Practicing Critical Global Citizenship in an Academic Library: Experiences of Immigrant-Origin Librarians

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Practicing Critical Global Citizenship in an Academic Library: Experiences of Immigrant-Origin Librarians

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ABSTRACT
The number of immigrant-origin students in U.S. higher education, those born abroad and those born in the U.S. with immigrant parents, has and will continue to increase. How can academic librarians engage with these students and their communities? In this article, we will provide a brief background on the increase of immigrant-origin students in higher education, our experiences as two immigrant-origin librarians, and our efforts to support global citizenship. We will also discuss how our skills as technical services librarians were particularly useful in this work. In two mini case studies, we will discuss our sustained efforts to support two different communities, the Lao American and Mexican American communities, by participating and collaborating with several local community organizations. The first case study will discuss how the librarian's leadership role as a board member of a non-profit can help organize and influence community programs and support educational events and scholarship. The second case study will discuss a Local Authors' Fair that sought to highlight local Hispanic authors. The second case study will also discuss partnerships with non-profit immigrant organizations. Finally, we will discuss how these events and partnerships could impact the collections of these academic libraries. This, in turn, will help academic libraries better reflect their local communities.

INTRODUCTION
Librarianship in the United States is rooted in white supremacy and racial protectionism (Sierpe 2019; Leung and López-McKnight 2021). In the past several years there has been an ongoing reckoning with the harms produced by the practices and policies in several areas of library work such as archives, cataloging, and collections (Leung and López-McKnight 2021; Davis-Castro and Bugg 2023; Roy et al. 2022). How, then, do minoritized immigrant librarians navigate "systems designed as structures of coercive assimilation" (Sierpe 2019:90)? How do librarians initiate critical changes to better serve the increasing number of immigrant-origin students enrolled in higher education? This article is the result of ongoing discussions between two immigrant-origin librarians, Lao-Chinese and Mexican, privileged to work in an area with Lao and Mexican immigrant populations. We discussed our immigrant experience, living in the diaspora, community service work, and library policies and practices. Specifically, discussions were prompted by the struggle to meet the community service requirement for achieving promotion and tenure at our specific institution.

Our understanding of community service was one of co-production with community members. However, the examples given to meet the community service requirement for tenure often invoked a paternalistic perspective whereby professional expertise is used to fill a deficit within the community. This perspective runs counter to our experiences with community and community organizations. When discussing the discrepancy, we realized that our
conceptualization of community service was informed by several concepts: community cultural wealth model, critical global citizenship, and authentic community engagement. With these concepts in mind, how, then, can librarians and libraries co-create collections and services without replicating historical harms and inequities? We will also discuss tools other librarians can use to develop our own critical global citizenship lens and practices.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Immigrant Origin Students

The number of immigrant-origin students attending higher education has increased over the last 20 years. Students from immigrant families accounted for 20 percent of all college students in the United States in 2000; however, in 2021, that percentage grew to 31 percent (Batalova and Feldblum 2023). This increase is particularly striking when examining the educational trends of immigrant families. We noted that immigrant-origin students accounted for 80 percent of the overall increase in higher education enrollment in those two decades. National data reflect signs this trend may continue as a 2015 projection estimated that the number of immigrants living in the United States is set to double by 2065 (Budiman 2020).

The growth of immigrant-origin students in higher education necessitates an understanding of their developmental experiences. Several studies have described the many forces and responsibilities immigrant-origin students may face in emerging adulthood, such as “dual forces of acculturation and enculturation” and that their development may be influenced by immigration status, generational status, familial socioeconomic status, gender, language acquisition, and culture (Katsiaficas, Suárez-Orozco, and Dias 2015:99). Studies on immigrant-origin students found that they may face multiple non-academic responsibilities including childcare, eldercare, work, and increased responsibilities as cultural brokers (Suárez-Orozco, Onaga, and de Lardemelle 2010; Gong, Kubo, and Takahashi 2014). Still, it is important to note that immigrant-origin students are not a homogenous group. The level of educational attainment, economic status, immigration status, and the extent of support networks differ as well. For example, some members of immigrant families may not have received any formal education, while others may have post-graduate degrees (Suárez-Orozco et al. 2010; Pak, Maramba, and Hernandez 2014).

