Cartography and Resistance: A Systemic Racism Intervention with All Kinds of Girls

Praxis Project Thesis: Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts — as part of the Community, Youth, and Education Studies Major at Clark University

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AKOG Logo, 2000

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Abstract

My praxis thesis was formulated in response to my desire to respond to the call of action that another practitioner-researcher working with All Kinds of Girls (AKOG), Nia Slater-Bookhart, made in their honors thesis "All Kinds of Girls but not All Kinds of Mentors? Decolonizing Whiteness in an Urban-Youth Program & Creating Radical Change" (2019). My motivations were also deeply intertwined with my own experiences of shame from lacking the skills and critical historical knowledge to make sense of systemic racism as well as a concern that inaction would result in greater harm. I sought to create an intervention that encouraged youth workers to make sense of systemic racism through researching its manifestations in locations of personal significance. In seeking to create an intervention, I worked closely with Professor Brett Coleman to modify a pre-existing intervention of the 'Systemic Racism Curriculum Project' (SRCP). My goal was to understand how youth workers experience the training and what impact it has on the development of antiracist thought and action.

The research took place over two sessions in which youth workers learned about systemic racism, explored a map of instances of systemic racism, completed a short answer reflection, researched, and wrote about systemic racism in an area of personal significance, and completed a final short answer reflection. The research questions were evaluated in light of the short answer responses through thematic coding. Separate from my data analysis, I created a map of underreported manifestations of systemic racism in locations of personal significance to participating youth workers to serve as an educational resource and tool of introspection for individuals in the program.

The major findings of this Praxis are structured as recommendations critical to practice for the future leadership board currently formulating a plan for diversity and inclusion for this organization. My analysis found that racial representation is critical not only for the benefit of the youth (predominantly BIPOC) but for alleviating the pressure on youth workers of color to carry the weight of representation. Additionally, my analysis indicates that several mentors engaged in universalizing the white perspective or viewing systemic racism as something not personally connected to their lives. This was present across racial demographics, including mentors of color who held other privileged identities. This suggests that representation is incredibly important but so is critical consciousness. I leave the leadership committees with recommendations to take actions that will focus on increasing diversity in representation while simultaneously implementing training to increase critical consciousness and antiracism as an active part of the organization's mission.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge the following people for their unwavering support in constructing this praxis:

Thank you to Nesha, for coding with me and supporting my data analysis.

Thank you to Maire, for serving on my praxis committee, listening with enthusiasm, and reminding me of the importance of admitting my mistakes.

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Thank you to Brett Coleman, for serving on my defense committee, for your patience in navigating the complexities of academic jargon and theory, and for developing such a meaningful, important intervention.

Thank you to my advisor, Sarah Michaels, for your countless hours and meetings with me over the past year and a half. Your encouragement and dedication to my success have been the most important support as I have navigated this process.

Thank you to the individuals who participated in this intervention with me. This project would not have been possible without you.

Thank you to all those who have told me when I was wrong. Your labor in initiating those conversations has led to tremendous growth for me throughout my life.

My deepest gratitude to Nia, you have inspired me, challenged me, and made an incredible difference in the lives of others. If it were not for your emotional and academic labor in the work you have done for AKOG, I would have never had these experiences, nor would I be writing this paper.

Dedication
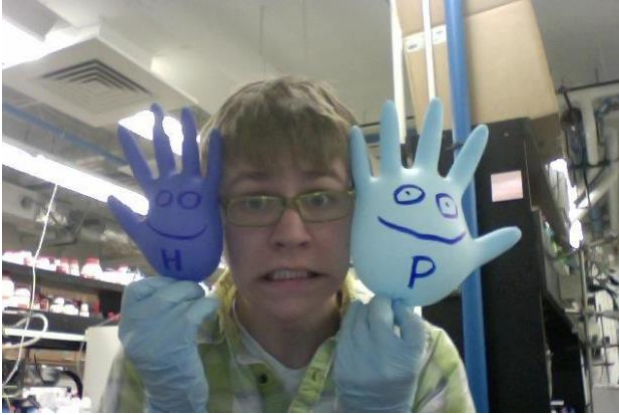
To the first adult in my life who ever challenged the discriminatory mindsets that I held as a

child, Tyler Kerr. Without you, I would not be here.

<u>Foreword</u>

<u>On Antiracism:</u>
"No one becomes 'not racist,' despite a tendency by Americans to identify themselves that way. We can only strive to be 'antiracist' on a daily basis, to continually rededicate ourselves to the lifelong task of overcoming our country's racist heritage."

Ibram X. Kendi, Further Reading: An Antiracist Reading List, The New York Times, May 29, 2019

<u>On Praxis:</u>
"Praxis Problem-posing education bases itself on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality, thereby responding to the vocation of persons as beings who are authentic only when engaged in inquiry and creative transformation."

Paulo Freire, 1972 (p. 84)

Dear reader,

Before you continue to read, I want you to go back to the quote on systemic racism at the beginning of this paper and re-read it. Sit with it. This is the most important lens through which I view this work.

I use many voices in discussing and making sense of my praxis.

- In the regular text, you will find my more formal academic thoughts.
- In the italicized text, you will find my internal dialogue through reflections, vignettes, wonderings…etc.
- Once you approach my findings section, you may notice that under many of the sections there is underlined text. These are my reflections on the complexities and significance of my findings.

To make sense of the complexity that has been this project, I have split it into several parts. First I'll introduce you to the All Kinds of Girls (AKOG) program, my experience in it, the changes I witnessed, and finally the intervention.

Before we begin, I ask that you keep in mind that I have written this thesis with the information I have had readily available to me at the time that I wrote it. This thesis is imperfect and is representative of the conceptualizing, processing, and questioning of the social structures I was raised in that I will be doing for the rest of my life.

<u>Introduction</u>

It's August 2018, I'm 18 years old. It's my first semester of college and I just moved from a mid-sized midwestern college town to the second-largest city in New England with a population double that of my hometown. I'm homesick and I desperately miss working with kids as I did every day at home.

I'm attending a training for the youth program I applied to join and was accepted into, called All Kinds of Girls (AKOG).

All Kinds of Girls (AKOG) is an undergraduate-run youth organization at Clark University. Clark University is a small, private liberal arts college with roughly 3,000 students. Around 60% of Clark's students are white. Clark University is situated in Worcester-the second largest city in New England. Within Worcester, Clark is within the main south community, the poorest socioeconomic quadrant of the city. On the map below, the Main South is the darkest shaded section-indicating that it is the most racially diverse section of the city (See map below). While most of residents in Worcester are non-white, this contrasts significantly with Clark's status as a predominantly white institution. These factors have and continue to shape the program significantly in terms of its creation, design, and leadership.
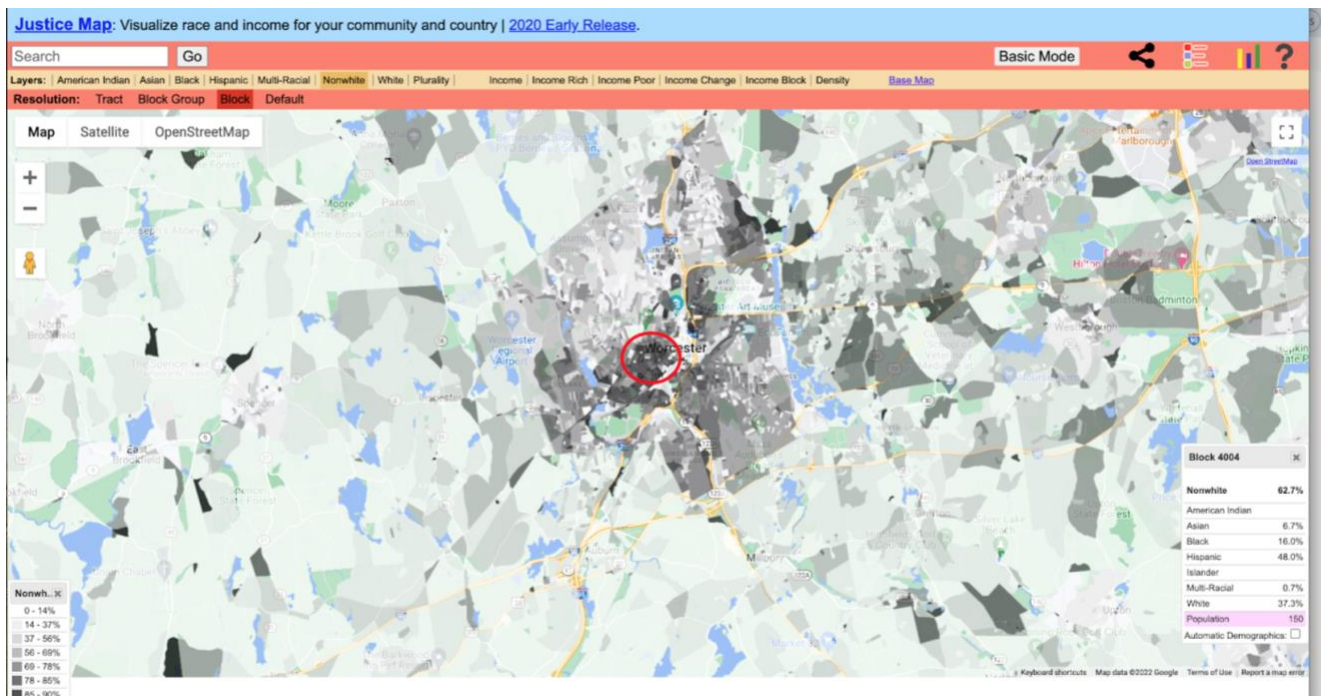
I was elated to learn of my acceptance to the program. Before I was even accepted into the program, I had met Nia.

Nia was the first face I ever associated with All Kinds of Girls when I attended the information session at the start of my first semester of college. She spoke about how the youth who came to this program needed ALL different types of women to look up to. During this presentation, she made a joke about her dad being republican-something we had in common. She spoke in ways that were familiar to me that I struggle to put into words. The way that my family spoke but I had been shamed out of speaking in formal academic settings. I knew immediately after listening to her and the other women at the meeting speak about their experiences, that I wanted to be a part of this program.

Nia served as the mentor coordinator for the program-meaning she oversaw organizing the mentor applications, training, attendance, and administrative aspects. One training she led has stuck with me for a long time.

It was my first ever AKOG training and I found myself sitting in a circle amongst many other college-aged women. We had passed around paper and markers and folded our papers into squares. While I don't recall what Nia asked us to write down in most of the boxes, I do vividly remember her asking us to write down words that we associated with the Main South Community.

I remember recalling the first time I visited Clark as an accepted student and feeling complete awe as my mother and I drove through the neighborhoods that surrounded the university. My mom and I stopped on what I now know is Hawthorne Street to gawk at one of the beautiful Victorian buildings. The paint was peeling, and the wood was weathered, but I couldn't help feeling some sort of inexplicable glee. I grew up in a neighborhood filled with mass-produced homes that looked nearly identical to the next. If you had asked me at that moment how I would have described the main south community-I would have probably said beautiful.

It wasn't until I began to read online about people's reviews and perceptions of Clark that I saw something shift in the narrative. People described the neighborhood that Clark was in as 'not nice' or 'not somewhere they would walk alone' on online forums. People made condescending remarks about my choice to go to college in Worcester, particularly when they learned that I had been accepted into colleges in much wealthier areas such as Sarah Lawrence College. Sarah Lawrence College is in Bronxville, NY which was ranked as number 8 [1] in the wealthiest places in the United States in 2018 (when I chose a college).

When I came to Clark, I remember one of my classmates jokingly referring to Worcester as the "dirty woo". I listened as we went around in the circle and shared what we had written. In the end, Nia spoke about how a lot of these perceptions were associated with poverty. This training was a major part of framing my experience in the program and as a resident of the Main South community. It encouraged me to reflect on my perceptions and think critically about why I thought those things, and how they influenced my positionality in the space of the program.

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[1] Based on a Bloomberg Analysis https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/31/realestate/bronxville-ny-an-affluent-village-15-miles-from-manhattan.html

I don't remember what I wrote on my paper when Nia asked us to describe Main South, but I do remember struggling. I have come to know that the light, joy, and beauty of this program and the main south community are far greater than I could have ever conceptualized at that time.

What they mean to me now[2]

Before we continue with this paper, I need you, my dear reader, to understand the love and light[3] that is this program. I want you to close your eyes and imagine yourself wearing the contents of an entire recycling bin.

I know what you might be thinking, what on earth is this girl writing about? Trust me, this is important. Truly imagine you are wearing a trash bag dress with a paper bag belt. Your puff sleeves are made out of egg cartons.

Now listen, the *clean* version of the latest female pop song is playing on a speaker in the background. Above the music, there is chatter of young voices and laughter.

Open your eyes and look around you at the dance studio floor covered with scattered recycling materials, running feet, and the bodies of many college and adolescent-aged women and girls (and people who identify as non-binary or genderqueer!). Imagine there is adrenaline shooting through your body. This is a glimpse of what a typical day of AKOG programming was like.

What I have described to you above, is our semi-annual 'trashion show' where we make fashion show items out of recycling and strut a pretend runway while we cheer for each other. This is what I want you to think of when you read about AKOG.

Ethnographic Context: AKOG's History

For you to really 'get' what this program is about, I have created several sections: what the program is, who we are (the youth and the mentors), the pandemic, and power structures.

What is the program?[4]

AKOG is a program offered free of charge to young people on Saturday mornings from October-April. It typically runs from 11 am until 1 or 2 pm. Historically, the program has offered

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[2] Photo compliments of Rose Wine Photography

[3] A phrase I picked up from Nia

[4] AKOG Lunch via @clarkakog on Instagram

youth hot lunches during the program. *Famously, we serve baked mac n' cheese, and let me tell you, no mac n' cheese I've had since has even remotely compared.*

The programming often centers around issues of empowerment, self-care, and goofiness. Days are presented as themes. Some of the most popular themes are self-love day, passion day (an alternative to career day), STEM day, and sHero day (a play on hero and the pronoun she). The program is split into two categories: the older and younger youth programs. The younger youth program serves youth aged nine to twelve years old while the older youth program serves youth aged thirteen to seventeen. The older youth program more frequently addresses difficult topics that are developmentally relevant to the age group they serve. [5]

Hence, its name – All Kinds of Girls – AKOG began as a very heteronormative program. At some point in time to be more inclusive, we began utilizing the phrase "female-aligned". In the past month, the program's leadership has raised concern for how the program may fail to be inclusive of people who do not identify as feminine or who may be questioning their femininity. As of April 2022, AKOG has begun to use the phrases "feminine, trans-femme, genderqueer, and non-binary folks" in their marketing materials. I've chosen to use the phrase 'identity-focused' when discussing the program out of respect for the direction the program is heading in.

Who are the mentors?

The mentors that work with and run all Kinds of Girls are Clark Students. As mentioned previously, Clark is a predominantly white institution (PWI) and as a result, many of the mentors who work with the program are white (approximately 69%[6]). Given that Clark is a private university-this also results in approximately of mentors identifying as middle or upper-middle-class as well[7]. The most of the mentors identify (to the best of my present knowledge) as cisgendered women, but some identify as nonbinary and genderqueer.

Frequently mentors apply to the program without experience working or living in a low SES or ethnically diverse community. Many mentors apply to the program with a desire to "help" or "fix" these 'poor children' (sometimes called a "white savior" complex), seeing the girls as having "deficits" rather than seeing all the assets and cultural wealth the AKOG girls bring. I know this to be true because I have witnessed these traits in myself and in the way the program was marketed to me as an incoming student. Before I ever came to the program, I had been fed messages from Clark's Admissions about the mission of the organization that were disconnected from the goals of the program itself. The admissions team when I visited as a high school senior spoke about AKOG and painted it in the light of empowering 'the disadvantaged

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[5] Lunch Being served at AKOG, via @clarkakog on instagram

[6] 69% is based on the demographic information of the 13 participants who initially consented to the research (not all of them were used in the study due to lack of completion). Out of the 13 participants, 9 identified as white. It is possible that this sample may not have been representative of AKOG.

[7] This is based on the data form the 13 participants who initially consented to participate in the research. All consenting participants identified as middle or upper class except for one participant who identified as upper-class.

youth'. I believe that many mentors like myself joined the program under the false guise that they were going to affect meaningful change in youth's lives rather than learn from the relationships they would form with the youth and celebrate them as unique individuals.

Any Clark student may apply to be a mentor with AKOG if they self-identify with the identity-focused criteria of the program. After applying, candidates attend an interview in which they learn more about the program and are interviewed by current leadership. The interviews involve the evaluation of 'problems of practice' scenarios. By 'problem of practice' scenarios I mean realistic scenarios that mentors could potentially encounter working with AKOG.

To me, the mentors are like cousins. Some of them I've known for what feels like years, we've watched each other grow up in ways that words would fail to express. In some respects, we are strangers. I learned just last week that one of the women I've known for over four years and (before we started Clark) and see four times a week for classes/meetings – has two younger sisters. For some reason, I'd always pictured her as an only child. Despite not knowing this, I could tell you so many things about her as a person, from her high school job, the backpack she carried freshman year, and her feelings about Dunkin Donuts.

Some mentors have been those special few cousins that I gravitate towards at family gatherings. AKOG has introduced me to many friends over the years. Like with my cousin-in-law, some of them I knew far before they became family, and others I simply just met at the program.

What I want you, as the reader, to know about the mentors is that they show up for the girls physically and mentally. I have had the incredible privilege of watching them act in ways that are selfless, loving, and brave in developing relationships with the youth. Many of them have shared over the years to the group that being a part of this program has helped them in coping with missing younger family members at home or healing parts of their inner child. I have found both of these to be true to my experience.

Who are the youth?

The youth who attend AKOG are predominantly from the Main South Community as it is a neighborhood mentoring program. Any youth who identifies with the identity criteria of the program (feminine, trans-femme, genderqueer, or non-binary) and who is between the ages of 9 and 17 is welcome to participate in the program. Many of the youth represent the demographics of the Main South community (BIPOC, low-income, and multilingual).

Off paper, the youth are vivacious young humans with unique personalities that I cannot capture in words. Some youths are outgoing and unapologetic with their thoughts and opinions. Others are more introverted, introspective, and thoughtful and many fall in between. My favorite thing about the youth of this program is their energy. Somehow, someway, at 11 am they can get me to dance, to cheer, to sing my heart out when all I want to do is go back to sleep. They are the true light of this program.

Who has power?

The power structure of AKOG is incredibly unique. Many youth organizations are non-profits or are

situated within school districts. AKOG is unique in that it is associated with a university that it depends on for funding. Previously AKOG has received funding from other sources such as an anti-violence grant from the United Way of Central Massachusetts Women's Initiative. This ended in 2018 as it was hard to meet the requirements of the grant conditions while still maintaining autonomy as an organization.

      Clark University often markets AKOG through their admissions process: painting AKOG through the lens of saviorism. This is incredibly frustrating for the program because this is not the lens through which we seek to frame ourselves. *WE* as individuals working with the youth have the privilege of seeing their strengths. If anything, the girls coming to this program have given us more than we will ever be able to give them.

      The leadership of AKOG is called the 'Steering Committee'. Membership of the Steering Committee is fulfilled exclusively by undergraduate student volunteers and thus the leadership embodies many of the same privileged identities as mentioned above in the section entitled 'Who are the mentors?'. Further, this club does not have any professional staff members resulting in leadership that is constantly evolving as students graduate. The committee is composed of several different roles: Mentor Coordinators (Nia's role as mentioned above), Curriculum Coordinators, Treasurer, Marketing and outreach, and a Grant Writer.

Below are the outlines of the responsibilities for each position:

      Mentor Coordinators: This position is typically held by 2-3 individuals who are responsible for managing the mentors (their attendance and training) as well as all administrative aspects of the organization.

      Curriculum Committee: The curriculum is split into two sections one for the younger youth program and one for the older youth program. Each committee is responsible for planning and leading the weekly program for their age group as well as gathering the appropriate materials. The younger Youth curriculum committee is typically composed of 3-5 individuals while the older youth committee is typically held by 2 individuals.

      Treasurer: This position is typically held by one individual who is responsible for managing the budget and coordinating payment for materials needed for the program.

      Marketing and Outreach (known as M&O): This position is typically held by 2-4 individuals. They are responsible for greeting youth when they arrive at the program, tracking attendance, managing paperwork, and facilitating communication with parents/guardians. Before AKOG starts for the semester, M&O is responsible for visiting local schools to advertise the program. They specifically market the program to reach youth and families who may be interested in attending the program. They are not associated with Clark's admissions or marketing team.

      Grant Writer: This position is typically composed of one person who is responsible for seeking out and writing grants for funding from various resources.

Outside of AKOG's regular hours, Steering Committee members meet once per week. Additional Committees (i.e., the curriculum committee for the younger youth) typically also meet once per week amongst themselves. Mentors interested in joining the Steering Committee apply to the current individuals who hold those positions and are interviewed.

What was the program like before I encountered it?

AKOG was founded in 1998 under the Women's Studies department (now known as Women and Gender Studies). The program was created "...in response to a community desire to create a space where generations of females could foster positive growth through mentorship and openly explore their personal and political identities". When AKOG was founded, it was structured as a drop-in mentoring program. The mentors were significantly whi than they were when I joined. There was no formal training or vetting process for the mentors of the program either. This structure remained for two years until I joined the program in 2018. [8]

So, *what changed? The answer is Nia and Fatima.*

Nia and Fatima's Work

You may remember Nia from the introduction, but perhaps you're wondering who Fatima is. Nia was Fatima's co-mentor coordinator during my first year in the program. Like myself, she was a psychology student. We connected one day when I volunteered to help her build a shelf for supplies and chatted over her pursuing a career as a therapist.

Now that you know who Fatima is, I want to tell you about Nia and Fatima's friendship. Never had I witnessed two women speak so supportive and encouraging of each other. There was this energy that they radiated when they were in the same room; it was like they both simultaneously lifted each other up with chaotic, fun energy and kept each other grounded. I looked up to them both immensely. Their friendship shaped the program's energy in such a positive way.

Nia and Fatima became AKOG's mentor Coordinators in 2016. They made many changes to the program, from instituting an attendance policy, starting outreach to identity-focused clubs to encourage mentors of various identities and backgrounds to join the organization, and creating mentor training. Much of this work became Nia's Honors Thesis "All Kinds of Girls, But Not All Kinds of Mentors (2019). From the stance of a practitioner-researcher, Nia argued that increasing the critical consciousness of the mentors was necessary to best serve the needs of the youth who attended AKOG.

To best understand Nia's thesis, we must first understand what she means by "whiteness"[9]. The resource that Nia cites in her thesis states "a dominant cultural space with enormous political significance, with the purpose to keep others on the margin" (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 21).

With this context, Nia emphasized the importance of examining the critical consciousness of privilege, particularly "whiteness", amongst mentors. She sought to explain why some mentors just 'get it' (understand their positionality of privilege in the space of AKOG), while

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[8]Nia and Fati pictured at their undergraduate graduation in May 2019.

[9] See Whiteness: The Problem for more information on whiteness

others don't. Her research emphasizes that elements of 'whiteness' can be embodied by anybody of any race (p. 41). She noticed that mentors of color who embodied other privileged identities often engaged in the same problematic mindsets that white mentors did, leading her to recognize that the issue was not one of the white mentors in the space of AKOG, but one of 'whiteness and consciousness' in which whiteness is synonymous with the privileged mindsets often perpetuated in spaces where white is viewed as 'normal' and other is viewed as 'deviant'.

