

# Why and How Diversity Matters in Libraries and on Campuses



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# Overview

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## □ Research Presentation

- Research Question
- Literature Review
- Methodology
- Sample of Findings
- Limitations and Further Research
- Implications for Practice

## □ Questions/Discussion

# Research Questions:

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- *What is the relationship between social identity and the ways in which diverse librarians fulfill their professional roles?*
  - Is social identity relevant to how librarians approach their various roles and responsibilities (ie: reference, instruction, collection development, cataloging, etc)?
  - If so, how?

# Significance of Study

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- In a so-called “post affirmative action era,” it is essential to have a clearer understanding of the added benefits faculty diversity brings to higher education
  - This study helps academic librarians, library administrators, and those in higher education better understand how librarian diversity can improve “organizational robustness” (Page, 2006)
  - This study contributes to the positive discourse on diversity in the academy by recording the micro-practices of diverse librarians

# Literature Review

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- Psychology/Sociology
- Higher Education
- Library & Information Science
  - Definitions of Diversity
  - Impacts of Faculty Diversity
  - Social Identity in the Workplace



# Literature Review

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## **Institutional Impacts:**

- ❑ **Educational Mission** (Hurtado, et al., 1999; Milem, 2000)
- ❑ **Curricular Offerings** (Chilnwniak, 1997; Sears & Marshall, 2002; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1976,1977, 1978; Willie & McCord, 1972)
- ❑ **Climate** (*Adkins & Espinal, 2004*; Hurtado, et al., 1999; Milem & Hakuta, 2000; Willie & McCord, 1972))
- ❑ **Research** (Antonio, 2002; Chilnwniak, 1997; Hurtado, et al., 1999; Milem, 2000)
- ❑ **Teaching & Learning (Pedagogy)** (Antonio, 2002; Hurtado, et al., 1999; Milem, 2001)
- ❑ **Leadership Development** (Alire, 2001; Winston, 2001)
- ❑ **Responsive Collections and Services** (Chandler, 1998; Johnson-Cooper, 1994; McKinzie, 1994)
- ❑ **Access to Materials** (Bethel, 1994)
- ❑ **Societal Relevance** (Adkins & Espinal, 2004; Grady & Hall, 2006)
- ❑ **Quality/Robustness** (Page, 2007; Hong & Page, 2004; *Winston, 2001*)

# Literature Review

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## Individual Impacts:

- ❑ **Retention/Graduation** (Astin, 1993; Chang, 2001; Jones-Quartey, 1993; *Josey, 1993*; McCord & Willie, 1972; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1976,1977, 1978)
- ❑ **Satisfaction** (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1976,1977, 1978; *Thornton, 2000*)
- ❑ **Social/Academic Isolation/Integration (Mentoring)** (Alger & Carrasco, 1997; *Echavarría, 1992*; Santos & Reigadas, 2005; Strickland, 1975; Willie & McCord, 1972;
- ❑ **Graduate School-Aspirations** (Nettles & Miller, 2006)
- ❑ **Multicultural Competency** (Gurin, et al., 2002; Hurtado, et al., 1999; Oka et al, 1994)
- ❑ **Academic Performance** (Holmes & Lichtenstein, 1998; Lance et al., 2005)
- ❑ **Critical Thinking/ Information Literacy Skills** (Kuhlthau, 1999; Ory & Braskamp, 1988; Whitmire, 1998, 2001, 2002)
- ❑ **Career Choice** (Adkins & Hussey; Winston, 2001)

# Literature Review

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## Diverse Faculty Impacts in the Library

- ❑ Expanded Collections (Adkins & Espinal, 2004; Lowry & Hanges, 2008)
- ❑ Greater User Satisfaction (Lowry & Hanges, 2008)
- ❑ Increased Recruitment (Adkins & Hussey, 2005; Winston, 2001)
- ❑ Increased Mentoring (Adkins & Espinal, 2004)
- ❑ Improved Multicultural Competencies (Lowry & Hanges, 2008)
- ❑ Increased Relevance (Adkins & Espinal, 2004; Grady & Hall, 2006; Lowry & Hanges, 2008)
- ❑ Stronger Leadership (Alire, 2001; Winston, 2001)

# Methods

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- Sample includes 30 librarians of all races, genders, ages and tenure lengths
- Sample drawn from 3 ARL campuses
- In-depth, semi-structured interviews
- Transcribed interviews verbatim
- Analyzed transcripts using Atlas-Ti qualitative analysis software

# Theoretical Underpinnings of Study

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- Help frame the study within the ARL organizational context:
  - **Critical Race Theory:** helps explain historical traditions and cultural and social norms within ARLs
  - **Social Identity Theory:** helps explain the salience of some social identities and the relationship between individuals and groups
  - **Role Theory:** helps explain why ARL libraries are organized similarly across campuses