It is critical when discussing immigrant-origin students that they are not flattened into “controlling images” or stereotypes that “reduces them to the most docile, incompetent subjects” (McMillam Cottom 2019:90). As former immigrant-origin students who attended higher education in California, we are familiar with the tensions that arise when enrolled in higher education. We witnessed the ways that the deficit models place the burden of deficiency onto immigrant-origin students as opposed to placing the responsibility onto the systems and institutions themselves (Liou, Martinez, and Rotheram-Fuller 2016). There is a concerted effort to meet the needs of the diverse student body, but without critical reflection on how the systems replicate historical harms, then those efforts may inadvertently continue those same harms (Leung and López-McKnight 2021; Roy et al. 2022).

Community Cultural Wealth Model

The community cultural wealth model centers around the “array of knowledge, skills, abilities, and contacts possessed and utilized by Communities of Color to survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression” (Yosso 2005:77). She describes six specific forms of capital that students already possess. Those are aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capital. This concept was developed to counter the narrative found too often in the literature about “disadvantaged” students whose lack of knowledge, skills, and abilities prevents them from attaining the social mobility that others attain. Others further described the negative impact of the deficit perspective as a tool to reinforce the hierarchies and power differentials between students and educators (Liou et al. 2016). By pathologizing students, it relieves educators of the responsibility of reforming social and systemic inequalities (Yosso 2005). The community cultural wealth model instead seeks to recognize the strengths of students of color and in doing so challenge the social and systemic inequities found in education.

Critical Global Citizenship

The literature conceptualized global citizenship in numerous ways. One systematic review found that these concepts fell under two broad categories, cosmopolitan and advocacy-based (Oxley and Morris 2013). Simultaneously,
Authentic Community Engagement

The Elective Classification for Community Engagement by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching recognized and formalized the importance of community engagement (American Council of Education n.d.; Driscoll 2008). The Community Engagement elective is “for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in the context of partnership and reciprocity” (Driscoll 2008:39). Even so, she found “most institutions could only describe in vague generalities how they had achieved genuine reciprocity with their community” (p. 41). The historical and power analysis needed for true reciprocation was missing. For example, Chupp, Fletcher, and Graulty (2021:437) posited that because of “the historic unequal relationships and power dynamics, university-community engagement must also integrate a racial equity lens and a commitment to confront inherent power differentials.” To that end, Chupp et al. (2021) defined authentic community engagement as “two-way knowledge exchange; mutually beneficial relationships; reciprocity; and collaborative work on relevant problems or goals identified by the community itself” (p. 437).

EXPERIENCES AS IMMIGRANT-ORIGIN LIBRARIANS

We are two immigrant-origin tenure-track academic librarians working in a large public university. The university is designated as both a Hispanic Serving Institution and an Asian American Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution. Boutsaba is a first-generation Lao-Chinese American, and Balladolid is a second-generation Mexican American. We are the first in our families to attain a tenure-track position in higher education. Like other faculty of color, we retained a strong sense of service to the community (González 2007). Additionally, we bonded over the collectivist values found in our own respective cultures. Previous research in immigrant populations has demonstrated the importance of “family interdependence particularly among Asian Pacific and Latino families” (Katsiaficas et al. 2015:99). They explained that the anthropological studies have identified these social responsibilities and obligations extending further than immediate families to those in the community. The sense of responsibility to the greater community is particularly poignant when considering the demographics of the university that the librarians work in and the demographics of those in the greater geographical area.

