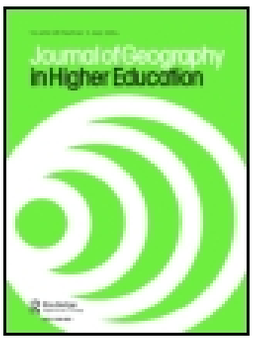

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ARTICLE

Reflections on operationalizing an anti-racism pedagogy: teaching as regional storytelling

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ABSTRACT

Responding to rising social tensions and ongoing theoretical and political changes in the study of geography, we advocate for greater operationalizing of anti-racism pedagogies within the field. Such pedagogies undermine long-standing geographic knowledge systems that marginalize and misrepresent people of color while also distorting and misinforming the worldviews of a White society. Drawing from classroom successes and uncertainties, five educators explore the anti-racist possibilities of geography education as a form of "regional storytelling." Regions, one of geography's formative constructs, play a central role within popular and academic understandings of racial differences and identities. Making exclusionary moral judgements about regions and associated populations has long been at the core of the colonization and racialization process. Contributors use reflexive storytelling – understood here as both a classroom instructional method and a way to create supportive spaces for educators to reflect on their praxis – to identify and discuss strategies for carrying out anti-racist, regionally-based teaching, the instructional decisions and challenges faced in the classroom, and perceptions of student response and anxieties. We also reflect on how the wider regional and racial positionalities of teachers and students shape the way an anti-racist pedagogy is enacted, interpreted, and realized within the higher education classroom.

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Introduction

This collaborative paper responds to ongoing theoretical and political changes in the discipline of geography, rising tensions within society, and a growing but still under-developed focus on racism within geography educational research (Esson, 2018). Specifically, we advocate for a greater focus within geography on operationalizing an anti-racism pedagogy, which actively rejects "the institutional and structural aspects of race and racism and explains how racism is manifested in various spaces [including schools], making the social construct of race visible" (King & Chandler, 2016, p. 4). An anti-racist pedagogy not only uses the

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classroom to explore the effects of racism, but also recognizes the role of educational institutions, practices, and practitioners in producing and reproducing racial inequality.

Building upon critical race theory's emphasis on using narratives to illuminate and explore racialized experiences, we explore the anti-racist possibilities of geography education as a form of "regional storytelling." Regions play a central role within popular and academic understandings of racial differences and identities and regional storytelling is envisioned as a way of bringing attention to the regional context of many popularly held ideas about race and racism. On a practical level, reflexive storytelling is used here to discuss strategies and challenges for producing an anti-racist knowledge of regions and regionalization that counters traditionally dominant and exclusionary geography education practices. This counter, regional storytelling – whether done within explicitly, regionally-oriented courses or within thematic courses – can introduce an anti-racism pedagogy to large numbers of students and help unlearn/relearn one of geography's foundational concepts.

Regional storytelling is envisioned as a way of acknowledging and reflecting on how the wider regional and racial positionalities of teachers and students shape the way an anti-racist pedagogy is enacted, interpreted, and realized within the classroom. We believe that critical self-reflection and dialogue on the part of educators is key to advancing pedagogical reform. Our intent is create a space for faculty to share and learn from not only their successes but also their frustrations, uncertainties, and tensions. A power imbalance is no doubt inscribed into our framework as we place importance on hearing the individual voices of contributing educators. Yet, educators are not solely responsible for engaging in critical regional storytelling. Anti-racist learning, like all learning, is co-constructed between faculty and student along with a host of social and institutional actors and structures inside and outside the classroom. We envision our discussion as an important first step in eventually collecting and unpacking the full range of stories, voices, and experiences necessary for operationalizing anti-racist geography education.

Background

The term "anti-racist pedagogy" dates back to at least the early 1980s. It ascended with the popularity of critical pedagogy (e.g., Giroux, 2004), which stresses preparing students as active citizens who recognize and struggle against inequality, along with critical race theory (e.g., Ortiz & Jani, 2010), which centers the experiences of people of color and challenges the role of racism within the structures, practices, and discourses of schools and other educational institutions. Anti-racism cannot be reduced to merely "multicultural" or "diversity" education or even the teaching of just "non-racism." An anti-racism pedagogy recognizes more publicly and deeply that schools and other educational institutions, even when they claim to embrace equity, diversity and inclusion, may not be necessarily serving the interests and needs of racially dominated groups (King & Chandler, 2016). While multiculturalism is arguably microscopic in challenging the ignorance and intolerance that students individually have for other cultures, anti-racism focuses in a periscopic way on exposing institutionalized racism, interrogating and tracing the origins of long-standing patterns and structures of inequality and prejudice, and using the classroom to critique "those explanations and practices that misinform and oppress people" (Troyna, 1987, p. 317).

