and inclusive debate would be a first step to a more thorough understanding of how neutrality can both help and hinder the aims of the LIS profession.

Conclusion and contribution: a change of approach

This investigation has identified four distinct conceptions of neutrality spanning three dimensions of variation: the importance of neutrality as a positive or negative, its conceptual coherence and its level of contextual engagement. Categorisations were then compared to literature. Three categories - 'Core Value', 'Subservient' and 'Hidden Values' - bore structural similarities with arguments identified in literature. Crucially, however, the 'Ambivalent' conception – characterised by an appreciation of neutrality as a slippery and elusive concept

– was largely missing. Typically, writers argue 'for or against' neutrality rather than appreciating the nuances in which neutrality may be beneficial or harmful. This difference was buttressed by noting variation within participants; all participants conceived of neutrality in at least two different ways as the emphasis of questioning changed. This variation suggests that a largely one-dimensional literary debate - construing neutrality as an 'all or nothing' concept – overlooks its complexity within the profession.

This study, therefore, assists in changing the tone of the 'neutrality debate' in LIS. A phenomenographic approach - searching for the 'architecture of variation' between different conceptions – built on variation discovered in literature, and enabled a descriptive comparison between literature and interviews. By holistically mapping conceptions of neutrality, the phenomenographic 'outcome space' and subsequent discussion will aid LIS professionals by deepening understanding of neutrality and its multifaceted nature within LIS. This in turn will lead to a more reconciliatory and productive understanding of intuitions either side of the 'neutral, non-neutral divide'. To facilitate this reconciliation, however, the nuance this study highlights could also be signposted in LIS education and relevant CPD as a means of facilitating a richer understanding of the challenge the concept presents.

Future Research: Reconciling Viewpoints

Future research could develop an ethical framework which provides normative guidance on negotiating the line between neutrality and non-neutrality. Burgess (2016), in an exception to the 'for or against' character of the neutrality debate, argues that a virtue ethics framework unifies neutrality and social responsibility. As reflected in the 'Ambivalent' conception, Burgess (2016) acknowledges ranging professional contexts that "complicate the goal of ethical unity" (p.163). This variety manifests itself through differing "cultural perspectives" that grind against a "homogenous" ethical understanding (Burgess, 2016, p.164), providing an "opportunity to break out of the discourse of competition between…values and instead focus on ways to reconcile the two under a broader understanding of LIS ethics" (p.169).

The Aristotelian notion of 'Eudaimonia' – reflecting a flourishing congruent with telos or purpose – makes this reconciliation possible. This pursuit is achieved via 'phronesis', a practical wisdom allowing "one to devote oneself to one's purpose" (Burgess, 2016, p.170).

Instead of forming "inviolable laws", neutrality and social responsibility become virtuous "good habits" in a context sensitive framework prioritising professional purpose. By noting how an action is "prudent or imprudent in a given situation" all courses of action are permissible (Burgess, 2016, p.170). Burgess (2016, p.165) repeats Osburn's assertion that libraries have "responsibility to act as steward over libraries and other information technologies where libraries are seen as a technology in the evolution of culture" as a purpose statement. Although a full evaluation of this purpose is beyond the scope of this investigation, a virtue-based approach demonstrates how intuitions guiding neutrality and social responsibility can be brought together in one consistent framework.

The context-sensitive merit of virtue ethics is echoed by ethical theorists and writers from other disciplines. Beginning with Rachels' definition of virtue as "a trait of character, manifested in habitual action" (Rachels, 1999, p.5 cited in Gardiner, 2003, p.297), Gardiner argues correct action constitutes a eudemonic flourishing that applies virtue in accordance with practical wisdom. Consequently, rather than being bound by strict moral rules, "the virtuous person perceives a situation, judges what is right, and acts virtuously *because it is in her disposition to act well*" (Gardiner, 2003, p.298), virtue ethics thereby provides "flexibility to assess each situation individually" (p.300). Armstrong (2006, p.120) similarly states that virtue ethics allows "judgement and moral wisdom to…make morally good choices…in different circumstances".

A key strength of virtue ethics is its acknowledgement of irresolvable dilemmas when an "agent's moral choice lies between x and y and there are no moral grounds for favouring…x over y" (Hursthouse, 1999, p.63). Here, prescriptive consequentialist and deontological frameworks misjudge our moral landscape by prescribing 'right action' in every scenario. Whilst two virtuous agents may act differently against the backdrop of an irresolvable dilemma, they do so having "thought about it…conscientiously…and after agonised thought" (Hursthouse, 1999, p.71). In summary, a virtue based framework accommodates the possibility that there need not always be a right action where neutrality conflicts with other values; by focusing on *rational procedure,* it provides a framework for unifying conceptions in ranging contexts. This contextual importance is emphasised by Nordby (2008, p.6), who suggests that virtue based frameworks depend not on a "core of moral knowledge" but an

essential "contextual awareness". Consequently, the *descriptive* approach of the study reported here is far from supplementary. It challenges the validity of all-encompassing abstract statements about neutrality's worth, an insight which potentially changes the tone of the neutrality debate in LIS.

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