Article

Black and Indigenous Solidarity in Social Sciences: Leaning into Our Nuanced Racialized Identities and Healing Together

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Abstract: Our co-authored piece contributes to Black and Indigenous solidarity juxtaposed to our nuanced and convergent lived experiences as racialized people. Lauren and I (Nate)co-explore how our racialized identities and stories may complexify Black-and-Indigenous-led movements. We say "racialized" to acknowledge white supremacists' racecraft to subjugate Black and Indigenous people. Lauren, an Indigenous educator activist, and I, a Black scholar activist, both with white maternal lineage, connected after storying about our journeys to, through, and beyond the teaching profession. Black and Indigenous educators have centered theories of we are not free until we are all free. Our knowledge contributions further complexify freedom-for-all by offering Black and Indigenous knowledge on nuanced ancestry within the U.S. racialization project. Conversational data stemmed from an educator activist collective project where Lauren and I had many conversations about our similar and unique journeys toward our justice orientation. Our conversations yielded many Black and Indigenous solidarity learnings. These co-learnings included: building solidarity through weaving our unique stories, extending nuanced understandings of racialized experiences, and co-regulation in societal spaces not made for us. We conclude with implications in continuing to build solidarity in social science.

Keywords: Black and Indigenous solidarity; healing-centered research; relationality; racialized identity; conversational methods

1. Introduction

Black and Indigenous people have unique, dynamic, and complex experiences within the United States' racialized and settler colonial project. We bring these experiences to our ways of knowing in social science, or knowledge co-creation[1]. However, less is known about how racecrafting, or white supremacists' intentional creation of pseudo-scientific racialized categories purposed for subjugation/domination (Fields and Fields 2022), is transgressed by Black and Indigenous solidarity building in social science. Lauren, an Indigenous educator activist, and I (Nate)[2], a Black scholar activist, both with white mothers, connected after storying about our journeys to, through, and beyond the teaching profession. Our storying and conversations took place after Lauren responded to a call to participate in an educational policy research project. This relationship spawned as we discussed how we could build equitable educational futures. Our knowledge contributions further complexify social science processes by offering knowledge on how nuanced and ancestral perspectives may support Black and Indigenous circumvention of interlocking systems of oppression within the U.S. racialization and settler colonial project.

We asked ourselves, in conversation with the contributions of our Black and Indigenous ancestors, how our lived experiences, as racialized people, and stories may complexify Black-and-Indigenous-led social science activities. Lauren and I answer our inquiry through

returning to our many conversations, stories, and informal discussions that took place during our participation in a Black and Indigenous educator activist collective and our co-presentation, titled Building Solidarity at the Intersections of Black and Indigenous Storying, at the All-In: Co-Creating Knowledge for Justice Conference in Santa Cruz, CA. We found co-learnings in building solidarity through weaving our unique stories, extending nuanced understandings of racialized experiences, and co-regulatory healing in knowledge co-creation spaces.

Our co-learnings are important because they highlight the importance of Black and Indigenous solidarity in the struggle for justice and emphasize a turn toward centering relationality and ancestral knowledges in social sciences (Eagle Shield et al. 2021). Lauren and I found co-learnings as we engaged in knowledge co-creation via centering Black and Indigenous critical theories (Gordon da Cruz 2017) and acting via co-presenting and co-authoring this study's knowledge (Fine and Torre 2019). Our stories and conversations contribute to a long history of Black and Indigenous solidarity in its nuance (Ineese-Nash 2020). Nuanced Blackness and Indigeneity further strengthens knowledge co-creation in social science because it dismantles stringent gatekeeping of Blackness and Indigeneity and deters white supremacist, colonial separation tactics.

2. Historical Context and Background

Gordon da Cruz (2017) has asserted the importance of weaving critical theories into knowledge co-creation activities. Thus, we start with a Black and Indigenous history of the United States centered on our ancestors' lived experiences (Mays 2021). The U.S. racialization and settler colonial project has been extensively written about by Black American (Du Bois 2001) and Indigenous American (The Red Nation 2021) movement leaders. We use Black American, or Black, to name the lived experiences of those African diasporans that have been born in, subjected to, and racialized within the historical context of U.S. chattel enslavement. Indigenous Americans are Native peoples sovereign to the contemporarily named American lands and waters stolen by European colonizers. However, there are infinite lived experiences within and between these racialized identities. We say "racialized" to acknowledge white, settler colonial racecrafting, or the mythical construct based on skin complexion and mobilized to justify power hoarding, white supremacist logics, and settler colonialism (Fields and Fields 2022). Today, settler colonialism and racecrafting converge, and these systems continue to have deleterious effects on Black and Indigenous communities.

