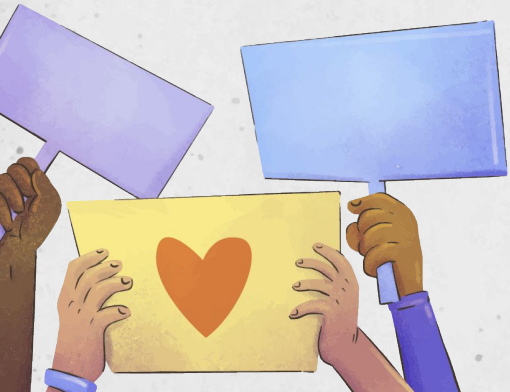


Maintaining Inclusive Library Collections in an ERA of Censorship

Andrea Jamison, PhD





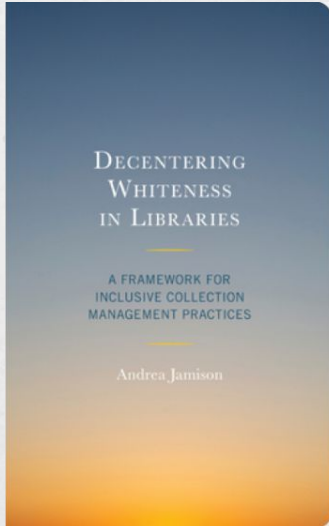
Researcher: **Andrea Jamison**



- Assistant Professor of School Librarianship
- Diversity Fellow
- Self Contained Classroom Room Teacher & School Library Media Specialist
- Author of *Decentering Whiteness in Libraries*
- CSK Jury/EMIERT Chair
- Research Interest: Examining the interplay of race, power, and identity in children's books. The role of libraries in perpetuating or mitigating diversity inequities.



Recent Work:



- Generates practices that align collection development policies with language from the LBR
- Encourages practices that align professional practice with policies
- Create discourse that discourages a passive approach to social justice via the implementation of values and propositions that uphold “equity for all” as a feel good value but not a standard of service.

OVERVIEW

01

- Examine the role of libraries during an era of censorship

02

Discuss Value of Diversity in Libraries

03

- Explore concrete strategies to improve selection practices for more equitable and inclusive collections



Libraries, Segregation & Censorship - Historical Perspective

“racial caste systems do not require racial hostility or overt bigotry to thrive. They need only racial indifference, as Martin Luther King Jr. warned more than forty-five years ago.”

— Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*

- 1896 (Segregation & Tension)
- 1930's Social Intolerance & Book Burnings
- 1939 Library Bill of Rights & Attempt at Neutrality
- Harm of neutrality & civil unrest

2. LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS / 23

Today indications in many parts of the world point to growing intolerance, suppression of free speech, and censorship affecting the rights of minorities and individuals. Mindful of this, the Council of the American Library Association publicly affirms its belief in the following basic policies which should govern the services of free public libraries.

- I. Books and other reading matter selected for purchase from the public funds should be chosen because of value and interest to people of the community, and in no case should the selection be influenced by the race or nationality or the political or religious views of the writers.
- II. As far as available material permits, all sides of questions on which differences of opinion exist should be represented fairly and adequately in the books and other reading matter purchased for public use.
- III. The library as an institution to educate for democratic living should especially welcome the use of its meeting rooms for socially useful and cultural activities and the discussion of current public questions. Library meeting rooms should be available on equal terms to all groups in the community regardless of their beliefs or affiliations.

Censorship Today: Codification of “Anti-Inclusive” Practices.



- Washington [HB 1886](#)
- West Virginia’s bills ([HB 2595](#), [SB 618](#), [SB 45](#), [SB 182](#), [SB 498](#), [HB 4016](#), [HB 4011](#))
- Alaska ([HB 228](#))
- Arizona ([HB 2112](#), [HB 2291](#))
- Colorado , [HB 1206 p](#)
- Florida ([SB 242](#), [SB 148](#)) ([HB 1557](#))
- Georgia ([HB 888](#), [SB 377](#), [SB 375](#)).
- Idaho ([HB 488](#))
- Illinois ([HB 5494](#), [HB 5505](#))
- Indiana ([SB 415](#), [HB 1362](#), [HB 1389](#), [HB 1134](#))
- New Mexico ([HB 91](#))
- New York ([A8253](#) and [A8579](#))
- North Carolina ([SB 700](#))
- Ohio ([HB 322](#) and [HB 327](#))
- Iowa ([SF 478](#), [SF 2043](#), [SF 2037](#), [HB 2053](#))
- Kansas ([HB 2662](#))
- Kentucky ([HB 14](#), [HB 18](#), [SB 138](#), [HB 487](#))
- Maryland ([HB 1256](#))
- Michigan ([SB 460](#), [HB 5097](#))
- Minnesota ([HF 2778](#), [HF 3301](#))
- Mississippi ([SB 2113](#))
- Missouri ([HB 2132](#), [HB 2189](#), [HB 1634](#), [HB 1457](#), [HB 1767](#), [HB 1554](#), [HB 1484](#), [HB 1669](#), [HB 1815](#), [HB 1835](#), [SB 638/676/734](#), [SB 694](#), [SB 645](#), [HB 1474](#), [HB 2428](#), [SB 740](#))
- Nebraska ([LB 1077](#))
- New Hampshire ([HB 1255](#))
- New Jersey ([SB 664](#) and [SB 598](#))