Local Demographics

Out of 21,924 students attending the university in 2023, 12,543 (57.2 percent) were Hispanic and 2,642 (12.1 percent) were Asian (Fresno State Office of Institutional Effectiveness 2023). This demographic breakdown is reflected by the county demographics as well. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2022), 55 percent of Fresno County residents were of Hispanic origin, and 11.9 percent were of Asian origin. Although the demographic breakdowns are highlighted, the members of these groups are not necessarily first- or second-generation immigrants themselves. On the contrary, there is a long history of immigration into this area spanning hundreds of years. Some may be third, fourth, etc. generation immigrants or not consider themselves immigrants at all. Still, even as the student demographics of the university reflect that of the surrounding area, the goal of student retention remains unrealized, as illustrated by the current educational trends among Latine and Southeast Asian student populations (Southeast Asia Resource Action Center & Asian Americans Advancing Justice 2020).

Among the Southeast Asian population, Lao Americans have the lowest attainment of bachelor’s degrees at 13 percent as compared to other Southeast Asian groups. For example, 34 percent of Vietnamese, 27 percent of Hmong, and 21 percent of Cambodian students attain a bachelor’s degree (Southeast Asia Resource Action Center & Asian Americans Advancing Justice 2020).
Americans Advancing Justice (2020). In 2021, of the Latinx population over the age of 25, 22 percent have earned an associate degree or higher (Excelencia in Education n.d.). Gong et al. (2014) further noted that Southeast Asians “must overcome significant academic deficits yet lack the necessary parental guidance to help them succeed in college…” students feel overlooked when it comes to assistance programs to support minority groups” (p. 5). Takahashi and Nottbohm (2019) wrote a report on Hmong students with campus president stating, “Hmong students need institutional and community support for their educational success, and their experiences and life stories are invaluable to faculty, staff, administrators and other students” (p. 3). The need and call for support for Southeast Asian students in California is clearly stated on these reports.

Local History

In 2018, The Atlantic, in partnership with graduate students at the University of California, Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism, published a series of articles highlighting Fresno’s systemic racist history and its persistent impact on minoritized residents. The first of the article, titled “Fresno’s Mason Dixon Line”, highlights the intentional redlining that occurred in the 1900s and how the “gulf between white, black, and brown residents remains embedded in the city’s geography” (Thebault 2018). This segregation is not a distant problem but one that is reinforced. For example, we have heard the advice given to several new faculty at our institution, “live anywhere north of Shaw or Herndon Ave.” It took several years before we realized what that advice was reinforcing. The Atlantic article explains:

Today, some argue that Shaw Avenue, an east-west thoroughfare that’s one of the city’s busiest, has replaced the railroad tracks as the city’s dividing line. White and wealthy above it, poor, Black, and Hispanic below. A 1970s-era city planning document actually refers to the street as Fresno’s Mason-Dixon Line (Thebault 2018).

This is particularly brutal as it demonstrates how white supremacy and racial protectionism work to reinforce racist systems. We did not question the advice, not knowing this history. Instead, we experienced the impact of this segregation via our community work. The communities we served were often found south of Fresno’s ‘Mason-Dixon Line.’ It was hard to miss the concentration of minoritized communities in south and west Fresno. Ultimately, Boutsaba settled in West Fresno in an area with a large Southeast Asian and Hispanic population. Balladolid settled near family in Madera, a county with a large Hispanic population.

In living and working in these areas, we saw how immigrant communities created and shared their own resources. For example, these communities would host festivals and resource fairs and maintain online resources such as databases, online maps, and social media accounts. It was in these spaces that we found cultural affirmation and resiliency. Even now, our lived experiences have been and continue to be multicultural and binational. We are privileged to travel to our countries of origin to visit with family and to retain the cultural traditions practiced by the communities. Because of these experiences, we approach community service as one co-produced with the community.