Anti-racist educators are obligated to raise student awareness of how systems of racial bias and hierarchy are embedded within the prevailing knowledge systems and practices of schools and wider institutionalized geographies that limit access to resources or opportunity for marginalized communities – all while actively considering the possibilities of realizing more socially just understandings and constructions of the world. This anti-racist mandate has always been important, but has reached an urgency with the resurgence of authoritarianism, White nationalism, racialized violence, and ethnic exclusion. Social justice is increasingly threatened by the election of conservative populist world leaders, the normalization of Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism, anti-immigration movements, anti-Black violence, and a roll back of civil and human rights protections (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). With a pedagogy of anti-racism comes opportunities to (1) ensure that our geography students become ethical and responsible citizens, (2) demonstrate the saliency of a geographic perspective to real-world issues and problems, (3) build solidarity with marginalized groups made even more peripheral by ongoing political changes, and (4) enhance the desirability of attracting a more diverse student body to the discipline.

Race, racism, and anti-racism are attracting significant attention from geographers after long being ignored (Kobayashi, 2014). The discipline is witnessing the rise and institutionalization of the "Black geographies" intellectual and advocacy movement (Bledsoe, Eaves, & Williams, 2017) along with growing calls for the decolonization of geographic knowledge (Radcliffe, 2017). The discipline increasingly recognizes its own struggles with diversity and inclusion, and even its complicity in creating "toxic" environments for geographers of color and female scholar-teachers (Mahtani, 2014). Yet, the geography education literature has not kept sufficient pace with these political and theoretical changes, even as more researchers engage with ethics and values, global citizenship and intercultural understanding, exclusion and privilege, and social action and transformation (e.g., Hankins & Yarbrough, 2009; Warf, 2015; Wellens et al., 2006). Anti-racism is a highly charged concept in many primary, secondary, and post-secondary institutions where neoliberal, conflict avoidant administrators would prefer such discussions never happen. The teaching of anti-racism can evoke strong emotional responses – in support and resistance – from students, teachers, and parents that no doubt require strategic management (Zembylas, 2012).

Drawing inspiration from Misco and Shiveley (2016), we seek to "operationalize" a pedagogy of anti-racism. Such pedagogical development requires generating specific instructional approaches and sober discussions of benefits and challenges. Our emphasis on operationalizing recognizes that even the most seemingly practical matter is an ideological and political project of deciding how to make anti-racism real and meaningful to students, teachers, and wider communities of learners. Through the analysis of spaces, places, and regions, anti-racism pedagogies in geography seek fundamentally to destabilize White-centric and Western-centric ways of thinking and talking about racial differences and identity. As Sanders (2013) argues, it is necessary for such a critique to question and perhaps challenge what may appear to be basic and apolitical concepts and language used in the geography education. Merrett (2004, p. 97) reminds us that "social inequality is inherently manifested in geographical ways" and "the pursuit of social justice cannot be separated from geographical concepts." According to him,

tearing down of systems of inequality depend upon the construction of alternative spatial understandings.

Anti-racism undermines long-standing and traditionally unquestioned geographic knowledge systems and practices that work to marginalize, misrepresent, and inflict violence upon people of color while also distorting and misinforming the worldview of a dominant White society. Problematizing dominant constructions and interpretations of region lie at the heart of producing anti-racist geographic knowledge; the practice of defining, characterizing, and making moral judgements about regions and their associated populations has long been at the core of the colonization and racialization process (Alderman, 2018).