Nia's research was rich with findings. Nia found evidence suggesting that mentor training around power and privilege may aid mentors in gaining greater critical consciousness and 'deconstructing (their) whiteness' (p. 80). Her praxis illustrates the power that two individuals (herself and her co-mentor coordinator –- Fatima) can have in changing the direction of a program. She emphasizes the importance of honesty, accountability, and embracing imperfection within organizations to create space for growth (p. 81).

The following was written by Nia in the closing of her Praxis Thesis:

"The people who have been a witness to the impacts of this space, understand why its existence is necessary and realize the true importance to the girls, their community, and the world. While there has been true and demonstrable growth in the overall program, there is still more work to be done to maintain the critical consciousness of its leaders and mentors, but more importantly, to keeping the girls' brilliance at the center.

The way to continue this work begins with the leaders and mentors. The constant being, leading with love and support for the girls, but also for each other. How do we give love, support, and empowerment to the girls if we do not give it to ourselves and each other?

The constant is the consistent development of our critical consciousness, the constant of critically thinking about who we are in the space and in the world, and why that matters. The true understanding of our identities, our power, and our privileges. The acceptance of our differences, and our shared similarities that need to exist in this space to maintain its importance.

The constant in this work means everyone who is a part of it needs to check each other with love and with the purpose of individual and collective growth, to challenge and inspire each other to do and be better, to be courageous and passionate in this work, to trust each other, and to understand our collective vision of leading with absolute love and support…

With all these constants, there is no way a program like this could become extinct. These constants push the foreverness of such a program that all girls, all around the world, deserve and need" (pp. 83-84)

In reading Nia's praxis, I felt called to work to increase critical consciousness within both myself and amongst AKOG mentors. With the progress and changes implemented through Nia's work, I had the privilege of witnessing the amazing power of this program. Since Nia has left the program, I have (sadly) watched the program change in many ways. Most significantly, the

pandemic changed the way AKOG operated and the bandwidth of our leadership to maintain the same training and outreach that Nia worked so hard to design and implement.

In light of my positionality as a white woman, I don't feel like we're doing enough. We talk a lot about why we aren't there to 'save' the girls and how we are often marketed by Clark in the light of saviorism, but in my last three years in AKOG, I don't recall ever reflecting deeply on this. There is more work to be done to maintain and even progress beyond what Nia's work was able to accomplish with AKOG. This thesis is an attempt to answer Nia's call to cultivate greater critical consciousness amongst mentors.

I joined the Steering Committee at the end of my freshman year, as Nia left. Three years later, I'm left asking myself what I have done to continue her work. It has become glaringly apparent to me that no matter how well-intentioned I am, I am a better leader and mentor when I'm actively working to be critically conscious of my positionality. With COVID, there was a fear that our program would cease to exist. Much of the energy that was devoted to improving the program (such as training/outreach…etc.) was diverted towards helping the program stay afloat.

So, what *has* the program been like since the pandemic hit? Let's discuss.

How AKOG has shifted

I'm going to be completely honest here. The inexplicable feeling of fulfillment that I felt after every day of AKOG disappeared for a good while during the pandemic. It was really, really hard for me to continue showing up with the same energy that I'd had before. I know a lot of others really struggled with this too. Thinking about AKOG just made me feel sad because I was comparing the program to what it was pre-pandemic.

When I initially wrote this section, I wrote it from an incredibly negative lens. I focused on the numbers, and I gave you all the little details of how many girls showed up on what days…etc. I re-read it and realized that I wasn't painting the right picture. AKOG isn't focused on the numbers. AKOG is focused on the light, the love, and the relationships with young people. The numbers and the specifics don't tell a story of the change in the environment.

Two pieces of artwork embody the changes that occurred during this time. For the activity, we decorated a face to look like ourselves, labeled it with our name, and passed it around the circle. On each piece of paper, we would write a compliment intended for each person.

my self-portrait with community compliments, 2018.
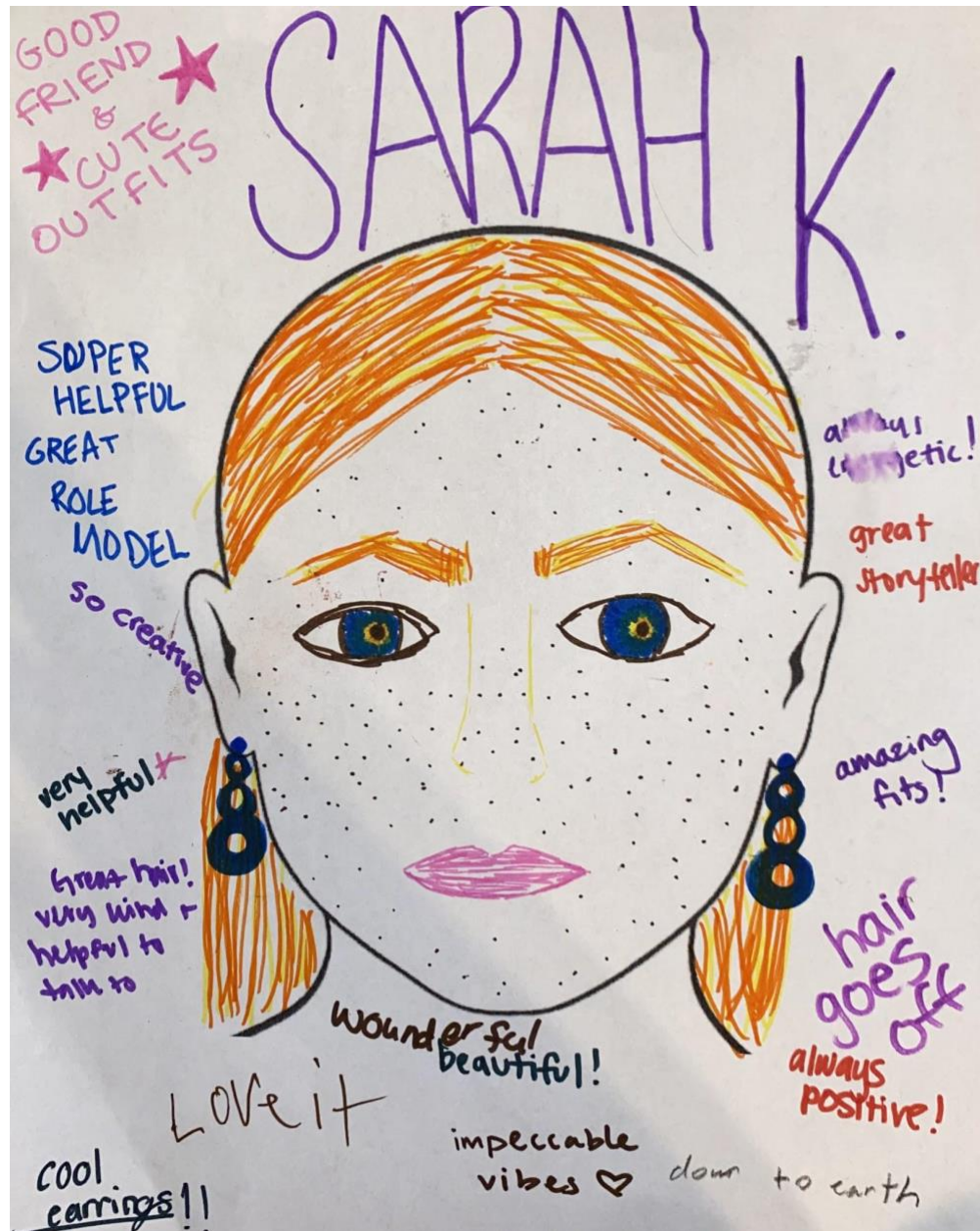
My self-portrait with community compliments, 2022.

When I initially saw the differences between these two portraits, I honestly felt sad. My portrait from 2018 has a page full of compliments from others, while my portrait from 2022 felt so empty by comparison. After really looking at them side by side, I realized that perhaps there was an immense number of positive differences between these two snapshots in time. These differences were both in my self-growth and the way our relationships have changed with each other in the program.

Changes in myself

How I envision myself and my greater self-concept is drastically different from 2018 to 2022. In 2018, I drew myself with straight orange hair and no facial features. I wasn't confident in my ability to draw them, and so I simply didn't. In 2022, I drew my freckles, the central heterochromia in both of my eyes, and my favorite pair of earrings on my ears. To me, this represents how much I've become aware of my identity, and my confidence in myself to convey that to others with certainty.

Changes in the program

The differences between the comments represent a lot of the changes I've seen within the AKOG community these past few years. With COVID, the number of youths who have attended our program has gotten significantly smaller, as you can see from the significantly smaller number of compliments on the second portrait. While there are a lot fewer compliments on the second portrait, if you look closely at them, the compliments on the second picture seem much more personal to me as an individual. These compliments were mostly focused on non-physical characteristics and seemed specific to me as an individual. A few examples of these compliments were "great storyteller" or "very kind and great storyteller". By contrast, compliments on my first portrait seemed to either focus on physical characteristics unique to me (my red hair) or non-specific to me as a person. Examples of these comments were "pretty hair", "red head", "you're smart" or "lit".

Symbolism

To me, these comments symbolize the changes in our community as a program. As our program has gotten smaller and we've faced challenges in executing our program, we've gotten the opportunity to get to know each other and the few mentees in attendance on a much more personal level. I spent a lot of time looking at the changes in AKOG through a deficit lens, but what if it has been a gift? What if somehow the challenges we have faced have pushed us to know each other better and get to know the girls we do work with on a much more personal level. These pictures have pushed me to realize that the light never left. As we were struggling to keep this program alive, we were creating more fuel, making this program perhaps stronger than it was before.

While our relationships with each other have grown stronger, we as a program have

struggled with keeping our program afloat to maintain the actions we were taking in the past

Setting the Scene

Struggling

It's June 3, 2020. I'm 20 years old. It's been almost three months since the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic. It's been roughly nine days since George Floyd was murdered. The Steering Committee had agreed upon stating support of the youth in our program and Black Lives Matter three days prior.
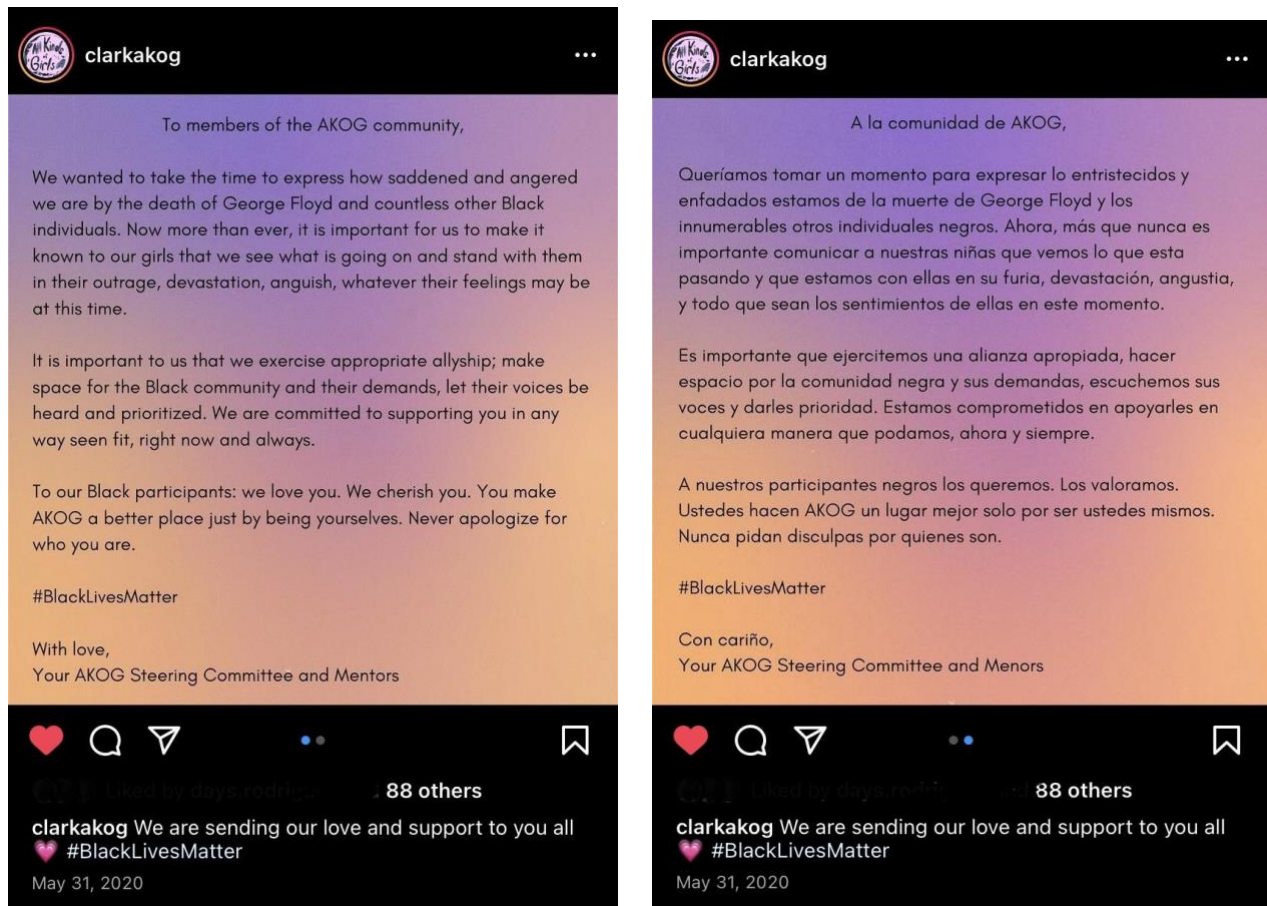
Message to the AKOG Community posted on @clarkakog's Instagram page on May 31st, 2020.

In addition to sharing the message above, the Steering Committee reposted a post from Clark's student council's Instagram (@clark_cusc) alerting Clark Students and Neighbors that there was an emergency response hotline started by a Clark University Professor, Eric DeMeulenaere. The hotline was created in response to the murder of George Floyd, intending to connect students and the community to resources.
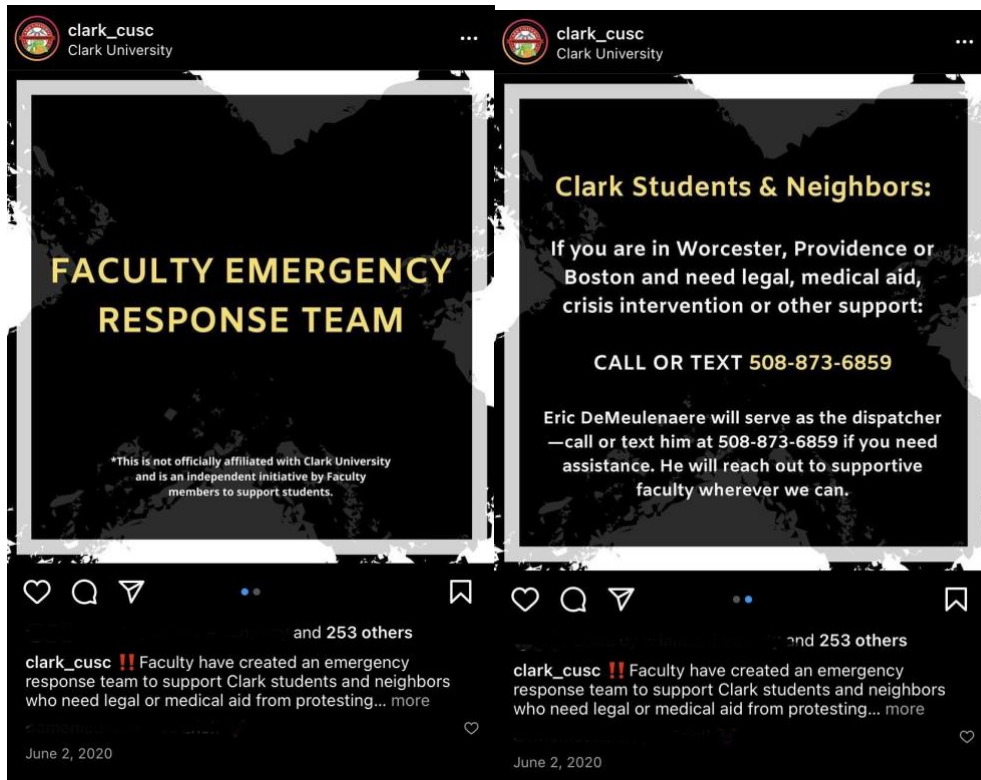
The post from @clark_cusc reshared on @clarkakog's Instagram story on June 2nd, 2020.

Oh, f*ck. I unlocked my phone to over 100 unread messages from our Steering Committee in a matter of minutes. What on earth was going on? I tried to scroll to the top to see what was already said because I had *clearly* missed something important above. One of the Steering Committee members in charge of marketing and outreach had sent a screenshot of a parent's response to the story that our marketing and outreach team had shared regarding the Faculty Emergency Response Team.

I cant believe your out there supporting these loser thugs destroying the low income neiborhoods and think its ok ....what a shame.!!!!! My girls will not be participating In any of your programs again.....
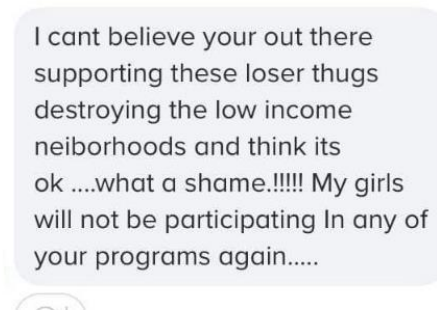
A screenshot of the message from the parent.[10]

In sending this screenshot, the steering committee member stated that they wouldn't be responding but wanted to "throw this out there". The following conversation began with expressing shared sadness for this woman's misunderstanding of the post.

One mentor wrote, "I think it comes down to what people are seeing as more valuable, property or black lives". Another mentor pointed out that non-violent protesters/bystanders-including Clark students-were arrested and that WPD omitted this from their report.

One of these people was a friend of mine. I had watched the footage of their arrest that they had posted on their Facebook page. My friend was a white woman who was brutalized during their arrest for standing outside her apartment. What about the police officers who were committing these violent acts?

While these responses seemed to be the consensus, one mentor was very concerned with our suggestion that we were condoning violence. They became incredibly adamant that we needed to respond to this woman and did respond despite being asked not to by other members of the committee. They repeated themselves multiple times by saying that we needed to make the parents "feel their girls are safe with us" and they need to "trust us with their children".

In the moment, I knew I disagreed with this, but I didn't have the vernacular or a strong enough understanding of systemic racism to articulate why I disagreed with this. I found myself frozen, hovering over my phone wanting to say something, and instead, staying silent.

What youth were they making feel safe? What about the youth from our program that our mentors mentioned seeing protesting? Our participants were predominantly people of color, and we were a predominantly white group of people making these posts. What message did it send if we made a statement clarifying that we didn't stand with protesters who engaged in violence-some of whom were engaging in retaliation to police-instigated violence? That we supported complacency in light of injustice? That we would remain silent when people in power abuse their authority? How could we pretend for even a moment that we could at all understand what it must be like to be a person of color experiencing the trauma of another racially targeted police brutality?

In response to this individual's pressure for us to release a statement, one mentor wrote "our separation from "violent people" lowkey justifies her and other parents' views of "thugs" we don't "associate with".

In response, this participant argued that we could lose a lot of youth if we didn't make a statement. Responding to this, another mentor wrote "I don't see this as too much of a loss, like I feel badly for her kids losing their space, but I feel more strongly about protecting our participants of color rn [right now]".

The conversation became more of what I would describe as an argument. The voices of the women of color on our Steering Committee were minimized or ignored when they didn't support what this member was trying to argue. One of the BIPOC members of the committee suggested that we needed a diversity and inclusion branch which garnered support from other members.

This conversation ended in an agreement that we needed to hop on a call together to talk things out. We scheduled a time for the following day but the mentor who felt differently than the rest of the group didn't attend.

There is a lot in this experience that I am still processing, but what has stuck with me the most is the failure to grasp how each instance of racism plays into the greater realm of it being a systemic issue.

I thought about how little we had done since Nia and Fati left the program in the spring of 2019 to continue their efforts to promote critical consciousness of positionality and whiteness in this program.

I think back to what our mentor training had looked like since Nia had left the program. We discussed very briefly – less than a few sentences – that we weren't here to 'save' the youth at this program this past fall (2021), but we never discussed anything beyond this. It occurred to me that the last mentors who had gone through any of Nia's training (mentors in my year – seniors) would be graduating at the end of this year.

Connecting

At the time that I was struggling with making sense of these issues, I learned that a psychology professor at Clark, Professor Brett Coleman, was working with this issue. Specifically, he had developed an intervention to help white people make sense of and understand systemic racism in connection to their own lives. His work had previously been implemented with healthcare workers and elementary education students in an academic setting. As a man of color, Professor Coleman brings a lens to this research, that I, a white woman, do not have. Collaborating with a researcher of color eased some of the concerns from the steering committee regarding a discussion regarding racism as part of a white student's research.

After reading more about his work, I reached out to him to see if it would be possible for us to collaborate. Upon meeting, we agreed to collaborate to implement a modified version of this intervention for the mentors of the program. Professor Coleman was eager to collaborate with me and I was eager to have someone with more experience navigating the literature surrounding this topic advising me. As co-researchers, I believe that Professor Coleman was able to provide a unique perspective as someone who has more experience in this field, while I brought a contextual lens as an AKOG mentor.

One of the major struggles AKOG faces as an undergraduate-led organization is the constant turnover of leadership. In my eyes, this is part of why it was so difficult to continue the work that Nia and Fati worked so hard to accomplish. Working with Professor Coleman provided greater stability in my eyes to have someone with knowledge of this intervention around long after I graduated – should the program wish to continue it.

In considering my motivation for this work, I think of a segment from Nia's thesis. In this segment, she is reflecting on speaking with a white mentor who has intrigued her because of her awareness of her positionality in the space of AKOG. Nia writes:

> *I had the opportunity to see Sara engage in the work to unpack these disconnects that were created due to her whiteness. While some interventions certainly lended themselves to this unpacking of whiteness and gaining more critical-consciousness, I believe that a lot of this work started in the space, she then took it beyond the space to challenge herself (p. 52).*

I hoped that working with Professor Coleman and adapting his intervention would potentially encourage mentors to unpack their whiteness and develop a greater critical consciousness – in thought and action – as Nia mentions Sara did above. My goal in implementing this intervention was to encourage mentors to start reflecting on their positionality within this space, and how systemic racism has shaped their journey to this space. I hoped that mentors would continue this work beyond this intervention. I hoped that this would awaken or amplify a critically conscious 'voice' in their heads as they went about their lives. I wanted to challenge the idea that racism "didn't happen here" and belonged to the south[11] or that racism was solely a manifestation of poor moral character – mindsets that I had noticed were so common in spaces such as the Clark community.

We know that disasters such as Hurricane Katrina and the Great Recession magnified pre-existing racial inequality. Data indicates that the COVID-19 Pandemic has continued this trend by exacerbating inequality (Perry, Aronson, and Prescosolido, 2021). Given the clear impact that lack of critical consciousness has had on our program in my vignette above, I believe that it is more important than ever that we as a youth organization and individuals are reflecting on systemic racism and working to become better, more critically conscious youth workers. There is discomfort in recognizing that our program has had a flawed history and that we each live in bubbles of our privileged ignorance.