CASE STUDY: SERVING THE LAO AMERICANS COMMUNITY

Lao Americans Community in Sonoma

Lao Americans arrived in the United States shortly after the Vietnam War as immigrant refugees. In the late 1970s and 1980s, Lao Americans scattered throughout California. They settled where they felt most at home, mainly in agricultural areas. Sonoma County was home to families who sought farmland and an environment where they could go fishing on the weekend. Many worked for technology companies as assemblers, which required limited English skills. When a few families settled in this beautiful county, they also influenced other friends and relatives from cities like San Francisco to move north. As more Lao Americans congregated, they wanted a place to practice their religion and continue sharing their traditions and cultural practices with their children. Those that resided in Sonoma County felt the need to sustain their cultural values and beliefs. The temple, Wat Lao Saysettha, was purchased and established in 2001 as a religious 503c nonprofit by one of the founders, Phang Phetsomphou, a social worker.

Before changing jobs to Fresno, Boutsaba was a longtime leader at Wat Lao Saysettha. She put her library skills to work after attaining her master’s degree in Library and Information Science (Janetvilay 2015). She used her social media literacy skills to help bring attention and visibility to
this small Lao American Buddhist community in Sonoma County. Currently, she is a board member for Wat Lao Saysettha as well as the agent representative for the organization. As a board member, Boutsaba worked on fundraising to pay off the mortgage for the temple.

**Media Literacy and Community Service**

In 2011, a Facebook page was set up to share the Lao New Year festivities. It turned out to be the key tool for sharing announcements of religious holidays, events, and programs. Boutsaba’s husband, Nam Ing, was a freelance photographer who captured beautiful pictures and shared them on Facebook. This reached Lao American communities in San Francisco, East Bay, South Bay, and as far north as Eureka to pilgrimage Wat Lao Saysettha in Santa Rosa, CA. The fundraising continued for major events like Lao New Year, Boun Ork Punsa, and Boun Katin. Boutsaba then helped the temple coordinate summer food fundraising events to raise more funds and organized a Lao language and cultural literacy class to reunite community members. She marketed the beautiful ambiance of Sonoma County and planned summer food fundraising activities with themes of street food and authentic Lao food. All volunteers learned how to cook and raised funds for the temple. It was a fantastic opportunity to bring people from all over to taste and learn how to perform Lao social circle dance, lumvong. A volunteer DJ played traditional Lao and Thai music while people enjoyed the taste of Lao food and lumvong to the homeland music.

Implicit in this work is the understanding of the community cultural wealth inherent in these practices. This is an example of community service meeting the community needs of the time. Before these practices can be documented and collected, as often done in librarianship, they must be preserved. With persistence and time, the small immigrant community in Sonoma County will reach their goal of sustaining their cultural heritage, religious practice, and enrichment of Lao American tradition. Through these outreach and fundraising efforts, Boutsaba led the effort to pay off the mortgage in late 2023. Their attention is now turned toward developing an iconic Lao temple in Sonoma County.

**Empowering Future Generation of Lao Americans in Fresno**

In 2019, Boutsaba partially moved to Fresno and quickly joined the Laotian American Community of Fresno (LACF), a nonprofit organization. This nonprofit was a more established organization. Many members had professional careers outside of their volunteer work and used their skills to serve this community organization. Because of the additional resources, Boutsaba was able to archive and document the organization’s programs and activities. It is critical to maintain a nonprofit organization’s legal documentation and retain the paperwork for events and programs. When Boutsaba first started working with the organization, the record keeping of their valuable programs was not as visible or accessible to other board members. As a secretary and past co-chair, Boutsaba helped manage their Google shared drive. Any information regarding their events since her involvement has been easily retrievable and readily available for all board members to access. In addition, she helped with organizational structure, roles and responsibilities, and strategizing and budget planning.

The Laotian American Community of Fresno’s mission is to empower the community and youth via education, social, and economic sustainability. The organization hosts an annual youth conference that invites middle and high school students to learn more about higher education at the Fresno State campus. Once a year, they have a scholarship fundraising event under the hot autumn sun at a local winery in Fresno County. Boutsaba was especially inspired by the annual $10,000 scholarships given to college students. It is a labor of love and passion for members of the board to provide such gifts to their community. The work is grassroots, and the impact is long-lasting for many lives that transitioned from poverty into higher education or sustainable careers.