One deleterious effect is the continued homogenization, or essentialization, of individuals with shared racialized identities. European-descended colonizers used homogenization to justify their theft, exploitation, and violence, and these white supremacist logics were contrary to Black and Indigenous ways of being. Before European racecrafting and through modern occupation, Africans and Indigenous Americans did not associate status, intellect, or humanness to the hue of a person's skin. In fact, some Black and Indigenous peoples were confused by the European, white supremacist, and colonial practices that regulated social interactions based on racecraft (Kendi 2016). As white colonizers continued to expand their harm across the Americas, the myth of race continued to grow in insidiousness.

Contemporarily, Black and Indigenous peoples feel the vestiges of racecraft in how we build solidarity in knowledge co-creation. Black Seminoles' historical, nuanced, and lived experiences demonstrate how racecraft is modernly situated and harms Black and Indigenous solidarity building. Black Seminoles are the ancestors of African Maroons, or freedom-seekers who successfully circumvented European enslavement, and lived with and among Seminole communities (Kai 2015). As early as 1689, African Maroons found refuge in some Seminole communities (Bateman 2002). However, Seminole leaders were not united in the extent to which Maroons were welcomed. Some Seminole communities treated Maroons as property and perpetuated colonial logics of human ownership (Johnston 2003). Concurrently, Seminole communities adopted Black freedom-seekers into tribes through

marriage and honored them with tribal names (Mock 2012). Black Seminoles' nuanced histories premise how European racecrafting may show up in modern relationships.

Historically, African descendants were contributing members to Seminole society. In many cases, Black and Indigenous people agreed to protect each other, taught each other agricultural practices, socialized together, and had mutual disdain for European colonizers (Sturtevant 1971). Yet, in 2000, Black Seminoles, who grew up immersed in Seminole ways of being, were expelled as members based on racecraft's blood quantum logic (Deloria 2022; Mock 2012).[3] White supremacist colonizers popularized blood quantum logics, such as the one-drop rule, to render African descendants to lower tiers of social hierarchies (Hickman 1996). Although there has been some reconciliation in recent years (Hirst 2020), Black Seminoles' lived experiences emulate how Black and Indigenous peoples' solidarity-building activities must start with communal efforts to heal from racialized trauma in our minds, bodies, and spirits (Menakem 2021). We must continuously turn toward understandings of shared history that transgress white supremacist, colonial logics. Lauren and I share our Black and Indigenous solidarity-building, knowledge-co-creation activities to contribute to the Black and Indigenous diasporic efforts to heal. We argue that nuanced identify formation that takes place before knowledge-co-creation activities and firm positionality within interlocking systems of oppression may be essential for Black and Indigenous solidarity building.

3. Black and Indigenous Knowledge Connections

Black and Indigenous knowledge is similar in our dynamic bend toward liberation and self-determination, but unique in how oppressive forces subjugate us. Africans through anti-Blackness and Natives by Indigenous erasure have been subjected to U.S. violence. Most importantly, this history of oppression begets many examples of Black and Indigenous resistance (Stewart n.d.). Black and Indigenous knowledge predates and transgresses any interaction with European-led settler colonial and anti-Black violence.

Black feminist scholars and intellectual thought leaders have contributed to co-theorizations surrounding the convergence of settler colonialism, white supremacy, and other forms of oppression. bell hooks, an important Black feminist intellectual thought leader, has described "interlocking" systems of oppression (Biana 2020, p. 13). In 1984, hooks (1984) first described the white supremacist, capitalistic, settler colonial, and patriarchal system as an oppressive and tangled web created to subjugate marginalized people. hooks' life work was to interrogate how similarly and differently situated marginalized groups may collectively free themselves and heal from these interlocking systems (hooks 2013, 2014). We find it appropriate to acknowledge hooks's theorizations at the intersections of settler colonialism and white supremacy as we think about the nuances in how Black and Indigenous people experience interlocking systems of oppression.