The Role of Libraries - Unchanged

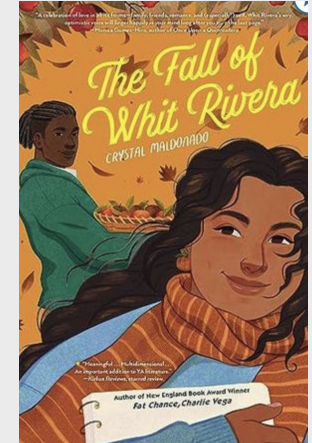
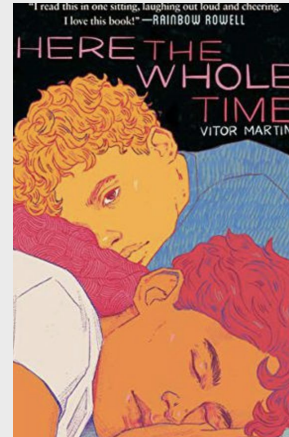
“Conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change, and yet suppression is never more dangerous in such a time of social tension.” - American Library Association

- In 2014, Tim Huzar discusses the correlation between libraries and democracy. ([Neoliberalism, Democracy and the Library as a Radically Inclusive Space](#))
- Huzar writes, “Typically libraries are presented both as a necessity for any country that wishes to be an effective democracy and, to a lesser extent, **as a doorway to the right of every citizen to cultural and intellectual development.**”
- [According to the American Library Association](#), libraries “advocate and educate in defense of intellectual freedom—the rights of library users to read, seek information, and speak freely as guaranteed by **the First Amendment.**”



The Role of Libraries

- Why is diversity essential to the work of libraries and librarians?





#1

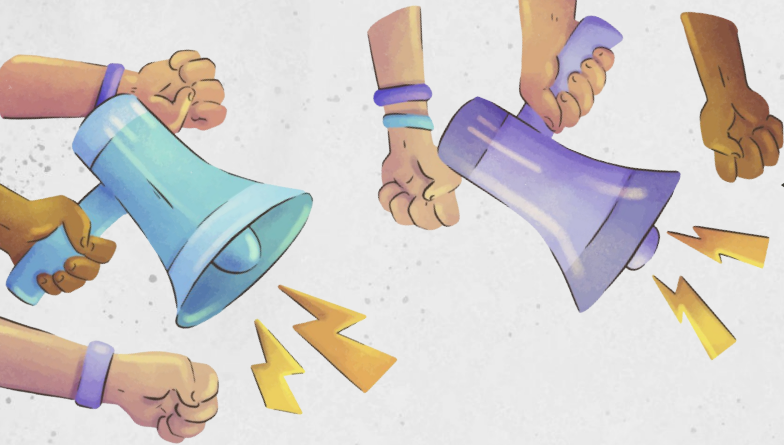
Service to Our Communities

- Libraries contribute to social capital.
 - “Social capital[1] is associated with multiple positive societal developments, democracy, economic development, government efficiency, community development, schooling, individual health and well-being, and with combating crime, drug abuse, and teenage pregnancies (Granovetter, 1985; Putnam, 1993, 2000, 2004; Hutchinson and Vidal, 2004; Wakefield and Poland, 2005 via Varheim, 2008)



#2

- Librarians must respond to the sociopolitical context of efforts to minimize student exposure to books that represent the experiences of historically marginalized communities.



#3

Professional Obligation & Continuity of Service

Library Bill of Rights

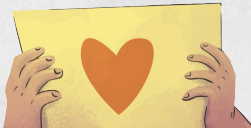
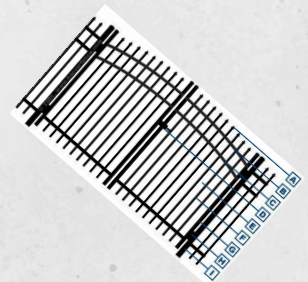
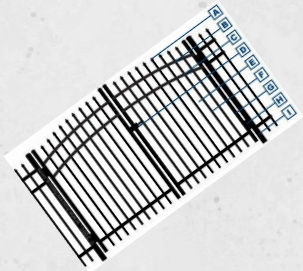
The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

- I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
- II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
- III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
- V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
- VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.
- VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Value of Diversity



