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Abstract

Since its inception in March 2014, the LIS Microaggressions project (www.lismicroaggressions.com) has grown as an online source and zine publication for library and information science (LIS) workers from marginalized communities to share their experiences with microaggressions in the workplace. This article will examine the project's efforts to move conversations on diversity, race, racism, and antiracism in the LIS field to transgressive and actionable steps. Through conference presentations, zine-making workshops, and distribution of zines at LIS conferences, the LIS Microaggressions collective wishes to "call in" or otherwise actively engage the LIS profession for critical reflection and analysis about microaggressions in the workplace with the ultimate goal of fostering support and a participatory community for library workers dealing with microaggressions.

Introduction

The term "microaggression" has become increasingly visible in scholarship, mainstream news sources, and conversations happening in higher education (Pérez Huber and Solórzano 2015b). The most widely recognized definition of the term states that microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults toward individuals from marginalized communities (Sue et al. 2007). Microaggressions can be difficult to identify because they are more nuanced, subtle forms of prejudice (Orozco 2016). They may be evident in the language we use with our peers, the

assumptions or perceived compliments we make of a person's ethnic background, racial presentation, observed religion, perceived gender, assigned gender, sexuality, physical and mental capabilities, and lifestyle.

In the context of the library and information science (LIS) profession, microaggressions can be exhibited in the workplace by making assumptions about people who work in any LIS setting (from now on referred to as "LIS workers" in this article) that may or may not relate to their abilities to perform the tasks necessary to conduct their work. For example, assuming a librarian is a student worker or asking to speak to the librarian in charge when a person of color (POC) librarian is at the reference desk are microaggressions that work in concert with the stereotypes of what a librarian should look like. These experiences vary in scope and can range from occupational assumptions to the very personal realm of identity politics. As individual experiences, microaggressions may seem insignificant or benign occurrences, but these experiences can take a cumulative toll on those who constantly find themselves on the receiving end of them (Dr. Chester Pierce quoted in Pérez Huber and Solórzano 2015b). Microaggressions can be the cause of a wide range of uncomfortable experiences in the workplace—from dismay and feeling unsafe, to hostility and feelings of exclusion (Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, et al. 2007).

The LIS Microaggressions (LISM) project was created to foster a space for library workers to acknowledge their experiences with microaggressions; find support and validation within community; and bring awareness to the LIS profession at-large. The project initially developed as a Tumblr page, soliciting and posting anonymous submissions from self-identified library workers on the microaggressions they have experienced in the workplace. In an effort to increase awareness and visibility beyond online spheres, the project expanded in the form of a zine publication in the spring of 2015. Zines, defined as "non-commercial, non-professional, small-circulation magazines which their creators produce, publish, and distribute by themselves" (Duncombe quoted in Creasap 2014), are experimental do-it-yourself (DIY) bodies of expression that allow for the creation of counternarratives and participatory community building (Honma 2016). Through zine work, the LISM collective has been able to "call in" or otherwise actively engage the LIS profession about issues of diversity, race, racism, and antiracism via zine-making workshops, presentations, and distribution of zines at LIS conferences. Practicing ways of "calling in" people versus "calling out" is one way of holding people accountable to their actions by engaging them, not excluding them. Most recently, the phrase "call out culture" has been popularized to describe a cultural phenomenon within progressive activist circles to "publicly name instances or patterns of oppressive behaviour and language use by others" and has come under criticism for its often public and performative political correctness (Ahmad 2015). The "calling in" practice stems from grassroots activist

circles (Trần 2013) as a way to constructively address problematic issues that may arise from those that unknowingly perpetuate them by calling them *in* for critical reflection, examination, and action. Because microaggressions can be manifestations of unconscious bias or discrimination, the rhetorical difference between "calling in" versus "calling out" can make a difference between perpetuating the same sentiments of alienation and hostility that microaggressions tend to evoke.

This article focuses on the LIS Microaggressions project and its efforts to "call in" issues of diversity, race, racism, and antiracism in the LIS field to transgressive and actionable steps by way of participatory community building through its online platform and zine production. With these two venues, the LIS Microaggressions project provides critical spaces for LIS workers to engage with their colleagues about pervasive racism and sexism exhibited in everyday microaggressive acts in the LIS workplace.

The paper will also provide a targeted sampler of women of color (WOC)–created zines and explore how the *LIS Microaggressions* zine fits into zine-making culture. Though rooted as forms of participatory culture and sites of resistance, zine communities themselves can embody and perpetuate racial and other oppressions. Growing out of white-dominated punk subcultures, zines have historically overrepresented dominant white groups. However, there is a rich tradition of resistance to white dominance in the zine community embodied through zines created by and for people of color. *LIS Microaggressions* continues this tradition as a WOC-created zine about marginalizing experiences in librarianship written for people of color rather than a white gaze.

Literature Overview

The LIS Microaggressions project exists at the intersection of emerging discourse in recent LIS literature on diversity, race, racism, and antiracism that incorporate feminist and critical race theory (CRT), social justice, and zine pedagogy.

Diversity in LIS literature

Despite diversity being listed as one of the core values of the American Library Association (2004), there has overall been infrequent and limited discussion of diversity in LIS literature. What has been published on diversity typically centers on the topic of recruiting more people from underrepresented ethnic and racial backgrounds into librarianship (Dewey and Keally 2008; Gulati 2010; Josey and Abdullahi 2002; Kim and Sin 2008; Love 2010). This numbers-focused approach to diversity has provided little discussion on retention in the profession or how everyday workplace behaviors relating to race, racism, or antiracism affect sustained diversity in the LIS profession.