“Universities have a responsibility to promote global citizenship by teaching their students that they are members of a large global community” (United Nations n.d.). Through her work as a faculty advisor to the Lao Student Association, Boutsaba asserted this responsibility. She has lived life as a global citizen. Boutsaba traveled as a refugee and immigrant and has earned a professional position. Now she empathizes and helps students in their own journeys. The experience of teaching is more meaningful to both students and advisors due to the shared common cultural and traditional values. The relationship of networking with the local community and being a faculty advisor created a sustainable system of enriching communities with universities impact. Reflecting
on the last few years of experience working on campus and with community organizations, Boutsaba has grown professionally and reached an esteemed rank by offering her diverse background and perspective of advocating for more inclusive voices, whether on campus committees or library collections. As a faculty member of the campus community, she serves as a faculty advisor for the Lao Student Association (LSA), where her leadership influenced and impacted students to do more for their communities.

**CASE STUDY: SERVING THE MEXICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY**

As a second-generation Mexican American who was raised in the local area, it was particularly important to Balladolid that any community service undertaken as part of the promotion and tenure process impact the Mexican American communities of Madera and Fresno counties. Nearly 60 percent of Madera County are of Hispanic or Latine descent, and 55 percent of Fresno County are of Hispanic or Latine descent. More specifically, according to the Latino Community Foundation (n.d.), above 90 percent of both Madera and Fresno’s Latine populations are of Mexican heritage. As a former AmeriCorps volunteer post-graduation, Balladolid conducted hundreds of pesticide and heat safety presentations for nearly 1,000 farmworkers in Spanish and English. This sparked a passion for direct engagement with community members close to home. As one Latina so illustratively put it, “Am I going to get caught up in this la la land of reality” (González 2007:297)?

After attaining a tenure-track position, Balladolid volunteered at REFORMA del Valle Central, a local chapter of REFORMA, a professional librarian organization focused on serving the library and informational needs of Latinos and Spanish speakers. Although volunteering first began with a small role as a member of a scholarship committee, it snowballed into serving multiple roles. Balladolid handled Google submission forms for the scholarship and book grant committees, managed the chapter listserv, co-created a chapter website, and served as the Zoom technician at the monthly meetings. There were also opportunities to directly engage with community members in different community events and periodic book giveaways. The chapter partnered with immigrant community organizations that held several events, such as El Día del Niño and Posada. This entailed coordinating donations, coordinating with event organizers, and, if available, coordinating volunteers. Book giveaways were a priority, especially since many areas of Fresno, such as those in south and west Fresno, are categorized as “book deserts” (Unite for Literacy 2024). During these events, the community members brought up prohibitive library hours, the need for more representative books, and difficulties getting their stories published.

During this period, many local Latine authors and illustrators approached the chapter for support in promoting their self-published books. The chapter invited many of these authors to speak at chapter meetings. Several of the stories revolved around journeys of perseverance and resilience in the face of assimilationist forces. Eventually, this request morphed into a collaboration with the local public library to highlight local authors from the area at the Local Authors Book Fair. Simultaneously, during several outreach events, chapter members were getting requests from attendees for culturally relevant books written by authors from the community. Examples included requests for books that explained Dia de los Muertos and Posada, two huge cultural events in Mexico often recreated in the United States. In conversations with community members who requested these books, it became apparent that they were working to retain the cultural traditions of their countries of origin. It was because of these two trends that prompted further reflection as to why these Latine creators were having such difficulty publishing their stories while simultaneously there was such a demand for these stories from the community.

