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## Confronting settler colonialism: Theoretical and methodological questions about social studies research

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### ABSTRACT

In this conceptual piece, we situate settler colonial theory and qualitative inquiry in a discussion about the research(ing) of social studies education. The context for this article includes our visit and conversations with 9th grade Oklahoma history teachers and their teaching and curriculum within Indigneous contexts. Although not focused as an analysis of our conversations with teachers, our discussion asks many questions about how we engage in social justice work and the choices we make in our research methodology.

### KEYWORDS

Critical theory; indigenous studies; qualitative research; settler colonial theory

We begin by recognizing the sovereignty of the 39 Native nations<sup>1</sup> within the territory now called Oklahoma. These Native nations, as with all nations<sup>2</sup> within the United States, have called these lands home since time immemorial. The colonized boundaries that today define “Oklahoma” were such named from the Choctaw words *okla* and *humma*, which mean “red people” (Savage, 2015). The Wichita and Caddo Nations lived in the region long before colonial invasion and settlement, as did the Plains Apache and Quapaw. Many of the Indigenous peoples<sup>3</sup> of these lands spoke Caddoan languages and formed complex societies and confederations with other nations. As European colonizers invaded, they brought disease, violence, and dispossession. Without consultation with any Native nations, the United States agreed to the Louisiana Purchase, which included land that would be named Indian Territory (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014).

As the United States pushed west, the Osage, Pawnee, Kiowa, and Comanche Nations were forced to relocate. Marked by the Indian Removal Act of 1830, the United States followed a policy of removal and genocide through violence and assimilation, and present-day Oklahoma served as a site for forced reservations. The 1887 Dawes Act relegated Indigenous peoples to individual allotments of land, which were systematically stolen through corruption by White Oklahomans, as documented by historian Angie Debo (1940) and others. Allotments also allowed for the creation of lands for White “Boomers” who had long illegally encroached on Indigenous lands and advocated for the opening of “Unassigned Lands” for further settlement.

The Indian Appropriations Act of 1889 sanctioned land runs to legalize the theft of Indigenous lands by “Boomers” and “Sooners” (the latter were settlers who began the land runs early). Efforts by Indigenous peoples to create a State of Sequoyah in eastern

Oklahoma were rejected, and the Oklahoma and Indian Territories were dissolved into the state of Oklahoma in 1907 (Debo, 1940). Since the creation of the state over a century ago, Indigenous peoples and their sovereign nations have continued to fight oppressive conditions and laws while also sustaining their communities, traditions, and governments into the present. Although brief, this historical context provides a backdrop to research we began with 9th-grade Oklahoma history educators about their teaching, specifically in how they include or exclude Indigenous perspectives, histories, cultures, and current issues within the district curriculum.

### **Who are we? Researcher positionalality**

In our preparations to talk with Oklahoma history teachers (most of whom had worked with Dan in previous years), we found ourselves discussing (with each other at first, and then later with teachers) our own histories and the influence those have on the decisions we make in our work. Talking openly about our own backgrounds as teacher educators from predominantly Western and Eastern European origins opens us to think more critically about our visit to central Oklahoma, our conversations with predominately White teachers, and the methodological choices we were considering for this study. By including ourselves in this writing, we open space to confront who we are and where we come from in relation to our work (Milner, 2007).

We begin with a summary of who we are, because it is from us that the questions and discussions posed here stem. Sarah, having been born in California, spent most of her childhood in southeastern Connecticut, homelands to both the Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan Nations. On her maternal grandfather's side, Sarah descends from a long line of White settler families to Virginia, including cousins George Washington and Meriwether Lewis. From this line of settlers, Sarah's great, great, great, great grandfather, Joshua Lewis, was sent by President Jefferson in 1805 to New Orleans to complete land titles stemming from the Louisiana Purchase. On her maternal grandmother's side, she descends from a predominately French family who arrived in New Orleans after expulsion from Acadia by the British. On Sarah's father's side, both her paternal grandmother's and grandfather's families are Ashkenazi Jews who left Poland and Russia, respectively, at the turn of the 20th century and settled just outside Baltimore. As she continues to learn more about her ancestry, Sarah takes responsibility for fighting against the White supremacist structures many of her ancestors worked to establish in the United States. Taking responsibility, for Sarah, is a lifelong endeavor.

Meanwhile, Dan grew up in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, home of the Cherokee Nation and the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma, and then nearby Tulsa. Despite being a first-generation Oklahoman, his identity was partially forged against outsiders' perceptions that the "flyover" state was backward and undeveloped. However, unlike many "Okies" associated with poverty and conservatism (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2002), Dan grew up in a White, middle-class family without these resentments but with privilege. Dan can remember few educational activities on Indigenous peoples in his K-12 school experiences, but those he recalls were miseducational (e.g., Land Run simulation in elementary school). As a student at the University of Oklahoma, Dan became more familiar with critical histories that addressed marginalized and erased stories in the state (e.g., Tulsa Massacre of 1921), but Indigenous histories

seemed to often be on the periphery and educational activities were scattered and lacked coherence. In teaching Oklahoma History during student teaching, for example, Dan led class discussions regarding Indigenous efforts in the state to preserve and promote Indigenous languages, but he remembers vividly feeling unprepared and overwhelmed to teach these histories himself. Before and during this study, Dan confronted his own ignorance about Indigenous histories.