There are important differences in between- and within-group nuances despite our commonalities. Suzack (2021) interpreted Rifkin's (2019) work on Black and Indigenous solidarity through describing Black and Indigenous peoples' differently situatedness to interlocking systems of oppression. Suzack stated, "since no one movement has the right to claim political preeminence over the other, both have to be thought together through their differences as well as through the multiplicity of their shared and divergent oppressions alike" (p. 140). Historical understanding of Black and Indigenous resistance underlies the modern efforts transgressing white supremacist coloniality; however, these Black and Indigenous movement actors' lived experiences must be explored in their complexities that include unresolved tensions.

Black and Indigenous knowledge creation has explored complexities and tensions that may arise in efforts to build solidarity. Amadahy and Lawrence (2009) name the realities of African diasporans' complex relationship with the colonial state. African diasporans may assert a "primacy of their own suffering" relating to the material and contemporary influence of U.S. chattel enslavement (p. 106). A person who centers the primacy of their own suffering may project their pain onto peoples they perceive as redirecting focus

away from material impacts of enslavement and prioritizing other forms of oppression. Then, Black and Indigenous relatives become trapped in the colonial task of constructing impossible hierarchies based on the question, who is the most oppressed? Moreover, Suzack (2021) named how movement actors should caution blind alignment to solidarity because coerciveness infringes on freedom to engage in togetherness when there may be contradictory aims. Thus, building solidarity demands rejection of self-primacy and coerciveness in a way that directly contends with complexities of colonial and anti-Black projects.

Black and Indigenous relatives have begun to reconcile tension and find togetherness through relationality (Eagle Shield et al. 2021), co-learning in movement spaces (Eagle Shield et al. 2020), genuine reciprocity through conversation and storying in knowledge co-creation (Kovach 2010; Toliver 2021), and co-imagining anti-racist education (Jean-Pierre and James 2020). These relational and reconciliatory social science activities have shown great promise in fostering Black and Indigenous solidarity. Dei (2017), an African-born scholar, adds to reconciliatory work by returning to Africa(ness) and Indigeneity within conversations complexifying Blackness. Dei introduced how reconciliation may stem from heavily nuanced self-definitions. Petillo (2020) conceptualized Arrivantcy, or a "contemporary process of self-reflection recognition and self-identification", as an opening to deepened Black and Indigenous coalition-building (p. 192). Ultimately, self-reflexivity, self-definition, tension resolution, and relationship building are central to paths forward in social sciences.

What is still needed is the unapologetic pursuit of nuanced knowledge co-creation contextualized within and beyond the United States' racecrafting. That is, we wonder how more nuanced, racialized identities and stories complexify Black and Indigenous solidarity in social science. We take up the work of Black and Indigenous knowledge creation spaces and our continued attempts to build cross-racialized solidarity.

4. Our Relationship and Positionality

One important nuance to Lauren's and my knowledge-co-creation and solidarity-building activities is our European maternal lineage. Individuals who have mixed-racialized ancestry often feel out of place in a society where Europeans constructed mythical racialized hierarchies to justify chattel enslavement and settler colonialism (Campion 2019; McKay 2021). We have asked ourselves, "Am I Black enough?" or "Am I Indigenous?" at various times in our lives. There were internal dialogues that have attempted to reconcile racecrafting with our lived experiences.

My entire life, I have pursued the stories of my African ancestors, even when I was steeped in whiteness during my K–12 journey, and decentered and critiqued the experiences of my European ancestry. I am not one generation removed from racist family members on my maternal side. If I were to explore or seek to connect with these folks, I may find individuals who did not see me as human, may have considered me property, and constructed me as lesser than them. Anti-Black racists hold no space in my ways of being and knowing. Instead, I reflect on (un)learning, healing, and resisting my socialization within, and perpetuation of, white, colonial systems. I am at peace with centering my African ancestry and do not need a blood quantum to claim my Blackness. I now pass it to Lauren to share her identity journey in her own words.

> **Lauren:** Similarly to Nate, my childhood was plagued with questions regarding my identity and how I fit into the world I was born into. I felt half of two different races, but whole of nothing. I grew up in a predominantly white community, and my entire K–12 education was a mechanism to uphold white supremacy. I never truly and authentically experienced a Native perspective, read a Native author, or learned the true history of our country in my K–12 schooling. These K–12 experiences led me to need validation from others about my identity, rather than from inside myself. It wasn't until college, when I had the urge to define myself, that I began to answer the questions about my identity I had previously kept

hidden deep inside. I centered my schoolwork with classes focused on Indigenous stories and history because I felt it was a necessity and a responsibility to my ancestors. Since then, I have sought out Indigenous perspectives, values, and community as a way to combat the white supremacy and as a means to feel ancestral connectedness. Passing it back to Nate to detail our process.