# Literature: Social Identity Theory

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## Agent/Target Identity Model

(Hardiman & Jackson, 1997)

### □ Agents

- Have power to define reality and set cultural and organizational “norms”
- Sometimes unaware of membership in dominant group due to privilege and norms; seen as individuals apart from group
- Knowingly or unknowingly exploit and/or reap benefits from target groups

### □ Targets

- Members of current and/or historically oppressed groups
- Sometimes seen as without individual identities apart from the group; often stereotyped
- Labeled as outside “norm” within culture/organizations

# Findings: Overview

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	<b>Agent</b>	<b>Target</b>
<b>Age</b>	40s-50s	20s-30s and 60s-above
<b>Race/Ethn.</b>	White	Non-White
<b>Gender</b>	Male	Female

# Findings: Summary: Good News

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- Librarians use a variety of ***micro-practices*** in their daily work to ***recast*** target identities into positive work assets:
  - Social Justice Orientation
  - Empathy
  - Identification
  - Humor
  - Crossing of Social/Professional Networks (both virtual & in-person)
  - Cultural Knowledge/Expertise
  - Role Modeling
  - Mentoring
  - Language Skills

# Race Salience: Role Modeling (Instruction)

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*“I feel that it’s important for me as Hispanic, Mexican, Latina person, whatever you want to call me, in a position like this, where there aren’t many [Latinas]...so when I teach, I’m...very aware of that. And I sort of want to show the students that either somebody like me can do it, or somebody like them can do it...Because I know that that touches a lot of different people. So I am aware of that as I’m teaching.”*

*–Rachel*

# Race Salience: Empathy & Identification (Reference & Instruction)

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*“I have a great empathy with my students, and that’s probably my first line of defense. Because I know what it’s like to be the only minority student in a class, or the first one to go to college. ...I’m working with mostly minority students—I know what it’s like to be “the other.” And so, my first method of instruction is just to try and put them [students] a little bit at ease, and help to break the stereotype of what libraries are and let them know that, just because you don’t know the answer doesn’t mean you’re dumb.”*

--Rosario

# Race Salience: Language and Cultural Knowledge (Collection Development)

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*"I think most definitely [social identity is relevant to collection development], especially with the most recent collections...[Getting] it had a lot to do with the trust that I was able to build with the families, particularly being of Mexican descent. The collection had been taken care of by the mother for years and years. And [the donors] had real issues with the U.S. So one of the things that he said to me was, "if [mother] knew that I was turning it over to the US, she'd be turning in her grave..." This was a really hard thing for them—to deposit it in a US institution. But I was able to build enough trust with him and I understood that [cultural discomfort]. What I was able to say, is that representation of this history in the U.S. is of utmost importance. And I think, in that sense, I think his mother would have been gratified. And, being able to speak the language...does play a role in being able to negotiate with [donors] nowadays." --Rachel*

# Race Salience: Cultural Knowledge (Instruction)

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*"For me, it's the subject matter [how racial identity is salient when teaching]. Because I think any good instructional librarian can teach databases. For me, the unique thing is my subject area...I should be able to get in there and be able to relate what they're learning...if it's about Pan-Africanism, Black nationalism, Malcolm [X]—whatever. I should be able to get in there and put that subject touch to it."*

--Andy

## Age Salience: Empathy (Reference)

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*I feel like in a lot of ways having the long-term perspective—having been here through many academic calendar years—is very valuable. It certainly provides a different perspective when you're seeing people who are caught up in their work—the immediacy of where they are in their college careers...You can see they think they're very unique in where they are, and that they will never get past the point that they're at...You see these poor people doing their final papers, and they're going nuts, and it's like the whole world depends on what they're going to do on this one paper—I do a lot of soothing and reassuring at the reference desk. So having that kind of perspective is good. –Francesca*

# Race Salience: Identification & Empathy (Reference)

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*In terms of the school that I'm in, I think [racial identity] is very salient. There is a program here--they invite about 30-50 minority incoming first-year students. They come in the summer and they get acclimated to the campus. So they definitely know that they are in the minority, right off the bat. There's really only a handful of minority staff and faculty...I know from the past, when the pre-freshman show up, when they come to my library, I excuse myself from meetings [to welcome them]. And their reaction when they see me! They even kind of whisper to each other! I know that they're like, "oh, my gosh, there's a Black librarian here!" And they look all excited! ...It's like, well, I'm glad they feel like now they have a face here that they can recognize. And I get those students in here [all year], even when they are working on other assignments [that have nothing to do with the subject area of her collections].*