Starting with a seminal article by Todd Honma (2005), more recent

literature has thematically shifted to nuanced discussions of diversity, such as social justice in libraries (Cooke, Sweeney, and Noble 2016; Morales, Knowles, and Bourg 2014; Roberts and Noble 2016); microaggressions (Alabi 2015a, 2015b; Orozco 2016); identity and stereotypes (Gonzalez-Smith, Swanson, and Tanaka 2014; Pho and Masland 2014); and lived experiences of librarians of color (Cooke 2014; Hankins and Juárez 2015). Librarians are also increasingly turning to critical whiteness studies in efforts to unpack the construction and moral implications of pervasive whiteness in the profession as a whole and libraries as institutions (Brook, Ellenwood, and Lazzaro 2015; Galvan 2015; Hathcock 2015; Ramirez 2015; Schlesselman-Tarango 2016).

Microaggressions in LIS and Other Literature
There is scant research in the LIS field that specifically addresses microaggressions and their impact in the LIS field or workplace. Alabi's aforementioned study of racial microaggressions in academic libraries found that minority librarian study participants experienced and observed microaggressions more often than nonminority librarian respondents (2015a). The study also revealed nonminority academic librarians did not recognize the racial microaggressions that their minority colleagues experienced. Alabi's study suggests a gap in perception in the LIS workplace between those affected by microaggressive actions and those that are not.

Emerging LIS literature is responding to ways in which the profession can combat racial microaggressions and other phenomena that may be experienced by early career LIS workers such as impostor syndrome and burnout (Farrell et al. 2017). Another important response to microaggressions in the LIS field is the contextualization of personal experiences from those who have experienced them in the workplace. Nicole Cooke (2014) examines racialized phenomena such as tokenism, double consciousness, and microaggressions in an analysis article about her first-year experience as a pretenured woman of color academic in the LIS profession.

For more of a comprehensive overview of the literature on microaggressions and a grounding of the historical origin of the term, one has to venture out of the current offerings in the LIS field and look to the literature in the fields of education, psychology, and other social sciences. The first mention of the term evolved from the phrase *offensive mechanisms*, a term first coined in 1969 by Dr. Chester Pierce, a psychiatrist and medical doctor based at Harvard Medical School. In 1970, he used the phrase to title his next chapter in which he first coins the term *microaggression*:

> Most offensive actions are not gross and crippling. They are subtle and stunning . . . the cumulative effect to the victim . . . is of an unimaginable magnitude. Hence, the therapist is obliged to pose the idea that offensive mechanisms are usually a *micro-aggression*. (Pierce quoted in Pérez Huber and Solórzano 2015b)

In the last two decades, growing scholarship in diverse academic fields has built on Pierce's foundational work. Psychologist Derald Wing Sue and colleagues (2007) have expanded the lexicon of microaggressive experiences to include *microinsults*, *microinvalidations*, and *microassaults*. Critical race theory (CRT) (Pérez Huber and Solórzano 2015a; Pérez Huber and Solórzano 2015b) has been used to contextualize racial microaggressions experienced by African-American (Solórzano, Ceja, and Yosso 2000; Sue, Capodilupo, Holder, et al. 2008), Asian-American (Ong et al. 2013; Sue, Bucceri, et al. 2009), and Latinx/Chicanx (Solórzano 1998; Yosso, et al. 2009) student experiences in higher education and K-12 (Kohli and Solórzano 2012).

Though there is a wealth of scholarship that unpacks the microaggression experience through theoretical framework, there is room for the literature to move the conversation beyond the theory by examining projects that specifically attempt to activate engagement about microaggressions in the LIS workplace.

Zines in LIS literature

The literature within the LIS field on zines focuses primarily on zine library collections: documenting (Freedman 2016; Hubbard 2005; O'Dwyer et al., 2014) or developing them (Bartel 2004; Brett 2015; Gisonny and Freedman 2006; Johnson 2016; Thompson 2007). Other authors explore zines as alternative or underground literature and culture (Dodge 2008; Herrada and Aul 1995; Koh 2008), or provide other practical coverage like how to catalog them (Berman 2005; Carlton 2015; Freedman and Kauffman 2013; O'Dell 2014), digitization efforts (Chant 2015), resources (Brett 2010), and programming (Gómez 2007). Librarians being librarians, the literature also includes reviews, bibliographies, and literary criticism (Barack 2006; Finnell 2013; Lymn 2013; Sellie 2006).

Library Journal (LJ) has provided significant coverage of zines along with a quarterly review column that ran from 2008–2012 (edited by Jenna Freedman). More traditional scholarly takes on zines in libraries have approached zines in the context of feminism (Eichhorn 2014; Freedman 2009; Wooten 2012), radical cataloging (Lember, Lipkin, and Lee 2013), and art (Thomas 2009). *Feminist Collections* is another significant source of zine articles and reviews (Fraser 2004, 2005).

ZINES BY WOMEN OF COLOR: A HISTORICAL SAMPLER

To situate the *LIS Microaggressions* zine in context, it is important to explore other zines created by women of color in the last approximately twenty years. This will be a targeted sampler; each of these titles were chosen for their explicit focus on racism, alienation, diversity, sexism, and other issues and themes commonly found in *LIS Microaggressions* submissions.

Since zines are a visual as well as a textual medium, it is also important to provide visual analysis on how zine graphics complement or complicate the text they accompany.