Nate: Thank you, Lauren. Again, as we write this piece together, I feel connected. Most significantly, your statement on "responsibility to my ancestors" gave me the type of goosebumps that come from divinity. I know our ancestors are beaming with love and affirmation in our continued attempts to center their ways of being and knowing.

5. Knowledge Co-Creation Process (Methodology)

Our knowledge co-creation activities began to fructify when Lauren responded to a call to join a Black and Indigenous educator activist research collective. The project included one-on-one conversations between myself and each of the collective members and four dialogic circle sessions. As members of the collective, Lauren and I spent a total of 7 h in group conversations and 1.5 h during our one-on-one. Beyond the formal research activities, our relationship extended beyond the project. Critical community-based and participatory knowledge co-creation challenges social scientists to offer invitations that extend our relationship(s) beyond university-sanctioned activities (Fine and Torre 2019; Gordon da Cruz 2017). In fact, I would frequently tell my comrades, "You are stuck with me as long as you are willing to have me in your life." This meant that I was and continue to be committed to each and every one of them. San Pedro and Kinloch (2017) argued that "To move beyond such normalized Western constructs of social science requires that educational researchers willingly center the realities, desires, and stories of the people with whom we work" (p. 374). Lauren's response to the project call was just the beginning of our attempts to center relationality in our research activities. Our willingness to continue our relationship beyond the confines of Western social science established a space that was fruitful for co-learning.

Knowledge Gathering Tools (Methods)

We used thematic analysis, found in narrative approaches (Barkhuizen 2016), to explore connections and tensions across storied lived experiences. Our lived experiences were interpreted juxtaposed to knowledge from conversing about our "everyday" experiences (Smith 1990, p. 4). We re-read our conversational data and pulled transcript references nested in our sharing of stories. For instance, we pulled the transcript from our first one-on-one conversation where we first introduced ourselves to each other. Conversational methods center "orality" in knowledge co-creation (Kovach 2010, p. 42). That is, conversational methods are the relational connection that undergirds knowledge contributors' co-learnings or study themes. For example, Datta (2018) and their knowledge contributors interpreted themes from storytelling/conversational methods and framed them as what they had learned from the project. Lauren and I extend Datta's storying reflection method on "what is learned" from research activities and we offer our thematic co-learnings. These co-learnings, or findings on which Lauren and I co-reflected, are an amalgamation of our dialogue that started upon her responding to the call and continues into the spirit of the below co-interpretations.

6. Co-Learnings (Findings)

Lauren and I organized our co-learnings into several themes that we thought captured the essence of our research question. We sought to connect with critical, community-based, and action-oriented knowledge-co-creation methodologies. We weaved our dialogic exchanges with implications, dreams, and connections relating to Black and Indigenous solidarity building within knowledge-co-creation activities. Each theme builds on its precursor until we offer a framework for Black and Indigenous healing in knowledge

co-creation in the third theme. It is important to note that our co-learnings cannot resolve all tension, nor speak across all realities. Instead, we speak to how our storying may, or may not, contribute to solidarity building in its multiplicities.

6.1. Dialogic Exchanges in Solidarity Building

Indigenous American and Afro-Indigenous peoples have long held deep relational connections to land, water, and life. Relational connections acknowledge life's sometimes unexplainable interdependence. Thus, acknowledging relational connectedness, in knowledge co-creation, may be an important premise to Black and Indigenous solidarity building in knowledge creation. Responding to the educational policy study call via survey, Lauren responded to the prompt, "Briefly describe what being a teacher activist or organizer" means to you.

> To me, a teacher activist is someone who uses their work inside the classroom to spark the minds and hearts of children to seek change. I use the resources I have such as lessons, stories, and discussions to build empathy in kids, so they can change the oppression they see in the world.

I sought to convene the Black and Indigenous collective to explore how we engage, or engaged, in activism in our classrooms and beyond. Lauren's description immediately resonated with me because her perspectives were directly aligned with how I had been conceptualizing teacher activism. As differently racialized people, we came to similar perspectives absent any interaction. Later, we realized we had multiple commonalities across our lived experiences.