We offer "regional storytelling" as an anti-racist pedagogical intervention, recognizing the role of stories in challenging racist characterizations of social and geographic life (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) and the pedagogical value of creating narratives of self-reflection (McGuinness, 2009). Stories, in this context, are not simply evocative narrations of the world. Rather, they are knowledge-defining material and representational practices that mediate the structures of social power and "transform the conditions under which social, political, and economic life unfolds" (Cameron, 2012, p. 574). Anti-racist, regional storytelling is about educators creating geographic knowledge with their students that exposes and disrupts the racialized messages and meanings found in the mainstream, dominant language, ideas, and practices used to frame and understand the regionalization process. Regionalization refers to the way in which we geographically and socially partition and value space, whether within the context of cities (e.g., neighborhoods), territorialized divisions within a country (e.g., western Canada or southeastern USA), or labeling groups of countries (e.g., world regions such as "Africa," "Latin America," "Middle-East", etc.).

Applying anti-racism to teaching regions is consistent with recent calls for greater critical learning about regional formation and renewed importance of regionalization within geography education (e.g., Rees & Legates, 2013). An anti-racist pedagogical lens ensures that students are actively considering the power dynamics behind the partitioning and valuing of space and human life, the inequalities found throughout the region-defining process, and the repercussions that the end products (i.e., the regions) create for various racialized groups. In addition, we focus on "regional" geography partly out of our own spatially defined needs. In the United States and Canada, "world regional geography" and similar adaptations are highly popular courses often part of a university's general education curriculum, an artifact of a regional approach that dominated North American geographic thought and higher education during the early and mid-20th century. Regional courses are frequently the first and only opportunity in North America to introduce the discipline to students with no previous geography education. Traditionally, regional courses are vehicles for recruiting majors and training pre-service educators who later teach at the primary and secondary levels.

Anti-racist, regional storytelling

The role of educators is to facilitate student learning about injustices and how geographic practices and knowledges can be unlearned and relearned in anti-racist ways. Yet, anti-racist teaching will be different for each educator based on their research expertise, identity, familiarity with this type of pedagogy, and the context within which they work. Research

suggests that faculty "awareness and self-reflection of their social position is important in implementing anti-racist pedagogy" (Kishimoto, 2018, p. 542). The contributors to this piece hold unique and power-laden positionalities, including backgrounds of White privilege as well as from historically marginalized groups. This positionality has to be constantly addressed and negotiated as one reflects upon the stories we create and enact for and with students (Wellens et al., 2006). Storytelling is a vehicle for educators to share and make sense of their own experiences, successes, and struggles in discussing race and racism with students. These stories invariably reveal that both teachers and students are situated within certain social and regional contexts and individual identities that frame storytelling in classrooms and hence pedagogical praxis and efficacy. Storytelling, in this context, is a reflexive tool benefitting not only to the educator telling the story but also for other teachers listening to the story. Listening is not a passive process but actively involved in the construction of meaning and decisions about how geography educators might proceed toward an anti-racist pedagogy (Kanngieser, 2012).

The following stories illustrate individual experiences in operationalizing an anti-racist pedagogy through regionally-based teaching, the instructional strategies used in the classroom, and perceptions of student responses. Pedagogical advancement is achieved not only by stories of success but also narratives of struggle and challenge. Following Harrowell, Davies, and Disney (2018), we see uncertainty, inexperience, and even outright failure – when critically examined and shared – as important resources for improving practices and outcomes and creating "supportive spaces."

Unlearning and relearning the language of teaching regions (Rodrigo Narro Perez)

My reflections are based on teaching a third-year undergraduate course called "Geography of a Selected World Region – Latin America." As a Latino instructor, I gave myself the responsibility that I must teach this course in a manner that properly reflects the diverse, complex, and frequently mischaracterized geographies and peoples that are Latin America.

My own regional and racial story is that I am a Peruvian Latino and an immigrant as well as an Ontarian and a Canadian. Throughout my undergraduate career, I never had an instructor who was Latinx, and, lacking such a role model, I went a long time unable to see myself as a university educator. While the Latinx population does not have the same proportion in Canada as it does in the U.S, it comprise about 1.5% of the Ontario population (Statistics Canada, 2017).

I began the course by telling students that about myself and my background. Proudly identifying myself as a Latino set the stage for how I would approach Latin America instructionally. I used my biography to challenge the tendency to treat members of marginalized groups as all-knowing spokespeople for their communities and/or regions. While I spoke Spanish and was born in Perú, I couldn't speak for every Latin American country, nor did I know everything about a vast region of over two dozen unique countries and territories. Erasing uniqueness for the sake of regionalization was something I did not perpetuate amongst my students. It is, after all, these stereotypes (i.e., "All Latinxs are Mexican") that can grow into racist perceptions, language, and policy (Guerin, 2003). A major course objective was to destabilize and analyze what the word "Latinx" or "Latin American" meant.