One cannot review WOC zine literature without discussing the seminal *Evolution of a Race Riot*, published by Mimi Thi Nguyen in 1997. Nguyen, then a senior in college, was fed up with everyday racism in punk rock. *Race Riot* was to be her goodbye to the community; but creating the zine and connecting with other punks of color saved the movement for her (Vasquez 2013). The zine, composed of self-reflective essays, poetry, drawings, short comics, and letters, was meant to be shared with other zinesters and punks of color. As a 1990s punk-scene creation, *Race Riot* is more overtly angry than most contributions to *LIS Microaggressions.* In the zine's introduction (see fig. 1), Nguyen is explicit about limiting contributors to people of color, and even within this community, she was selective:

I wanted to make a couple of observations in order to set up this compilation and frame its existence. (By the way, I put out the first flyer in August 1995. In the meantime, I had grad school and work and moving and life to do.) One, I have to admit that I was selective. Lots of stuff didn't make it in here. Some of the reasons why: 1) A piece was too self-hating. I didn't see how productive "I hate myself for being black/Asian/etc." would be when it wasn't going to be acknowledged as an insidious effect of racism and at least partially resolved. 2) A piece played up the "lone race ranger" aspect. I received some work from people of color who were very into the "I'm unlike other black people because I don't speak 'ghetto,'" "I'm more aggressive than most Asian women are," etc., stuff that took pains to set themselves up as "exceptional" exceptions to their respective and usually distanced racial communities. 3) A piece that was too obviously addressed as a plea to whites to please pretty please "accept" us. Um, no way--? It's not their prerogative to accept us, to tolerate us, to invite us to sit at their table. That only reconfirms and validates the existing racial power inequality, not to mention counts on white "benevolence" and charity. Ick. It's so not mutual.

Figure 1. Introduction to Nguyen's *Evolution of a Race Riot*, 1997. Permission by author.

The introduction has very little embellishment with black text on white paper suggesting that her message is straightforward and not to be gilded. She lets the submissions speak for themselves. She ends the introduction with an XOXO and her handwritten signature, showing that with her anger is also love (Nguyen 1997, 6).

Sixteen years later, Rachel Casiano Hernández explicitly writes about the microaggressions she experienced while in nursing school in *Vital Signs,* published between 2013–2014. Due to a medical condition, Casiano Hernández was forced to withdraw from a nurse practitioner program. That could be an isolated incident, but Casiano Hernández hints at issues of diversity and retention in her program when she shares that "on a funny/sad note: there were originally 40 students in the program and
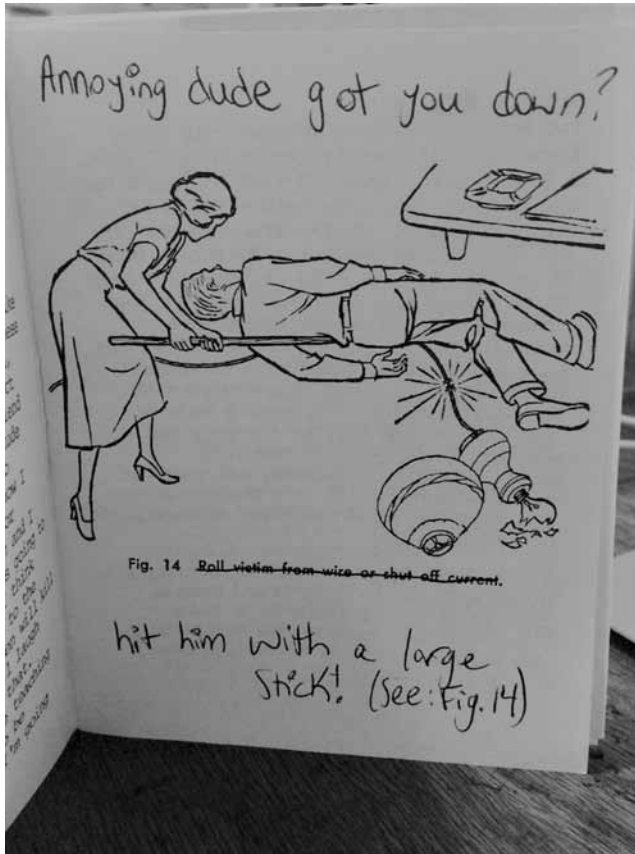
Figure 2. Illustration of Red Cross *First Aid* manual in Casiano Hernández's *Vital Signs*, 2013. Permission by author.

between the 3 of us [who left] they lost: 100% of their international students, 66.7% of their LGBT students, and 25% of their students of color. Diversity fail!" (2013).

Casiano Hernández illustrates the second issue of her zine with a graphic from a 1957 Red Cross *First Aid* manual (see fig. 2). She chooses visual elements for her zine that depict white, heteronormative-presenting people. She then visibly crosses out the original text provided, rather than cut or white it out, and adds in her own subversive message to make it her own. Thus, she is both highlighting and negating the mainstream cultural narrative and stereotype of nurses as pristine white uniform-wearing angels (Casiano Hernández 2013).