Even as Latine or Asian American authors self-publish their stories, these stories can be excluded from the shelves of libraries and bookstores. This outcome can be attributed to several reasons. For example, there has been a trend in libraries to outsource technical services work (Bennett 2022). Less staffing has meant finding as many efficiencies as possible. Consequently, library staff rely on vendor systems that prize profit and efficiency. These vendors address library workflow issues by working with traditional publishers, providing metadata, and consolidating payments. However, this has meant that at least some collection development and metadata decisions have been outsourced as well. There is more friction when purchasing books that are not traditionally published. The infrastructure is not there to support, for example, different languages. Years of this outsourcing have resulted in decreasing original catalogers available to
catalog books that fall outside mainstream work. This is the case with libraries found throughout the Central Valley, including Fresno and Madera. REFORMA del Valle Central is working on addressing this issue by highlighting representative stories no matter how they are published and connecting those stories to the people within the community. This work continues as REFORMA del Valle Central connects people to organizations to further amplify the reach of the Latine community in the Central Valley.

**DISCUSSION**

*Academic Librarianship and Community Service*

The retention and tenure process at our institution covers three broad areas of requirements: professional effectiveness, scholarly/creative activities, and university/public service. The current model probationary plan states faculty must provide “evidence of no less than two examples of substantial or ongoing community involvement relating in some way to his/her/their professional or educational background, or professional/university service” (Fresno State 2015:15). Balladolid claimed participation in different REFORMA del Valle Central events under community service and a board role under professional service. There were concerns that this could be categorized as double dipping. Consequently, Balladolid claimed her work in REFORMA del Valle Central solely under community work. However, there were still concerns that this did not meet the community service requirement as it did not incorporate electronic resources work. It took months of self-reflection to understand why this was so difficult to process.

As two untenured librarians, we grappled with how community service was interpreted by library colleagues. In a strict sense, it meant doing cataloging and electronic resources work within the community. However, how can there be genuine reciprocity when a “solution” has already been prescribed? As Chupp et al. (2021) stated, authentic community engagement entails “collaborative work on relevant problems or goals identified by the community itself” (p. 437). Such a narrow characterization of how to meet community needs lends itself to so-called community shopping, where the faculty member then searches for a community or community organization that can meet their needs. This further exacerbates existing inequities. It prioritizes communities or community organizations that have the infrastructure in place for those prescribed solutions to be implemented and for the faculty members’ needs to be met. The uneasiness generated by the pushback from the differing understanding of community service was captured by Arroyo-Ramirez, Jones, O’Neill, and Smith (2021) when they characterized the “expectation to divorce our identities and act impartial and unfeeling to project the image of the consummate professional” as part of an “institutional culture of toxic ambition” (p. 2). This “toxic ambition” is also related to performative protocols, or the act of engaging with communities to only “further one’s own career, tick boxes” (Hird et al. 2023:3).

A large issue here is that this process treats “the university as a self-contained unit, it minimizes the reality that some, if not many people claim their identity in both the university and community” (Chupp et al. 2021:446). We felt a debt owed to our communities to use the skills and resources in a way that benefits our community. Community service then meant contributing to community building first. An example was Boutsaba’s work with the Wat Lao Saysettha temple. The community needed assistance in navigating the system and sustaining nonprofit status and survival, which meant social media literacy to promote themselves to their community and register with the state of California. Only in Fresno, at a more established nonprofit, could Boutsaba more directly apply her skills in organization, preservation, and description. Another example is Balladolid’s work on creating online applications for scholarships and book grants. It was only after a lot of community work that Balladolid was able to create the online Central Valley Authors & Creators database, a database highlighting stories authored and created by people in the community for people in the community. The initial service was for everyday tasks, done without fanfare but necessary to maintain community. Although initial community work may not seem directly tied to our immediate areas of expertise, those were the actions that ultimately led to the eventual use of those skills.

