FILLING IN THE MARGINS:

THE USE OF QUEER THEORY, FEMINIST STANDPOINT THEORY, & CRITICAL RACE THEORY TO BUILD INCLUSIVE ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

- Queer theory
- Critical race theory
- Feminist standpoint theory
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

● What type of theoretical approaches do archivists use to build inclusive archives?

● Do archivists already apply principles of critical race theory, feminist standpoint theory, or queer theory in their collection development work?

● What does it look like when these theoretical frameworks are applied to archival practice?

● What challenges do archivists identify that may be alleviated by the application of a combination of feminist standpoint theory, queer theory, and critical race theory to archival practice?
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RESULTS

● all interviewees exhibited some characteristics of each theoretical framework in their descriptions of their approaches to the work

● each interviewee also identified challenges that a more intentional application of this combined theory could alleviate
“Especially from marginalized groups. In my opinion, our society - the predominantly white community - has done a lot of taking, and we need to give back. I think that that also helps in the relationship-building process, to be clear that we’re not here to take, we’re here to work with you and we’re here to do what’s best for you and for the materials. So that’s sort of the approach that I try to take when I work with new people or organizations.”

CODES:

- Acknowledging & Naming Privilege (CRT / FST)
- Acknowledging & Naming Position (FST)
- Prioritizing & Naming Difference (QT / CRT)
- Centering people of color and marginalized groups (CRT)
“Well, there’s so much that’s not in the written record or the traditional record. As I said before, we thought that maybe some of these - Some people do not save material, as in papers, but they have an important story to tell, and that’s one reason for oral history. Another is that you get a very different kind of information in oral histories than you get in the written record, especially if the written record is more official or it’s more the everyday work records or council records or something like that. If you get an oral history, that really enriches the record of both. And you need both of those kinds of records.”

CODES:

- Storytelling as revising history (CRT)
- Acknowledging & prioritizing the knowledge of marginalized groups (FST)
- Redefining (materials, practices, categories) (QT)
“...marginalized groups may be more skeptical of a predominantly white institution wanting their records. So that’s part of the building in the relationship and also as you know it’s a challenge for archives to have people know about what archiving is anyway - any groups, it can be challenging to explain what we do - so that’s with almost any community, of having to go in and explain what an archive is and what we do and all of that.”

CODES:
- Donors/Archivists as Participants (QT/FST)
- Identifying & Naming Privilege (CRT / FST)
- Acknowledging & Naming Position (FST)
A more intentional application of queer theory, critical race theory, and feminist standpoint theory can help to alleviate some of the challenges identified by archivists working to build inclusive collections:

- selection and appraisal
- trust-building and relationship-building
- redefining archival collections
QUESTIONS?

jen.labarbera@gmail.com
@jenlabarbera