In Lauren's and my first conversation, I began the dialogue by sharing my journey as a Black educator activist. I wanted to model a two-way vulnerability where Lauren felt reciprocal in our storied exchanges. That is, any question I posed to her would also be asked of me. In fact, early in this first conversation, I shared some information about my intersectional identity. She politely interjected, feeling an instance of connection.

> **Lauren:** Can I ask a question?
>
> **Nate:** Yeah, please [enthusiastically].
>
> **Lauren:** I just was really interested in your story. Was your mom super supportive of you pursuing this part of your identity?
>
> **Nate:** Such an interesting question [feeling connected]. My mom and I's relationship has been, has been a little bit all over the place, in particular to issues surrounding race and racism. She is a white woman. She's a white person. So she will never understand what it's like to, you know, have your skin, be a weapon to folks.
>
> **Lauren:** Right.

I proceeded to share about some of the specific disagreements and growth that stemmed from experiences of being a Black man with a white, female-identifying caregiver. I described the racialized experiences my mother was unable to help me navigate and modern implications in how I reconciled and healed as an adult. Once I concluded answering Lauren's question, she stated a connection to my story.

> **Lauren:** A lot of your story resonated with me and that was really, really great. And I love that you're acknowledging that the work isn't done because, I agree, I do not think it ever will be.
>
> **Nate:** Right.
>
> **Lauren:** But it's really important. So that's great. Um, should I share [my story]?
>
> **Nate:** Yes, please. Thank you for listening.

Our dialogic exchanges, or stories and conversations, emulate the reciprocity, vulnerability, and connectedness centered in our knowledge co-creation space. We established

reciprocity and vulnerability through dialogic exchanges where we shared lived experiences and stories that may have had us reliving difficult times in our lives. However, this reciprocal vulnerability begat connectedness that allowed for us to build our relationship across nuanced racialized identities.

6.2. Centering Nuance

Lauren's and my dialogic, knowledge-co-creation activities were undergirded by solidarity across our nuanced identities as Black or Indigenous people. Lauren identified connectedness when she first told me about her perspectives on her nuanced Native identity. She started her comments naming a similarity.

> I'm similar to you. I have a white mom, and my dad is Native American. Prior to, probably, I don't know, six months ago, I would have said that he is a full-blooded Native because I felt in my heart that it solidified who he was, who I am. Now, in my work, I acknowledge that this is a completely colonial way to view Native people . . . my dad grew up on a reservation in [western New York] and then he moved to Wisconsin where he met my mom.

My earlier comments about not needing a blood quantum to claim my African ancestry resonated with Lauren's journey in forwarding a nuanced Native identity. The coloniality of blood quanta assigns significance to racist pseudoscience. It was her and my perspective that our identities are informed by infinite nuance.

One shared and complex nuance relates to our undergraduate degrees in Black and Native American studies. When I shared with Lauren my identity self-definition that took place during my time as a Black studies major, she told me about her experience as an American Indian/Native American studies major.

> Similarly to you, I started taking classes at the University of Minnesota and [I majored in] American Indian/Native American studies and I just finally felt seen and understood.

We continued to converse about what it meant to teach and learn with and from people who may have shared our experience as racialized people. I mentioned how I have an unapologetic love of nuanced Blackness, or the complex and multifaceted lives of African diasporans. Lauren mentioned nuances in lived experiences among Natives who were born and raised on a reservation and those who did not have the same reservation experience. Within these dialogic exchanges, we simultaneously centered nuance and commonalities across differently racialized experiences. Appendix A invites readers to explore a larger conversation that evidences the centering nuance co-learning. Here, we talk about the exhaustion that stems from pressure to identify in specific ways and the lack of affirmation stemming from people attempting to "put us in boxes". We reaffirmed that our nuanced, racialized identities cannot fit into socially constructed and monolithic Black and Indigenous identity descriptions. Affirmation stemmed from centering nuance emerged from our dialogic exchanges across our racialized identities as Black and Indigenous people.