As you will read below, part of my praxis is through unpacking instances of systemic racism in my own life that were ignored in the discourses and education I grew up with and live in now. These experiences further motivated my desire to do this work because they changed my worldview in such powerful ways.

One of my major concerns in developing an AKOG intervention was my positionality as a white woman (see positionality section). I was concerned that there were things that I would not be able to see because of my positionality, or that this intervention could result in harm. Working with Professor Coleman, who identifies as a man of color, eased some of these concerns – both from myself and the Steering Committee.

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[11] This mentality is later defined in my positionality sub-section "To my own eyes" as the "Free State Mentality"

Responding

Considering my motivations above, my positionality as a white woman, and the positive impacts that I witnessed Nia and Fatima's work have, I don't feel like we're doing enough. We talk a lot about why we aren't there to 'save' the girls and how we are often marketed by Clark in the light of saviorism, but in my last three years in AKOG, I don't recall ever reflecting deeply on this. There is more work to be done to maintain and even progress beyond what Nia's work was able to accomplish with AKOG. This thesis is an attempt to answer Nia's call to cultivate greater critical consciousness amongst mentors.

The intervention

The goal of this intervention was to increase individual comfort levels in confronting and discussing systemic racism. Drawing on practitioner inquiry methodology – and participant reflections – I will explore the following research questions:

> **RQ 1: How do college-aged youth workers experience place-based systematic racism intervention?**

> **RQ 2: What impact did place-based learning have on the development of an antiracist[12] stance amongst youth workers working for identity-focused organizations?**

> **RQ 3: How do college-aged mentors at identity-focused youth programs think about the relationship between systemic racism and the work they're doing?**

The first research question seeks to identify how youth workers experience the intervention in general, while the following two are focused on the two parts of critical consciousness identified above by The Newark Community Collaborative Board: anti-oppressive thinking (RQ2) and anti-oppressive action (RQ3).

Positionality:

Much of this praxis thesis is influenced by how I see and understand the world around me, how the world sees me, and the dynamics these interactions create. To make the many aspects of my identity more manageable, I have split this section into three parts: who I am – to the youth, the mentors, and my own eyes.

Who am I, Sarah, in the space of AKOG?

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[12] Here I use the definition of antiracism from Ibram X. Kendi who writes "one who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing an antiracist idea." (p. 13, How to Be an Antiracist) Furthermore, Kendi states that: "The opposite of racist isn't 'not racist.' It is 'antiracist.' What's the difference? One endorses either the idea of racial hierarchy as a racist, or racial equality as an antiracist. One either believes problems are rooted in groups of people, as a racist, or locates the roots of problems in power and policies, as an antiracist. One either allows racial inequities to persevere, as a racist, or confronts racial inequities, as an antiracist. There is no in-between safe space of 'not racist.'" (p. 9)
(AS CITED, https://library.fandm.edu/antiracist)

I have been a mentor with AKOG for all four years I have been an undergraduate student at Clark, and thus the girls who have been in our program for several years know me well. As someone on the curriculum team – the people who lead the group activities – they might recognize my face more easily than they would other mentors as I'm constantly announcing things to the group. That being said, I'm often running around coordinating activities and thus don't tend to sit and just connect with the youth as frequently as some of the other mentors do.

Demographically, my identity is vastly different from many of the girls in our program. I was born in the United States, attended a private elementary school, speak English as my first and primary language, prefer Starbucks over Dunkin Donuts, and identify as a white, queer, cisgendered woman. Most importantly to the youth is our disagreement over our preferences with Dunkin Donuts and Starbucks.

Beyond my demographics, I share many similar interests with the youth. I love art, jumping in leaf piles, playing "I celebrate people", and making friendship bracelets. I spend a lot of time in the Worcester Public Schools (for my graduate teaching program) – the same school district that most of the youth attend. We share a mutual love for TikTok and most importantly, AKOG. There are likely many other ways in which I am both an insider and outsider that I can't see because of my positionality.

To the mentors

In contention with each other, my many identities make me both an insider and an outsider among the mentors. While many of the mentors at AKOG grew up as upper-middle class in the urban, northeastern United States, I grew up in in a blue-collar family in the suburban and semi-rural Midwest. The cultural differences between the Midwest and the northeast seem to influence many ways of interaction, from the way I speak and think, my vernacular, and subtle cultural undertones. I believe that the notes of white Christian saviorism were more prominent in my upbringing than they may have been in other mentors' childhoods due to cultural differences between the Midwest and northeast.

Despite this, I have noticed that I share many identities with the other mentors. As a white, middle-class, cisgendered woman, who attends the same undergraduate institution as my participants, we share many common lived experiences. Working with the program has also cultivated a sense of shared purpose amongst myself and other mentors. While there are a couple of mentors that I see frequently throughout the week as we are involved in the same programs/classes, I do not have any sort of connection with most of the mentors outside of AKOG.

At the end of my freshman year (Spring 2019), I joined the Steering Committee as a Curriculum Coordinator for the Younger Youth Program. I believe that serving as a Curriculum Coordinator has made me both an insider and an outsider. As a part of the Steering Committee, I have become an insider to the other leaders of the program. To those whose sole role is as mentors, I have become an outsider by the shift in power dynamics. For mentors who applied to the program in the fall of 2019 or later, I played a role in interviewing and vetting who should join the program. I also am a part of making decisions for the program and work closely with the other curriculum coordinators to lead the daily programming. This inherently influences the power dynamic and relationship between me and the mentors. This, in cumulation with my many identities as both an insider and outsider, complexifies my positionality amongst the mentors.

To my own eyes

        I have split this section into three parts to make sense of the different complexities of my positionality, some of which I didn't 'see' until I was synthesizing the final draft of this paper. These three parts are embodied in the questions what was I taught to see? What do I see now? And finally, who do I see myself as in doing this work? The first question (what was I taught to see?) discusses my worldview growing up. The second question (what do I see now?) explores what I have come to understand about my previous worldview and how I was blind to many truths. The final question (who do I see myself as in doing this work?) unpacks my positionality as a researcher and my concerns in doing research on race as a white person.

What was I taught to see?

        I have personally fallen into the mindset of white saviorism that is ingrained deeply in the 'helping' mentality of white people – particularly within the intersection of femininity and Christianity. While I have found little in the literature to suggest the presence of such a phenomenon, I know this to be true from the lived experiences of myself and others. Growing up as a white, middle-class, Christian, cisgendered woman in the Midwest, the element of 'heroism' or white saviorism was deeply ingrained into my identity, almost as if it was synonymous with femininity. The more I embodied the ideology of white saviorism as a teenager, the more praise I received from the adults in my life. I was taught that it was the Christian woman's duty to 'save' the 'poor children'.

        While conversations around racism were present in my upbringing, conversations about the complexities of racism were not. In fourth grade, my teacher facilitated a modified version of the Blue-Eyes/Brown-Eyes classroom exercise pioneered by Jane Elliot. Unlike Elliot's original experiment, our classifications were determined by a number that our teacher assigned to us, seemingly at random. Number one students were in charge – they could do as they pleased. Number two students could not do as they pleased without permission from a number one student. We were asked to consider how people of color may feel, but never discussed the implications of systemic racism. Unlike Jane Elliot's Blue-Eyes/brown-Eyes experiment, our exercise was not based on any sort of physical characteristic that was visible to others. We could not immediately identify who was a number one and who was a number two student. This failed to help me understand that race was an external characteristic rather than an internal manifestation.

        Other topics that we explored in depth were the history of Native Americans in our area and the Exodusters, formerly enslaved Black People who migrated to Kansas. Conversations about racism were centered around the past and never occurred in the present tense until high school when we watched the documentary *13th* during my AP US History Class. Watching that documentary was the first real conversation where I can recall the systemic nature of racism being acknowledged. While this was a powerful experience, we didn't revisit this for the rest of the year. It felt like we glossed over racism in general because we were supposed to but didn't go into *too* much depth unless we were celebrating our history that was 'better' than 'slave states'.

        It is important to acknowledge that I was incredibly privileged to have had any conversations about racism and slavery at all in my K-12 education, even if they were not sufficient. I grew up in a town on the Kansas side of the Missouri-Kansas border. Students just a school district or two away from mine did not learn about slavery. I attended a high school that was considerably more racially diverse than other schools in the area. Our fields were vandalized

with hateful racial slurs from other high school students several times throughout my high school education. At 17, an older coworker of mine told me that I attended the "*racial slur* school". In high school when I was driving home and pulled over by an officer, police officers pulled my friend (a man of color) out of the car and demanded his residency status but never asked for my license or registration.

I grew up in a state that was historically a Free State and in a town that played a role in the civil war. As a child, I vividly remember my mother telling me with emphatic pride to me "you grew up in a *free* state". There was a massive sense of pride in the fact that we were a free state.

<u>What do I see now?</u>

Little did I know that despite being a 'Free' State, my hometown, Lawrence, Kansas, was the place of several mass lynchings of black men. Pete Vinegar, Isaac King, and George Robertson were kidnapped from the Douglas County Jail on June 10th, 1882. The men proceeded the hang them from the Massachusetts Street bridge – the same bridge that I used to sit on to watch fireworks every Fourth of July with my family. These events were a part of an even greater string of acts of 'racial terror' in Kansas during the late 19th century (Carpenter, 2021[13]).

Pictured to the left is the route that the murderers of Pete Vinegar, Isaac King, and George Robertson took from the county jail to the bridge over the Kansas River[14].

I think about every time that I walked across that bridge in the 18 years I lived in Lawrence. Every history walking tour I went on for a youth program or a school field trip, that walked across that bridge – but not once did I learn about the violent murders of these three men.

I think about every Fourth of July celebration I shared with my family on that bridge. <u>*How ironic is it that the place where I was taught to celebrate freedom was the unmarked grave of three men-erased by history?*</u>

Just a few short blocks away from this bridge lies the Lawrence Arts Center, where the town's annual performance of "A Kansas Nutcracker" is held. The show is a celebration of Kansas' history as a Free State and plays a huge role in the community. The first half of the show is a mix of ballet and a play detailing the history of the 'Border Ruffians' and John Brown. I was performing in this

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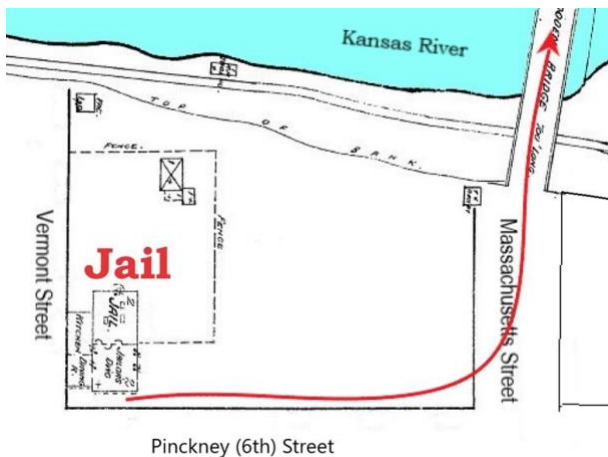
[13] For more information on this, please visit https://kansasreflector.com/2021/02/12/obscure-history-of-black-lynchings-in-kansas-inspires-activism-against-modern-day-racism/
https://kansasreflector.com/2020/12/08/lawrence-seeks-justice-for-three-men-lynched-138-years-ago-at-kansas-river-bridge/

[14] Photo Compliments of The Kansas Reflector but originally created by Lawrence Branch NAACP.

production before I could even read in 2005. I was dressed in pioneer clothing, two braids, and smiling with the other children at the 'party' celebrating the arrival of John Brown in Lawrence. This represented what my home was to me – a "Free" State.[15]

This mindset, the "Free State Mentality", didn't disappear when I moved to Massachusetts in 2018 for college. This term is one that I use to describe the idea that racism doesn't exist in places where slavery was outlawed before the civil war (i.e., New England, and Kansas). The ideology suggests that racism exists within individuals in politically liberal and/or historically Free States on are rare individual level (like a bad apple) and by contrast depicts the south as having racism deeply embedded into all people, systems, and structures (bad tree). It's a tactic[16] that I believe is used to absolve individuals from confronting the level to which they may inadvertently participate in and benefit from institutional racism. I believe this to be true because I have fallen into this mindset myself and have spent the past year and a half deconstructing it.

When I close my eyes and remember being at the rehearsals, I now think a little more critically than I did at nine years old. Most of the other dancers around me were all white. Most of the actors, directors, and stage crew were also white. Most of the dancers and performers looked like me. Many went to the same private elementary school that I attended, and their parents owned homes in the same neighborhood that my parents did. Almost all the kids had a stay-at-home parent.

What did it mean if the only people calling it a "Free State" were white and privileged? What was 'free' about white people controlling history's narrative? How could it be a 'Free State' on stolen land? What does it mean that the biggest celebration of Kansas history took place less than a few minutes' walk from the bridge where three innocent people were murdered and never acknowledged it?

It wasn't until I was constructing my praxis in the fall of my senior year of college (17 years after I first performed in production as a grasshopper in 2005) that I realized the blaring irony between the cast and the intention of the performance. To me, this represents the background I bring to the table in my thesis work. I see so many parallels between being in the cast of the Kansas Nutcracker and being a mentor with AKOG. In both cases, groups of people predominantly white and other privileged identities were working closely with race, while having little to no conversations about what that truly meant.

Most of the conversations I had regarding racism before I worked with AKOG were about the interpersonal aspects and did not discuss its systemic manifestations. I spent the most of my life with the understanding that as long as I was careful not to treat people of color any differently, I wouldn't be racist. I now realize that this was a cultural avoidance technique to brush the concept of structural racism to the side. My experience of learning little about the elements of systemic racism is an example of how intuitive and normalized elements of systemic racism can become when they aren't explicitly addressed. To combat the 'Free-State Mentality,'

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[15] Photo compliments of the Lawrence Arts Center https://lawrenceartscenter.org/about-us/

[16] Also known as a distancing device

I strongly believe that we must discuss and reflect on systemic racism and its influence on our positionality in the space of AKOG.

<u>Who do I see myself in doing this work?</u>

As a white woman who has played a role in the perpetuation of systemic racism, I'm led to question if I am the right person to be doing this work. I suppose from another lens, I must ask myself, if not me, then who? I am imperfect and I play into a greater system of privilege, but if I do not work to disrupt that system, then who will? If people who benefit from systemic racism are not actively deconstructing it, then the weight will fall onto people who are already burdened by carrying the weight of oppression from systemic racism. I hope that I can use my previous misunderstandings to better inform the complexities of my work. Instigating these conversations regarding systematic racism with mentors terrifies me. I am uncomfortable with my positionality in this space. I also know that by ignoring this problem, I will be a bystander to allowing the current cycle of 'brushing it under the rug' to continue. My promotion of antiracist practices (using antiracist pedagogy) as a white person will always in inherently flawed but doing nothing is worse.

The bottom line is that I am aware that we are failing to talk about systemic racism in many different contexts. As youth workers, we hold a considerable amount of influence over the lives of young people. I do not know the best way to approach this, which is why I believe working with a professional co-researcher was the best course of action. While being a practitioner positions me in a unique context that a complete outsider may not have, it also may be blinding. My outside perceptions and relationships with my participants may influence how I respond to the data because of confirmation bias[17]. In accommodating for this I needed to work closely with Professor Brett Coleman.

Literature Review

In this section, I will outline the literature that has informed this research. The literature surrounding this project can be sorted into three major categories: how white people understand racism, racism in youth work, the previous honor's thesis that demonstrates the need for intervention, and the justification for the intervention selected.

Racism: Personal? Systemic? Both?

Research conducted by Pew Research Center indicates that white Americans report significantly lower rates of racial tensions and racism in the United States than their black-identifying counterparts (2016). Further, white people have been socialized to attribute racism to interpersonal transgressions perpetrated by those who are seen as intellectually/morally inferior and ignore racism's structural manifestations (as cited in Dancis, 2021, Applebaum, 2013; Coleman et al., 2020; Feagin, 2013). This is presumably because of differing racial socialization and people of color's lived experiences navigating a racialized world.

This research implicates that white people or people who exhibit the privileges of 'whiteness' need to hold a better understanding of systemic racism.

So, what exactly is systemic racism?

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[17] "Confirmation bias, as the term is typically used in the psychological literature, connotes the seeking or interpreting of evidence in ways that are partial to existing beliefs, expectations, or a hypothesis in hand" (Nickerson, 1998)

In defining systemic racism, I draw on the definition of systemic racism in Joe Feagin's book, *Racist America: Roots, Current Realities, & Future Reparations:*

> *Systemic racism includes the complex array of antiblack practices, the unjustly gained political-economic power of whites, the continuing economic and other resource inequalities along racial lines, and the white racist ideologies and attitudes created to maintain and rationalize white privilege and power. Systemic here means that the core racist realities are manifested in each of society's major parts...each major part of U.S. Society--the economy, politics, education, religion, the family--reflects the fundamental reality of systemic racism. (2000, p. 16)*

As illustrated by Feagin, systemic racism is apart of 'every major part of U.S Society'. Understanding this is critical to explicating the nature of racism. By contrast, I understand interpersonal racism to be racism that is located within the beleifs and behaviors of individuals. As is clear from reading this definition, systemic racism is an incredibly complex and abstract concept that is woven into society in many different complex ways. This contrasts with interpersonal racism, which is typically observed in concrete, identifiable, interpersonal interactions.

Racism in Youth Work

Further, these 'white' ways of knowing about systemic racism manifest themselves within youth work both through pressure on youth workers to minimize systemic racism's presence and role in youth work and through the lack of literature regarding systemic racism in similar programs. The literature surrounding youth work documents the pressure of youth workers to minimize or otherwise ignore the functions of systemic racism. Baldridge conducted ethnographic research on 20 youth workers at an after-school program in the urban northeast and presented findings that indicated that youth workers often experience pressure to downplay the social structures of systemic racism in light of youth work (2014). Baldridge suggests that while many youth workers enter these programs with good intentions, they often fall short when held to unrealistic pressures of a neoliberal society to frame urban youth as 'broken' or in need of 'saving'.

Baldridge further informs my research by explaining where these notions of white saviorism can be located. If my goal is to cultivate greater critical consciousness, then perhaps that increased consciousness will encourage mentors to harbor a greater awareness of these pressures and how to combat them. This also aids me in understanding that this issue is far greater than that of just AKOG; it is manifested in other similar programs. Perhaps, the findings of this research could be helpful to other similar youth organizations struggling with cultivating critical consciousness.

The literature on racism and bias in similar collegiate-led, identity-focused, youth organizations has examined out-group tolerance as a part of interpersonal racism but has failed to acknowledge systemic racism (Lee, Germain, Lawrence, and Marshall, 2010). In this study, researchers examined the navigation of 'difference' through tolerance of people not in their 'in-group' – which was identified as the youth who attended the program.

This further informs my work by demonstrating the need for such intervention not only in AKOG but in other similar youth programs. We see above how there is a clear gap in the literature regarding the presence and manifestation of systemic racism in university-associated, identity-focused, youth programs and create motivation for and a call for the necessity of this work.

<u>*Who is racist?*</u>

The idea that the 'moral minority' is responsible for social issues is further depicted in Payne's term, the "Good Person-Bad Person conception of social issues", in his article "Black Bastards and White Millionaires" (year). He explains the harm in the "Good Person-Bad Person conception of social issues" when he writes:

> *The bad person's conception of social problems should be considered a distancing mechanism, a way of saying that the people who are problematic are not like us, not like the civil, literate, and concerned people who produce and read social theory. Much of what one hears in liberal circles nowadays about the "moral majority" is just this kind of distancing device. If the students I have taught recently are any guide, the tendency is to write the "moral majority" off as hopelessly stupid, which is to say that the problem with this world is that there aren't enough intelligent people – that is, people like my students" (pp. 13-15).*

Here, I understand Payne to be saying that the suggestion that racism is an issue that stems from moral character or lack of intelligence is a distancing device used to make racism feel 'far away' from people who hold the privileges of higher education. Distancing is understood in the literature as a way of detaching one's self-concepts from the identity of 'whiteness' as a whole (Knowles and colleagues, 2014). This denial is indeed just that. It does not change the presence of racism or racist structures in the lives of these individuals but makes it easier to ignore responsibility for it. Racism is not far away from us, it is, indeed, a system that plays a role in our everyday lives. It is greater than the mere incompetence of a few individuals – it is a system.

The idea of the 'moral majority' used as a distancing device plays into the greater theme of epistemologies of ignorance, which I frame my research through[18]. The narrative of the 'moral majority' is problematic as it implies hopelessness towards racism. It locates racism in people ('bad people'), rather than in power structures, legal systems, and institutional norms (that is, in systemic terms). It facilitates comfort for individuals who benefit from racism, allowing them to feel like they're not racist and thus not the problem (a distancing device). <u>This literature is reinforced by my personal experiences. I know that with access to education, people can understand why the behaviors they learned were wrong.</u>

Thinking about Payne in light of my project aids me in framing how I think of racism in terms of its existence in our program. Just because All Kinds of Girls is situated within a liberal arts institution that prides itself in its commitment to social justice and we discuss the fact that 'we are not here to save the girls' doesn't mean that racism doesn't exist within our program. This challenged the socialized narrative that I'd heard of who could be racist – particularly in the context of my education at Clark. It challenged the 'Free State Mentality'[19].

People who participate in perpetuating racism are what you might think of as 'woke'. This is a hard bullet to bite. It is not a comfortable feeling to think about my peers and me who dedicate so much of our free time to participate in a youth program with wholesome intentions – are upholding racist structures. It was significantly easier to subconsciously associate racism with people I who didn't like, I wasn't close to, didn't live here, or didn't share meaningful experiences with me, but it was harder to think about it in the context of myself, of people who I loved, or who I worked closely with.

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[18] see conceptual framework, subheading: Epistemologies of Ignorance

[19] *see positionality, p.32*

The final statement by Payne implying that the problem with the world isn't that there aren't enough intelligent people helps me in framing my project in a positive light. There are enough intelligent people in the world. There are a lot of intelligent people in AKOG! I know this because I witnessed it. I've witnessed mentors demonstrate emotional intelligence in their interpersonal interactions through setting healthy boundaries, and I've watched them utilize their academic intelligence in structuring egg drops in creative ways or sharing something they're knowledgeable about with the group.

This distancing device is problematic because it causes us to assume that racism exclusively exists within people – 'bad' people who aren't like 'us' – whatever in-group the individual identifies with. But perhaps is necessary is the opposite of a distancing device – a device that makes racism personal, that helps us understand how racism has impacted our lives and how this erasure is a product of the systemic nature of racism.

<u>*The Systemic Racism Curriculum Project*</u>

The Systemic Racism Curriculum Project (SRCP) was developed by Professor Brett Coleman in response to previous literature regarding race and racial perceptions. To understand the context of his work, it is critical to understand the literature in which his work is closely intertwined. His theoretical framework, "Epistemologies of ignorance," draws on the work of many other whiteness scholars. Epistemologies of ignorance is defined in the literature as "cultural-psychological tools that afford denial of and inaction about injustice" (Adams & Markus, 2004; Mills, 1997; Nelson, Adams, & Salter, 2013, p. 213; Sullivan & Tuana, 2007). I understand this to mean that epistemologies of ignorance is the way that we go don't know about, avoid, or dismiss instances of injustice.