In confronting ourselves within the research, we work from a place that seeks to learn from Oklahoma teachers so that our advocacy is better informed. As such, we must always recognize and call out the presence of our own power, privilege, and settler colonialism. As Carey (2004) noted:

I find *me* in the story, in the present manifestations of colonization (institutionally, culturally, socially, and spiritually). The Western academy is a safe space from which we call for change. It is a powerful place. But it is still a colonization institution, a total institution, a technology of power. (emphasis in original, pp. 70, 80)

We are part of the stories we tell because of the decisions we make before a single interview is conducted or piece of data “collected,” and thus, articulating researcher positionality is imperative.

When we first began this work, we wondered what the possibilities and challenges for Oklahoma history teachers were in bringing diverse Indigenous histories and current issues into their classrooms. The complexities of Oklahoma’s past and present, as we listened to the stories of teachers in one central Oklahoma high school, brought to bear several questions about the very nature of the inquiry we were attempting to conduct. These questions perhaps lingered ever present before the work even began, during a conversation over coffee when Dan presented Sarah with the idea of revisiting spaces where he used to live and teach. What follows, then, in this manuscript is not a traditional recounting of a research study, but rather questionings and reflections about *the very nature of our work* as social studies scholars who want to learn from teachers’ experiences, settler colonial theory, qualitative inquiry, and the pursuit of justice. For us, one question looms large as we look backward and forward in this study: What responsibilities do we have as social studies researchers in addressing settler colonialism within our own research?

### **Settler colonial theory: An introduction to the U. S. context**

Settler colonial theory tests “the historian’s penchant for tidy periodizations, insofar as while there are beginnings, there is no end; the legacies of colonialism persist” (Hixon, 2013, p. 2). Settler colonialism is ongoing around the world. With connections to colonial studies (1950s–1960s); “internal colonialism” (1970s) theorizations of circumstances in, for example, Apartheid South Africa; postcolonial studies (circa 1980s); and “new imperial history” (1990s), settler colonial studies emphasize “the continuing operation of an unchanged set of unequal relations” (Veracini, 2017, pp. 2–3). Settler colonialism transcends time and place; what is needed is “conquest, elimination of Natives, replacement, and far-settlement” (Lahti, 2017, p. 9). Scholars have named and unpacked settler colonialism in several Latin American countries, Russia, the “British West” (i.e., Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa), the United States, China, Israel, and Japan, to name a few

(Lahti, 2017). As such, settler colonialism is not a singular event (historical or contemporary) in any one place or space, but rather an ongoing structure (Wolfe, 2006).

This structure is multidimensional, including a geopolitics that is established at least in part on settler understandings of continental empire-building. Veracini (2017) provided a few examples of these “continents of the mind”:

The rebelling settlers of what would become the US built a “continental” army, their representatives met in a “continental” congress, the settlers of South Africa met undifferentiated “Africans” and self-defined their collective and language as “Afrikaner,” US President James Monroe developed his doctrine to fence off clearly defined *continental* limits, Australian Federation united an “island-continent” and Canada was built around a “continental” railroad from “sea to sea.” (emphasis in original, p. 1)

As a “violent act of geography,” settlers steal lands and turn those lands “into space and then into place again” (Veracini, 2017, p. 5). The place looks largely like the homes settlers left behind. Reid and Peace (2017), in their examination of settler colonialism in northeastern North America, additionally explained how settlers brought their sovereignty with them and exerted that sovereignty over Native nations “or settlers of other origins” (p. 80).

Hixon (2013) also took up this discussion of settler colonialism in that “what primarily distinguishes settler colonialism from colonialism proper is that the settlers came not to exploit the indigenous populations for economic gain, but rather to remove them from colonial space” (p. 4). In short, interrogating settler colonialism in the context of our work, including the territory comprising Oklahoma and the broader United States, requires understanding that this structure is predicated on a desire for the erasure of Indigenous peoples and seizing of Indigenous lands (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015; Tuck & Yang, 2014). In his writings, Wolfe (2006) additionally unpacked the ways in which settlers, rooted in their xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and anti-Blackness, constructed “grammars of race” to establish and maintain power (p. 387). Wolfe explained, “As opposed to enslaved people, whose reproduction augmented their owners’ wealth, Indigenous people obstructed settlers’ access to land, so their increase was counterproductive. In this way, the restrictive racial classification of Indians straightforwardly furthered the logic of elimination” (p. 388).

