MICROAGGRESSIONS AND RESISTANCE

ORGANIZERS

Nisha Nair, University of Pittsburgh
Audrey J. Murrell, University of Pittsburgh
Deborah Cain Good, University of Pittsburgh

While there is extensive research on active forms of discrimination and exclusion (Mor Barak, 2011), exclusion that happens more subtly and oftentimes inadvertently, in the form of subtle forms of denigration, invalidation or slights, referred to as 'microaggressions', has only recently begun to draw research attention (Gartner and Sterzing, 2016; Lilienfeld, 2017; Sue, 2010). This kind of exclusion is often invisible and operates in subtle forms, the intended exclusion itself a form of covert resistance to inclusion.

Microaggressions denote subtle form of bias and discrimination such as slights, snubs or insults directed towards minorities, studied predominantly through the lens of race. Racial microaggressions have been defined as "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group" (Sue *et al.*, 2007, p. 273). Since the mainstreaming of research on racial microaggression by Sue and his colleagues (Sue *et al.*, 2007; Sue *et al.*, 2008a), the concept has begun to be applied to other marginalized groups and demographics such as ethnic minorities and people of color (Balsam *et al.*, 2011; Clark *et al.*, 2014; Nadal, 2011), gender (Basford *et al.*, 2014; Gartner and Sterzing, 2016), religious minorities (Husain and Howard, 2017), minority sexual orientation (Shelton and Delgado-Romero, 2011; Woodford *et al.*, 2013), and to the immigrant experience as well (Shenoy-Packer, 2015). An intersectional approach to the study of microaggressions is also in need of further development (Nadal *et al.*, 2015).

Responses to microaggressions have also been varied. Some like Wang and colleagues (2011) argue that microaggressions can affect the wellbeing and psychological health of those subject to it, while others like Campbell and Manning (2014) posit that microaggressions and the attendant focus on it have given rise to a culture of victimhood. Studies have noted the resultant feelings associated with microaggressions as those of powerlessness and a sense of invisibility (Sue et al., 2008b). The self-reinforcing cycle of illegitimacy experienced by people within marginalized identity groups (Vial *et al.*, 2016) has also been noted. Coping with microaggressions can take on different forms such as turning to spirituality, seeking support networks and mentorship (Holder *et al.*, 2015) or expressions of active or subtle forms of resistance. Thus, microaggression experiences could result in a diminished sense of self, or be actively or passively resisted to protect and shield one's identity.

Given the nascent stage of research on microaggressions in general (Lilienfeld, 2017; Sue, 2017), and the dearth of studies that have examined microaggressions from more than one dominant identity

lens (Sterzing *et al.*, 2017), we invite papers that examine microaggressions from individual marginalized identity perspectives or using an intersectional lens with emphasis on resistance.

The focus is on understanding the experience of microaggressions for individuals with multiple minority identities (such as race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) and ways in which resistance manifests itself, both in the act of the microaggression and the experience and response to it. Ways in which microaggressions relate to the process of identity re-formation, re-categorization or salience assigned to different minority identities, is also of particular interest. The stream will thus focus on examining microaggressions as resistance, and responses to and coping with microaggressions in the form of resistance that may either be overt or covert. We are also interested in themes of majoritarian backlash to the microaggression experience and invalidation and refutation of microaggressions such as the use of humor in conveying exclusion.

Based on the above, we invite papers that address any of the themes of microaggressions and resistance. We are especially interested in the following areas:

- Implicit resistance in the act of microaggressions
- Responses to microaggressions manifesting as resistance
- Identity impacts of microaggressions
- Intersectional microaggressions and resistance
- Backlash to racial and gender microaggressions
- Backlash to sexual orientation microaggressions
- Backlash to other marginalized identity microaggressions
- Negation and invalidation of the microaggression experience
- Power and resistance in microaggressions
- Experience of illegitimacy in microaggressions

The thrust areas are only indicative and not meant to be exhaustive. We welcome both conceptual and empirical papers using different epistemologies and methodologies that deal with subtle forms of exclusion (such as microaggressions) and manifest resistance. The resistance can be both direct or indirect, overt or covert, exercised by the issuer or by the recipient of exclusion. Papers on microaggressions from any of the marginalized identity perspectives such as race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, etc. are welcome. Of particular interest are papers focused on intersectional microaggressions and resistance.