From this 'inverted epistemology', the "the Marley Hypothesis" was developed[20]. The Marly Hypothesis states that "group differences in perception of racism reflect dominant-group denial of and ignorance about the extent of past racism" (Nelson, Adams, and Salter, 2012). The Marley Hypothesis is a reference to the lyrics sung by Bob Marley:

> *If you know your history*
> *Then you would **know where you coming from***
> *Then you wouldn't have to ask me*
> *Who the heck do I think I am* (Buffalo Soldier, 1983).

His lyric "know where you coming from" emphasizes the importance of understanding the importance of knowing one's history and how history interplays into one's positionality (Marley & Williams, 1983).

A study conducted in 2012 through the University of Kansas and Texas A&M university sought to test the Marly Hypothesis. Nelson and colleagues found evidence that upheld the

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[20] *Hulton Archive/Getty Images*

Marley Hypothesis in a study conducted with university students in which students were evaluated on historical knowledge in addition to their perceptions of racism. The study found that white students perceived significantly less racism (both isolated and systemic) than black students did. The results of the study also indicated that white students scored significantly worse than black students on their knowledge of racial history. The variance in historical knowledge explained the difference in perceptions of racism between black and white students. Based on this evidence, Nelson and colleagues pose that white individuals' lack of 'critical historical knowledge' may play a part in modern racism (Nelson, 2012).

In addition to exploring the Marley Hypothesis, Nelson and colleagues explored the racial identity relevance hypothesis. This hypothesis states that "motivation to protect group esteem, in the form of positive racial identity predicts Whites' present-day racism denial" (Bonam and colleagues, 2018, p.1). Previous literature informed the researchers that white individuals had the motivation to protect a positive group image (Unzueta & Lowery, 2008).In support of the racial identity hypothesis, Nelson and colleagues found that the more white participants positively identified with their race, the stronger they denied the presence of systemic racism in American society (p. 215).

It is possible that acknowledging the inherent benefit afforded to white-passing individuals in a society deeply intertwined with systemic racism may threaten the maintenance of a positive group image, creating a potential explanation for white individuals' dismissal of systemic but not interpersonal racism. The large scale of systemic racism may pose a greater threat to maintaining a positive group image than the smaller scale of interpersonal racism. Interpersonal racism is frequently attributed to the fault of individuals rather than that of the identity group. Previous literature in this field of inquiry indicates that whites individual identity and group identity are able to distance themselves easier from instances of interpersonal racism unlike systemic racism (which is more difficult to deny benefit from) (Adams, Tormala, & O'Brien, 2006). The significance of these findings revealed the centrality of *Epistemologies of Ignorance* in understanding race and society They highlight not only support for the Marley Hypothesis but the ways that cultural tools are used to maintain ignorance of racism.

In response to the findings of Nelson and colleagues, a study conducted by Bonam, Das, Coleman, and Salter provided mounting evidence to support the Marley Hypothesis by replicating the prior study at a racially diverse university. Consistent with the findings of Nelson and colleagues, Bonam and colleagues found that white college students held lower levels of 'critical historical knowledge' compared to their black peers. Bonam and colleagues argue that lower levels of historical knowledge explain white students' increased likelihood to deny systemic racism. The greater both black and white participants identified with their race, the more stratified these results became.

In the second part of this study, Bonam and colleagues sought to understand how critical historical knowledge could be used as a tool to cultivate a deeper understanding of systemic racism amongst white individuals. White adults residing in the United States were recruited online using the MTurk (an online research participant recruitment tool) to listen to an audio clip and then answer a series of questions. The experimental group was asked to listen to a clip about the United States Federal Government's role in creating black ghettos while the control group was asked to listen to a similarly formatted clip from the same show that discussed animal intelligence rather than the United States Federal Government's role in the creation of black ghettos. Both the control and experimental group were asked questions about systemic racism

and pig intelligence. Participants in both groups also completed a place-based critical historical knowledge test and a racial identity relevance test. Place-based learning is understood to be learning that is connected to a geographic location. Findings from this study indicate that exposure to critical historical information can help facilitate the recognition of systemic and present-day racism amongst white Americans. The study illustrates how disrupting ignorance through programming can play a critical role in combating racial ignorance through racial socialization.

This study mentioned above resulted in a second publication, examining how participants made sense of place-based critical history through their written reflections. After listing to the audio clips, participants were prompted to immediately respond in a short answer format describing their reactions to what they had just read. The study sought to examine the evidence that White Americans were not familiar with historical facts presented in the study, develop a more nuanced understanding of how white Americans made sense of critical historical facts about systemic racism, and seek evidence for the construction of an intervention designed specifically to teach White people about systemic racism and examine the evidence of if cognitive dissonance could be productively sustained.

The study found evidence that indicated that white people were largely unaware of the systemic nature of racism. Participants who did hold some knowledge of it were still able to ignore and presumed a lack of personal agency (Coleman, Bonam, and Yantis, 2019, p. 16). This suggests that an intervention should address White people's lack of critical historical knowledge. Further, the authors reference previous literature suggesting that explicitly addressing systemic racism (compared to overemphasizing prejudice or stereotyping) may help white people successfully garner an understanding of the complexities of racism (Adams et al, 2008, as cited in Coleman, Bonam, and Yantis, 2019, p. 15).

Despite these suggestions, the authors further discuss some of the negative reactions that participants engaged in when confronted with place-based critical history, such as denial. The authors argue that engaging participants in channeling their emotional reactions to a threat to their positive self-identity is critical for the implications of future interventions. One of the ways they discuss doing this is through facilitating critical reflections on whiteness.

The intervention

With mounting evidence for the role of place-based critical historical knowledge, a structured intervention was developed over 5 years with students and colleagues – one of whom was Professor Coleman. The Latest iteration of this intervention is the Systemic Racism Curriculum Project (SRCP). On the publicly available mapping site, Coleman and colleagues provide the following clarifications for the project's justification, and history. They write:

Systemic Racism Curriculum Project

The Systemic Racism Curriculum Project (SRCP) is a classroom-based, participatory action research project aimed at facilitating a *systemic* understanding of racism in the U.S. People in general, and white people especially, tend to assume that racism is primarily a matter of defective individual attitudes. This is only half the story. Racism is a systemic process that is built into U.S. culture, policies, and institutions. Racist individuals, and their attitudes, are products of such systems. This misunderstanding of racism is due to people's socialization and (mis)education. The result is that racism continues to profoundly impact people's lives, even as many believe that it is no longer a problem.

But the situation is not hopeless. Systems thinking about racism (and other forms of oppression) can be improved when curricula explicitly address the structural and institutional nature of racism. It can be further improved when white students are given the opportunity to both explore the nature of whiteness and engage with racial others who may posses greater knowledge of systemic racism by virtue of their socialization as people of color. The SRCP accomplishes those goals by 1) incorporating research on this issue into course curricula, 2) engaging students in participatory research meant to develop curriculum on systemic racism, and 3) facilitating collaboration among students and community members. In addition to facilitating shifts in knowledge at the individual level, a long-term goal is to create a network of educational spaces that can form the foundation of new structures that facilitate people's engagement with dismantling systemic racism. In the current political climate, in which mainstream institutions have largely failed in the fight for racial justice, such new structures are essential. You can watch an introductory video that describes the research that inspired the SRCP here.

In order to accomplish these goals, this intervention utilizes cartography (mapping) in order to help participants, make sense of place-based critical historical knowledge. The mapping project takes part in two phases. During the first part, participants explore an interactive map of the United States marked with instances of systemic racism. This map allows participants to zoom in on locations and read about the history of each site, as well as examine the pinpoints on the larger map in relation to each other. After this, participants are asked to write a reflection on the experience, what they learned, and their reactions to it. In the second phase, participants are asked to identify a location of personal significance, research systemic racism in that area, and write a paper on it. This paper typically includes two parts, the description of the systemic racism site (including their relationship to it), and the participants' reflections and reactions to what they learned.

Over time, participants' site descriptions led to the creation of a map with many points from all over the country. Participants' site descriptions from previous interventions are added to the map to complexify and improve the content quality for future interventions. Sites on the map are organized by theme. Some of the many themes include 'Gentrification and Residential Segregation, 'Police Brutality, 'Erasure and Dehumanization', and 'White Supremacy'.The Link to the map can be found here[21]

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[21] https://sites.google.com/view/brussellcoleman/srcp is the site URL if you are viewing this as a hard copy
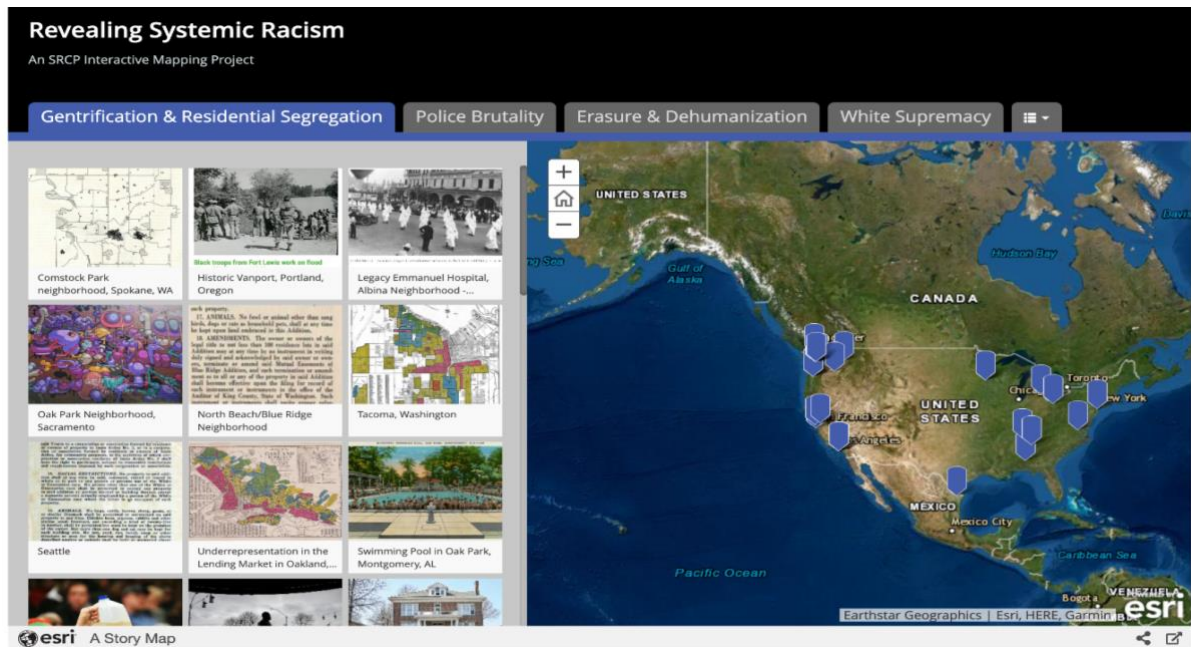
Above is a screenshot of the most recent version of the Story Map.

The site describes the map as an 'interactive' and 'evolving' project constructed through the collaboration of students, professors, and community members with the common goal of identifying instances of systemic racism that have been ignored and/or forgotten. It aims to help individuals identify and explore locations where systemic racism has manifested to aid a greater understanding of how intertwined systemic racism is with American society – even in seemingly 'progressive' areas. Visually identifying tangible examples of a concept like systemic racism which is so abstract makes it more difficult for people to deny, ignore, or downplay its existence.

Brett Coleman and a colleague (Dansis & Coleman, 2021) researched the implementation of the SRCP on nursing students. The participants engaged in the intervention as depicted above. Participants' reflections were coded thematically, and parts of their site descriptions later became new additions to the map.

Data from this study revealed that participants made sense of the systemic racism they were confronted with by questioning systems and institutions, identifying connections between historical and present social themes, reflecting on problematic thought processes, reflecting on their ignorance, complex emotional reactions, an initiative to take action (Dansis and Coleman, 2021, p. 5). Coleman and his colleague propose the term "Transformative Dissonant Encounters (TDE)" as "inflection points that provide White people with personally meaningful information that contradicts their non-racist worldviews and reveals racism to be a significant factor in shaping society, including their own communities and personal experiences" (Dansis & Coleman, 2022, p.3). TDE proposes that white ignorance is not stagnant and can be disrupted through "place-based education that reveals one's ignorance as socialized" (as cited, Dansis & Coleman, 2021, p. 10).

The intervention in context

With this context in mind, I'm responding to Nia's call to action by implementing a modified version of the SRCP Mapping Project. While my research is collaborating with the youth workers of an identity-focused youth program, previous research has worked with

participants in program-specific academic courses. Examples of this include elementary education or nursing programs. Previous interventions of the SRCP have taken place in an academic classroom environment, where the papers were assigned for a grade. This is very different from how I am choosing to modify this intervention because this youth program is not an academic space. Participants were not required to complete the assignments nor did their participation in the research, or the intervention influence their academic standing. Rather than papers, I will be asking participants to complete short response surveys designed to address the key points that participants were asked to address in the papers for the SRCP assignment. Participants will also be writing a short description of a systemic racism site.

Limitations of the story mapping intervention

Current limitations in the literature are centered around the context in which the research was conducted – through academic pressure, participant region, lack of academic background, and gender identity. Research has previously been exclusively conducted in academic settings. This may potentially sway participants' authenticity due to concern regarding bias from an instructor. This research has predominantly been conducted on participants in the Midwest and pacific northwest. There may be significant cultural undertones between the pacific northwest that could have swayed participants' understandings of systemic racism and their responsiveness to the intervention. Additionally, this research has not been conducted on individuals from varying academic backgrounds. Most of participants have been undergrad students at private universities.

My research seeks to fill the gap in the literature by developing an understanding of how youth workers at a female-aligned, genderqueer, trans-femme, and non-binary serving youth organization understand and conceptualize systemic racism during a place-based critical history intervention. With the understanding that white saviorism is a phenomenon that uniquely interacts with all types of social oppression-including gender expression/identity, I hope to garner greater context to inform future researchers and those in leadership positions in gender-identity-focused youth organizations. The goal of this research is to improve gender-identity-focused youth programs and actively fight to make systemic racism an issue that is not shied away from for lack of understanding. The intervention aspect of this research seeks to empower youth workers to make sense of their relationship to systemic racism and understand its influence on youth work.

Conceptual Framework

My conceptual framework consists of three concepts which interact to create the lense in which I view this work. These three concepts are Whiteness (the problem), Epistemologies of Ignorance (how the problem is maintained), and Critical Conciousness (how the problem is combatted).

Whiteness: The Problem

My definition of 'whiteness' comes directly from Nia's praxis. In her praxis, she frames whiteness as the problem that she seeks to address. She emphasizes that whiteness is incredibly interlinked with white racial identity and the social privileges that are afforded to those individuals who embody it. She also defines whiteness as it is understood in the literature. She frames whiteness in her praxis by drawing upon several authors. Two of these authors, Carol

Tator and Frances Henry, co-wrote '*Racism in the Canadian University: Demanding Social Justice, Inclusion, and Equity*'. Nia shares the following excerpt to frame whiteness:

'*Whiteness,' like 'colour' and 'Blackness,' are essentially social constructs applied to human beings rather than veritable truths that have universal validity. The power of Whiteness, however, is manifested by the ways in which racialized Whiteness becomes transformed into social, political, economic, and cultural behaviour. White culture, norms, and values in all these areas become normative natural. They become the standard against which all other cultures, groups, and individuals are measured and usually found to be inferior (As cited, 2009, pp. 46-47).*

Nia discussses the ways in which these authors help her frame whiteness as a sociopolitical, economic, and cultural manifestation. She also references the key features of whiteness indicated by the Alberta Civil Liberties Research Center.
They state the key features as:

- *Whiteness is multidimensional, complex, and systemic*

- *It is socially and politically constructed, and therefore a learned behaviour.*

- *It does not simply refer to skin colour, but to its ideology based on beliefs, values, behaviours, habits and attitudes, which result in the unequal distribution of power and privilege based on skin colour (Frye, 1983; Kivel, 1996).*

- *It represents a position of power where the power holder defines the categories, which means that the power holder decides who is white and who is not (Frye, 1983).*

- *It is relational. "White" only exists in relation/opposition to other categories/locations in the racial hierarchy produced by whiteness. In defining "others," whiteness defines itself.*

- *It is fluid—who is considered white changes over time (Kivel, 1996).*

- *It is a state of unconsciousness: whiteness is often invisible to white people, and this perpetuates a lack of knowledge or understanding of difference which is a root cause of oppression (hooks, 1994).*

- *It shapes how white people view themselves and others, and places white people in a place of structural advantage where white cultural norms and practices go unnamed and unquestioned (Frankenberg, 1993). Cultural racism is founded in the belief that "whiteness is considered to be the universal ... and allows one to think and speak as if whiteness described and defined the world" (Henry & Tator, 2006, p. 327).*

- *Whiteness is a set of normative privileges granted to white-skinned individuals and groups; it is normalized in its production/maintenance for those of that group such that its operations are "invisible" to those privileged by it (but not to those*

oppressed/disadvantaged by it). It has a long history in European imperialism and epistemologies.

● *Whiteness is distinct but not separate from ideologies and material manifestations of ideologies of class, nation, gender, sexuality, and ability.*

● *The meaning of whiteness is historical and has shifted over time (i.e., Irish, Italian, Spanish, Greek and southern European peoples have at times been "raced" as non-white) (http://www.aclrc.com/whiteness)*

Through these key features and definitions from Nia, I frame whiteness as the problem.

Epistemologies of Ignorance: How the Problem is Maintained

Epistemologies of Ignorance function as 'ignorance technologies' which are "cultural-psychological tools that afford denial of and inaction about injustice" (Adams & Markus, 2004; Mills, 1997; Nelson, Adams, & Salter, 2013, p. 213; Sullivan & Tuana, 2007). Essentially, epistemologies (which is an academic term for a way of knowing) of ignorance simply means the way that people remain ignorant or avoid knowing. These 'ignorance technologies' or ways of avoiding confronting racism, allow white individuals to avoid confronting evidence of injustice that may result in cognitive dissonance or threat to their identity. It is possible to counteract epistemologies of ignorance. As Coleman writes "white epistemologies of ignorance can be disrupted when White individuals have opportunities to both acquire knowledge about the history of racism in their communities and explore the antecedents and manifestations of their own lack of knowledge of the subject" (Coleman et al., 2019, p. 14). This is exactly what the SRCP is attempting to do, disrupt white epistemologies of ignorance by providing means of acquiring historically accurate information about manifestations of systemic racism that they may have personal connections to.

Whiteness is maintained by Epistemologies of Ignorance through its focus on lack of conscious introspection on positionality.

Critical Conciousness: How the Probelm is Combatted

I define critical consciousness through the definitions Nia used. She cites The Newark Community Collaborative Board, inspired by Paulo Freire's book, *"Pedagogy of the Oppressed".* They write:

[C]ritical consciousness refers to the process by which individuals apply critical thinking skills to examine their current situations, develop a deeper understanding about their concrete reality, and devise, implement, and evaluate solutions to their problems. …[C]ritical consciousness is a key ingredient for positive behavior change. It has two components: anti-oppressive thinking and anti-oppressive action. Anti-oppressive thinking means developing a deeper understanding of structural and internalized oppression. Anti-oppressive action means collaborative efforts to overcome and dismantle structural and internalized oppression. Developing a critical awareness of systems of privilege and oppression is necessary, because without this awareness, one cannot take action. Critical thinking and the anti-oppressive thinking of critical consciousness work together, because oppression involves controlling information, and it

requires uninformed thought. Without the ability to think critically, a person cannot
develop anti-oppressive thinking (NCCB).

I use this definition (as cited by Nia) to frame the understanding of responding to whiteness that this intervention embodies. It seeks to approach whiteness as a concept that can be combatted through the cultivation of anti-oppressive thinking and action.

Summary

While whiteness is the problem through the norms it presumes as a dominant cultural lens, epistemologies of ignorance acts as a tool that allows people who embody whiteness to maintain this their ignorance in whiteness. Critical consciousness gives us an opportunity to disrupt whiteness and epistemologies of ignorance through antioppressive thought and action. The functions of these three concepts in relation to each other form the lense through which I view this work. Understanding the relationships between these three concepts is critical to understanding the goals of this research in addition to the findings out lined below.

Methodology and Methods

Methodological Stance

I am approaching my research from the lens of practitioner inquiry. While I am acting as a practitioner partnered with a supervising researcher, much of my project has been shaped through discourse and co-construction from my praxis cohort. Some of the individuals in my cohort are also involved in AKOG and are participating in my research. I hope to leverage my unique position as an insider in the community to better understand the mentor's reflections regarding systemic racism. Because I hold first-hand knowledge of the functions and norms of the program, I hope to use this contextual knowledge to make sense of my findings. My methodological approach is best described as interpretivist-rather than straight "experimental research". As a practitioner, I have taken several steps to aid in reducing the impact of my bias, such as comparing my findings with another person who also used the same coding methods before arriving at my final analysis. Despite this, there is no true way that I could assume a stance of complete objectivity.

Outline

Below I have included an outline of this project from participant introduction to the end of data collection. Its purpose here is to provide clarity to the order in which things occurred during this intervention.

1. Mentors were notified via email that there would be an optional but highly encouraged systematic racism intervention for mentors.
    a. For more information, mentors were invited to attend an informational session with Professor Brett Coleman on Saturday, October 30th.
    b. Mentors who were unable to be in attendance but were interested in participating were asked to reach out to me directly.
2. An informational session was held for the intervention on Saturday, October 30th.

     a. Professor Brett Coleman spoke to participants about the development of his systemic racism intervention.
        i. Key points addressed included:
           1. What is systemic racism?
           2. systemic vs. interpersonal racism
           3. The psychology behind systemic racism and white denialism
           4. Systemic racism in youth work

A. During the second part of the intervention, I talked about what this intervention would look like in the context of AKOG.
     a. Key points addressed included:
        i. Risks for participation
        ii. Benefits for participation
        iii. Justification for this work
        iv. Time commitments
        v. Voluntary research participation in addition to intervention participation
        vi. Participant eligibility

B. This session was videotaped and mentors not in attendance were sent the recording.

C. Mentors were asked to sign up for the intervention by completing a google form.
     a. This form allowed mentors to indicate if they would like to participate in the research as well.
     b. This form also contained demographic information including socioeconomic class, gender identity, preferred pronouns, age, and year at Clark.

3. Mentors who were not in attendance for the informational session were sent a google sign-up form as well as a link to the informational session recording.
     a. Following this, several reminder emails were sent to mentors.
     b. Several mentors had scheduling constraints and thus I made plans with several mentors to reschedule the initial intervention before the first one began.

4. At the first session on November 6th, mentors who have indicated that they would like to participate in the research component will be given a consent form to complete.
     a. Mentors were all asked to complete a brief survey in two parts, pausing in the middle to reflect as a group.
        i. As mentors began the survey, I notified participants that I would be audio recording this session.
        ii. After completing the first half of the survey, mentors were asked to reflect aloud on their thoughts or share their answers with the group.
     b. Mentors then completed the second half of the survey.
        i. Following their completion of this portion, there was another verbal reflection amongst mentors.

      c. Mentors then were invited to proceed upstairs where Professor Brett Coleman gave a brief overview of the story map and justification for this intervention
          i. Mentors were provided with a link to the story map and asked to explore the map.
          ii. Mentors Completed a final survey and then were free to go.
5. At the next session, mentors researched and wrote their own descriptions of a systemic racism site to submit to the map.
      a. Mentors had the space to work independently but I made myself available to help people research
      b. Once mentors had completed their site description and a closing reflection survey, they were free to go home.
      c. Some mentors needed more time to complete their site descriptions and sent them to me in the following week.