*Critical Global Citizenship*

Even as we worked with the Lao and Mexican immigrant communities, we had a first-hand view of how “community service” can be co-opted to serve the institution and not the community. We saw community driven physical collections donated to the library without the institutional support necessary to do right by those collections.
The university did not provide the necessary infrastructure, such as space, staff, and time. For example, one of the collections was placed in essentially a large cubicle, the other on a bookcase against a wall. These two endeavors lacked the staff to effectively manage, preserve, and facilitate access to these physical collections. Instead, it was up to Boutsaba to continuously advocate for adequate staffing to treat these collections with the care they deserved. As Clifford states, in response to the creation of the Community Engagement classification from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, there is a need by these institutions ‘to be acknowledged for’ the community partnerships. The discrepancies between what the university marketed and what we saw in action led to deeper conversations about what community-led collections would look like, one that was not performative (Gasman 2023).

Our concern is that in the rush to repair historical harm, initiatives such as these can turn predatory, especially for archival material from marginalized immigrant communities. Not enough care would be given for effective access and long-term preservation of community-driven collections due to the austerity measures and current neoliberal practices within higher education. As Regina Brooks, founder of a literary agency, said, there was a rush for “diverse authors,” but the publishing houses didn’t have the “internal infrastructure to sell” (Alter and Harris 2024). The underlying concern is that this rush will replicate the historical harms as informed by colonial history, where wealth is extracted from the communities of origin to benefit those outside the community. One example is the controversy around American Dirt, a story about Mexican migrants that was criticized as geared toward white audiences (Grady 2020). A People of Color in Publishing and Latinx in Publishing survey on the systemic way this issue is reproduced, “The idea of the “white default”—in other words, the unspoken assumption that any book published will be read by a mostly white audience (and that this perceived white audience is not interested in reading stories outside of the white default)—is one of the problems that keeps the publishing industry from handling books by and about BIPOC responsibly” (Latinx in Publishing 2018:23). This hasn’t changed in the intervening years since. Linda Duggins responded to the state of publishing, “Publishing houses and institutions within this industry are not set up for people of color…You’re bucking up against really entrenched cultures” (Alter and Harris 2024).

There has been a concerted effort to address diversity issues from many fronts, including addressing the lack of people of color throughout the publishing industry and in librarianship. However, there has been widespread backlash to such diversity initiatives. A Lee & Low survey found that the number of Latine employees in publishing dropped from 6 to 4.6 percent between 2019 and 2023 (Alter and Harris 2024). A report by Kendrick and Hulbert (2023) found that between 2010-2022, the number of Asian and Latin librarians fluctuated between 2-3 percent and 5-6 percent, respectively. This is important because these are gatekeepers throughout the literary supply chain, from publishers to vendors/aggregators to libraries themselves. The impact compounds on one another.

Even when institutional support is not there, we recognize the necessity to reflect the experience of today’s students. The consequence of not valuing a community’s cultural wealth is readily apparent. One example occurred when the legislation requiring ethnic studies passed in California (California State University n.d.). It was then that librarians within the California State University (CSU) system reviewed ethnic resources from multiple information vendors. It soon became apparent that these vendors did not have robust collections for several ethnic groups. The reasons were multi-faceted. Some vendors relied on the digitization of archival materials that were collected over several years by different organizations, including libraries, around the country (Adam Matthew n.d.). Other vendors bundle books and journals that focus on ethnic groups (ProQuest n.d.). However, years of historically exclusionary practices in archives, publishing, and librarianship cannot be overcome overnight (Quiñonez, Nataraj, and Olivas 2021).

Students and faculty continue to demand community created and driven collections. This is not new. In 1968-1969, the Mexican American Student Confederation at California State University of Fresno demanded a room “dedicated to housing works on Chicano history and culture and by Chicano authors” (Fresno State 2022). Fresno is one of the 23 California State University (CSU) systems. These types of spaces exist in other CSUs (Roy et al. 2022). These resource hubs can meet various needs, such as meeting and exhibit spaces. That request was ultimately denied. Fifty-six
years later, this sentiment is still reflected in the requests for inclusive books made by members of the general community during local outreach events.