I began my first class meeting with this question: *What makes Latin America a region?*

Students were told there is no right or wrong answer to this question; they might even start by listing what factors *don't* make Latin America a region. Answering this question required they reflect on what constitutes a "region". I shared one definition – a region is a set of sociospatial groupings delimited largely on the grounds of shared history and culture (Rees & Legates, 2013). I repeatedly reminded students that Latin America is referred to more as a region by non-Latin Americans than by Latin Americans living in the region. The identity of being Latin American (*latinoamericano/a* or *Latinx*) is often embraced once a person emigrates out of the region and shift their own language to remain attached to the region. Before immigrating to Canada, I would never have identified as Latino, the word was not in my vocabulary. By acknowledging the often sidelined experiences and perceptions of Latin Americans, in particular with those who now reside in the U.S or Canada, we can de-stabilize established geographical knowledge about the region into one focused on the people themselves. (De Genova, 2017; Onuki, Mouron, & Urdinez, 2016).

I actively curated certain words and narratives used in class, recognizing that language frames how we value regions and people of different racial backgrounds. We unlearned and relearned the popular knowledge claim that Christopher Columbus "discovered" the Americas by examining the historical geographies of Latin America and discussing the kind of violence that the word "discovered" does to the legitimacy and identities of Latin America's pre-colonization civilizations. Openly challenging the language of regional discovery, I taught about the richness of the Incas, Aztecs, and Mayans, always mindful of calling them "the indigenous peoples of Latin America" or by their respective name. Remembering how I was tested on Canadian geography history in elementary and secondary schools, I rewrote an exam question that I had long resented. Rather than asking "*When did Columbus discover America?*", I asked "*In what year did Columbus land in the Americas and begin the process of colonization?*"

Anti-racism pedagogy is about challenging long unquestioned and state-sanctioned bodies of regional knowledge and exposing how the power of racism undergirds the very questions we ask and answer about people and places. Upon completion of the course, I received positive feedback from students, many of whom had never formally been introduced to the region. Occasionally my inbox would receive an email from a student sharing a story from Latin America. Yet, I lacked a tool for assessing student learning. Had I changed my students' perceptions and understandings of Latin America and ***Latinxs***? Were students now more ready to question traditional regional knowledge and language? These questions have bearing on not only the success of my teaching but the wider efficacy of an anti-racist pedagogy.

Combatting erasure and teaching to transform (LaToya Eaves)

I have approached my reflections with some hesitation. My encounters with teaching geography are inflected by being a queer Black woman from North Carolina (USA). I am a first-generation degree-earner, meaning my five siblings and my cousins shepherded in the tradition of our family members completing college. Our family's historical lack of access to education is a direct consequence of the disenfranchisement

of Black communities in the United States, which initially began through indigenous genocide and chattel slavery. Blocking access to education was a primary tool to maintain the structure of White supremacy. The integration of education, including higher education, during the 19th and 20th centuries was met with anti-Black resistance and violence. The context from which I teach geography – my sense of place – is nuanced by the environment I was raised in and the history I was born from. Consequently, I negotiate the academic space very carefully, as the education system was not constructed with people like me in mind, in content and pedagogical approach. It is within this context that an anti-racist pedagogy becomes more urgent. At present, I am the only Black geographer and one of few Black faculty on my campus. This background information is important because being a racialized person incorporating anti-racist pedagogy is a difficult task due to the possibility of student resistance to learning about the role of race and racism in broader society and in geography. Reflection on one's positionality is an integral aspect of anti-racist pedagogy. From here, I focus on strategies that I incorporated into two of my classes.