I Dreamed I Was Assertive (IDIWA) is a zine created by Chicago-based librarian Celia Pérez. In *IDIWA* #3, which Pérez published during her second semester of library school, she recounts sharing a previous zine with her white in-laws. Her in-laws perceived her writing about her "feelings about living between worlds, as a first generation American and a quasi middle class, college educated person who spends most of her time among white people" as aggressions against them. Pérez did not share her zine with her husband's family for a while after that. In another essay in the zine, Pérez describes how zine-making has been a cathartic and empowering creative outlet for her, especially as a woman of color:

> So in my zine I get to bitch all I want about being looked at funny, being asked what country I'm from all the fucking time, seeing my people portrayed as sneaky little bean eaters or boat people in the media, having my intelligence or abilities questioned because of my name or appearance. (Pérez 2000, 3)

Perez's visual style, as is that of the others described here, is relatively unadorned, with graphics at the end of articles and ads for other zine projects. The issues Pérez raises in her zines are later mirrored in the *LIS Microaggressions* zine, and in fact, Pérez served as a special guest on the "Super Special Edition" issue of *LIS Microaggressions* (volume 2, issue 2), providing an overview of people of color in zine-making. Notably, Pérez's zine is an individual effort, a personal zine or perzine, whereas *LIS Microaggressions* is a group-edited compilation, or comp zine. *LIS Microaggressions* uses the comp zine form to call participation in, allowing even anonymous contributions. In this way, the project harkens back to Nguyen's *Evolution of a Race Riot,* but is open, rather than selective—a model that blends historical POC zine methodologies with today's free online culture.

History of LIS Microaggressions Project

The LIS Microaggressions project first began in candid, private conversations between early career women of color LIS workers looking for advice and support from their peers on how to deal with microaggressions in their workplaces. The group consisted of individuals working as outreach and instruction librarians, archivists, and subject librarians at large research universities, small community colleges, and nonprofits. At the time the project started, some members of the collective were facing various early career challenges that many experience at the start of their careers, such as securing stable, long-term employment, relocating for employment, and seeking skill-building opportunities to better position themselves in the profession. In these formative early career years, many collective members experienced constant slights during interactions with their peers, supervisors, and patrons who directed hostile, derogatory, or negative insults at them based on their presumed membership in marginalized communities. These slights manifested in seemingly innocuous

personal questions that imply otherness. One example was the insistent nature and incredulous tone of "where are you from . . . where are you *really* from?" Other slights were less direct, yet potentially more damaging to career growth, such as limiting career and skill-building opportunities to certain groups of people based on cultural norms on technological aptitude and ability. The collective experienced that, on the whole, any task that involved technological skill-building was most likely to be handed to male coworkers than to female coworkers; and more likely to be handed off to white women than women of color. These general examples are constructed from a litany of real life experiences that collective members have bore witness to and continue to struggle with. The result of these daily interactions and observations can vary from stress, emotional fatigue, and anxiety that directly affect overall job and career satisfaction.

Informal conversations between collective members began through private emails, chat, and text messages during which individuals shared respective experiences. These isolated and individualized experiences formed part of a small community of shared experiences. The support and validation collective members received and provided each other in this community gave members the strength to depersonalize their experiences. For some, this type of support was just enough to stay emotionally afloat at their respective workplaces. It was just enough to keep going, to not give up, and find their place in the field.

The collective realized the support members provided one another not only counteracted some of the very feelings of exclusion that microaggressions at times communicate, but also gave members a sense of agency to turn outward to the profession and ask the following questions: *How many other people in the profession have felt, or are currently feeling, microaggressed at their workplace? How can we help foster community and agency with others who might not have a support group to voice or acknowledge their experiences with microaggressions? How can we bring awareness of these issues to the LIS profession at-large in a way that is actionable and constructive? How can a project that centers the microaggression experience further advance conversations and actions about diversity, race, and antiracism, already happening in the LIS profession?*

At the time LIS Microaggressions started, there were a number of online grassroots, social-justice-oriented communities. Within the LIS field, examples include #critlib and #libtechgender on Twitter and the Art+Feminism Wikipedia Edit-a-thon events. Outside of the LIS field, there were projects such as The Microaggressions Project (http://www.microaggressions.com) and I, Too, Am Harvard (http://itooamharvard.tumblr.com) that were developing critical spaces in efforts to address or disrupt problematic assumptions and perceptions about marginalized communities. The collective took inspiration from all of these projects to begin the LIS Microaggressions Tumblr in March 2014. The Tumblr allows contributors to anonymously post their LIS microaggression experiences

through online submissions. From the beginning, collective members recognized the importance of anonymity in providing a safe space for those interested in sharing their experiences without fear of retribution from their colleagues, supervisors, or the profession. To an extent, collective members also operated under a certain guise of online anonymity for two reasons: first, to center contributors' experiences, maintain their agency, and let their experiences speak for themselves; and second, to protect collective members themselves from the same possible retribution in the workplace, profession, or general online harassment. Efforts made by the collective to maintain relatively anonymous worked to a certain point. We will later discuss some of the critical outcomes of the project, including online visibility and vulnerability to online harassment.

Nonetheless, to generate contributions and visibility to the project, several members of the collective began to present posters at various LIS conferences. The first poster was presented by Cynthia Mari Orozco, Elvia Arroyo-Ramirez, Rose L. Chou, and Annie Pho in the Diversity and Outreach Fair at the 2014 American Library Association (ALA) Annual Conference. In the same safeguarding spirit of the Tumblr site, poster session participants anonymously submitted their experiences with microaggressions by handwriting them on sticky notes and posting the notes on a blank conference poster, which were later photographed and uploaded onto the Tumblr site. Bringing the project into LIS conferences not only allowed for in-person dialogue between contributors, potential contributors, and LIS Microaggressions organizers, but it also allowed organizers to begin dialogue with LIS workers who may not have known about the concept of microaggressions and who might potentially be perpetrators of them. By bringing the project to the LIS conference circuit and heightening the visibility of the project, the collective was able to bring the project directly to LIS workers that did not know about the Tumblr or did not care to visit the site. The collective now recognizes this as an early "calling in" for dialogue and exploration of the subject of microaggressions that extended beyond the act of reporting experiences.