Work to redress the historical exclusions is ongoing. Robust scholarship requires years of investment ranging from hiring researchers from those communities, infrastructure support such as societies, journals, conferences, and opportunities to truly challenge institutions' historical policies and practices (Quiñonez et al. 2021). One way to bridge this gap is by supporting immigrant-origin students and faculty whose perspectives can enrich the literature, institutions, and the community. In some cases, that may mean a concerted effort to include global voices, specifically those that were actively silenced. It is here that critical global citizenship may be operationalized.

CONCLUSION

Tools for Practicing Critical Global Citizenship

As stated earlier, librarianship in the United States has been rooted in white supremacy and racial protectionism. It is not lost on us that due to this, a critical concept that needs to be defined is that of the community cultural wealth model. As Booth (2021) notes, people from marginalized communities must not be seen as "objects of study, or groups that need to be 'helped' or 'put right,' their disadvantage stemming from poor choices and 'bad citizenship'. Instead, education for global citizenship must make visible the many structural antecedents of inequality" (p. 63). Therefore, it is critical that anyone interested in co-creating inclusive collections first learn the history of the communities. For immigrant communities, that may entail the global forces that prompted migration in the first place. This is in addition to the local histories of those same communities. By understanding these histories, it is possible then to be more “sensitive and deferential to the needs of communities themselves” (Booth 2021:68).

This work is necessary because as knowledge workers, librarians have a hand on maintaining colonial systems of information and knowledge, the infrastructure, that faculty and students navigate and use in their own research. It is critical that librarians begin questioning the unspoken assumptions in this work. As Hird et al. (2023) discuss, the concept of ontological supremacy is at work in these spaces of higher education. “Academic knowledge systems preserve a power imbalance with Indigenous ways of knowing and being, often by omitting, misinterpreting, extracting from and devaluing Indigenous knowledges while creating singular narratives of ‘truth’ and ‘discovery’” (Hird et al. 2023:1).

Even those from minoritized and immigrant communities must keep questioning their own biases. As discussed earlier, immigrant communities are not homogenous. We constantly question our own power when working with the community. Even as we are part of the community we serve, we are acutely aware that we grew up in a white supremacist culture. We have our own work we need to do to unlearn discriminatory practices and anti-black sentiments found within ourselves and our own communities. This self-reflection is constant. One of us was particularly struck by a particular song lyric, “Are you community made? Are you claimed by who you claim?” (Xiuhtezcatl 2024). This is the practice of cultural humility, one that prioritizes relationships, is other-oriented, and is committed to redressing systemic and structural inequities (Kostelecky, Townsend, and Hurley 2023). The important point is that by building true partnerships, one cannot self-insulate from the potential harm one does because there is a commitment to stay within the community.

More tools for authentic community engagement may be found in works within archives, health, and social sciences (Kline et al. 2018; Ghaddar and Caswell 2019; Gabiola et al. 2022). A common thread among all is to see community members and community organizations as true partners. This may entail placing community members in project leadership roles, empowering them to take ownership, and getting out of their way. What does this look like in libraries? There are several initiatives underway for the ethical collection of these resources. One such initiative is the Mukurtu platform, an open access platform that provides “differential access to community members and the general public and to create space for traditional narratives and knowledge labels that foreground Indigenous knowledge in the metadata of digitized cultural heritage materials.” (National Humanities Alliance 2024). In practice, this is a power sharing endeavor where Indigenous community members act as their own gatekeepers of their own resources.

We want to encourage more academic librarians to be more involved with the community they are serving. Ideally
living within the community and regularly attending community-led events to begin those relationships. The barriers or invisible walls between community and institution must come down for historical harms to ever be addressed. That cannot be done if librarians escape accountability of their work by retreating into the ivory tower. It is through this modeling that librarians can critically question current library practices and policies and work towards more fundamental change.

REFERENCES


Gabiola, Joyce, Gracen Brilmyer, Michelle Caswell, and Jimmy Zavala. 2022. “It’s a Trap;