Participants

Seventeen total mentors signed up to participate in the intervention. Two did not consent to participate in the research portion and both participants did not follow through with their participation. Out of the 15 participants, 8 completed all aspects of the intervention, including the systemic racism site write-up. Five of the remaining six participants completed both sessions and the survey but never turned their systemic racism site descriptions in despite several follow-ups, and one didn't complete the final survey. Only data collected from the 8 participants who completed all parts of the intervention's steps were used for this research.

Out of the 8 participants, seven identified as women, and one identified as genderqueer. Half of the participants served in a leadership role of some sort. Five out of the eight were in their fourth year at the university, with the remaining three in their second year. The average age of the participants was 20.5 years old. Half of the participants had been working with an identity-focused youth organization for five semesters, two for three, one for seven, and one was in their first semester. All except one spoke English as their first language. Five of the participants identified as white, one identified as biracial (white and Asian), another identified as Asian, and the final participant identified as Black[22] and Latinx.

The participants were overwhelmingly politically left-leaning, with five participants identifying with 'far-left' and three identifying with 'moderately-left'. It also seemed that the sample didn't identify deeply with religiosity. Six of the participants stated that they were 'not at all' religious and only two identified as 'slightly religious'. The participants overwhelmingly self-identified as middle-class, leaning heavily towards the upper-class. Half of the participants selected middle class as their socioeconomic status. Three participants answered upper-middle class, and the remaining participant answered upper-class.

Data Collection

I collected several different types of data at different points in time from my participants. The forms of data collected were:
- Basic demographic information
- Short answer surveys
- Description of systemic racism site

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[22] Black (vs. African American) was this participants' preferred convention of indexing their racial identity.

- Audio recordings

The means of data collection was modeled after Professor Coleman's previous research, which had been conducted during an undergraduate class. Participants completed essays and their reflections were the main source of data for his research. Since this intervention is not in an academic space, I collected the same data but split it into two parts: a short answer survey and a description of a systemic racism site. Since surveys may cause participants to go into less depth in their reflection, I elected to include audio recordings so that reflections about their answers to the group could be used to further clarify their experiences.

There are three main forms of data collection throughout my research: short answer reflections, audio recordings, and descriptions of systemic racism sites. After examining the richness of the data, I decided to only use the short answer surveys to answer my research questions. The systemic racism site descriptions were edited and vetted for accuracy and clarity and added to the greater systemic racism map used for this project.

All mentors were welcome to participate in the intervention regardless of if they would like to participate in the research component. Mentors were notified that there would be systemic racism intervention on the first day of AKOG but were not told more specifics about what that would entail. On the third day of AKOG, an informational session was held for mentors interested in participating in the intervention. The session took place immediately at the end of the day. The first half was composed of Brett Coleman's background and development of the intervention while the second half was led by me and focused on what this intervention would look like in the context of AKOG.

Mentors at the session were given a QR code linked to a google form. It was asked that all mentors complete the google form at least to indicate if they were participating in the intervention or not. For participants who consented to the research, the form asked their demographic information, if they needed help making up a session due to a scheduling conflict, food preferences, accommodation needs, and if they had already signed a consent form. Attendance at the informational session was low as half of the program had been canceled due to inclement weather. To accommodate for mentors who were unable to be there, the presentation was recorded and sent in an email to all the mentors.

Map Creation

Using participants' site descriptions, I developed a map similar to the one participants used in this intervention. The map can be found here[23]. I shared this map with the mentors of AKOG so that everyone could have an opportunity to read about the instances of systemic racism that these mentors identified. I chose to create a separate map from Professor Coleman's because I wanted to create something tangible and just for AKOG, that AKOG mentors could use to think about the experiences of the mentors in the program. Some of the site descriptions may still be added to Professor Coleman's comprehensive map.

Data Analysis

My data analysis was modeled after Professor Brett Coleman's previous procedures to ensure the validity of my findings. To further ensure validity, before coding the data, I compiled all data for each participant into individual word documents labeled with the participant's

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[23] You can also find this site at https://storymaps.com/stories/b4ee57953b41407a95f47713a4a7f8a4

assigned code. Not all participants completed their data at the same time as some participants completed makeup sessions or needed more time with their site descriptions. Once I had obtained all the data from a participant, I moved their file into a subfolder entitled "completed data".

When coding the data, I used the SRCP Codebook developed by Professor Coleman for coding student reflections on this project. The codebook (see Appendix XX) identifies five main themes in participant reflections: emotional reactions, taking action (or not), knowing about systemic racism, making sense of systemic racism, and denial/rejection/avoidance. Each theme was composed of several categories (and some categories had sub-categories). For instance, emotional reactions were represented by the letter A and A1 symbolized anger. When I found data that didn't seem to fit within the coding scheme but seemed important, it was coded as 'uncoded' and it was revisited.

To ensure validity and reduce the risk of bias, Knesha, one of the research assistants in Professor Coleman's lab, worked with me. Knesha (better known as Nesha) is a senior at Clark who I have known since the spring of 2020. We initially bonded after both having lived in Kansas and our love for Wendy's 4 for 4 deal.

Once a file was in the completed data folder, we could highlight interesting chunks and place them into our own individual excel sheets where we would add a code from the codebook. Once we were done coding data, we would then cross-reference our findings with each other. If there was a discrepancy between our codes, we would discuss it until we could agree on the best code for the segment.

With the uncoded segments, I brought them to my praxis cohort for their input. My advisor, Sarah Michaels, noticed that it seemed like there was a theme about seeing racism in the context of the youth organization. With this, I created a new coding category for the codebook: Contextualizing Systemic Racism in Youth Work.

Findings

In analyzing my data, several interesting themes emerged. **Considering these themes, I will have included commentary on each subsection or section that I address below. This commentary is in the indented, underlined text under each theme or sub-theme.** My commentary includes my reflections, and how I'm making sense of the data in this section. Some themes were more significant than others, and thus they have multiple sub-themes listed within each theme. I found that participants exhibited emotional reactions, identified ways of taking action, discussed ways of knowing about systemic racism, made sense of systemic racism, engaged in deflection, and contextualized systemic racism within the context of AKOG.

Theme 1: Emotional Reactions

Participants expressed a wide variety of emotions in their reflections but predominantly appreciation for the research. The subcode of appreciation is defined in the codebook as when "participants express gratitude for participating in the project; participant comments indicate engagement in academic activities" (See appendix). One participant wrote, "I'm really thankful for all those who've done such extensive research on this topic and that the histories of the neighborhood are exposed and accessible documents" (3). Another participant exemplified this subcode in much simpler terms when they wrote "made me more comfortable regarding institutional racism" (participant 5). The theme of positive emotional expression was mimicked

through the theme of hope. This was exemplified when participant 10 wrote, "I feel glad that I can contribute to such an important project and hopeful that discussing these issues will open the eyes of some who believe that racism does not exist in their town".

Reflection on Emotional Reactions

This finding was not consistent with my expectations. I anticipated that participants would demonstrate negative emotional reactions, such as shame. Despite this, there were no data points that were coded by Nesha and me that used code A3 for shame. This makes me wonder what it means that people experienced such positive emotions during the intervention. The findings from this theme suggest that perhaps this project had a positive impact on the mentors, and others may potentially benefit from participation. This complicates the framework of critical consciousness by suggesting that people may enjoy disrupting their epistemologies of ignorance.

Theme 2: Taking Action

Another finding identified amongst participant responses was the desire to take action. Participants identified tangible actions such as continuing to research systemic racism on their site and working to develop a more informed curriculum for the youth program. One participant wrote, "I feel like I want to do research on this area as well given that I again am part of the perpetuation of gentrification in Main South simply by existing at Clark" (3).

Other participants conceptualized taking action through the lens of responsibility. Some mentors placed responsibility for combating systemic racism onto white women. For example, a participant wrote, "white mentors should be engaging in active antiracism outside of this training as well and held accountable for doing so in some capacity" (10). While mentors like this one suggested that white mentors should be responsible for engaging in active antiracism activities, other mentors mimicked this sentiment of holding white women liable. One mentor wrote, "We also need to ensure that we do not allow for the use of "white women's tears" to get out of uncomfortable situations and that we put the girls before ourselves" (4). Other mentors spoke about their responsibility. One mentor wrote

> *"I am leaving this space with a reminder that I need to continue to educate myself, read about these instances and systemic issues, and go out of my way to educate other white people in my life since a lot of our education on systemic racism was entirely absent or lacking" (10)*

The theme of mentioning one's positionality when referring to their own individual responsibility seemed to be common across racial demographics. Another participant wrote, "As one of the few people of color in this mostly white organization, it is important for me to show up for the girls and hopefully be seen as a mentor or mentor type figure for them" (participant 3).

Some participants discussed taking part in self-directed learning about systemic racism. Participant 5 wrote, "I try to continue to push my understandings of the systemically racist social structures by reading, listening, and engaging in books, music, videos, poems and activities that regard such".

Reflection on Taking Action

What stood out to me the most in the section was the way that mentors discussed action and responsibility varied by race. A white participant suggested that white participants should be held accountable for engaging in antiracism outside of the program while a participant of color spoke about their responsibility to show up to the program as a person of color. This is

meaningful because it may indicate a difference in how these participants made sense of their responsibility. This complexifies the lens of critical consciousness in antiracist action by race. The differences in the way these participants experience taking action suggests that antiracist action may look different across different racial demographics. This makes sense because whiteness may manifest itself differently in people of different racial identities.

Theme 3: Knowing About Systemic Racism

Throughout their reflections, participants demonstrated many ways of knowing about systemic racism. In demonstrating their ways of knowing about systemic racism, participants discussed previous knowledge, spoke about learning new things through this experience, shared emerging realizations based on this information, and illustrated unconscious gaps in their knowledge.

Previous knowledge

Participants discussed their previous knowledge regarding systemic racism but there seemed to be two distinct themes across participants. White participants spoke of their knowledge exclusively using the phrase "I was familiar". For example, "I was familiar with some of the events and not others" (5) and "I was familiar with some of them" (4). By contrast, participants who identified as people of color, spoke about systemic racism as a reality they were well aware of. One of these participants wrote, "I've always known Washington state is problematic in terms of systematic racism and segregation" (15). The phrase 'I've always known' has very different implications than the phrase "I was familiar with", implying incredibly differing life experiences. While this participant implied their knowledge, other participants of color spoke more explicitly about the sources of their knowledge.

One participant who identified as biracial (Asian and White) wrote:

This has reinforced my knowledge of systemic racism, about how law's and systems perpetuate racist ideals and beliefs. My understanding hasn't changed, I've learned about systemic racism in some of my courses at Clark (7).

The phrases "this has reinforced my knowledge" and "my understanding hasn't changed" are both similar in sentiment to "I have always known" and further solidifies the evidence for an emerging theme between how participants of color and white participants speak of previous knowledge. It should be important to note that this participant credits 'some' of their courses at Clark for contributing to their knowledge. This is important because it suggests that while some classes may help develop a better understanding of systemic racism, not all classes do. This suggests that Clark Professors can restructure their courses to be actively antiracist.

The third participant of color (identifying as Black and Latinx) in this study also expressed something similar to participant 7 about the sources of their knowledge about systemic racism but was more explicit about the centrality of their own lived experiences. They wrote, "Nothing has changed for me given I knew about this from classes and such but more so from my own life as a person of color navigating our racialized world" (3). The phrase "nothing has changed for me" continues to provide mounting evidence for the differing experiences between white participants and participants of color. Like participant number 7, this participant identified their courses at Clark as a source of their knowledge. Most notably, they referred to their experiences as a person of color as the most important factor in shaping their knowledge of systemic racism.

The differences between previous knowledge between BIPOC participants and white participants are consistent with previous literature and my expectations. Such differences demonstrate the necessity of such interventions for white mentors. Further, these findings reinforce the idea that whiteness is a normative way of experiencing the world. They also provide evidence for the ways that Epistemologies of Ignorance facilitate facilitates ignorance of injustice and thus maintains whiteness. Findings from participant seven indicate that interventions such as this one are more critical for white mentors – who may more likely embody characteristics of whiteness – as they do not navigate the world as people of color.

Having a Realization

In discussing their knowledge about systemic racism, some participants discussed having realizations while learning about systemic racism that shifted their perception of the world. Some of these realizations were connected to the areas that participants grew up in and the prevalence of racism in those locations that they had not been previously aware of. For instance, one participant wrote, "It also made me realize how the racial demographic and geographical pockets…of Olympia influences the type of students who go to different schools" (15). Other participants mentioned realizations on a more general scale. larger-scale systemic issues. For instance, one participant wrote about systemic racism "how its literally everywhere. it's not like one person being rude its an entire thing" (8). This illustrates a realization that racism is greater than an interpersonal issue and manifests itself systemically.

Reflection on Having a Realization

Participants having realizations illustrates how place-based learning can act as a facilitating device in disrupting epistemologies of ignorance and whiteness. It provides further evidence that critical consciousness – specifically antiracist thought – can be cultivated through place-based learning.

Identifying Miseducation

Participants identified educational institutions as sources of miseducation. One participant identified their miseducation simply as a lack of education regarding racism. They wrote, "It was great to see a very organized map and reliable resource of so many events that I never learned about in school" (10). In contrast, other participants felt that their education had taught them false things about racism. One participant shared, "This has contradicted what I have learned in school and been tought how racism was in the south of the us and not near us" (8). Other participants critiqued their current antiracist education at the institutional level in writing "It…made me think critically about the antiracist education at Clark - it's present in some courses and is prioritized by some professors, but they are in the minority" (10).

Reflection on Identifying Miseducation

Participants identifying miseducation further demonstrate a greater awareness of their learning. This further justifies the necessity of this intervention. Participants are demonstrating critical consciousness through antiracist thought. This is evident because they are thinking critically about the sources of education of that have mislead them in understanding the reality of systemic racism.

In demonstrating knowledge regarding systemic racism, some participants illustrated unconscious gaps in understanding systemic racism. These misconceptions were made by two participants for a total of seven codes. These misconceptions were demonstrated through belief in a just world and universalizing the white perspective.

Belief in a Just World

The code *belief in a just world* is borrowed from Lerner's (1980) construct of *belief in a just world.* It is defined by Coleman (et. al. 2020) as "comments that indicate the belief in universal moral fairness." While this sub-category consisted of only one comment, it's interesting to examine. When asked what they were leaving the session with that day participant 15g wrote "knowing that systematic racism is an issue everyone cares about". As mentioned above, 15g identifies as a person of color (Asian). This comment exemplifies a false belief in universal moral fairness because if systemic racism was an issue everyone cared about, we would be taking greater steps as a society to work towards greater equity for all people.

Universalizing the White Perspective

While making comments that implicate universal moral fairness was one demonstration of gaps in knowledge, participants more frequently made comments that universalized the white perspective. When asked 'How does our awareness of systemic racism (and its intersections) as youth workers influence the relationships that we cultivate with the youth who come to our program?' one participant responded, "I think that being more aware that not everyone has the same life experiences as you and that they might be dealing with more stuff and have a different mind set every saturday is important to remember" (8). This comment implicates a universalized white perspective because they are viewing the weight of systemic racism as "more stuff". This implies that experiencing systemic racism is not something that the 'average' person may experience, thus centering those who do not experience the negative burden of racism as 'normal'.

Not only did white mentors universalize 'the white perspective' but one mentor of color did as well. They wrote

> *"I think systemic and systematic racism are terms that feel "far" away from us, in that we don't always feel its effects, so I think we all need to get more up close and personal with it in order to see how it impacts our lives and the communities we live in" (15g).*

Implying systemic racism is something that feels far away from 'us' implies that having the privilege of not thinking about racism all the time is 'normal', thus universalizing the white perspective. The participant further centers the white perspective by writing "we don't always feel its effects". The usage of 'we' is making a critical assumption about the experiences of other youth workers. While this participant is not white, their statements are still centering 'a white

perspective' in the sense that 'whiteness' is symbolic of privileged identities that allow individuals to navigate the world without bearing the burdens of racism[24].

<u>**Reflection** on Gaps in Understanding</u>
<u>The presence of gaps in understanding amongst participants of color complexifies my understanding of whiteness, epistemologies of ignorance, and critical consciousness simultaneously. It emphasizes that the issue and privileges of whiteness (the problem) can be embodied by people of color who may hold other privileged identities (Slater-Bookhart, 2019, p. 41). It illustrates that identifying as racially white and embodying characteristics of whiteness are not the same. This theme further demonstrates that epistemologies of ignorance are closely interlinked with whiteness and facilitate misunderstandings such as universalizing the white experience. The gaps in understanding depict the lack of critical consciousness, showing that whiteness and epistemologies of ignorance don't co-exist with critical consciousness.</u>

<u>**Theme 5: Making Sense**</u>

Making sense of systemic racism was the most common type of code across all participant reflections. Most frequently, participants found parallels, related personal experiences, questioned various systems and institutions, and acknowledged systematic racism today.

Finding Parallels

In making sense of systemic racism, many participants related the intersections of other forms of systemic oppression to their analysis. Most notably, participants related gender and socioeconomic status exclusively to systemic racism. In making direct statements, participants who related systemic racism to other types of oppression only related it to either gender *or* socioeconomic status. Participants did not mention any other intersections besides gender and socioeconomic status. In discussing the intersection of racism and sexism participant 10 wrote:

> *In this program, systemic racism may manifest at the intersection of racism and sexism, which will compound the negative effects on the girls. As mentors who relate to womanhood/girlhood in some capacity, we can all understand the effects of sexism. That being said, it is important for our white mentors to keep in mind that we will never have the same experience of sexism or discrimination in general as BIPOC.*

This participant discusses the compounding effects of experiencing sexism and racism. They emphasize the inability of white mentors to understand the experiences of BIPOC. While this participant took an introspective lens to systemic racism, some participants explained the intersections of systemic racism in terms of cause and effect. One participant wrote "many of our mentors and much of our leadership is made up of people who are white. Clark is a predominantly white institution due in part to its high cost as systemic racism plays a large role in socioeconomic status" thus making sense of systemic racism through an explanatory lens (4).

Not all the participants made sense of systemic racism's intersections in such specific terms. Some participants made much more broad blanket statements. For instance, one

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[24] It should be acknowledged that people of color are conditioned to be numb/desensitized to racism and micro/macro-aggressions.

participant simply wrote "Systemic racism has everything to do with everything" suggesting that systemic racism is related to all parts of life (3).

Reflection on Finding Parallels

What stands out to me in this section is that mentors only related systemic racism to gender or socioeconomic status, but not in conjunction with each other. Interestingly, these were the only two types of oppression mentors related to systemic racism. Several other non-exhaustive possibilities could have included sexual orientation, religion, ageism, or colonialism. Given that this is an identity-focused youth organization serving female, trans-femme, non-binary, and gender-queer folks, and participants were prompted to discuss the intersection of gender and race in their reflections, I expected these participants to make this connection. This is meaningful because it provides insight into what parts of intersectionality mentors might be thinking about, and what they might not.

The relationships between whiteness, epistemologies of ignorance, and critical consciousness are all relevant in this theme. Whiteness reflects the privileged lenses that these mentors might be viewing the world through in only comforting systemic racism to gender or socioeconomic status. Additionally, it speaks to the social tools (epistemologies of ignorance) that may be active in preventing the mentors from possessing a deep knowledge of the way systemic racism interacts with forms of social oppression outside of gender oppression and socioeconomic status. Finally, this finding complexifies our understanding of critical consciousness. It demonstrates that antiracist action is not necessarily comprehensive. It is possible to engage in antiracist thought through one lens (i.e., the intersection of race and class) and not others. This raises the question of if this is still antiracist thought. I'm led to say yes, because we have no evidence that these mentors may not have brought up other forms of systemic oppression should they have been prompted differently.

Relating Personal Experience

In making sense of systemic racism, participants related their personal experiences. This occurred predominantly through discussing physical proximity to sites on the map. Participants expressed making sense through locations where they grew up, spent their childhood, or attended school in their early years of life. Participants made statements such as "It's where I grew up" (7) or "I grew up here and have all of my family here" (6).

Not all participants related their personal experiences in such a positively connotated manner. One participant discussed their lack of personal experience resulting in a lack of engagement with the map. They wrote "exploring the map was educational, but I felt disconnected from it since I don't have any relationships with the points on the map so far. I do know that this will change over time as more people contribute to the map" (7). This statement emphasized the critical nature of personal connections for meaningful learning about systemic racism in this project.

Reflection on Relating Personal Experience

What stands out to me from participants' personal experiences is the importance of physical proximity. Participants discussed their connections to their systemic racism sites or their disconnect from the present version of the map because it did not have any locations they were connected to. This further supports findings from Coleman et al. that racial history education must be personally relevant to the individuals learning about it to disrupt White epistemologies

of ignorance (as cited, 2019). This further supports the justification for this training and makes me optimistic that there is real change work occurring here-or at least the potential to occur.

This theme adds to my understanding of critical consciousness by suggesting that personal connections/locations of personal significance are important facilitators in cultivating critical consciousness. The final quote from participant seven also indicates that personal significance may be a necessary condition for disrupting epistemologies of ignorance.

Questioning Systems and Institutions

Another way that participants made sense of systemic racism was by synthesizing the role of systems and institutions in upholding systemic racism. This questioning centered around authority and institutions, social systems, and well as discussing intentionality and strategies utilized to uphold SR.

Distrust in Authority

Distrust in authority was one way that participants questioned systems and institutions. One participant demonstrated distrust in authority when they wrote:

This environmental racism is not a one off occurance and I remember when it got significant media attention, and what's so dangerous about the ways our media functions is that it is forgotten so quickly despite the fact that the majority black population in Flint is still! experiencing the affects of this issue (3).

This statement reflects the unreliability of the media in reporting manifestations of systemic racism, further demonstrating that the media is an untrustworthy source of information. By clearly identifying the media's function and complacency in upholding racism, they are emphasizing that the media is not a reliable source.

Blaming Institutions

Taking things one step further from distrust, some participants named institutions as responsible actors in the perpetuation of systemic racism. One participant wrote, "Clark's marketing of AKOG as a white savior organization also has a large impact on the whiteness of the program" (7). This statement clearly describes the institutional marking as at fault for contributing to the problematic nature of the program.

Intentionality

Some participants took their statements beyond distrust and blame on institutions and discussed the intentional nature of institutional perpetuation of racism. One participant illustrated this when they wrote "the government is shown to not care for the basic rights of its oppressed people. In any way possible, the government goes out of its way to hurt minority groups in hopes of their profit" (5). The final sentence, particularly when they write "the government goes out of its way to hurt minority groups" drives home the message that systemic racism is perpetuated on purpose. In terms of acknowledging intentionality, all segments under this code reference the government as the institution.

Understanding Technologies

The final way that individuals questioned systems and institutions was through understanding technologies. By understanding technologies, I am referring to specific strategies or actions taken by institutions that upheld SR. For example, one participant discussed these specific strategies when they wrote "Those who have had the power to create the maps dominantly accepted by our society (and thus create borders, displace peoples, take land, and extract resources/capital) has exclusively belonged to those privleged by white supremacy, patriarchy, colonialism, captialism, etc" (3). Here, this participant is naming mapping as a way that has historically upheld systemic racism.