LIS MICROAGGRESSIONS ZINE

Not only did poster sessions further heighten the visibility of the project in the LIS professional community, they extended the project's online participatory culture to tangible, in-person dialogue, bridging the idea to expand the project in the physical form of a zine. Expanding the LIS Microaggressions project from the Tumblr to a zine publication made sense to the collective for a number of reasons. The Tumblr was already in line with the zine-making ethos of creating a participatory community, albeit limited in an online presence, where a community is encouraged to contribute toward a shared collective experience (Honma 2016). Because of the deeply personal narratives the project centers, the do-it-yourself

nature of zines not only provides the freedom to experiment with differ-ent modes of expression (Honma 2016) but also allows for the validation of lived experience. Furthermore, disrupting the usual conference-going experience with potentially uncomfortable experiences aligns with the te-nets of creating space for counternarratives that other professional forms of expression might not offer space to. Centering and validating personal experience are also critical tenets found in feminist pedagogy (Frances L. Hoffmann and Jayne E. Stake quoted in Creasap 2014) and the CRT framework (Pérez Huber and Solórzano 2015a).

Zines are distinctive physical and emotional catalysts for moving con-versations beyond the abstraction of theory to understanding issues on a more personal level (Honma 2016). The physicality of the zine format allows for a physical weight on collected microaggression experiences. It is one thing to read individual microaggression experiences via submis-sions online. It is another weightier, and tactile, experience to flip through pages of microaggressions experiences that have been collected in a body of work. The zine-making and contributing experience is both a highly personal and individualized experience, as well as communal and collec-tive. For collective members as both zine-makers and contributors, the zine has allowed their microaggression experiences to be depersonalized in new and creative ways. Gathering these experiences and putting them together in a zine issue counters the very nature of what disempowers people when they are the microaggressed because it allows them to see that it is not simply their personal experience; microaggressions happen to many marginalized individuals in the field. This agency, ultimately, is what drew the LIS Microaggressions collective to the zine format.

LIS Microaggressions volume 1, issue 1 was published in March 2015, using contributions solicited specifically for the zine and sticky notes that were submitted in-person at conferences. The first issue was subsequently distributed at several national conferences, including the Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS), Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), and REFORMA. At the time of this writing, there are six *LIS Microaggressions* issues, including a "Super Special Edition" issue.

"*LIS Microaggressions*" *Zine Labor*
The nature of the LIS Microaggressions project has always been collabora-tive, and with the zine publication this remained true as labor is shared among the production team with input solicited from the rest of the LIS Microaggressions collective. Orozco began assembling the team for the *LIS Microaggressions* zine in late 2014. The team included geographically dispersed librarians and archivists: Arroyo-Ramirez, Chou, Pho, and T-Kay Sangwand. Orozco invited art librarian Simone Fujita to join the collective as zine project manager to coordinate the production of the zines, as she had previous zine-making experience and had hosted zine workshops at

her library. Erika Montenegro became an integral part of the zine-making team beginning with volume 1, issue 2.

The labor for the *LIS Microaggressions* zine is divided among four parties: sticky note contributors, zine cover designers, zine editors, and zine distributors. Each zine begins with a call for sticky note submissions, posted on the Tumblr and sent to a variety of LIS email lists. The first call expresses the spirit of the nascent project:

> LIS Microaggressions is soliciting Post-it submissions to be collected and included in our first ever LIS Microaggressions zine, which will be distributed at the upcoming ARLIS, ACRL, and REFORMA conferences (March-April 2015). This zine will also be available for download on our site!
>
> Definition: Microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward individuals from marginalized communities. Microaggressions can be difficult to identify because they are more nuanced, subtle forms of prejudice. They may arise from the language we use with our peers, the assumptions we make of others, or perceived compliments.
>
> Submissions: Snail mail your Post-it submission to the address below postmarked by Friday, March 13th. Please write down or draw out your microaggression on a Post-it (or plain paper) no larger than 3x3. Submissions can be anonymous, or feel free to include your name/pseudonym/handle/etc. The zine will be constructed by LIS Microaggressions editors, kinda like our ALA 2014 poster but in zine form! (LIS Microaggressions 2015)

As this call suggests, like the Tumblr, the zine project relies heavily on the contributions of LIS workers at-large who participate by sharing their experiences. Unlike the Tumblr, the zine affords a deeper sharing experience via sticky notes and rendered in participants' own words and handwriting. These submissions form the central content of the zine, and the zines could not be produced without the active engagement of contributors. Other zine content has included a list of microaggressions articles and websites, city guides specific to conference locations, recommendations of other POC-created zines, a toolkit for dealing with microaggressions, and a brief history of the term microaggressions.