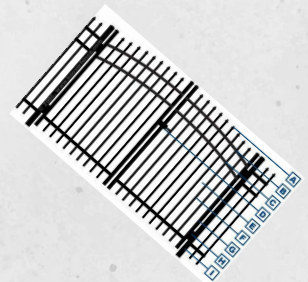
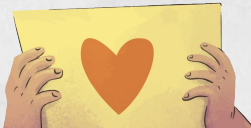
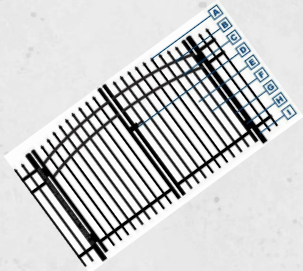
- Fosters cross cultural competence and mutual respect or teaches tolerance (Hartmann, 2016).
- Increases awareness of social practices, values, and belief systems of dissimilar cultures (Evans, 2010).
- Can create an environment of inclusion where all patrons feel valued and appreciated.
- Breaks down cultural/social barriers.
- Help people understand the complexities of a socially diverse world.
- Equalizes educational opportunities and affirms the value of all patrons.
- Greater knowledge sharing



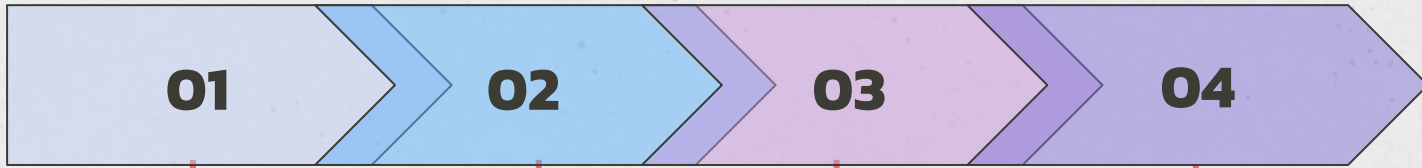
Value of Diversity



- Greater student engagement is a precursor to gaining, strengthening, and mastering critical, cultural, and media literacies.
- Diverse books have personal and communal benefits and serve as a foundation for helping people develop a love for reading which can lead to increased comprehension and language development.



Recommendations (Research Based)



01
Sample
Library Policies
(schools &
universities)

02
**Content
Analysis**
Checklist guided
my inquiry

03
Reliability
Interrater
Reliability = 96%

04
Data Analysis
Tabulated
Frequency
Presence & themes





Findings

1. Lack of transparency
2. Lack of specificity (low presence of diverse terms)
3. Lack of embeddedness





Findings



Of 77 school districts, 16 policies were analyzed and 4 policies manifested messages of diversity.

Finding 1

The term diversity was often listed as a reference to another document: Example: “see **diversity** in collection development policy”

Finding 2

Diversity wasn’t specific to people. Example: “...is dedicated to building collections that provide the greatest impact on literacy, learning, teaching, and research and offer **diversity** of content.” In another example diversity was not contextualized at all.

Finding 3

Districts duplicated policies. These policies did not provide any guidance on how diverse books were selected.

Finding 4

Policies did not act as gates to aid in the selection of diverse books. There were no information about how diverse books were selected.





Recommendations for Library Policy Development

1. Librarian should advocate for updated policies that provide links and references to current ALA Library Bill of Rights and Interpretations. This step is crucial for librarians in states where there are anti-censorship policies. Example HB 2789
2. Given increase in censorship, it's important that collection development policies are easily located for the community to access. Transparency is key for the community to know your library's commitment to inclusivity.
3. Move away from benign diversity statements
4. Librarians should advocate for specific language that describes what diversity means in the context of people, the criteria for selecting diverse books (decision points), and the sources used to identify diverse books and why diverse books are included in your policy. This language should be embedded in policy.
5. Name communities in policies
6. Operationalize diversity (what steps do you take to procure diverse resources & funding commitments)





Recommendations for Library Policy Development

7. Outline diversity in selection criteria (i.e representation, how do you address bias in collections, multiple perspectives, etc.)

8. Strong reconsideration policies:

<https://www.ala.org/tools/challengesupport/selectionpolicytoolkit/sampleforms>

<https://education.illinoisstate.edu/labschools/policies/Library%20Development%20Collection%20Policy.pdf>





Resources:

- Assess the level of diversity within your library program.

Lee and Low Publisher's Survey:

https://www.leeandlow.com/uploads/loaded_document/408/Classroom-Library-Questionnaire_FINAL.pdf

- Diverse BookFinder <https://diversebookfinder.org/>

- Diversity Scorecard:

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bc5da7c3560c36b7dab1922/t/5e835d5d2bb4bc65c4b86454/1585667422275/Scorecard+Toolkit+Formatted+for+PDF+w_out+ppt.pdf





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THANKS!