Reflection on Questioning Systems and Institutions

Something that stood out to me was when participant three discussed how mapping has been used to uphold systemic racism in the subsection 'understanding technologies'. This made me consider that in many ways by using cartography for resistance, we are disrupting a system that has contributed to the perpetuation of skewed narratives. This also made me consider the efficacy of doing this work with people of privilege adding to the map.

Based on participants reflections, questioning institutions was a powerful way that participants processed blame for systemic racism. This complexifies my understanding of critical consciousness by providing greater insight into the types of antiracist thoughts participants may engage in when cultivating critical consciousness. It also provides greater insight into participants awareness of the ways epistemologies of ignorance man manifest itself into institutions (i.e., the media).

Theme 6: Deflection

Deflecting blame

Participants engaged in denial primarily through deflecting blame. One of the ways that participants deflected blame was by answering questions about their role in systemic racism in the third person. One participant wrote:

Mentors should be better versed in the history of systemic racism in this country, institution , and program. Mentorship as a concept should be better understood so that people don't assume they are in a change making position without doing actual change making work (6).

By answering in the third person this participant is removing their responsibility for taking part in the actions they are discussing and thus deflecting blame.

Reflection on Deflection[25]

Demographic data for participant six indicates that they identify as white. With the context of this individual's racial identity, this comment is concerning. White mentors often enter Youth Work spaces with good intentions and an ability to 'talk the talk' (explain that racism is bad and 'we' should be doing something about it) but fail to walk the talk (take action or acknowledge their role in perpetuating it).

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[25] This deflection is dispersed throughout this section in order to provide the best analysis of this theme. Underlined comments indicate reflection while normal text indicates part of the analysis of the theme.

An additional way that participants deflected blame was by minimizing the importance of events that did not occur near them. A participant shared, "I wasn't aware of most of the events I read about, a lot of them felt significant to the region and I'm not from the regions that were listed" (7). Here, the participant appears to be explaining why they didn't know about the events they learned about. By attempting to justify their lack of knowledge, this participant is deflecting blame.

I want to emphasize here that mentors not seeing systemic racism as something that is connected to them in any way, is a significant problem when they are just typical people because it indicates a lack of empathy or concern for others. Considering that these are predominantly white youth workers working with youth who are predominantly people of color in an urban context, this is a massive issue. This mentor is essentially distancing themselves from the difficult issues that the youth they work with face and are impacted by every single day yet participate in a program where they actively engage with them in fun, light-hearted activities.

The final way that participants deflected blame for systemic racism was by devaluing the significance of their critical thinking about systemic racism. Participant number six wrote, "it felt like I didn't learn anything new because I was doing all the work on my own / thinking alone and not hearing new perspectives". By stating that they didn't learn anything because others were not facilitating their understanding of systemic racism, it seems that this participant is deflecting personal responsibility for systemic racism and placing it on others.

The presence of this theme caught me off guard. Professor Coleman had warned me that deflection would likely be present as part of the natural human process of cognitive dissonance. As a psychology student, I probably should have expected this theme to be more prevalent. I think that I simply wanted to believe that the people at AKOG were not going to be susceptible to this or that this intervention was special in some sense. This was me engaging in my own dissonance.

I think that I've realized that finding some deflection amongst the mentors indicates that the learning that these individuals were doing was powerful enough to activate these psychological processes. Nothing from the participants' transcripts indicated any overt deflection. Rather, their deflection was more covert and contextual. Here, I understand overt racism to be explicit, obvious, or intentional attitudes or behaviors towards a minority group rooted in the color of their skin (Elias, 2015). I understand covert racism to be discrimination towards a minority race that is subtle or hard to notice. Both types of racism are problematic, but covert racism is much harder to recognize. Many people may not even realize that they are engaging in covert racism. I know for myself, that covert racism has manifested itself in socialized beliefs and assumptions that result in unconscious actions or behaviors.

It stood out to me that participants' deflection encompassed such a small proportion of the overall codes. It is possible that participants were hyperaware of how I or other mentors may perceive them and thus were careful about their word choice. It is also possible that participants truly may not have experienced a lot of deflection.

This finding provides greater context into the conceptual framework through which this paper is written. It illustrates how deeply epistemologies of ignorance is ingrained into social structures, so much so that when confronted with evidence of systemic racism, participants deflected personal responsibility for participation and benefit from systemic racism. It also

speaks to the ways that whiteness is a dominant social lens through which society is framed and thus things that disrupt that are ignored or dismissed. This raises questions about how we should confront whiteness and critical consciousness. Are there better ways to approach disrupting whiteness and epistemologies of ignorance that would result in less deflection? Is there perhaps a relationship between locations of personal relevance (or the lack of) and cultivating critical consciousness (avoiding deflection)?

Theme 7: Contextualizing Systemic Racism

While most of the codes seemed to fit within the preexisting SRCP codebook, I noticed that some segments just didn't seem to fit yet still seemed relevant. These codes were about how mentors visualized or contextualized what they were learning about racism within the youth program. Participants seemed to contextualize systemic racism in the space of youth work in two ways: naming knowledge as a tool to better serve youth and knowledge as a form of harm reduction.

The code 'Knowledge as a tool' encompassed when participants identified awareness and knowledge of systemic racism as a tool to better serve youth. An example of this was when a participant wrote "this awareness will hopefully positively influence the relationships we cultivate with the youth through ensuring that they feel heard and respected in our program and that we do our best to not perpetuate systematic racism in our work" (4). By discussing the ways that greater knowledge of systemic racism can potentially positively influence the youth who attend the program, this participant is suggesting that this knowledge could serve as a tool for youth workers to be better youth workers. While this participant identified knowledge as a tool to amplify the girl's experiences directly, other mentors discussed knowledge as a tool to change our internal processes as mentors. One participant shared, "conversations about systemic racism can be used to dissemble some of our biases, and help us be able to value the mentees more" (7). This sentiment was mimicked when a participant explained why these conversations were important by writing "it helps us be better mentors and recognize the girls in all their complexities" (3).

Knowledge as harm prevention

Like the code 'knowledge as a tool', some participants focused on how knowledge and understanding of racism could act as a harm prevention/reduction. Harm prevention was coded when participants discussed knowledge of systemic racism as a tool to minimize or mitigate any negative manifestations of racism in the program or on the youth. For example, one participant wrote, "hopefully this awareness ensures that we do not go into working with youth as a way to feel as if we are saving them or perpetuating any other white savior narrative" (4).

Some participants who demonstrated their ability to contextualize systemic racism in the context of youth work also demonstrated struggling with the idea. For instance, participant seven whose quote is shown under 'Knowledge as a Tool', later stated

> *I think that the training was helpful in learning about my personal connections to systemic racism, but I am having trouble connecting it to AKOG/mentoring in general. I do think it was beneficial, but I'm not sure if it's completely connected to AKOG as a training program.*

This further demonstrates that contextualizing systemic racism is not a linear process.

<u>**Reflection** on Contextualizing Systemic Racism</u>
<u>These findings support the conceptual framework that cultivating critical consciousness can disrupt whiteness and the epistemologies of ignorance that enable it. They indicate that mentors are not only engaging in antiracist thought but thinking about antiracist actions that can be taken in their context (youth program). This complexifies previous findings which primarily focused on antiracist thought. The context of these actions as taking place within the program in question is particularly meaningful because they depict tangible outcomes for individuals beyond the mentors-but for the youth who attend the program.</u>
<u>The second part of these findings – which indicates that some mentors struggle at times with contextualizing systemic racism – indicates that there is potentially some disconnect in facilitating these long-term understandings of antiracist action in context. This raises the question of how interventions such as this one, and organizations can work to best support youth workers in this process of cultivating long-term understandings, conceptions, and actionable thoughts of systemic racism's role.</u>

Discussion

In this research, I wanted to better understand how mentors at an identity-focused youth organization experience place-based systemic racism intervention. In doing so, I sought to answer the following questions:

RQ 1: How do college-aged youth workers experience place-based systematic racism intervention?

RQ 2: What impact did place-based learning have on the development of an antiracist stance amongst youth workers working with female identity organizations?

RQ 3: How do college-aged mentors at identity-focused[26] youth programs think about the relationship between systemic racism and the work they're doing?

I have addressed each of the questions above, and more succinctly in separate paragraphs below.

The first question, *How do college-aged youth workers experience place-based systemic racism intervention, presents* many rich findings from participants' reflections. Namely, the data indicated that there were some near-universal themes across participants, some experiences that were unique to only a few individuals. Almost all the participants expressed appreciation for their participation in the project. By contrast, a few deflected blame or demonstrated gaps in understanding. Participants expressed the desire to take action, but the ways participants discussed taking action varied by participants' racial identity. White participants frequently spoke about their responsibility in conjunction with other white mentors. Mentors of color frequently expressed their responsibility in individual terms in addition to discussing their responsibility to show up to the program for the youth as people of color. In addition to this,

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[26]When originally constructing my research, AKOG identified as a female-aligned program. In the final weeks of my project AKOG's leadership has gone back and forth on coming up with a better term that is inclusive of individuals who may not align themselves with femininity or the gender binary. I've chosen to use the phrase 'identity-focused' out of respect for the new direction the program is heading in.

participants frequently questioned institutions to varying degrees, from stating their untrustworthiness to calling their actions out as intentionally planned to uphold systemic racism.

Next, I examine the findings in relation to the second research question: *What impact did place-based learning have on the development of an antiracist stance amongst youth workers working with female identity organizations?* To evaluate this, I draw upon a chart created by Andrew M. Ibrahim, MD, MSc, on antiracism:
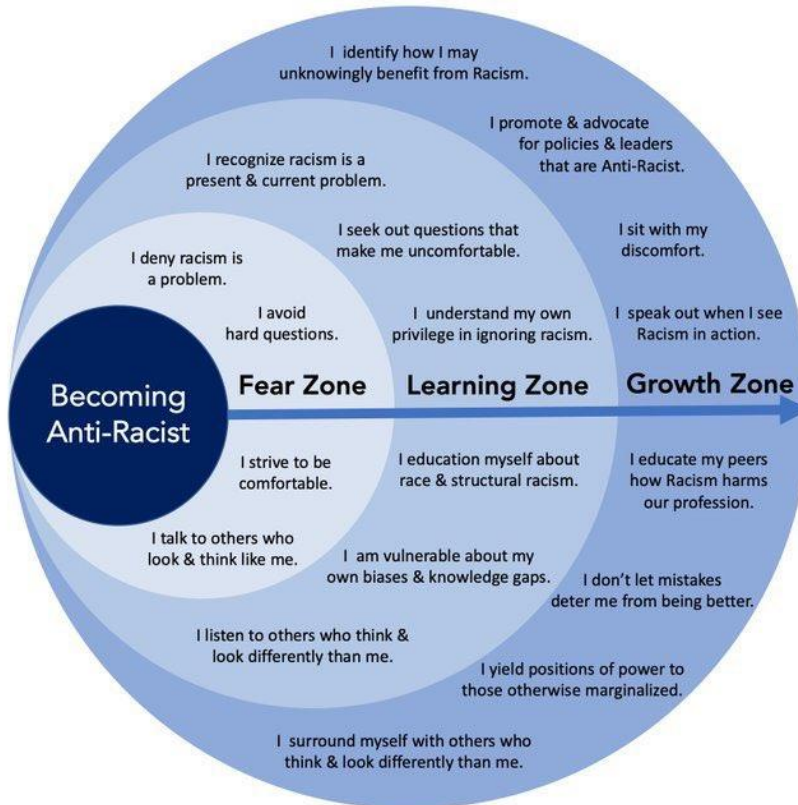
To understand if this intervention aided mentors in developing an antiracist stance, I look to the themes identified amongst the participants and where they fall on the chart. Based on participants' willingness to take action and identify miseducation, it is clear that participants seem to fall between the learning and growth zone. Some participants who engaged in deflection or demonstrated gaps in knowledge may be closer to the learning zone than others. Overall, participants demonstrated the ability to sit with their discomfort, advocate for antiracist policies, educate their peers on how racism impacts youth work, and continue to grow despite previous misgivings. This intervention did likely encourage mentors to engage in antiracist thought. Because I did not examine the mentors' previous levels of antiracist thought, I cannot make a definitive statement on if this intervention made a significant impact or not, outside of the participant's statements (which indicated it may have!).

Finally, I looked at how the data informed my final research question: *How do college-aged mentors at identity-focused youth programs think about the relationship between systemic racism and the work they're doing?* The answer to this question comes largely from the code theme "Contextualizing Systemic Racism." Participants discussed knowledge of systemic racism as a tool for youth workers to improve the experiences of the youth and their internal processes. One other participant discussed knowledge of systemic racism as a form of harm prevention – specifically in the sense that it could reduce the likelihood that white savior narratives were

perpetuated through the program. It should be noted that not all participants consistently demonstrated their understanding of systemic racism in the context of the youth program. One participant who explained that conversations regarding systemic racism could be used to help us value the girls more, later suggested that they weren't sure what the connection was between systemic racism and AKOG. This illustrates that participants did not demonstrate a linear understanding of systemic racism in context.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

There are several limitations to this research. One is the small sample size. This was due in part to the high number of participants who did not complete the entire intervention and thus were not included in the data analysis. Future research should replicate this project with a larger sample size. Future research could examine reflections of individuals who do not complete the description of the systemic racism site to consider if their responses differ from others.

Participants were also predominantly from non-religious backgrounds, which may have skewed the results. Literature suggests that Christian ideologies perpetuate concepts of colonialism in terms of race and power (Taylor & Francis, 2019). The literature does not provide greater context on the influence of other religions on these dynamics. A greater number of Christian-aligned religious mentors could influence the presence of white savior ideologies. Future research could include youth workers who work with youth in religious contexts to identify what role (if any) religion might play in understanding racism and youth work.

Participants were predominantly politically liberal, which likely skewed the results. Future research should work to incorporate participants with greater diversity in political identity to understand if there is a relationship between learning about systemic racism and political orientation. Future research with youth work and SRCP might also work to incorporate this into programming so that youth are also participants.

Findings Critical to Practice: Recommendations for AKOG Leadership

In conducting this research, I have found four key, critical findings from my analysis that I believe to be the most critical to making practical sense (i.e., informing future action of the program) of this research. These findings are representation, the necessity of such intervention, experiences, and microaggressions.

Representation

The issue of representation was one Nia sought to address by reaching out to identity-focused organizations to recruit mentors from more diverse populations. The issue of representation arose in this research when one of the mentors (who identified as Black and Latinx – the two largest demographics that our youth identify as) shared that they felt responsible for showing up for the youth because there were so few people of color in the organization. **This illustrates that the issue of representation is not only one for the benefit of the youth (as is framed in Nia's thesis) but for the well-being of the mentors of color.** Holding that weight is a significant responsibility, and hopefully, it could be alleviated by increasing representation within the mentoring population. I discussed the burnout that I and many other mentors experienced (see Changes in the program p.18) was likely exemplified by mentors of color who may have felt an even greater pressure to show up for the youth.

Denial and Distancing

We observed denial and distancing amongst mentors in the sections in theme six – Deflection – and in theme three, Ways of Knowing about Systemic Racism, subsection Gaps in Understanding on pages 52-53 and 48-49 respectively. We also observed the presence of universalizing the white perspective amongst mentors of color. This indicates that we need to think very hard about representation. It's not just a simple question of needing more mentors of color. Perhaps we need more mentors who share the same identities and life experiences as the youth of this program. **Representation is incredibly important, but it does not necessarily solve the issues of critical consciousness and whiteness. As stated in Nia's thesis, 'whiteness' can be embodied by people of any racial identity who hold other identity privileges. Even with mentors of color, there is still the possibility of whiteness being an issue. Based on this, I believe that it is important for this program to focus on getting more mentors of color and critical consciousness simultaneously. Developing a strong, meaningful culture of antiracist thought and action, looking within, and deconstructing each of our privileges – is a necessary part of maintaining the strength of this program.**

Experiences

Participants' experiences overall seemed positive. Participants frequently expressed appreciation and engagement with the project. White mentors discussed less familiarity with critical historical knowledge than BIPOC who discussed their lived experiences having informed their knowledge of the systemic nature of racism. **This exemplifies the necessity of such an intervention for white mentors.**

Microaggressions

Microaggressions are defined as "brief statements or behaviors that, intentionally or not, communicate a negative message about a non-dominant group—are everyday occurrences for many people". Throughout my analysis of the data, I found evidence to suggest that mentors may very likely be engaging in microaggressions – particularly when they engaged in deflection or universalizing the white experience. I also found that I became aware of my own microaggressions – particularly once when I misspoke during a Steering Committee meeting, making a comment that suggested that racism was predominantly a systemic issue rather than both an interpersonal and systemic issue. This indicates to me that AKOG could benefit from future training that incorporates microaggression training.

Conclusion

So now what?

When I initially started working to implement my praxis, I got wrapped up in the concept of racism being a systemic issue. Subconsciously, I discounted interpersonal instances of racism as infrequent. As I continued to work through my project and began to write it up, I realized I was wrong. Racism is interpersonal and systemic. One of the research participants put it best when they wrote "I am thinking about how systemic racism makes people feel more comfortable

perpetuating instances of individual racism." (4). Writing up my data has been a process of realizing, processing, and making sense of my misunderstanding of racism. It also makes me afraid that I have caused harm in doing this project.

I'm led to question if we can understand interpersonal racism without understanding systemic racism. As a white person, I'm led to question to what extent I and other white people can understand a type of systemic oppression that we will never experience but benefit from every day. I don't know the answer to these questions. I'm led to falling back on the literature that drove the implementation of the SRCP, that antiracist thought and action held greater salience when white people had stronger understandings of racism. I'm writing this under the assumption that activism and antiracist thought amongst white people is critical to combating racism – both systemic and interpersonal.

Much of this work has been unpacking the racism I was raised with and the ways it has manifested itself in my own life. I think it's incredibly important to acknowledge my privileges – to have been able to spend so much of my life without having to consciously understand racism – and in having the resources and opportunities to leave the area that I was raised in and have exposure to an education that taught me a surface level of knowledge about racism. It has also been a time of sitting with a tremendous amount of shame for the ways that I have, and (even if subconsciously) continue to participate in racist systems, structures, thoughts, and behaviors. I have come to learn that this shame is important. It is an emotion that I believe leads to change.

April 23rd, 2022-Community Arts Day and my final day of AKOG
I walk upstairs one last time and look around. I see the ghosts of all my memories in this room all at once. One memory is much clearer than the others, my first community arts day in 2019. I close my eyes for a second and see the faces in the circle around me that day. I remember how the floor felt under my body, my hands on the ground, but most importantly, I remember the love. I remember Fati wrapping her arms around Nia at the end of their last day in 2019.

I think back to the teenager I was when I started this program. I catch a glance of myself in the mirror and for a split second, I see myself, my 18-year-old self, lacking critical consciousness and unsure how to advocate for the issues she knew were important. This program was a space of learning for me. But perhaps it shouldn't have been. Perhaps I should have done that work outside of this space. I joined this program because I wanted to find meaning in my life, and I sure did, but at what expense? To this, I do not know the answer. I may never.

I walk downstairs to meet one of my friends still cleaning up from the end of the day. We walk upstairs together, and her words wrap me in the same hug I remember watching Nia and Fati share. It feels anticlimactic in a way. I realize that the learning and growing and celebrating I've done in this space will be things I will continue to do for the rest of my life.

I didn't want this day to end. I think back to the mentor debrief we had just a few minutes before. I realized that my time here was done. This amazing program had so many wonderful human beings.

If you are reading this, members of my beloved AKOG community, please know that I have the utmost faith in you. I have not been a perfect mentor, leader…etc. None of us are. I hope if you ever question the direction the program is headed in – that you revisit the ethnography section of my paper. Remember the light that came out of the pandemic for this program. Most importantly, I hope you see the light in each other, in the youth, and within yourselves. You got this.

Appendix A. Survey questions

Note: These surveys are located here for contextual purposes and to serve as a resource for future researchers. Only survey three and the final survey were analyzed for data analysis. The initial survey only utilized demographic information for contextual purposes. Responses to survey two were not evaluated.

Initial Survey:

1. What is your name? (I'm the only person who will see this)
2. Racial identity (please select as many as you feel represent your identity)
3. What pronouns may I use for you when I speak to you in person? (your response will not be included in my research-this is just to make sure that I'm using the correct pronouns since there's such a big group of us!)
4. If I use any of your responses in my research, what pronouns may I use for you? (you will not be identifiable in any way)
5. What is your gender identity? (woman, man, nonbinary, prefer not to answer, and fill in the blank/other)
6. what age youth do you work with (please select all that apply) (9y/o, 10 y/o, 11 y/o, 12 y/o, older youth program (age 13-17), both (mostly younger), or both (mostly older), or steering committee)
7. Are you on Steering Committee (yes/no)
8. Are you a Clark Student?
9. How long have you been a mentor with this program (if your work was paused in the spring of 2020, please count that semester as a full semester despite it being cut short) (1-7 semesters)
10. How would you describe your role as a mentor/youth worker in your organization?
11. What year are you in college? (1st year-4th year)
12. How old are you? If your birthday is coming up over the course of the next three weeks please select your current age
13. Racial identity (please select as many as you feel represent your identity)
14. What is your political orientation? (far left, moderately left, moderate, moderately right, far right)
15. Where were you born? please identify if it was rural, urban...etc.
16. How religious do you identify as? (not at all religious, slightly religious, moderately religious, very religious, devotely religious)
17. What socioeconomic status do you identify the most with? (upper class, upper-middle class, middle class, working class)
18. Is there anything that I could do to help ensure that this research is accessible to you?

Survey two:

1. Who are you in the space of AKOG?
2. What does it mean that All Kinds of Girls is a predominantly white organization? Please be as descriptive as possible and respond in complete sentences.

(Post reflection-was this mentor present for the verbal conversation with others?)

1. What does systematic racism have to do with the fact that AKOG is a predominantly white organization?
2. In what ways do you think systematic racism and gender intersect in this organization?
3. What role do you play in systematic racism in the space of AKOG?

Survey three:

Section one:
1. Were you previously familiar with any of the events that you read about? How did you feel about this?
2. Were there any instances where you saw connections between the past and present? If so, where? How did you make these connections?
3. What was it like for you to explore the story map? How did you feel? Please be as descriptive as possible.
4. What are you leaving this space with today?

Section two:
1. What site are you going to choose?
2. what is the personal significance of this location to you?
3. Will you be working with a partner? (if you are not participating in the research component please only partner with others who are not participating in the research component. Please also know that if you will be making up training that it's easiest to work with someone who will also need to make up the same training or work alone.
4. If you're working with a partner, who are they?

Final Survey:

1. What is your name?
2. Why did you choose the site that you did?
3. How did you feel about the information you gathered on your selected site? What did it make you think about?
4. how did you feel completing this project?
5. What have you learned about Systemic Racism? Has your understanding of racism changed? If so, how?
6. How can we use conversations about systemic racism to help us amplify the cultural wealth that the girls bring to AKOG?

7. As a female-aligned organization, how might systemic racism manifest itself uniquely in this program?
8. After having this experience, What do you know think it means that All Kinds of Girls is a predominantly white organization? And what does systemic racism have to do with this?
9. How does our awareness of systemic racism (and its intersections) as youth workers influence the relationships that we cultivate with the youth who come to our program?
10. Would you recommend this training to others? why or why not?