6.3. Co-Regulation and Healing

A crucial co-learning stems from how Black and Indigenous solidarity building, in knowledge co-creation, engenders co-regulation and catalyzes healing. The history and continuance of settler colonialism and anti-Blackness creates a priority in communal healing. Lauren's and my dialogic exchanges started with vulnerability, transitioned to solidarity building, and moved to affirmation that engendered healing. Figure 1 attempts to visualize our healing process in knowledge co-creation and illuminates our building-blocks analogy.
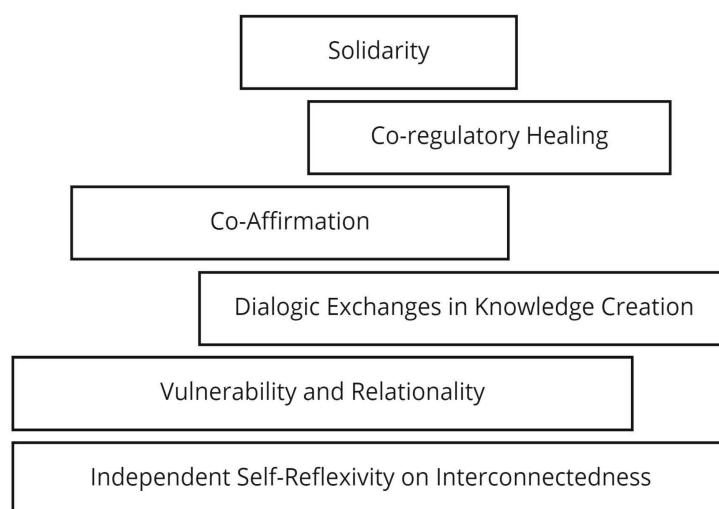
Figure 1. The building blocks of our solidarity.

We may think of solidarity building as laying the foundational blocks for healing. Throughout the relational and healing process are components that Lauren and I found to be important. Figure 1 shows how the building process was nonlinear, messy, unable to be predicted. The misalignment signals tension and negotiation as we learned together. The healing process began with the self-reflexivity block when Lauren responded to the project call, and I read her responses. The process concluded with the solidarity block. The in-between, or the building blocks that reinforced our solidarity, was iterative. We moved to dialogic research spaces where we exchanged stories about our nuanced identities. Then, we affirmed each other in our nuanced and common lived experiences. Co-regulatory healing, a collaborative and communal practice in soothing pain, was an essential building block to our solidarity.

Lauren's and my healing manifested in how we helped each other co-regulate through sharing potentially painful experiences. Lauren's affirmation and series of questions led to self-reflection and evidenced instances of healing from racialized trauma.

> **Nate:** Yeah, it's very interesting in the sense that, you know, I've had to do some [healing] work. It's painful. I'm continuing to [heal] do work, and I think this work that I do as a Black educator who also wants to, you know, connect students with their organizing efforts. Part of it is the pain that I felt, I don't want that to happen [to other students].
>
> **Lauren:** Yeah [in affirmation].
>
> **Nate:** I am at the intersection of, as a Black person, what white supremacy does in your family [speaking from a story].
>
> **Lauren:** Right, Yeah [in affirmation].
>
> **Nate:** Um, so . . . . I'm not sure if that answered your question, but . . .

As I reflected on the healing work I did and continue to do, every affirmation, in the form of a verbal "right" or "yeah", gave me the support I needed to share my story, feel heard, and know that there may be connection. Reciprocally, Lauren shared an instance where she healed and continues to heal from racialized trauma, but we negotiated that we keep those learned lessons between us. Additionally, this article being in my (Nate's) voice, this story is not mine to tell. What is important is that healing stemmed from co-regulatory healing in how we shared and affirmed each other's nuanced, lived experiences.

7. Discussion, Implications, Dreams, and Connections

We accept the invitation from Fine and Torre (2019) to implicate how Lauren's and my knowledge co-creation "opened up spaces for dissent and struggle" in research, inquiry,

and social science (p. 442). We extend the invitation to thinking about how our stories and conversations contribute to sustaining relationships and opening invitations to Black-and-Indigenous-led justice movements. Our knowledge may purport a premise to opening transgressive spaces in Black-and-Indigenous-led social science may be dialogic exchanges and affirmation across our nuanced racialized identities.