I teach at a large, undergraduate-serving university in the Nashville, Tennessee, metropolitan area. I regularly teach world regional geography (WRG) and have found most textbooks to be limited to a Eurocentric point of view. I supplement the course text with alternative sources, including videos, photos, blogs, and creative literary works in order for students to understand multiple points of view on any given region or topic. At the beginning of the term, we watch Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's TED Talk "The Danger of a Single Story." In it, Adichie discusses her Nigerian upbringing and her negotiations with privilege and the enduring legacies of European colonialism. Because the legacy of colonialism is prevalent through the tropes that frequently define world regions, Adichie's TED Talk provides an origin point for our class to rethink the world in terms of power. Regularly, students remark on the stereotypes they held about Africa, including only associating the continent with disease or poverty and how Adichie changed their minds as she continued to speak. We revisit the themes of her talk as we study the spatial patterns presented through the textbook's (sometimes abject) discursive regional formations. By further using YouTube, social media sites, blogs, and podcasts conceived by people who are from and live in the regions, students' knowledge of non-Western places and people as well as local geographies is constantly renovated. During exam periods and end of term reflections, students can easily recall and apply lessons from Adichie. The approach has proven a significant tool in expanding the anti-racist regional storytelling incorporated in the curriculum.

Similarly, my second pedagogical approach involves the creation of a seminar called "Race Takes Place." The course remains significant because the disciplinary canon does not include a diversity of thought. Merely examining the scholars considered to be the foundation of radical/critical thought and of social justice in geography reveals a group overwhelmingly comprised of White men and the occasional White woman, all of whom were afforded access and privilege on racial and/or economic terms. Because race has been commonly limited to positivist terms and measurable facts (McKittrick & Woods, 2007), it is important that the course center the theoretical contributions of people of color to geography and the ways geographers can conceptualize race and place. As in WRG, introducing course material that centered people of color as the authors and negotiators of their spatial terms renovated their understandings of

geographic concepts and histories. We use disciplinary tools, such as census data, archival materials, and maps, and compared them with themes brought forth from works by scholars such as Clyde Woods, Katherine McKittrick, Laura Pulido, Carolyn Finney, and Caroline Bressey. This approach to geography, as with WRG, successfully taught students to "read landscapes" beyond the limited nature of conventional geographic approaches.

Collective knowledge creation as anti-racist pedagogy (Solange Muñoz)

I grew up in the 1980s in a racially diverse, working class neighborhood in Ann Arbor, Michigan, a progressive university town. Close to Detroit, race relations were defined through a Black and White dichotomy, but my generation benefitted from school integration programs, and we lived and enjoyed the complexities of a diverse society. Later, as an undergraduate at the University of Michigan I learned about Latin America and my Latin American/Latinx heritage (my father is Bolivian, and my mother is British). As an adult, I lived in Chile and Argentina and have taught courses on Latin America and Latinxs in the US at institutions in Michigan, Texas and Tennessee. I currently teach an undergraduate course titled "Landscapes and Cultures of Latin America" that has an average enrollment of thirty-five, mostly White students from politically conservative regions of Tennessee. Few have travelled out of the country, and many have little to no previous knowledge about Latin America.

My strategies for promoting anti-racist narratives of Latin America begin on the first day of class, when I tell students what to expect throughout the semester. I "warn them" that my course is discussion-based and relies on *collective knowledge-making*, through sometimes emotionally charged and difficult conversations, in which we may not agree with all of the information, opinions and ideas presented. I stress for students to be comfortable with disagreeing with each other and with me and make a clear distinction between arguing about an idea versus a personal attack. To illustrate, I share an experience from when I lived in Chile. Each weekend, my Chilean friends would meet and engage in heated debates about the current state of politics and society. At the end of the night, they would all hug goodbye, affectionately calling each other "*hermanx*" or "*compañerx*" and plan to meet the following weekend. Through this account I am asking students to reflect on US culture and our tendency to avoid uncomfortable discussions, and I am planting the seeds for students to take ownership of their ideas, opinions and reactions, as they learn about the histories of other cultures as well as their own.

I also employ a definition of Latin America that emphasizes the racial, cultural and economic diversity of the region, and includes Latinx and Latin American communities and enclaves in the United States. While textbooks present Latin America as south of the US border, I introduce a counter-narrative in which Latin America includes the United States through shared colonial, geographic and economic histories and connections. For example, using a map of the region, I explain that, until 1848 all of the Southwest US belonged to Mexico, and talk about the Mexican citizens who became US citizens overnight. Similarly, I discuss the history of US imperialism in the region and reflect on how the legacies of geopolitical power relations and White supremacy continue to impact the region and how we perceive Latin America and its people. Through the use of historical maps, pictures, and current articles, I trace contemporary

events in the region to the United States' historical and current occupation as an imperial power. This framing is meant to challenge the racial "othering" of Latinxs and Latin Americans by asserting that Latin American countries and the US have a closely shared and complex history characterized by power and domination.

