

Experiences of Microaggression by Black Professionals in Social Services in Portugal

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ABSTRACT

The study explores the experiences of microaggression by Black professionals in the social service field in Portugal. In depth interviews were conducted with seven participants and the data was analyzed thematically. Critical race theory and the conceptual framework of “microaggression” as a specific form of implicit racism is used to elucidate the everyday experiences and consequences of microaggression. The themes under experiences of microaggression in the workplace indicate how Black professionals are perceived as the racial Other, the triad of microaggression from the supervisor, subordinates and coworkers, white fragility, pressure to assimilate, ethno-racial matching, gendered racism and the organizational culture that perpetuates microaggression. The results indicate how “lusotropical” narratives of Portuguese national identity as a “good” colonizer led to the denial of racism which perpetuates microaggression. The research also highlights the consequences of microaggression, particularly the intergenerational trauma associated with racism and shaped by colonial systems of cultural oppression. This study recommends engaging in radical social work action that challenges oppression at both an individual and structural level through ideological critique and collective political movements for anti oppressive social policy changes.

KEYWORDS:

- [Microaggressions](#)
- [critical race theory](#)
- [social services](#)
- [Portugal](#)