First, Black and Indigenous solidarity building in social science may start with placing ourselves in conversation with each other's ideas and our ancestral knowledges before we engage in dialogue. Fortunately, Lauren and I had similar perspectives that were identified through her response to the call. Thus, there were reduced suspicions about each other, and we positioned ourselves for connection. Lauren accepted an invitation to engage in a Black and Indigenous educator activist collective because she sensed commonality in how the collective members may have situated themselves related to pedagogical activism. This implicates the types of pre-work or pre-dialogic acts that could open Black-and-Indigenous-led social science for collective dissent and struggle. Returning to how Black and Indigenous coalitions have mobilized knowledge co-creation to circumvent state-sanctioned violence may exemplify a path forward (The Red Nation 2021). There may be a need for pre-introspection and an initial invitation that premises solidarity building in social-science knowledge co-creation.

Second, our storying shows how knowledge co-creation may require starting with affirming the ways Black and Indigenous people arrived at their nuanced, self-defined, and differently racialized identities. Lauren and I had shared paradigms relating to self-defined, racialized identity. We acknowledged race as a myth and discussed how the myth manifests in blood quantum rhetoric. Further, we interrogated our own privilege relating to our skin complexion, maternal caregiver, and socialization within Western universities. We self-identify as Black or Indigenous and recognize the nuanced multiplexes within Blackness and Indigeneity. It could be that our shared experience of being told we were not Black or not Indigenous emboldened our self-identities and we co-created a space that refused racecrafting. This refusal led to a lean into, or centering of, nuance and complexity. Gordon da Cruz (2017) asserted that social scientists should give more weight to Black and Indigenous knowledges because we "have more expertise about the impacts of police violence and, as the objects of violence and racism, are in a better position to name and describe the racism that is fundamentally normalized and integrated in our society" (p. 373). We agree and add that we are better positioned to lean into nuance as we continue to build solidarity in our circumvention of interlocking systems of oppression.

Third, our study demonstrates how social scientists, and our relatives, can simultaneously co-create knowledge and heal racialized trauma in cross-racialized dialogue. There are many people and communities in pain stemming from their subjugation to interlocking systems of oppression. Social scientists may embed healing practices when inviting people and communities to co-create knowledge. This would shift the ways in which social scientists think about research. Fine and Torre (2019) described shifts in naming some of the tensions relating to participatory epistemologies and different relationships to pain. They stated, "Some [of our co-researchers] wanted no 'damage' analyses—of pain, wounds, troubles—and others insisted that we gather this material—'this is my life!'—to reveal the scars of oppression" (p. 441). Our contributions extend this shift in demonstrating how knowledge co-creation may center healing. In this co-imaginary, knowledge contributors would create space to identify what is causing the pain, describe how it is impacting our bodies, illuminate what healing actions can be taken, and direct resources to those healing practices. The result may be a deepened, nuanced solidarity across Black and Indigenous communities.

Finally, there are a couple important future directions to consider related to the co-learnings from our storywork. First, our storying was heavily informed by Lauren's and my situatedness within U.S. contexts. However, Black and Indigenous solidarity building and healing may hold implications on the global scale. White supremacy, anti-Blackness, and settler colonialism is a global project and there are international, transgressive coali-

tions circumventing interlocking systems. Converging global perspectives with Black and Indigenous solidarity may bolster the pursuit of liberatory futures. Second, gender identity was not a dimension that was explicitly explored in our storying. Thus, future knowledge co-creation should co-explore gendered and power dynamics within Black and Indigenous solidarity building. No matter the future direction, cross-racialized and nuanced analysis should be brought to the forefront and intersected with gender dimensions and global perspectives.

8. Conclusions

Black and Indigenous solidarity in knowledge co-creation is dynamic, complex, and important—but not inevitable. Suzack's (2021) note about the freedom to choose to be in relation is crucial. This perspective allows space to reconcile tension and negotiate aims. Lauren and I demonstrate one of the many paths forward that began with our own self-reflections, moved to dialogic spaces, and concluded in co-regulatory healing. Social scientists may connect with our contributions in their own nuanced identities and their relationships with knowledge contributors. Solidarity building blocks will not be the same. However, when social scientists find connection to others' work, we move research activities to more relational paradigms. We invite readers to unapologetically center stories, histories, tensions, negotiations, and conversations in social science, but more importantly, in relation to each other. We cannot be free in knowledge creation until every single one of us is free.