--Rowena

# Findings: Summary: Bad News

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- Librarians with target identities sometimes experience:
  - Solo Status
  - Tokenism
  - Exclusion/Isolation
  - Different Expectations/Rewards than those with agent identities
  - Fewer Professional Opportunities (mentoring, networking, committee assignments, etc.)
  - Withdrawal (“rotating door” syndrome)

# Age Salience: Fewer Professional Opportunities

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*“You observe who’s being tapped for what. And you see a decided preference for what I think is a fairly small age window. I mean, for committees, positions...you could say the 30s to 40s...they’re going to be called on over and over and over... I mean, people begin to fall off the radar, and it’s not, I think, because they don’t have anything more to contribute or they don’t have the energy or the interest. It’s that there’s something else at work...”*

–Yvonne

# Age Salience: Discounting Expertise

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*It's been interesting to me that most of the people that come in here are older...And they have a very different idea of who I should be and how I should act...It's something—it's unspoken—it's felt [disrespect]...it's something that's palpable. And that has taken me by surprise a bit...And sometimes it [her age] makes the situation easier, and sometimes it makes it a lot more difficult...It makes it easier, I would say, when it's the younger faculty that are coming in [to the library]. Their past experiences, and their recent education, their social context has been very different. --Harriet*

# Age Salience: Discounting Expertise

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*I wonder—when I started this job—I guess I was a little concerned if they [older librarians] were going to take me seriously. And sometimes, I've had a couple meetings where I was sort of new to the whole dictating the flow of a project—and I've kind of felt like people were attacking me a little? Just talking about it, my eyes are watering up, even though I'm not upset about it [jokingly]. It's just—the thought of people not taking me seriously kind of upset me during the meeting. And I don't know if that's a gender or an age thing...And being new, or newish, to the library, I wonder if those things effect how seriously people take me.*

--Charlene

# Gender/Race Salience:

## Exclusion/Discounting Expertise

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*Because I chose to go into an area that tends to be male dominated and White dominated [library technologist], I knew it would be a bit of a struggle, but I had no idea when I started...I see a definite pattern of who [library staff] choose to come to [for project help]. Right now, there's only two of us librarians in this kind of role; myself, and an Asian gentleman. And there's a definite tendency to go to him first. A very strong tendency.*

--Sally

# Gender Salience: Professional Opportunities

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*We were the first class to go to [a minority leadership institute] that program. And I was the only male among all these women...And it wasn't lost on me, that in 200X, I was the first one to become a director of a library...So that wasn't lost on me [his gender being an advantage]...because I didn't even really apply for this position [as Director of a specialized campus library].*

--Andy

# Gender Salience: Exclusion

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*I try to remain active in my initial specialty, collection development. When I joined [a professional association], I realized that it was not a female-friendly place, and I was not welcome—I got a cold shoulder. I noticed a very strong preference for having males on the committees. It was an area where I saw the percentage of women [in academic libraries], female to males, reversed. It was men running the committees, and men as heads of collections. To me, it was because collection developers usually also handle money—a lot of money in ARLs...They think collection management work is more important than reference or cataloging. And I never was aware of that before becoming a collection administrator...It was like they were saying “go back to your service job. That’s where you belong.”*

*--Polly*

# Gender/Race Salience: Fewer Professional Opportunities

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*I'll speak my mind if I feel compelled to, and I'll stand up to whoever tries to bully me...But I've had to learn how to project a sense of confidence and strength over time. It hasn't been easy. But I have. And there have been some negative consequences. I'm never appointed to any committees any more; and they blocked me from promotion—that kind of thing. So it has its price, sticking up for yourself, and being who you are.*

--Diego

# Emerging Theory: Social Identity and Role Performance

## Librarian Characteristics:

- Race/Ethnicity
- Gender
- Age/Generation
- (SES)
- (*Sexual Orientation*)

## Environmental Interaction

- Salience of Target/Agent IDs.
- Micro-practices/Recasting
- Solo Status
- Withdrawal/Engagement
- Fulfillment