References

Balsam, K. F., Molina, Y., Beadnell, B., Simoni, J. and Walters, K. (2011), "Measuring multiple minority stress: The LGBT People of Color Microaggressions Scale", *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, Vol. 17 No. 2, pp.163-174.

Basford, T. E., Offermann, L. R. and Behrend, T.S. (2014), "Do you see what I see? Perceptions of gender microaggressions in the workplace", *Psychology of Women Quarterly,* Vol. 38 No. 3, pp. 340-349.

Campbell, B., & Manning, J. (2014), "Microaggression and moral cultures", *Comparative Sociology,* Vol. 13 No. 6, pp. 692 – 726.

Clark, D. K. S., Spanierman, L. B., Isaac, P. and Poolokasingham, G. (2014), "Do you live in a teepee?" Aboriginal students' experiences with racial microaggressions in Canada", *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, Vol. 7 No. 2, pp.112-125.

Gartner, R. E. and Sterzing, P. R. (2016), "Gender microaggressions as a gateway to sexual harassment and sexual assault: Expanding the conceptualization of youth sexual violence", *Journal of Women and Social Work,* Vol. 31 No. 4, pp. 491-503.

Holder, A. M. B., Jackson, M. A. and Ponterotto, J. G. (2015), "Racial microaggression experiences and coping strategies of black women in corporate leadership", *Qualitative Psychology,* Vol. 2 No. 2, pp. 164-180.

Husain, A. and Howard, S. (2017), "Religious microaggressions: A case study of Muslim Americans", *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work,* Vol. 26 No. 1-2, pp. 139-152.

Lilienfeld, S. O. (2017), "Microaggressions: Strong claims, inadequate evidence", *Perspectives on Psychological Science,* Vol. 12 No. 1, pp. 138-169.

Mor Barak, M. E. (2011), *Managing diversity: Toward a globally inclusive workplace.* Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Nadal, K. L. (2011), "The racial and ethnic microaggressions scale (REMS): Construction, reliability, and validity", *Journal of Counseling Psychology,* Vol. 58, pp. 470 -480.

Nadal, K. L., Davidoff, K. C., Davis, L. S., Wong, Y., Marshall, D. and McKenzie, V. (2015), "A qualitative approach to intersectional microaggressions: Understanding influences of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and religion", *Qualitative Psychology,* Vol. 2 No. 2, pp. 147-163.

Shelton, K. and Delgado-Romero, E. A. (2011), "Sexual orientation microaggressions: The experience of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer clients in psychotherapy", *Journal of Counseling Psychology,* Vol. 58 No. 2, pp. 210-221.

Shenoy-Packer, S. (2015), "Immigrant professionals, microaggressions, and critical sensemaking in the U.S. workplace", *Management Communication Quarterly,* Vol. 29 No. 2, pp. 257-275.

Sterzing, P. R., Gartner, R. E., Woodford, M. R. and Fisher, C. M. (2017), "Sexual orientation, gender, and gender identity microaggressions: Toward an intersectional framework for social work research", *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work,* Vol. 26 No. 1/2, pp. 81-94.

Sue, D. W. (2010), *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation*, Wiley, Hoboken, NJ.

Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M. and Holder, A. M. B. (2008b), "Racial microaggressions in the life experience of Black Americans", *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice,* Vol. 39*,* pp. 329–336.

Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Nadal, K. L. and Torino, G. (2008a), "Racial microaggressions and the power to impose reality", *American Psychologist,* Vol. 63, pp. 277–279.

Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Torino, G. C., Bucceri, J. M., Holder, B. M., Nadal, K. L. and Esquilin, M. (2007), "Racial microaggressions in everyday life: Implications for clinical practice", *American Psychologist,* Vol. 62 No. 4, pp. 271–286.

Vial, A.C., Napier, J.L. and Brescoll, V.L. (2016), "A bed of thorns: Female leaders and the self-reinforcing cycle of illegitimacy", *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 27, pp. 400-414.

Wang, J., Leu, J., & Shoda, Y. (2011), "When the seemingly innocuous "stings": Racial microaggressions and their emotional consequences", *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin,* Vol.37 No. 12, pp. 1666–1678.

Woodford, M. R. Howell, M. L., Kulick, A. and Silverschanz, P. (2013), ""That's so Gay": Heterosexual male undergraduates and the perpetuation of sexual orientation microaggressions on campus", *Journal of Interpersonal Violence,* Vol. 28 No. 2, pp. 416-435.