Appendix A

We want to share a longer excerpt from our first one-on-one conversation because we feel that it is a moment that exemplifies our turn toward nuance:

Nate: I want to just affirm and acknowledge you're sharing with me your identity because I think that is where we connect. When we're trying to identify within these, you know, social constructs it becomes very difficult, right, and I have always worked through, you know, having conversations about it to really broaden what we mean when we talk about who our people are where we come from, because I feel like that is the most important piece. You know, not something that was created to subjugate people [such as race].

Lauren: Completely, and I feel like it's just one of those things where it took me a long time to be like "where I am?" [with my identity] . . . With me identifying as Native, I didn't expect the amount of pushback that I got from people. People of color and white people will question, they will say, "Why? I just don't understand" [about her Native identity]. If I'm telling someone how I identify, there is always a follow-up question.

Nate: Right.

Lauren: This is so frustrating and it's tiring, it's tiresome.

Nate: Right.

Lauren: I'm telling people how I identify, but they are still like, "Well, you know, Black and Brown families" [as a way to undermine Lauren's Native identity and assume she wouldn't understand]. People automatically assume. And I don't really know why that is necessarily ... I tried to ask people, you know, "What is that?" [responses that undermine Lauren's identity], and why these are the questions and I get a lot of different answers in terms of that. But it's nice to connect and I feel like there's a lot more ... unfortunately ... a lot of people who struggle with it and are trying to figure it out, like you got to do work and figure your own self out [in solidarity]. And figure out how they are comfortable identifying.

Nate: Yeah, and especially in the United States.

Lauren: Right.

Nate: When I go visit my family in Jamaica and I say I'm Black American and they're always like "Nathan, what do you mean?" [dramatically]

Lauren: [Laughter]

Nate: Because it's not the same context. The same white supremacist systems are not the same in Jamaica compared to the United States. Right. So there's just a difference in how Jamaicans may theorize race vs. ethnicity. It's more about where you're from, where's your neighborhood. What is your dialect. The United States is so far removed from that because of lots of different reasons. And like you just said, people are obsessed with putting people into a box that they want them to be in and it's like, well, "Why are you doing this?", when I tell you what I am [how I identify].

Lauren: And it [white supremacist logic] plagues the Native community too. because I didn't grow up on a reservation ... I totally understand that my story is not the same as Indigenous people who have grown up on reservations. Again, it's putting people into boxes and trying to formulate it. And a lot of times it's, I don't know ... I was just ... go ahead, sorry [stopping herself from continuing because she felt like she was talk too much].

Nate: No, no, no [as in, do not apologize].

Lauren: I was like, "Where am I going with this?" [Nate and Lauren share in laughter]

Nate: Love it. And I think our conversation also represents the importance of solidarity between Black and Indigenous people ...

Lauren: Uh-huh.

Nate: Especially in the United States. History tells us that oftentimes white elites will fragment racialized and marginalized communities and, you know, set us against each other or try to create conditions that encourage Black folks to be against Native folks; Native folks against Black folks. That's also part of this conversation and this collective that I'm trying to build as we join the rest of the group in these conversations. I intentionally put Black and Indigenous people of color, because I think it's important for us. To have a knowledge creation space where whiteness is absent, so we can figure out what our solidarity looks like first, and then think about what our strategies are to transform the systems that are deeply steeped in settler colonialism, white supremacy, and racism.

Lauren: Yeah.

Notes

[1] Knowledge co-creation is research, inquiry, and social science that is relational. Knowledge that is co-created is relationally situated to life, land, water, and spirit—it is answerable to community and temporally positioned. This definition of research transcends Western constructs of knowledge gatekeeping, or the tendency for social scientists to make stringent claims about, and institutionalize how, knowledge is valued.

[2] This piece is in my voice (Nate) given how contractual obligations allow for me to have more time for writing activities. Lauren, as a former teacher and current teacher mentor, holds a practitioner role that does not give as much time for writing activities. Thus, Lauren trusted me to synthesize, interpret, and write out our co-learnings. Thus, when we say "co-author" we mean mostly written by Nate with Lauren's blessing, knowledge contributions, writings, and review.

[3] We want the reader to know that we do not include this example to demonize But to acknowledge the complexities of racialized identities and the perpetuation of white supremacist logics in Black and Indigenous solidarity-building activities. Similarly, there are some Black Americans who are complacent in the perpetuation of Indigenous oppression. However, we argue that "who oppressed/oppresses who" is white supremacist rhetoric. Here, our point is that Black and Indigenous conflict may be a product of white supremacy and settler colonial logics.

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