Guest designers, all of whom are LIS workers and/or MLIS students, are invited to create the cover of each zine. These contributors have included LIS Microaggressions' own (Pho, Arroyo-Ramirez, Montenegro, and Fujita) and invitees who include Ann Matsushima Chiu (A'misa Chiu) and Louvic Cabrera. Much like the zines' content, the covers often convey an irreverent reference to more serious topics. Pho's cover for volume 1, issue 2 (see fig. 3) is a play on fine artist Barbara Kruger's *Untitled (Your Gaze Hits the Side of My Face)*, with a cat depicted rather than the bust of a woman, alongside a caption that reads, "Your words hit the side of my
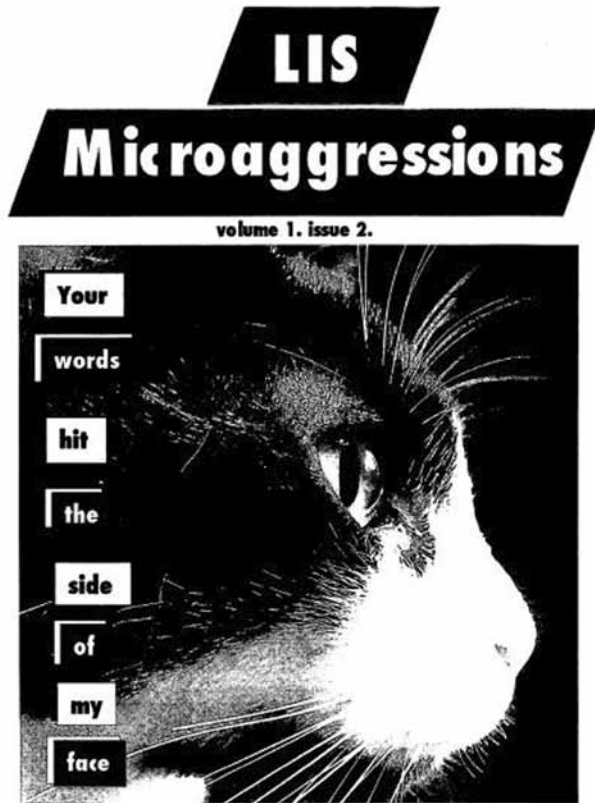
Figure 3. *LIS Microaggressions* zine, volume 1, issue 2; cover design by Annie Pho, 2015. Permission by authors.

face" (Pho 2015). With this clever reworking of Kruger's feminist artwork about the male gaze, Pho presents a humorous but effective commentary on the severe impact that microaggressions inflict on marginalized LIS workers.

Zine editors assemble a cohesive publication from the components created by the sticky note contributors and zine cover designers. They are responsible for collecting the sticky notes, reading and interpreting them, and designing the zine around the sticky note content. The subject matter and tone of the submitted microaggressions inform the layout and design of each issue. A handmade, cut-and-paste, collage aesthetic utilizing free and public domain images adds an additional graphical layer of content as the visual backdrop for the sticky notes. The visual content may echo the exasperation of a microaggressed LIS worker, utilizing playfully biting images to mock and critique the racism, sexism, or ableism described. For

Figure 4. *LIS Microaggressions* sticky note submissions in volume 2, issue 1, 2016. Permission by authors.

example, a story about a white male lamenting his feelings of isolation in diverse cities to a woman of color (self-described as "the only person of color on our library staff") is accompanied by illustrations of bearded white men superimposed with an image of *Star Trek*'s Uhura and "WHAT-EVER DUDE" scrawled nearby (Orozco, Fujita, and Montenegro 2016) (see fig. 4).

Zine distributors, typically members of the collective, are responsible for disseminating the publication during professional conferences. Each zine is scheduled for targeted release around major LIS gatherings, including the American Library Association (ALA) and Society of American Archivists (SAA) national conferences, as well as professional gatherings that center on the experiences of LIS workers of color, such as the National
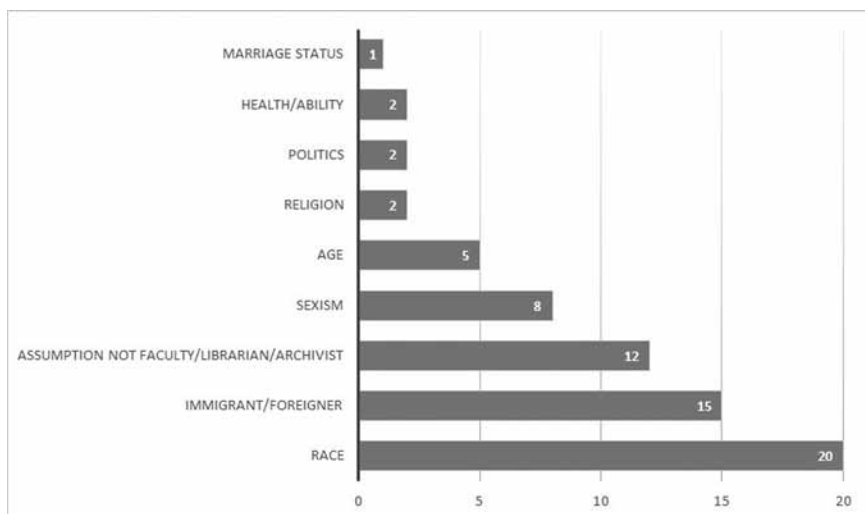
Figure 5. Analysis of *LIS Microaggressions* zine submissions. Permission by authors.

Conference of African American Librarians (NCAAL) and the National Diversity in Libraries Conference (NDLC). The zine release is promoted through social media sites, such as Twitter and Facebook. Distribution is primarily done on an in-person, one-on-one basis, but collective members have also handed out the zines at the ALA Zine Pavilion. Zines have also been mailed to individuals or collecting repositories who request them, such as the Barnard Zine Library. Additionally, scanned copies of the zines are made available on the Tumblr for individuals to download, print, and assemble themselves.

"LIS Microaggressions" Zine Content

An examination of submissions in the first four *LIS Microaggressions* zine issues shows a prevalence of microaggressions relating to race, the assumption of foreignness or immigrant status, and the assumption that one is not a member of the profession (see fig. 5).