Appendix B. Storymap
Storymap of participant's research

Appendix C. Codebook

SRCP Nursing Project Codebook – Version 8

A. Emotional reactions: As an outcome of learning about systemic racism: people respond with a range of emotional reactions including anger, guilt, shame, sadness, shock, discomfort. *Note: Add an asterisk (*) to the code label when the emotion is followed by some sort of elaboration (e.g. "it was sickening and makes me not want to go there")			
Code name	Code label	Definition	Example
Anger	A.1	Participants express anger in response to learning about S.R. (whether they accept or reject facts associated with S.R.). Can include anger about the subject and/or about having to learn about it.	
Guilt	A.2	Participants express feelings of guilt; may be *white guilt* or a general feeling that everyone is implicated, regardless of their race	

Shame	A.3	Participants express feeling a sense of shame either because they are white or because S.R. is generally shameful for society as a whole	
Sadness	A.4	Participants express feeling sad in response to learning/talking about S.R.	
Shock	A.5	Participants express feeling shocked as a result of learning about the existence, pervasiveness or severity of S.R.	
Discomfort	A.6	Participants express feeling uncomfortable with learning or talking about S.R.	
Disappointment	A.7	Participants express feeling disappointed in themselves or others (including institutions) for upholding S.R.	"I'm disappointed that my public education left this out completely." (King, Assignment 2)
Appreciation/Engagement	A.8	Participants express gratitude for participating in the project; participant comments indicate engagement in academic activities	"I would love to be able to type in a zip code and be directed to articles and topics related to a specific location, in addition to selected topics from the tabs." (King, Assignment 1)
Hope	A.9	Participants express feeling hopeful that systemic racism can/will be addressed/improved.	
Sympathy/empathy	A.10	Participants express feelings of sympathy and/or empathy for people subject to systemic racism	

B. Taking action (or not): Participants discuss whether any action should be taken regarding systemic racism, whether it is possible to do anything about it, and if so, what should be done			
Code name	Code label	Definition	Example
Can't do anything about it	B.1	Participants express pessimism about the possibility of changing or fixing the problem of S.R.	
Taking action	B.2	Participants discuss whether any action could or should be taken in response to S.R., including discussing what the action should be and/or how to take the action; refers only to taking specific tangible actions	
Sub-code: Wanting/planning to take action	B.2.a	Participants discuss wanting or planning to take some form of tangible action in response to SR	
We should be teaching each other about S.R.	B.3	Participants express the need for people (especially white people) to teach each other about S.R.; <mark>can include the importance of knowing about SR (e.g. "it's important for people to know…")</mark>	
Sub-code: Self-directed learning	B.3.a	Participants mention doing their own research or autonomous learning about S.R.	"A quick Google search shows that manslaughter sentences in California are between 3 to 11 years in prison." (Cunningham, Assignment 1)

Code name	Code label	Definition	Example
Placing responsibility	B.4	Participants discuss where the responsibility lies (i.e., in individuals, institutions, etc.) for S.R. and its solutions	
Sub-code: Self-responsibility	B.4.a	Participants refer to their own individual responsibility for S.R.	
Sub-code: Other individual responsibility	B.4.b	Participants refer to other individuals' responsibility for S.R. (as opposed to themselves).	
Sub-code: Institutional responsibility	B.4.c	Participants refer to the responsibility of social institutions for S.R.	

C. Knowing about systemic racism: Participants discuss whether they have knowledge of systemic racism, and the role of that knowledge (or lack thereof) in teaching people about it

Code name	Code label	Definition	Example
Previous knowledge/debate	C.1	Participants refer to and/or describe the extent to which they already know about S.R. and/or the extent to which they have already had discussions or debates on the subject; can include not being surprised by what they learned through the assignment	

Sub-code: Source of S.R. education	C.1.a	Participants name people and institutions as sources of learning about S.R.; code should be applied with the name of the source		"I've only heard about [the Rodney King beating/LA riots] through comedians" (Cunningham, Assignment 1) "I've had few supervisors and peers that were Black, and after discussions with them I realized how difficult racism was for them in the military." (Cunningham, Assignment 2)
Sub-code: Imagining/anticipating instantiations of SR	C.1.b	Participants imagine or anticipate how SR manifests based on some previous knowledge or understanding of SR		
Learned something new	C.2	Participants state that they didn't know about S.R. and/or that they are learning about it, or some aspect of it, for the first time as a result of the assignment; does not include learning something new in the past or some other way besides the assignment. (Note: In order to double code with C.3, participants have to say they didn't know and/or refer to specific pieces of info they likely didn't have before.)		
Sub-code: Being surprised	C.2.a	Participants describe being surprised by what they learned about SR through the assignment		

Having a realization	C.3	Participants describe a specific realization or greater understanding about S.R. as a result of learning something new about the subject that changes their worldview. This code can be applied even if they don't mention specific information they acquired, or if what they learned is abstract.	
Gaps in understanding	C.4	Participants indicate current misunderstanding or lack of knowledge about S.R.; includes mistaking the difference between S.R. and individual racism *Note*: does not apply to participants' self-awareness of gaps in understanding (which is covered by D.11)	"many Black individuals in the military do not have the resources they need to advance their military career. " (Cunningham, Assignment 2) "The Picket House in Bellingham, for example, stood as a clear reminder that the white settlers viewed themselves as "keepers of the peace" for the "uncivilized", "unfriendly" Native Americans in the area." (Langager, Assignment 1) "Japanese people also suffered from racism, as many considered immigrants as a barrier to the procurement of jobs, resources or other desirable belongings, a refrain against immigrants heard time and time again" (LeClair, Assignment 2)

	Sub-code: Belief in Just World	C.4.a	Participant comments indicate belief in universal moral fairness (Lerner, 1980)	"What makes it even more ridiculous is while the Nooksack tribe are fishing, hunting, and gathering they aren't "allowed" to profit off their food, but only use it to survive." (Grimstad, Assignment 1) "What was most difficult to understand is how some people, in the face of these recent racist incidences, were continuing to defend the commemoration of Robert E. Lee. " (Langager, Assignment 2)
	Sub-code: Universalizing white perspective	C.4.b	Participants illustrate thinking within a lens that centers and privileges whiteness, or otherwise assumes (implicitly or explicitly) that a white perspective is universal/normal.	"It is very easy to take a step back and decry it as a non-issue, something that did not happen here. Racism is typically associated with the South, while the Northwest feels like the innocent brother who is only guilty by association. " (Leclair, Assignment 1) " these events took place in a place that is not typically associated with racism when compared to other areas of the nation, predominately the south. " (Leclair, Assignment 1)

Sub-code: Misperceiving progress	C.4.c	Participant comments reflect false belief in North American progress in reducing S.R. over time	"It is also surprising many of these acts towards Chinese emigrants happened after slavery was abolished, and before Washington was recognized as a state; A time when you would expect citizens to be open to immigrants." (Cunningham, Assignment 1) "It is also hard to believe that the signs of the Pickett house were up until August 2017, that seems like far too long." (Grimstad, Assignment 1) "Even after nearly thirty years, police brutality against black people across the country is an ongoing problem. " (King, Assignment 1) "in my mind's eye, racism of this nature is something that existed and began to end with the Dust Bowl. " (Leclair, Assignment 1)
Reflecting on Previous Ignorance	C.5	Participants describe/reflect on their own prior lack of knowledge about S.R.; must include some elaboration beyond not knowing about SR in the past (may often be double coded with C.3)	"I was -- at one-point -- part of the crowd that didn't think racism was a problem in the military." (Cunningham, Assignment 2) "Before reading through the map, I understood gentrification to be the slow remodeling and "upgrading" of a poor neighborhood to meet the demands of the hip, young professionals moving into the area. While I understood there was a negative connotation, my grasp of the historical events in gentrified neighborhoods around our region was clearly lacking." (Langager, Assignment 1)

Identifying Miseducation	C.6	Participants name people and institutions as sources of previous lack of knowledge about S.R.; (code should be applied with the name of the source in the notes)	"as child I went to pioneer park to learn about how it was like to live in the pioneer days while in elementary school multiple times. I don't ever remember being taught how the settlers treated the native people." (Grimstad, Assignment 1)

D. Making sense of systemic racism: Participants discuss the ways in which they (or people in general) "make sense" of S.R., including finding parallels to other forms of oppression, relating personal experience, asking questions, and relating theory and course material.

Code name	Code label	Definition	Example
Seeing theory happen	D.1	Participants relate theoretical concepts to what they learned from the assignment or to the concept of SR itself	
Finding parallels	D.2	Any process by which participants relate other forms of systemic oppression/marginality to understanding S.R. (e.g., sexism, classism, etc.)	
Relating personal experience	D.3	Participants refer to some personal experience (for themselves or others) while discussing S.R.	
Sub-code: Physical proximity	D.3.a	Participants refer to having physical proximity to a site on the map (must be for an extended or meaningful period of time, e.g. growing up near the site)	

Why don't people discuss S.R.?	D.4	Participants question/discuss the reasons that people in general don't talk about S.R. (i.e., because of discomfort, feeling incompetent, etc. *Does not include lack of knowledge*)		
Analyzing privileges	D.5	Participants discuss their own or other people's privilege related to or resulting from S.R.		
Understanding the role of resistance	D.6	Participants discuss the ways in which people do, have or could resist S.R. (e.g., organizing, protest, legislation, etc.), including discussions of why resistance occurs		
	Sub-code: Understanding action in context	D.6.a	Participants exhibit understanding acts of resistance in historical and social context of S.R.	"I'm not surprised there was uproar and ensuing riots after the verdict." (Cunningham, Assignment 1)
Perspective taking	D.7	Participants talk about the experiences of other people in relation to S.R., and discuss what the experience must have been like for other people.		
Questioning systems & institutions	D.8	As a result of learning about/discussing S.R., participants raise questions about the role of social systems and institutions in maintaining S.R.; includes loss of faith in such systems/institutions		
	Connecting systems	D.8.a	Participants make/refer to connections between two or more intersecting social systems that maintain S.R.	

Sub-code: Distrust in Authority Figures & Institutions	D.8.b	Participants indicate understanding that authority figures and institutions are unreliable sources for informing and about responding to S.R.	"Recently, president Trump stated that racism in the military is no longer a problem. Many would disagree." (Cunningham, Assignment 2)
Sub-code: Institutional Blame	D.8.c	Participants explicitly point blame at certain institutions (e.g., public schools, police, government) for upholding S.R.; may often be double coded with Code A.1 (Anger)	"It is hard for progress to be made when the President of the United States and the Commander in Chief says things that implies racism is not a problem in the military. This creates a system that ignores the issues that Black individuals face in the military and represents how the President is making systemic racism in the military worse. It allows people ignore the issues, while also belittling the problem Black individuals face in the military." (Cunningham, Assignment 2) "I'm disappointed that my public education left this out completely. " (King, Assignment 2)
Sub-code: Understanding Intentionality	D.8.d	Participants assert the deliberateness of institutional policies and structures in upholding S.R.	"Developers also planned for segregation, this is one of the more shocking things to me. " (Grimstad, Assignment 2) "city planners seem to have covered up and nearly erased the historical significance in these areas." (Langager, Assignment 1)
Sub-code: Understanding Technologies	D.8.e	Participants refer to specific strategies used by institutions to uphold S.R.	"each of these unilateral Acts were designed to hurt Chinese, and only Chinese immigrants, enacted on the orders of the highest levels of government. " (LeClair, Assignment 2)

Acknowledging S.R. today		D.9	Participants acknowledge the presence of S.R. in the current time	"I feel it is important to bring attention to this because problems still exist in the military." (Cunningham, Assignment 2)
	Sub-code: Connecting past to present	D.9.a	Participants relate previous racist policies and structures to disparities today	"By not allowing families of color to purchase homes in the 1930's it has created inequalities that are still present today as well racism in the real estate industry. " (Grimstad, Assignment 2)
Acknowledging SRCP as source of understanding		D.10	Participants explicitly attribute their understanding of S.R. to the SRCP assignments	"By having the locations pinned on a map you can visually see that systemic racism is and has happened all over. Systemic racism is not confined to certain states, it has no boundaries." (Grimstad, Assignment 1) "This is an amazing and powerful project and tool to help disseminate crucial current and historical information about racism in our country." (King, Assignment 1) "Learning about the historical events and present-day implications covered in the SRCP project were a powerful reality check. Exploring the map opened my eyes to the ways in which separate historical events feed into the overarching problem of systemic racism" (Langager, Assignment 1)
Acknowledging current problematic thinking		D.11	Participants acknowledge the problematic nature of their own thinking/understanding about SR	

Code name	Code label	Definition	Example
Sub-code: Acknowledging current complicity in S.R.	D.11.a	Participants acknowledge their own or others' complicity in maintaining S.R.; depends on use of the present tense.	
Sub-code: Acknowledging problematic public discourse	D.11.b	Participants refer to the problematic nature of the thinking of people in general as a result of their socialization to be ignorant of SR; must be a generalization rather than about specific individuals.	
It shouldn't be this way	D.12	Participants' comments reflect a belief about how things should or shouldn't be in regards to SR	
Apprehending contradictions	D.13	Participants' comments reflect an understanding or engagement with social contradictions related to SR	

E. Denial, rejection & avoidance: Participants describe the ways in which people (including themselves) deny, reject, or express skepticism about the concept of systemic racism; includes seeking to avoid the topic of SR and/or downplaying their own role in or responsibility for SR.

Code name	Code label	Definition	Example
Denial/rejection	E.1	Participants deny or reject the existence or significance of S.R. and/or discuss the ways in which other people deny or reject.	
Sub-code: Denial/rejection-self	E.1.a	Participants deny or reject the existence or significance of S.R.	

Sub-code: Denial/rejection-others	E.1.b	Participants discuss ways in which other people deny/reject SR	
Skepticism	E.2	Participants express skepticism about the existence or significance of S.R., but don't outright reject or deny it, and/or discuss the ways in which other people express skepticism	
Sub-code: Appeals to evidence	E.2.a	Participants point to lack of evidence as justification for denying/rejecting S.R.; should be double-coded with E.1.a	"According to the author, whose name I was not able to find, blacks were primarily limited to housing in the downtown and East Central neighborhoods." (LeClair, Assignment 1)
We are all the same	E.3	Participants reject, deny or avoid the issue of S.R. specifically by downplaying the significance of race, invoking equality rhetoric, and/or discuss the ways in which other people do these things	
Minimizing institutional racism	E.4	Participants downplay the significance of S.R.; including by claiming that racism is primarily an individual problem, and/or discuss the ways in which other people downplay SR	

Appeals to personal responsibility	E.5	Participants deny or reject SR by claiming that problems associated with it are primarily the responsibility of individuals subjected to SR, and/or discuss the ways in which other people appeal to personal responsibility	
Drawing false equivalents	E.6	Participants reject, deny, avoid or otherwise downplay the significance of SR by claiming that other forms of oppression/marginalization are equivalent to SR	
Deflecting blame	E.7	Participants' comments reflect a downplaying of their own role, complicity in or responsibility for SR.	

Appendix D. Data

Text Segment	Participant #	Uncoded	Coder name	Notes
felt angry as a response to how racism embedded into the foundation of the US enables these instances of racism to still happen today.	6	A.1	Nesha and Sarah	Double code w D.9a
I feel neutral, yet sad that systemic racism will always be a part of Capital.	15	A.4	Nesha	
The information that I gathered about my site did not surprise me, which disheartened me about the town and state that I grew up in. I already knew about some forms of the racism that has existed and still exists there, and every time I learn something knew I become more and more disheartened.	10	A.4	sarah	participant is sad
The information that I gathered about my site did not surprise me, which disheartened me about the town and state that I grew up in.	10	A.4	Nesha	
I feel sad, which is I guess is the most simple word for it, that I did	4	A.4	Sarah	main point is that it made them sad

not know so many of the locations highlighted on the map				
it was crazy to see how it was literally right where I am and how these are still lasting today.	8	A.5	Sarah	participant is experiencing disbeleif/shock
The large amount of pin points and examples spread out over the country is a shocking visual representation, and it was easy to click through and explore.	6	A.5	nesha	
it made me feel very shocked and appalled	4	A.5	Sarah	stating exact emotion coded
It was very alarming to see the ways in which history has ignored the abuses and systematic racism.	4	A.5	Sarah and nesha	Alarm feels different from shock-keeping this here to consult with brett and nesha
As someone who considers themselves an environmentalist, I was horrified by the lack of knowledge surrounding environmental history in environmental movements and thought it was important to share.	4	A.5	nesha	
it was difficult to read about these instances and look at the map knowing that the large about of racism we read about was only a minuscule fraction of the racism that exists in the U.S. and elsewhere.	10	A.6	sarah	discomfort
a bit stressful but its good to find out	8	A.6	Sarah	
I felt uncomfortable with the fact that lots of the information we saw isn't more well known.	7	A.6	Brett	The main point is discomfort
Reading injustices makes me think of how systemic racism is in our society, and it makes me feel shitty, and uncomfortable.	5	A.6	Sarah	Participant is expressing their discomfort when reading about tangible instances of systemic racism
I didn't feel good but it made sense	5	A.6		the point they were making was discomfort
it helps to see things visually	8	A.8	Sarah	expressing appreciation for the visual format of the map
its cool to see things on a smaller scale that are in places of importance to you and then be able to zoom out and see it in context	8	A.8	Sarah	Appreciating the project as a resource
I do wish to see it in the future with more points, to see how many people were able to learn more	7	A.8	sarah	hopefullness

about systemic racism in their spaces.				
I felt that this map embodied this and it was great to explore it's functions and imagine how it will continue to develop.	5	A.8	sarah	participant is focusing on appreciation of this resource
I'm really thankful for all those who've done such extensive research on this topic and that the histories of the neighborhood are exposed and accessible documents	3	A.8	Sarah	new code A8a for gratitude for previous work done by others before this project
it was affirming to see everything on the map	15g	A.8	sarah	from class coding
made me more comfortable regarding institutional racism	5	A.8	sarah	appreciation
I feel glad that I can contribute to such an important project, and hopeful that discussing these issues will open the eyes of some who believe that racism does not exist in their town	10	A.9	sarah	participant is hopeful that this work will help others-may also be coded as denial?
I'm leaving the space with the intent of researching my town's history. I know my home state of NH is a systemically racist state, but I do want to dig more into my hometown and it's surrounding towns.	7	B.2.a	Nesha & brett	
I feel motivated to continue to educate myself on the issues surrounding systemic racism and how to be a better ally in fighting against it.	4	B.2.a	Sarah	motivated to take action-the action here is educating themselves
I feel like I want to do research on this area as well given that I again am part of the perpetuation of gentrification in Main South simply by existing at Clark	3	B.2.a	Sarah	the main point is the participant wants to do their own research
intentionally create programming that speaks to their experiences	3	B.2.a	Sarah	pariticipant is suggesting an action, but not descriptively
It reminds me of how i want to be a part of the solution and motivates me to continue to educate myself, and check myself, my biases, and my understanding and "my history."	5	B.2.a	Sarah	wanting to take some kind of action-though is small
I try to continue to push my understandings of the systemically racist social structures by reading, listening, and engaging in books,	5	B.3.a	Sarah	Is this b2a or b3a

music, videos, poems and activities that regard such				
This exercise made me realize that I need to pay better attention to the environments I am, and see how, in front of my face, I see people of color being limited.	5	B.3.a	Sarah	
white mentors should be engaging in active antiracism outside of this training as well, and held accountable for doing so in some capacity.	10	B.4	Sarah	participant is expressing that mentors should be held liable by the program
We also need to ensure that we do not allow for the use of "white women's tears" to get out of uncomfortable situations and that we put the girls before ourselves.	4	B.4	Sarah	need help-subcode or no
I am leaving this space with a reminder that I need to continue to educate myself, read about these instances and systemic issues, and go out of my way to educate other white people in my life since a lot of our education on systemic racism was entirely absent or lacking.	10	B.4.a	Sarah	b3, b4, b4a or b4b??????
I was familiar with some of the events and not others	5	C.1		
I was familiar with some of them	4	C.1	Sarah	is about previous background knowledge
I know a lot about the histories of redlining and systemic racism as it exists in housing and schooling because of redlining.	3	C.1	Sarah and Nesha	The main point is that they had previous knowledge about systemic racism
I've always known Washington state is problematic in terms of systematic racism and segregation, so it was affirming to see everything on the map.	15g	C.1		Should this be d3? For relating personal experience? Or c1a? Sources of education
This has reinforced my knowledge of systemic racism, about how law's and systems perpetuate racist ideals and beliefs. My understanding hasn't changed, I've learned about systemic racism in some of my courses at Clark.	7	C.1.a	Sarah	what is this person ~really~ saying? Why am I so suspicious that this reinforced their knowledge os sytemic racism? Do I want them to be 'wrong' in some way-they could be justifying this for all sorts of reasons
Nothing has changed for me given I knew about this from classes and	3	C.1.a	Sarah	The main point of what they're saying is that they had learned

such but more so from my own life as a person of color navigating our racialized world				about this from classes but mostly from being a person of color
I felt educated, learning more about the bill that was signed because I only knew a surface level amount of information beforehand.	7	C.2		
Even for the events I already knew about, I still gained information which reaffirmed and pushed my understanding.	5	C.2	sarah	
It also made me realize how the racial demographic and geographical pockets (I'm not sure if this is an actual word, but what I mean is the different races and ethnicities, and income-levels that live in one part of a city compared to others?) of Olympia influences the type of students who go to different schools.	15g	C.3	sarah	participant had a realization from the info
I found out that the KKK was active in my New Hampshire town from 1989 to 1990.	15	C.3	nesha and sarah	
how its literally everywhere. its not like one person being rude its an entire thing.	8	C.3	Sarah	c3-having a realization that changed their worldview
I was familiar with some events that I read about, but there were still countless others that I was not aware of. Reading these examples made me think about how many contemporary examples of systemic racism I do not know of or do not see.	6	C.3	nesha and sarah	
Question context: (we can use conversations about systemic racism) "to look at girls as real people in full context and not just as people that we need to make better and "solve" or fix"	8	C.4	Sarah	I don't know how to code this. It feels like there's some sort of deficit lens going on here. "not just" seems to imply that the participant thinks we are already doing this. Does the participant not already see the girls as real people?
(question context: As a female aligned organization, how might systemic racism manifest itself uniquely in this program?) "I think that because we are already a marginalized group that it might	8	C.4	Sarah	

show up more because of people's intersectionality or lack of"				
I think that its not just like "only white people are attracted to akog" but that its something engrained that akog is just one example of a bigger issue.	8	C.4	Sarah	new code? not interpersonal but insitutional? participant seems to not quite understand that systemic racism has interpersonal effects
people are oppressed from every direction and that I cant "solve" that in the five minutes interaction that I have with them each week, but can try to better understand them as a person and what they bring to the table.	8	C.4	Sarah	
Knowing that systematic racism is an issue everyone cares about	15g	C.4.a	Sarah	participant is indicating that their belief that systemic racism is an issue and important is a universal one-implying belief in a just world
I think systemic and systematic racism are terms that feel "far" away from us, in that we don't always feel its effects, so I think we all need to get more up close and personal with it in order to see how it impacts our lives and the communities we live in.	15g	C.4.b	sarah	stressing importance of these convos and trainings
(question for context: How does our awareness of systemic racism (and its intersections) as youth workers influence the relationships that we cultivate with the youth who come to our program?): "I think that being more aware that not everyone has the same life experiences as you and that they might be dealing with more stuff and have a different mind set every saturday is important to remember".	8	C.4.b	Sarah	This seems like they're viewing systemic racism as a burden that youth carry-that oppresses them. It seems like they're deflecting it as a "them" problem. Either c4b-univeralizing white perspective-because they're viewing systemic racism as "more stuff" and a thos experiencing racism as having a 'different mindset" or e7-deflection
I was familiar with a couple of them, but most of the stories I have never heard of. This made me feel disheartened, as I have been for a while, about the education (or lack thereof) that I received in middle school and high school. It also made me think critically about the	10	C.6	sarah	

antiracist education at Clark - it's present in some courses and is prioritized by some professors, but they are in the minority.				
In school, I was predominantly taught that racism was a thing of the past and mainly existed in the South; however, racism is still here, and manifested in extreme ways only 30 years ago (and I'm sure to this day in ways that I don't know about) in my northern town.	10	C.6	sarah	participant is expressing their understanding of the problematic discourse.
It was great to see a very organized map and reliable resource of so many events that I never learned about in school	10	C.6	Sarah	participant is identifying source of miseducation
This has contradicted what i have learned in school and been tought how racism was in the south of the us and not near us	8	C.6	Sarah	Participant is identifying how the education system misinformed her of raceism
Having a majority white space will always result in a lens of whiteness that skews our understanding of race and power.	6	D.1	sarah and nesha	participant is demonstrating their understanding of systemic racism and power
It really reinforced the ways that history works to erase racist pasts and histories	4	D.10	Sarah	they seemed to be stating that they gained deeper uderstanding from this project
I am leaving this space with a furthered understanding of the numerous ways that white supremacy and systematic racism have infiltrated every aspect of society.	4	D.10	Sarah	
While I knew that racism is still very prevalent, I had never thought of it through looking at a map which highlights the prevalence even more.	4	D.10		
even though I know this is happening in NH, I don't know what efforts are being made against it	6	D.11	Sarah	???not sure what to code this one. The participant is acknowledging gaps in their own knowledge-lack of knowledge of resistance-knowledge of instituional harms but lack of knowledge about resistance
it reminds me of all that I don't know, and while I don't like to think I am, I wonder if I am part of the problem	5	D.11.a	Sarah	