## Impacts on Librarians' Roles

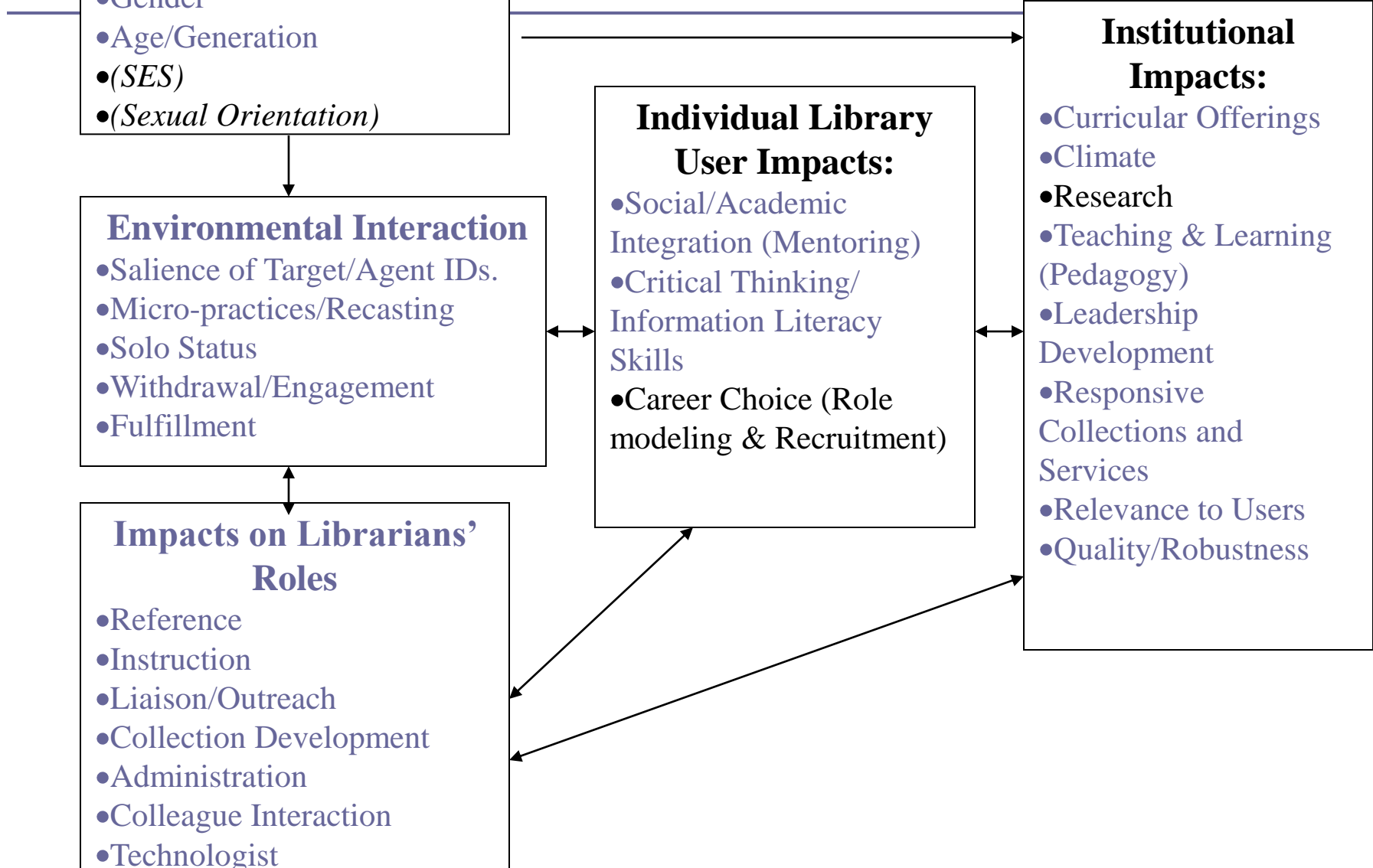
- Reference
- Instruction
- Liaison/Outreach
- Collection Development
- Administration
- Colleague Interaction
- Technologist

## Individual Library User Impacts:

- Social/Academic Integration (Mentoring)
- Critical Thinking/Information Literacy Skills
- Career Choice (Role modeling & Recruitment)

## Institutional Impacts:

- Curricular Offerings
- Climate
- Research
- Teaching & Learning (Pedagogy)
- Leadership Development
- Responsive Collections and Services
- Relevance to Users
- Quality/Robustness



# Implications: Further Research

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- ❑ Larger scale investigation of identity salience in work roles using quantitative methods
- ❑ Study the intersectionality of identities in order to create a dynamic model for identity and work
- ❑ Investigate outcomes of various micro-practices from the *user's* perspective

# Implications: Practice

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- Need to be more aware and deliberate about how we manage diversity and professional opportunities:
  - Need be mindful of solo status, tokenism, and isolation effects with regard to all social identities (Residency programs and cluster hires)
  - Structure work environments & organizational culture to minimize negative, and emphasize positive diversity outcomes
- Need to more fully understand and work toward organizational robustness in the fullest sense
  - Recognize the integral nature of diversity and excellence
  - Work to integrate areas of the Library that are not diverse (internships, recruitment, professional pipeline issues)

# Social Identity and Role Performance

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- Questions?
- Discussion?