The authors coded contributions from the first four issues using the following categories: race, immigrant/foreigner, assumption not faculty/librarian/archivist, sexism, age, religion, politics, health/ability, and marriage status. A single submission could be coded into more than one category. The majority (35) of the total coded submissions (67) deal with race or perceived foreignness/immigration status. Submissions dealing with race include feelings of isolation from being one of a few people of color in a room, comments about hair, and hiring: "The [white] person we wanted to hire for the Public Services Librarian accepted a job somewhere else, so that's how we got you" (Orozco and Fujita 2015). Regarding per-

ceived foreignness/immigration status, the first note in the very first zine issue is an apt example: "them: what's your name? how do you spell it? Is it a surname? did you name yourself?" (Orozco and Fujita 2015). There were also a number of contributions about colleagues mocking nonnative English speakers' accents. Twelve submissions cite examples of contributors not being recognized as a "professional," be it as a librarian, archivist, or faculty member. It is not always clear why the misassumption occurs— that is, whether it is due to race, ethnicity, age, or another factor. Five (7.5%) of the sticky note authors have explicitly age-related complaints, such as a new academic library colleague assuming they are a student, therefore it is likely some of the "assumption not faculty/librarian/archivist" contributions are related to age, rather than race or ethnicity.

Several contributors, whose race and ethnicity are unidentified, report incidents of sexism, whether it is a male peer perceived as a boss over them or an actual supervisor commenting on the "girl's" attractiveness. Due to the anonymous nature of the contributions and the simplicity of a five-to-ten-word sticky note text, it is not possible to identify when people are representing multiple identities at once.

"Calling In" through Zine Engagement
In an effort to take engagement with the zine further, the collective began to incorporate the use of the *LIS Microaggressions* zine in several workshops and presentations. Zines are participatory by nature, asking their readers to engage in active and critical reflection. In effect, zines challenge readers to contextualize their roles as part of a larger social struggle in relation to the issues presented or examined in the zine (Kenwood Jung quoted in Honma 2016). Through conference presentations and zine-making workshops, the LISM collective wishes to "call in" LIS conference attendees for active, critical reflection and analysis about microaggressions in the workplace.

Conference Presentations
Members of the LIS Microaggressions collective have presented at numerous LIS conferences on the topic of microaggressions, often incorporating the *LIS Microaggressions* zine and zine-making into their presentations. Integral to these presentations is the active participation of attendees in sharing and discussing microaggressions.

These presentations frequently include an interactive component, such as mini zine-making workshops that have been employed as a technique to further engage conference attendees in personal reflection around microaggressions. At their presentation "Working Towards Inclusion: Recognizing and Addressing Microaggressions in Library Spaces" (part of the Summer Teaching Retreat for Librarians at Santa Ana College in July 2016), Fujita and Pho provided an overview of microaggressions in librar-

ies, shared the work of the collective, and discussed inclusive teaching practices. In addition to candidly sharing their own personal anecdotes of both being microaggressed and microaggressing others, Fujita and Pho asked attendees to consider microaggressions they have personally witnessed or experienced in library instruction. The session concluded with Fujita leading attendees in creating a one-page zine, which is constructed from one sheet of paper folded and cut to resemble a miniature booklet. The zine template included prompts for individual reflection on the major themes of the presentation: "How have you experienced or observed microaggressions in teaching? How have you responded or addressed these microaggressions? How can you make your teaching more inclusive?" Participants were instructed to write or draw their responses in the zine. The materiality and portability of the mini zine enables attendees to share the presentation with others easily and provides a tool for revisiting the concepts discussed long after the session's conclusion.

At the National Diversity in Libraries Conference (NDLC) at UCLA in August 2016, Orozco, Fujita, and honorary LIS Microaggressions collective member Ebony Magnus facilitated a roundtable discussion titled "Macro Impact of Microaggressions: Exploring Microaggressions in Librarianship," in a combined session with Ray Lockman, whose work focuses on microactivism and social justice through everyday work practices (2015). This session included presentations on microaggressions and microactivism, small group discussions around these themes, and a mini zine-making workshop. The zine-making activity provided an opportunity for both participatory learning and individual reflection, with the following prompts: "What strategies can you employ when dealing with microaggressions? What can you do to actively address your own biases? How can you apply microactivism to your work? What practical steps can you take to make your workplace more inclusive?"

Conference attendees have responded positively to the inclusion of zine-making as a technique for reflection. Creative "making" activities are rare at LIS conferences, and consequently, the opportunity to make a zine in such a setting elicits palpable excitement because it is novel and unexpected. Additionally, the process of zine-making organically encourages community building within the session, as attendees inevitably turn to their neighbors to check whether they are folding the zine templates correctly, seeking assistance from and sharing expertise with one another.

At the Asian Pacific American Librarians Association's 35th Anniversary and Symposium in June 2015, Orozco, Chou, Pho, and Sangwand hosted a facilitated discussion inviting attendees to discuss microaggressions they have faced and strategies for responding to them. Participants split into small groups and provided suggestions for how to respond to specific microaggressions, with examples taken from the Tumblr. Each small group then shared their ideas with all session attendees. Based on this discussion,

the collective created an online toolkit (made available on the Tumblr) with strategies for dealing with microaggressions—both as the target of microaggressions and as offenders. The collective also solicited and received submissions for future zine issues.