Furthermore, by presenting on topics that students identify with Latin America, in which they have less personal involvement, I can be more radical in the ways I ask students to reflect on and discuss the same issues in the US context. I have students examine race and racial identities and constructions in Latin America and then, in the US. This approach allows students to both learn about race and racism in the context of Latin America, while reflecting on normalized ideas and experiences in the US. Throughout the semester I continue to introduce topics like inequality, environmental racism, social justice and others, and their connection with global and institutional powers, as shared examples and events from *across the Americas*. I hope that by telling these stories in a broadly regional context that students begin to question and critically consider and analyze the regional stories with which they have grown up. This kind of pedagogy involves some risks. Students often resent being asked to personally and intellectually engage in their own knowledge development, particularly in more conservative areas of the US. Yet, perhaps most rewarding as well as challenging has been learning to teach these topics and employing collective knowledge learning techniques in different political and regional contexts – from the highly charged immigration border debates of Texas, to the more progressive but distinctly racialized geographies of Michigan, and finally to the resurgence of southern White nationalism in Tennessee.

Unpacking historical geographies of southern hospitality/hostility (Derek Alderman)

I have taught exclusively at universities in the southeastern United States. Being a White southern male helps me create a rapport with my geography students, who also tend to be White southerners. Regretfully, early in my career, I did not critically address my Whiteness. I now discuss with students how my identity invariably limits fully understanding the experiences of people of color. My positionality also provides space for critiquing the benefits of Whiteness in a region with a history of oppressing African Americans and for asserting my responsibility to challenge the lasting legacies of racism.

My pedagogical focus is often the Southeast and how the African American freedom struggle is central to our knowledge of the region's development, even as racism is a national and global problem. Until a couple of decades ago, such a perspective was largely missing from traditional, White-centric regional analyses. The Southeast remains riddled with racially unjust stories of who matters – from antebellum plantation museums that write slavery out of their guided tours to southern food and music festivals ignoring the contributions of African Americans. Regional storytelling in my classrooms challenge these racialized silences and inequalities. I sometimes serve as storyteller, but am careful in how I speak about (and not for) people of color. Hence, students have opportunities to hear from African Americans in their own words through oral histories, documentaries, guest speakers, and fieldwork.

In teaching about the historical geography of travel, transportation and tourism, I de-stabilize the well-worn concept of "southern hospitality." Contrary to the

stereotype that southerners are welcoming to all visitors, hospitality in the Southeast is a social practice that communicates unequal messages about who belongs within the region. Being welcomed within the region has always been shaped by racism. While many White travelers may have found a hospitable Southeast, their Black counterparts have often met hostility, humiliation, and violence along streets, within buses and railroad cars, and at hotels, gas stations, and restaurants refusing to serve them. This was especially the case during the Jim Crow era (1870s to 1960s) of institutionalized segregation and discrimination. With my students, I fashion a geographic knowledge about the role of southern racism in limiting Black mobility, access to public spaces, and full political citizenship.

To assist this anti-racist storytelling, my students engage with an increasingly popular archival resource – the *Negro Motorist Green Book* (Alderman & Inwood, 2014). Published from 1936 to 1966, *The Green Book* was a travel guide developed by and for African Americans to assist them in navigating Jim Crow hospitality/hostility and locating accommodations – by state, city, and street – where they would be welcomed. One of my chief pedagogical goals with the *Green Book* is to cultivate a "strategic empathy" (Zembylas, 2012) in which students know about, identify with and care for the experiences of people of color – although I warn against the fallacy of believing that such empathy can be fully achieved by White students.

After students listen to a recorded interview with an elderly African American who describes the difficulties of driving during Jim Crow, they participate in a role-playing exercise. Students are asked to simulate the planning of automobile-based trips into and out of the Southeast, using *Green Book* to determine where they can (or cannot) stop for fuel, food, and lodging. The simulation captures the difficult work of avoiding and resisting racism and the sophisticated regional knowledge developed by African Americans. This knowledge and "Black sense of place" (McKittrick, 2011) are often written out of prevailing regional geographies of the Southeast. I do proceed carefully, however; when role-playing is approached insensitively or without proper reflection, it can reaffirm racist beliefs rather than challenge them.