I was surprised at how many examples on the map were super recent.for example, I read one about housing discrimination in Long Island that was from 2019, which surprised me because people tend to think "these sorts of things don't happen anymore."	6	D.11.b	sarah	is this d11.b or d13
knowing that it wasn't just the south that was racist and it continues to be an issue now	8	D.13	Sarah	refrencing social contradictions
I learned that racism isn't a stand-alone concept, and systemic racism is multifaceted and is interconnected with so many other areas of life and in policy-making. Race and class, for example.	15	D.2	sarah	participaant is explaining that they have realized the intersections of systemic racism
In this program, systemic racism may manifest at the intersection of racism and sexism, which will compound the negative effects on the girls. As mentors who relate to womanhood/girlhood in some capacity, we can all understand the effects of sexism. That being said, it is important for our white mentors to keep in mind that we will never have the same experience of sexism or discrimination in general as BIPOC.	10	D.2	sarah	intersection of race and gender at akog
We might assume that we understand more than we do because we share one marginalized identity with one another.	6	D.2	sarah	?
many of our mentors and much of our leadership is made up of people who are white. Clark is a predominantly white institution due in part to its high cost as systemic racism plays a large role in socioeconomic status.	4	D.2	sarah	racism and socioeconomic status intersection is the main point
White women are common perpetrators of systemic racism as some believe that because they are women they are just as oppressed as people of color, which is a take that lacks intersectionality and nuance. In our discussions surrounding gender equality and	4	D.2	nesha	

racism we need to ensure that we are not pitting the two issues against each other to make ourselves more comfortable.				
Systemic racism has everything to do with everything.	3	D.2	Sarah	the participant doesn't explicitly state any intersections such as gender or class but it seems that they're trying to emphasize the way that systemic racism embodies all parts of life
Systemic racism exists through the fact that private college is not a super accessible space and thus mostly white students attend which has caused this group to be mostly white as well	3	D.2	sarah and nesha	
It was a part of my childhood and school.	8	D.3	sarah and nesha	contradiction between coding- split into two codes
Exploring the map was educational, but I felt disconnected from it since I don't have any relationships with the points on the map so far. I do know that this will change over time as more people contribute to the map.	7	D.3	Brett	This is about the lack of personal experrience
It was where I went to high school!	15	D.3.a	Nesha and sarah	
This is the town that I was born in, went to middle and high school in, and have lived in since the age of 12.	10	D.3.a	Nesha	
Where I grew up	8	D.3.a	Sarah	physical proximity/connection to site
it is where I grew up	8	D.3.a	Sarah	participant grew up here
It's where I grew up	7	D.3.a	Nesha	
I grew up here and have all of my family here	6	D.3.a	Nesha	
I was first drawn to look at NYC because that's where I'm from	3	D.3.a	Nesha	Nesha and Sarah switched Sarah's code into two parts to match nesha's
Harlem is where I've grown up	3	D.3.a	Sarah	the participant notes their extended physical proximity in the area

Systemic racism will manifest itself in the different power dynamics between mostly white and financially 'well-off' female students and female students of color. The racial and potentially financial disparity between mentors and students would inevitably create a divide in how each group understands the other. With that, there needs to be an acknowledgment of privilege and how systemic racism is a building block for that, as well as how it benefits certain populations and demographics while hurting others.	15g	D.5	sarah	analizing privledges
white students may have more energy and time to commit to a club like this because systemic racism has led to white students not having to do things such as devoting time to taking extra courses, working as a student (or working multiple jobs), needing time to devote to mental health and general well being, as much as students of Color who are constantly being affected by the systemic racism present all around us, both in general society and within our school.	10	D.5	Sarah	analizing privledges
I am thinking about how systemic racism makes people feel more comfortable perpetuating instances of individual racism... It is built into the system and the system works to the advantage of white people	6	D.5	Sarah	$$"""""3'
I thought a lot about my own life and living in Harlem as though we are a multiracial family, we are of middle class and definitely contribute to the increasing expenses in the city	3	D.5	Sarah	This is about positionality and personal responsibility-also torn if this is d5 or not
To be aware of the positionality most mentors have as most of them are white	3	D.5	Sarah	participant is acknowledging racial positionality
When seeing how people counter that, and create alternative maps or destroy borders or repurpose or	5	D.6	sarah	participant is talking mainly abou the role of non-specific resistance

return land, I think that is a really significant strategy of resistance.				
When seeing how people counter that, and create alternative maps or destroy borders or repurpose or return land, I think that is a really significant strategy of resistance.	3	D.6	nesha	resistance
In a predominantly white org, when racism occurs, the minority POC feel more pressure in "representing" the POC population within the org. POC might feel more pressure to assimilate, and feel limited to express and present their true selves, disabling the benefits from their engagement.	5	D.7	sarah	participant is imagining the experiences of POC
I saw lots of similar events happening in history such as repeated abuses at the hands of police as well as the ways laws are implemented to disenfranchise and exclude people from society. I made these connections largely by looking at the repeated events thought the country and history.	4	D.8		
I was not surprised by this as history is largely written by white people.	4	D.8.b	Sarah and nesha	main point is that white people aren't good historical sources for history and have controlled the narrative maybe also c1b
This environmental racism is not a one off occurance and I remember when it got significant media attention, and what's so dangerous about the ways our media functions is that it is forgotten so quickly despite the fact that the majority black population in Flint is still! experiencing the affects of this issue.	3	D.8.b	Sarah	This is about the unreliability of the media to accurately inform the public of manifestations of systemic racism
Clark's marketing of AKOG as a white savior organization also has a large impact on the whiteness of the program.	7	D.8.c	Sarah	blaming institutional marketing
It made me think about my sister and other family members that are still in the public school systems in NH, and how their education regarding the racist history of the US and NH is going to be limited.	7	D.8.c	sarah	they are finding schools as the main source of teaching about race and racism

Being a part of a predominately white institution has a large systemic role on AKOG being predominately white	7	D.8.c		
While the situations are different, the government is shown to not care for the basic rights of its oppressed people. In any way possible, the government goes out of its way to hurt minority groups in hopes of their profit.	5	D.8.d	Sarah	
When reading about Flint Michigan which I knew a bit about beforehand, I think the map did a good job explaining the intentional and continuous state-imposed violence within Flint.	3	D.8.d	Sarah and Nesha	The main point is the deliberate nature of the state's polcies
~~Those who have had the power to create the maps dominantly accepted by our society (and thus create borders, displace peoples, take land, and extract resources/capital) has exclusively belonged to those privleged by white supremacy, patriarchy, colonialism, captialism, etc.~~	3	D.8.e	nesha	
I was surprised at how many examples on the map were super recent.for example, I read one about housing discrimination in Long Island that was from 2019, which surprised me because people tend to think "these sorts of things don't happen anymore." Another similar example from 1910 talked about efforts in Minneapolis to keep neighborhoods homogenous / same race. The amount of time between these examples is huge, yet not much has changed.	6	D.9.a	sarah	The participant is connecting past to present-perhaps needs new subcode or a way of narrowing down the subcode d9a to also incclude the
Systemic racism exists through the fact that private college is not a super accessible space and thus mostly white students attend which has caused this group to be mostly white as well	3	D.9	Sarah	participant is pointing out how systemic racism is manifestsed into modern systems
Boston bussing and the METCO program still remains today and now	8	D.9.a	Sarah	Connecting their past to present

A lot of the historical events fall have a cause/effect relationship with the present. The Portland spot on the map talked about how the state's constitution barred POC from living in the state, and that definitely has a large effect on the state being extremely white.	7	D.9.a	Sarah	past to present
Systemic racism has to do with the history of AKOG, why it was created, who created it, and what our goals were and are now	6	D.9.a	sarah	??? Seeing the history of systemic racism in their organization
I really like how the map showed the linkages between history and current day.	3	D.9.a	Sarah	The main point is that there are parallels between past and pesent
I wasn't surprised by any of the information I found but it was jarring to see the disparities in numbers.	15	E.7	sarah	participant is deflecting blame by presuming prior awareness
I wasn't aware of most of the events I read about, a lot of them felt significant to the region and I'm not from the regions that were listed	7	E.7	sarah	it seems like the participant is justifying why they don't know about these events
it felt like I didn't learn anything new because I was doing all the work on my own / thinking alone and not hearing new perspectives	6	E.7	sarah	`participant seems to be minimizing the value of their own reflection on systemic racism`$\partial ß\$$
Mentors should be better versed in the history of systemic racism in this country, institution , and program. Mentorship as a concept should be better understood so that people don't assume they are in a change making position without doing actual change making work.	6	E.7	Sarah	the prompt used we, but the participant answered in the third person. Feels like they're removing their peronal responsibility-e7 or it could be a new code of insitutional deflection/blame
I don't think my understanding of systemic racism has changed, that being said I know have more examples for me to grasp the scope, power and control of systematic racism.	5	E.7	sarah	
. I felt angry as a response to how racism embedded into the foundation of the US enables these instances of racism to still happen today.	6	Uncoded	Sarah	double code as a1 and d9a

Being aware of systemic racism helps us as youth workers see a little bit more insight into the experiences of youth in the program. But, this isn't enough. Being aware of systemic racism is only a surface level amount of knowledge, but it allows us to think more critically and listen closer to the youth we encounter.	7	Uncoded	sarah	f1 new code
I think that the training was helpful in learning about my personal connections to systemic racism, but I am having trouble connecting it to AKOG/mentoring in general. I do think it was beneficial, but I'm not sure if it's completely connected to AKOG as a training program.	7	Uncoded	sarah	f2-dual coded with c4
Conversations about systemic racism can be used to dissemble some of our biases, and help us be able to value the mentees more.	7	Uncoded	Sarah	f1 new code
Hopefully this awareness ensures that we do not go into working with youth as a way to feel as if we are saving them or perpetuating any other white savior narrative.	4	Uncoded	Sarah	f3
This awareness will hopefully positively influence the relationships we cultivate with the youth through ensuring that they feel heard and respected in our program and that we do our best to not perpetuate systematic racism in our work.	4	Uncoded	Sarah	new code f1
As one of the few people of color in this mostly white organization, it is important for me to show up for the girls and hopefully be seen as a mentor or mentor type figure for them.	3	Uncoded	sarah and nesha	b4a and new code f4
It helps us be better mentors and recognize the girls in all their complexities	3	Uncoded	Sarah	new code f1

Appendix E. Resources

Below are a list of resources that I have found personally helpful in understanding and deconstructing my whiteness and epistemologies of ignorance.

The Fitchburg State Library Anti-racism Resources:
https://fitchburgstate.libguides.com/c.php?g=1046516&p=7593704

Ibram X. Kendi's Antiracist Reading List:
https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/29/books/review/antiracist-reading-list-ibram-x-kendi.html

Appendix F. Consent Form

Dear AKOG Mentors,

My name is Sarah Krambeer and I am one of the Younger Girls Curriculum Coordinators. I'm a senior at Clark double majoring in Psychology and Community, Youth, and Education Studies (CYES). Next year, I'm planning on completing the MAT program and hopefully will become a third-grade ESL teacher. As part of my major in CYES, I'm required to do a praxis (similar to a capstone) project. I've been a part of AKOG since my freshman year, and I'm interested in understanding systemic racism and youth work.

As a part of my project, I'm working with Professor Brett Coleman to implement a systemic racism training for AKOG mentors. The training will take place after AKOG and last for two Saturdays. We plan for the training to last for about an hour to an hour and a half; I'm hoping to study how mentors understand systemic racism as well as work to make conversations about systemic racism a larger part of our training as mentors. I am hoping to study the training as part of my capstone research. I would love it if you would like to be part of the training and my research, but please know that your decision to participate in the training or consent to be part of my research or not will have no influence on your standing as a mentor with AKOG or how I see you as a peer. It is up to each of you if you would like to participate in my research. Even if you agree to participate, you can change your mind at any point, with no penalty whatsoever.

Procedures:

> This project is composed of two main components: the training and the research component. During the training, you will be asked to reflect on your experiences as a youth worker. My research hopes to collect data that will allow me to observe how systemic racism influences our positionality in spaces like AKOG. You do not have to participate in any aspect of the research to participate in the training. Each research aspect is optional. I plan to conduct an electronic survey at the beginning of the semester and halfway through the semester. I also plan to have consenting partnerships audiorecord their conversations and complete a guided survey together after the training. These audio recordings will help me identify what is happening and how we as mentors communicate with each other. I will never record your interactions with youth. These recordings will be strictly for training. I will always let everyone know that I am audio recording before I begin. At any point, any mentor is welcome to request that I stop the recording. I will review the audio records, occasionally transcribe (write down) what was said, and reflect upon the implications of these interactions. I will always replace your name with a code number and exclude any information that could reveal your identity. Finally, I may reach out to consenting mentors to conduct a brief audio-recorded interview at the completion of the training. During the interview, you will be able to pause the recording at any time. You can choose to not answer any of the questions and I will attempt to make sure questions are not too personal or invasive. Only I and my advisor, Dr. Sarah Michaels, will have access to the data that is collected from this research.

Description of duration:

If you choose to participate in both the training and all aspects of my research, your total involvement will include roughly three hours over two Saturdays. 15 minutes after each AKOG session, two 10 minute surveys, and one 10 minute interview. Should you opt to engage in only some parts of this research, your time commitment would be adjusted accordingly.

Eligibility:

To participate in my research, you must be over the age of 18 and enrolled at Clark University as an undergraduate student. You must be a mentor working with All Kinds of Girls younger girls' program. All mentors who meet these requirements are welcome to participate in both the training and my research.

Potential Benefits:

Of the Peer mentoring pilot:

Personal Growth:

It should be noted that participating in this research may have positive benefits as you will have the opportunity to reflect on your positionality and understanding of systemic racism. It is possible that you may experience both personal and interpersonal growth as a result of participating in this research.

Academic growth:

Clark is a research institution and much of its academic coursework considers lenses of socioeconomic class, race, gender identity, religion...etc. in developing an understanding of many different complex issues. By working closely with a peer, you may be exposed to different perspectives in much more personal ways than you may be used to in the context of a classroom. This could potentially aid your ability to process and develop a broadened understanding of different life circumstances than your own. It is possible that these experiences may aid your complex understanding of the world and enrichen the perspective that you bring into the co-construction of knowledge at Clark.

Of participating in the research aspect:

Advancement of support for youth workers:

While there are no expected direct benefits from participation in this research, we do anticipate benefits to the society such as bridging the gap in the literature surrounding the experiences of Youth Workers. The findings of this data may aid future researchers in developing an understanding of how to assist youth workers in caring for not only their mentors but also each other. This research will build upon the research that Brett Coleman has been conducting for several years, and will work to help improve the quality of his systematic racism training. You may experience feelings of pride or a sense of meaning knowing that your experiences may help those who come after you.

Potential Risks:

Of Participating in the peer mentoring pilot:

Vulnerability:

This pilot research involves unpacking your perceptions of race and your experiences as youth work. You may share some statements that put you in a vulnerable position with the researchers. While there is a culture of embracing emotional vulnerability within the community of AKOG, it is possible that you may experience some difficult emotions as a result of this.

Confidentiality:

I plan to take every measure possible to ensure that your identity and information provided are protected. This being said, those who are in the study will likely be aware of the other participants in the study and may notice each other dropping off consent forms or staying after AKOG to meet with their peer mentor.

While I am bound to the ethical constraints of protecting the information you provide as a researcher, because of the unique partnership nature of this research, your partner is only bound to the promise to not disclose any information outside of the research study without your permission. I will have no control over if your partner breaks this promise to maintain your confidentiality, and thus there is an inherent risk that your confidentiality may be broken.

Of participating in the research aspect:

Confidentiality:

Should there be a breach in any confidentiality that allows others to identify you within the research, you may experience discomfort or social stigma, particularly if the data breach discloses information that goes against the social norms of the community that has access to it. In order to prevent this as much as possible, I will remove any identifiers from the data and will delete the key with participants' names and code numbers after the research has been completed.

Observance:
Like all instances of youth work, there is a possibility that you may experience discomfort regarding others' perceptions of your lived experience. To accommodate for this, you are welcome to ask me to stop recording or omit any section of my data that you would not like analyzed.

If you experience discomfort or emotional distress in relation to this research, please contact the Clark University Center for Counseling and Personal Growth at (508)-793-7678.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right to refuse to answer any question and participate in any study procedure without penalty. Your participation in this study will not affect your standing as an AKOG mentor. Should you wish you withdraw from the study at any time, please send me an email at skrambeer@clarku.edu or text me at (785)-691-8571.

Confidentiality:

All forms of data collected by my research will be kept strictly confidential. Only I and my advisor, Dr. Sarah Michaels, will have access to the data. All data will be stored digitally in a password-protected Google Drive. I will delete or shred any data that contains identifying information after I have de-identified it. This will occur within 24 hours for all types of data. I will always replace your name with a code number and exclude any information that could reveal your identity. All data will be deleted three years after the project's completion with the exception of any excerpts that may be incorporated into my final paper and potentially presented at academic conferences. If you change your mind at any point during my research, I will remove your words and replace them with 'xxx'. As this research and pilot mentoring program involves working closely with a peer, there is an inherent risk that confidentiality may be broken by your partner discussing what was said outside of the peer mentoring space. To help ensure confidentiality, please do not discuss the details or participants in this focus group outside of the session.

Compensation:

There will be no compensation for participation in this research.

Dss`s\6
Data Use:

The results of this research study may be presented used in my final praxis paper and presented at academic conferences. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study. The data from this study will be kept for three years following the completion of the research, as is in compliance with federal regulations.

Consent:

The sections below outline the types of data I would like to collect. You can say 'no' to any or all aspects of the research. If you say 'yes' and later change your mind, I will delete all of the data I've collected involving you within 24 hours. *If you would like to participate in my research, please indicate below what kinds of data you are comfortable with my collecting*. For your peace of mind, I will explicitly state when I am collecting information. For instance, I will always formally state that I will be recording an interview, so there is a clear distinction between social interaction and research.

I give consent to participate in the systematic racism training:
　　　___Yes　　　　___No

I give consent to be audio recorded during this study:
　　　___Yes　　　　___No

I give consent to participate in two electronic surveys during this study:
　　　___Yes　　　　___No

I give consent to participate in weekly paper surveys with my partner:
　　　___Yes　　　　___No

I give consent to participatein one audio recorded interview:
　　　___Yes　　　　___No

Participation in any of the above aspects is **optional.** You may consent to some and not to others. **<u>You can choose not to consent to any aspect of this project or all of them and you will still remain a full member of AKOG</u>**.

Consent to Data Collection:

I will not collect any data on you without your written consent. All data will be stored digitally in a password-protected drive which only I will have access to. All audio recordings, interviews, and written notes will be destroyed three calendar years after my research is completed with the exception of any excerpts that may be incorporated into my final paper and potentially presented at academic conferences.

Should I include any data I have collected on you in the final product of my research, I will change your name and exclude any information that could be used to identify you. If you are willing to allow me to collect some or all of the types of data listed above, please sign this form and return it to me, Sarah Krambeer. This project will take place from September 2021 until January 2022.

Concerns:

If you have any concerns or would like to ask a question, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. You can reach me by sending me an email at skrambeer@clarku.edu or calling/texting me at (785) 691-8571. Should you prefer, you may also reach out to my supervising professor, Dr. Sarah Michaels (she/hers). She can be reached at smichaels@clarku.edu.

I'm looking forward to this semester of AKOG. I appreciate all of you so much for everything you do for this program and the girls!

Sincerely,
Sarah Krambeer

I _____ (print name) give permission for Sarah Krambeer to collect the above information from me in and outside of AKOG in the Fall of 2021 and early Winter of 2022. By signing, I am affirming that I am 18 year of age or older.

Volunteer Signature: _____   Date: _____

This study has been approved by the Clark Committee for the Rights of Human Participants in Research and Training Programs (IRB). Any questions about human rights issues should be directed to the IRB Chair, Dr. Robert J. Johnston (508) 751-4619.

Appendix G. IRB Approval

Attachments:
- Determination for IRB Protocol #147 - Approved.pdf

Clark University IRB	*Expedited Protocol Approval*

To: Sarah Krambeer
From: Clark University IRB
Subject: Protocol #147 "The Power of Peer Mentoring Amongst Undergraduate Youth Workers: An Asset-Focused Intervention with the Mentors of All Kinds of Girls"
Date: 10/04/2021

The protocol The Power of Peer Mentoring Amongst Undergraduate Youth Workers: An Asset-Focused Intervention with the Mentors of All Kinds of Girls has been approved by the Clark University IRB under the rules for expedited review on 10/04/2021. **Research may begin.**

Investigator Responsibilities

- Investigators must keep all consent forms and research records on file for **three years** following the date of IRB approval. Faculty advisors are also obliged to keep, for three years, consent forms and records received from research projects undertaken by their students.
- The investigators must notify the IRB **immediately** of unanticipated problems that affect subject welfare through the adverse events submission process in Mentor.
- Any changes to this protocol must be submitted to the IRB for review through the amendment function in Mentor **prior to being implemented.**

Consent Form
If your protocol involves the use of a physical consent form (including those distributed as electronic files such as pdf), you must use a form with a stamp of approval from the Clark University IRB. The stamped consent form is attached to this email.

This protocol is approved without an expiration date. When you have completed work on the protocol, please return to Mentor and Terminate the protocol.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB.

Best of luck on the research.

Linda Cote
IRB Coordinator
licote@clarku.edu

Determination for IRB Protocol #147 - Approved

Citations

Alberta Civil Liberties Research Center, http://www.aclrc.com/cared

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