Allyship and Critical Reflections

The opportunity to metaphorically and literally use our long-arm stapler, as long-arm staplers are part of the essential tools to construct a multipage zine booklet, with LISM allies presented itself during the Race Matters: Libraries, Racism, and Antiracism themed 2016 LACUNY Institute. "Offensive Mechanisms, Constructive Paths: How to Recognize and Deal with Microaggressions in the LIS Field" was a facilitated dialogue session led by Arroyo-Ramirez, Chou, and LIS Microaggressions ally Jenna Freedman. The focus of the facilitated dialogue was to give a historical grounding of the term *microaggressions*; call people in for critical reflection by examining previous *LIS Microaggressions* zine submissions through the "Super Special Edition" issue; and give space for group discussion to occur while utilizing guiding questions printed in the zine in efforts to unpack the reported microaggressions.

Working with a white ally presented the opportunity to tackle some of the more nuanced challenges of working on issues of race and antiracism. The collective welcomed collaborating with Freedman because of her experience as a long-practicing zinester and her work in developing and sustaining zine visibility in libraries and archives. She curates a zine collection that has, as part of its collection development policy, the intentional inclusion of zines by women of color (Barnard Zine Library, n.d.). Even before the opportunity to collaborate presented itself, she had been collecting and cataloging *LIS Microaggressions,* which resulted in her successfully appealing to the Library of Congress to add "Microaggressions" as a subject heading (Lower East Side Librarian, 2015).

Organizing a facilitated discussion and subsequently coediting a zine issue with Freedman led to critical reflection about the content of previous zine submissions. The collaborative as a whole has attempted to be inclusive and expansive about what constitutes a microaggressive experience and has not rejected or denied visibility to submissions that are not race related. Though while organizing the LACUNY presentation Freedman articulated that she found zine contributions on subjects other than race and ethnicity to be disrespectful and that content where people complain that they are judged at work for their tattoos is inappropriate. Presenters decided to include the zine submission that sparked this dialogue in the "Super Special Edition" issue to prompt discussion to Freedman's point and to illustrate how she, as a self-identified person with race privilege, is less vulnerable to being called a "reverse racist" or otherwise judged in her

career for wanting a more hardline inclusion policy to protect and respect WOC/POC spaces in LIS projects.

Allyship is tricky to navigate, and everyone makes mistakes while trying to support one another; though allyship should not be the same thing as sycophancy. The authors of this article believe the role of the ally is to do the best they can to listen, to learn, to self-educate, and to keep the focus on the person or group they are meant to be supporting. Learning how to be a true ally or partner is a multistep, nonlinear process, and, Freedman reports, the *LIS Microaggressions* zine is a useful tool in a librarian's or other LIS worker's how-to manual.

While the LISM collective actively promotes critical engagement with participants at conferences, the project has also generated what the collective identifies as nonproductive, negative online reception or "trolling." Online trolling consists of comments made by online users that purposefully incite discord without the intention of having a constructive dialogue. For the LISM project, this includes derogatory or threatening remarks directed at the project's Tumblr and Twitter accounts that attempt to belittle and joke about the importance of discussing microaggressions. The comments leave little to no room for constructive dialogue about the value of the project and its intended goals of highlighting microaggressions in the LIS workplace. This behavior is not uncommon; it is even expected, as online harassment is rampant.

Most recently, discussions happening on college campuses about microaggressions have been the topic of choice for media and news publications. The LISM project and its collective members have been the subjects of several articles published by online conservative outlets, one of which was written during the drafting of this article. These publications have attempted to detract from the importance of this work by belittling or joking about the LISM project and going as far as targeting particular individuals of the collective. This type of unproductive response only highlights the reasons why talking about microaggressions remain important and necessary, particularly since women of color have especially been targeted online when speaking out against racism, ranging from verbal, physical, and sexual assault threats (Cross 2014).

Conclusion

The motivation behind pursuing a project like LIS Microaggressions stemmed from the success of other grassroots, social justice–oriented communities on social media, both within the LIS field, like the aforementioned #critlib, #libtechgender, and Art+Feminism edit-a-thons, and outside of the LIS field, like The Microaggressions Project, and I, Too, Am Harvard. Though diverse in breadth and scope, these projects seek to challenge claims of the existence of a "post-racial" or gender-equitable

society where racism and sexism are no longer threats to campus and work life. We know, especially after the 2016 US presidential election and the rise of emboldened white supremacist violence, that the notion of a "post-racial" society is a myth. Now, more than ever, projects like the aforementioned are necessary to resist and push back on a "posttruth" society that is sustained by distorting undisputed facts and truth to embolden individual, group, or government sponsored discrimination against marginalized communities. Zines, in particular, are an increasingly visible channel for librarians to resist and push back on this "posttruth" society as evidenced by Hunter College's *Resources for a Post-election World* (Hunter College Libraries 2016). Zines are also becoming an increasingly chosen vehicle for librarians to highlight library and archives services and resources (Lyon 2016).

Another clear motivation was the desire to positively contribute to conversations of diversity in LIS on our own terms. As women of color in the LIS field, members of the collective have first-hand experience with the profession's issues of diversity that include recruitment, retention, lack of leadership opportunities, and lack of validation from peers, our employers, and the profession at-large. Relegating diversity issues only to institutional and professional organization mission statements and writing about these issues in academic articles that are inaccessible behind paywalls are not enough. It is the collective's hope that LIS Microaggressions has furthered conversations beyond theory and surveys, and that it has been an educational resource for those who are unfamiliar with microaggressions and their persistence in the LIS field. Most importantly, the collective hopes that LIS Microaggressions has given those who have experienced microaggressions in the workplace an outlet and a community to not feel alone in their experiences.

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