Students' positive reaction after the exercise suggest – as Pierce & Widen (2017, p. 48) assert – that "visceral and emotional experiences have an important place in the university classroom." Much less clear is the extent to which students reconcile this history of racialized hospitality – which many students argue is now safely in the past – with the reality that "driving while Black" remains a contested if not deadly affair. Mobile people of color remain targeted by police and micro- and macro-racial aggressions. The challenge of anti-racist pedagogy is ensuring that my students and I don't produce regional stories that disconnect past racism from contemporary injustices and thus deny the continuing effects of White privilege.

On including the stories and identities of students (Phil Klein)

My involvement in this discussion represents my introduction to the idea of an explicitly anti-racist pedagogy. As an entry point, the strategy of regional storytelling is compelling, for as a geographer, I cherish the diversities of this world. My values inevitably underlie the content and examples that I select for my classes, so it is relevant to share with students how my experiences shaped this worldview. My own regional

identity is tied to the western U.S. I grew up in the 1960s in a nearly all-White, middle-class suburb of San Francisco, California. Since then, home has been several progressive cities in California and Colorado, and for the last two decades, a small Colorado community having mostly conservative social and political views. Where I now teach is a swing state in U.S. politics, with students holding both liberal and conservative views. About two-thirds of students at my university are White, mostly from suburban and rural middle-class Colorado families, with backgrounds similar to mine. Like the 1960s me, they have not thought critically about the role race plays in our personal geographies.

Given the recent uptick of racist ideologies in the U.S., I now realize that simply teaching "non-racism," or trying to ignore race entirely, is not satisfactory. White students may be unaware of the geography of injustice that others in their country and community face. Case studies can help students identify the latent racism behind urban spatial segregation and critique the resultant unequal access to amenities, public spaces, and justice itself. In an introductory human geography course, I've used examples of redlining by lending institutions in Los Angeles and a recent story about a negative neighborhood reaction to gentrification in Denver. Students see how racist spatial practices guide the defining of regions within cities and perpetuate the conditions of substandard housing, failing businesses, and social pathologies so often found in impoverished neighborhoods.

While effective, these activities are essentially teacher-centered. The challenge in operationalizing anti-racist pedagogy is to find ways to empower students to relate their own stories. Especially in larger classes, students may be too reticent to speak up. Brief writing tasks (e.g., describing the migration history of a family member) are helpful, and using local examples can spark deeper engagement. The Denver gentrification story, being nearby and familiar to many, generates lively discussions in which students contribute other local examples of gentrification from their own lives. Hearing experiences from peers in other regions is useful. In my upper-level regional course about Europe, students read several chapters from Keane and Villanueva (2009), which describe varied student-centered research projects concerning place and identity. Reading European students' perspectives about "othering" and contested spaces involving marginalized groups helps my students appreciate the pervasiveness of racism. Essay assignments based on these chapters ask students to reflect on local and regional examples of these same issues. Some students relate stories of their own experiences with racism or being marginalized in other ways.

For me, a challenge to embracing an explicitly anti-racist pedagogy is the concern of alienating some students. The "disruptive" aspect of anti-racist pedagogy is the element with which I struggle. Addressing controversial topics is essential in studying geographic issues, but a balanced presentation is vital. In a politically diverse classroom, students will rightly reject blaming racism for every injustice or stereotyping all Whites as racist. Yet exploring these topics invites greater participation from students whose own experiences include racial oppression. The most engaging discussions on these topics have been when Black or Hispanic students have shared their stories. As the student body at my university has itself become more diverse, I am hearing their stories more frequently. This enriches not only the knowledge of other students about racism, but of mine as well.

In pondering anti-racism further, I am reminded of my participation in a project during graduate school to develop geography modules for secondary schools. To guide the teacher-authors of those materials, project leaders defined several affective outcomes for geography education. Among these were to "cherish" environmental and cultural diversity, "foster" empathy and tolerance, and "discourage" stereotyping, sexism, and racism (Hill, Dunn, & Klein, 1995). Continuing in that spirit, perhaps our most important affective goal is to make any geography classroom a space wherein all our stories can be told. That might attract wider interest in geography, if the discipline were perceived as a place that truly values diversity in both word and action.

