

The University of Macedonia Library & Information Centre is an academic library located in Thessaloniki, Greece. Our library collection includes - among others - material in English, Greek, French, German, and Russian. Bibliographic records are available through our Online Public Access Catalogue.¹ Subject headings are assigned according to the language of the resource described, i.e. Greek resources are assigned both English subject headings (LCSH) and their Greek translation. Resources in other languages are assigned subject headings only in English.

Following the surge of academic libraries around the world to review their subject headings for racist or pejorative content, we decided to have a critical look at our catalogue. Our starting point was the *Change the Subject* movement² and the changes to MARC authority records as suggested by the American Library Association in its report from the Subject Analysis Committee Working Group on the LCSH "Illegal aliens".³ Taking into consideration the changes applied by Cornell University Library as well as Harvard Library and many others, and although these changes were not finally adopted by the Library of Congress, we embarked on a small-scale project.

The project focused on two areas: a) the 'Illegal aliens' family of subject headings and b) the recent change of name of the Republic of North Macedonia.

Illegal aliens

We started by searching our authorities files for use of this subject heading in all fields of authority records (1XX, 4XX, 5XX, 6XX etc). It turned out that we had used this term either alone or accompanied by a free-floating/ standard subdivision. There were also other subject headings that needed to change since they included the term alien (e.g. Women alien labor). As it turned out, changes had to be made to the following headings whether stand-alone or in combination with subdivisions:

- Illegal aliens
- Human smuggling
- Aliens
- Immigrants
- Human trafficking
- Alien criminals
- Alien labor
- Women alien labor
- Alien property
- Corporations, Foreign
- Repatriation

¹ <https://catalog.lib.uom.gr/>

² <https://www.library.dartmouth.edu/digital/digital-collections/change-the-subject>

³ <https://alair.ala.org/handle/11213/9261>, especially Att-6.

The English terms that were preferred were those suggested by ALA and other English-speaking academic libraries:

- Illegal aliens changed to **Undocumented immigrants**
- Aliens changed to **Noncitizens**
- Alien criminals changed to **Noncitizen criminals**
- Alien labor changed to **Foreign workers** (already authorized by LC)
- Women alien labor changed to **Women foreign workers** (already authorized by LC)
- Alien property changed to **Foreign-owned property**

Then there was also the issue of the Greek translation of the term Illegal aliens. Was the translated term also racist or pejorative? It was in our day and age. Perhaps it wasn't a couple of decades ago, but it wasn't being used anymore in government language. The Greek term was Παράνομοι ξένοι, now changed to **Παράτυποι μετανάστες**. Before changing the term we consulted the websites of Greek Ministries (i.e. Ministry of Interior and others) and the United Nations terminology.⁴

All of the changes were recorded manually, both in authority files as well as bibliographic records. When a MARC field had to change in a bibliographic record, field 650 was maintained, but the indicator changed from 0 to 7 and subfield 2 was added with the text **Change the Subject Project**.⁵

Since the cancelled terminology is still being used by the Library of Congress, there is a risk of downloading the same authority files again. This will be resolved by training the next cataloguers as to what happened and why, recording these changes to our department blog and perhaps checking our authorities again in a year from now.

North Macedonia

The country that is now called Republic of North Macedonia, authorized by LC as **North Macedonia**, was formerly in dispute with Greece over its name. The term used by Greece was Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). The Greek term was Πρώην Γιουγκοσλαβική Δημοκρατία της Μακεδονίας (ΠΓΔΜ). The two countries agreed to use the same terminology when they signed the treaty of Lake Prespa, which entered into force on 12/2/2019. The Library of Congress previously referred to this country as Macedonia (Republic).

Our bibliographic records now reflect these changes that were done manually. Since the number of records was not excessively long, we decided to alter them one-by-one for both projects, rather than add references to our OPAC indexer. We estimate that a total of 109 subject headings were affected. The time we invested was four working days of a single cataloguer.

Finally, we would like to express our appreciation to fellow-librarians who found the time to record their changes and share them online with the rest of the world. It is really important for librarians who are not native English speakers to understand when and why a term should not be used anymore. We hope that our work will inspire other colleagues in the future.

⁴ https://www.unhcr.org/cy/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2018/09/TerminologyLeafletGREEK_PICUM.pdf

⁵ This was done for future cataloguers to understand the use of the terminology and why it happened. This way we could also track in our system all the bibliographic records that were affected. Our reference for this practice was Change the Subject Project Guide of SUNY Libraries Consortium available at <https://slcny.libguides.com/c.php?g=986218&p=7623203>.

References and Links

1. Daniels, Laura E., Magagnosc, Jacqueline K., and Nichols, Margaret F. "Making change that matters in the library catalog." *Catalogue & Index* 202, (March 2021): 19-23. https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.cilip.org.uk/resource/collection/F71F19C3-49CF-462D-8165-B07967EE07F0/C&I_202.pdf
2. Harvard Library ends use of subject heading 'illegal alien'. *The Harvard Gazette* (March 9, 2021). <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/newsplus/harvard-library-ends-use-of-subject-heading-illegal-alien/>
3. Gross, Tina, Subject Analysis Committee Working Group. *Report from the SAC Working Group on the LCSH "Illegal aliens"*. <https://alair.ala.org/handle/11213/9261>