Discussion and conclusion

Reflexive storytelling – understood here as both a classroom instructional method and a way for teachers to assess their own praxis – has the capacity to shed light on the strategies and challenges of incorporating anti-racism into the teaching of regions as one of geography's formative constructs. Contributor reflections offered several strategies for exposing and challenging the racial inequalities embedded within knowledge systems, the classroom, and wider geographies of social life. They include instructors:

- using the classroom to work through their own positionality and the identities of their students with regard to race, region, privilege, and marginalization;
- linking anti-racism dierctly to learning goals, including affective outcomes, and preparing students to engage in sometimes uncomfortable but civil discussions and debates;
- unlearning/relearning the language of traditional regional knowledge and supplementing standard curricula with the often neglected voices, knowledge systems, and senses of place of people of color;
- creating moments of active, collective knowledge-making in which students work independently and together in hands-on ways to empathize with those historically racialized as "others" and acknowledge the diversity of realities that defy regional generalizations and stereotypes;
- using geographic comparison to explore shared regional histories of colonialism/imperialism and question previously fixed ideas about the belonging of people within certain places/regions; and
- aligning anti-racism with an exploration of spatial justice and the leveraging of geographic tools and regional critique to understand how place and region shape the broader processes of discrimination and equality.

Although we see potential and already realized success in anti-racist teaching and what it may offer in de-stabilizing traditional, exclusionary conceptions of regions, our experiences in the classroom prompt a sober consideration of the challenges that face such pedagogy. These challenges include:

- insufficient textbooks that, despite theoretical advancements in geography, continue to reify a White-centric, Euro-centric narration of regions;
- the tough work of helping students understand the genealogy of racism within and between regions (i.e., how inequality in the past informs and reproduces contemporary injustices);
- managing the ideological diversity of student political attitudes and socio-regional backgrounds found in classrooms and creating safe spaces for empowering long marginalized students of color while also facilitating White students to recognize the role of racial oppression in structuring their world;
- the potential social and emotional vulnerability that anti-racist pedagogy may have on teachers from historically marginalized groups and regions as they incorporate their positionality into classroom discussions;
- the fact that anti-racist regional storytelling happens in colleges, universities, and disciplines that have yet to reconcile their own historical and ongoing complicity in discrimination against people of color; and
- the need for tools for assessing short and long term outcomes of anti-racist pedagogy on the affective and cognitive development of students and creating classroom environments for students to share their stories and benefit from stories of students.

The latter challenge is especially key. While many of this paper's contributors reflected briefly on student reaction, we lack a full understanding of the transformative impacts of anti-racist regional storytelling on students, their learning, and their own position within the reproduction of racism. A truly transformative pedagogy must address the politics of voice at work within classrooms as well as within this paper. The voices of teachers are prioritized here, but it is also imperative to engage student voices more directly and actively incorporate their stories, responses, and anxieties about region and racism into an operationalizing of pedagogy

Ensuring that anti-racist storytelling is impactful is not simply up to faculty and students but requires structural and institutional adjustments within geography education. The *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* might consider, for example, publishing a recurring forum explicitly devoted to teaching race, a corrective for the dearth of prominent outlets for anti-racism geography educators. *JGHE* might also consider convening multiple INLT workshops for the purposes of developing methods for assessing cognitive and affective learning from anti-racism pedagogies.

Pedagogical progress cannot be made without incorporating critical race and social justice perspectives into geography curriculum and higher education practices. Higher education geography curriculum, particularly North American instruction about and with regions, is arguably out of synch with ongoing racial-ethnic tensions and says little if anything about the relationship between geography education and racism. Until that relationship is operationalized and becomes standard in our syllabi, learning objectives, and textbooks, many geography educators and their students will be reluctant to overcome the social and personal vulnerability of participating in anti-racist learning. Whether anti-racism pedagogy receives institutional support or not, we will always need supportive spaces for faculty to reflect upon and share stories of their experiences, successes, and challenges. It is our hope that this collaborative piece can inspire others to tell their stories.

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