Settlers in the United States racially target(ed) Indigenous peoples in order to take their lands (Wolfe, 2006). Lumbee scholar Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy (2006) noted that Indigenous peoples are “both legal/political and racialized beings; however, we are rarely treated as such, leaving Indigenous peoples in a state of inbetweenness wherein we define ourselves as both, with an emphasis on the legal/political, but we are framed as racialized groups by many members of society” (pp. 432–433). As American settlers established White supremacy as the legal foundation of life in the United States, they systematically dispossessed, erased, and enslaved Indigenous peoples to remake lands into settler property (Dippie, 1982; Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012, 2014; Wolfe, 2006). The settler colonial structure, as scholar Walter Mignolo noted during a conversation with Gaztambide-Fernández (2014), emphasized that European settlers see land in economic terms and, by extension, through the international laws they create to protect land theft.

Settler colonialism in the United States, however, changes over time to shift “in disposition variously from accommodation to annihilation to inclusion of indigenous peoples” (Goldstein, 2014, p. 9). Goldstein (2014) further noted,

An exclusive focus on imperialism and empire with regard to the United States risks losing sight of how territorial seizure, the legal justifications for occupation, the unofficially sanctioned or tolerated illegalities that further underwrote expansion and occupation, and differential modes of governance—including liberal democracy and citizenship—remain the very conditions of possibility for its more indirect forms of rule. (p. 9)

Similarly, Veracini (2015) argued that these settlers systematically disavowed or denied “the indigenous sovereignties” they encountered, “either by signing treaties they do not intend to honour, or by asserting different versions of the *terra nullius* doctrine” (emphasis in original, p. 41). This assertion is similar to a discussion raised by Hixon (2013), in that although the United States may have recognized Indigenous peoples’ land claims in its early years, the government later turned to legal maneuverings to forcibly remove Native nations from their lands as the United States invaded west. In seeing the lands encompassing the United States as empty of peoples and nations and, therefore, open for the taking, White Americans reinforced racist policies and practices that are hallmarks of settler colonialism.

The Dawes Act, for example, brought some 50,000 White settlers into the Oklahoma Territory where they claimed nearly two million acres of land—lands taken from Native nations who were then forced on to smaller allotments. These new “unassigned lands” were then opened to White settlement, and with the passage of the Homestead Act of 1862, those lands were given to White Americans after a five-year waiting period (Landry, 2017). The site of the school we visited for this research was in an area called “Unassigned Land” until the Land Run of 1889. In his examination of American history, Hixon (2013) noted, “The time for trade and diplomacy, compromise and coexistence, had now passed. The Americans sought a final solution to the problem that had long plagued settler expansion onto a ‘frontier’ they called their own” (p. 62). It is significant in our discussion not only to recognize the location of the school and its teachers in relation to settler colonialism, but to also recognize that despite the efforts of the United States, Indigenous sovereignty is legally understood as being preconstitutional, meaning that it existed *before* the creation of the United States (Biolsi, 2005). According to Eastern Shawnee scholar Robert Miller (2005), Indigenous sovereignty, as outlined in *United States v. Winans*, articulates a granting of rights to Americans, not a granting of rights from Americans. The theft of lands to create the state of Oklahoma, as the central example here, remains an illegal act and a violation of U.S.-Native treaties.

Although settler colonialism is founded on the taking of land and formation of racial hierarchy, it also creates spaces by which settlers can deny their own histories. This denial is especially powerful. Hixon (2013) contended, “historical denial helps explain why study of the United States within the context of both settler colonialism and postcolonialism has been relatively scarce and ‘especially controversial’” (p. 12). Historical denial enables the critique of colonization throughout the world while simultaneously dismissing issues of colonial power in the U.S. context. As Crow (2017) discussed, “Settler colonialism matters to any understanding of the history of the United States simply because, in the American context, settler colonialism has worked by allowing the predominant settler population to not recognize itself as one” (p. 95). Denying that the United States has *always* been a colonial power robs the present of the urgency to explicitly name the violence wrought by settler colonialism and challenge the very foundations of democracy, freedom, and justice for which the United States claims to be built (Sabzalian & Shear, 2018). For us,

settler colonial theory challenges the deeply rooted and ever-present forces of hegemony—the structures by which the dominant remain dominant—in U.S. history classrooms and specifically within the spaces and places where we make research decisions toward hearing and learning from the experiences of Oklahoma history teachers. Within these structures, that also include testing pressures, limited professional development for social studies, and demands to standardize curriculum, are teachers who must make their pedagogical decisions to teach about the state’s divisive histories (Houser, Krutka, Province Roberts, Pennington, & Faili Coerver, 2017).

### **Questioning qualitative inquiry**

As we continue to learn about settler colonialism in the U.S. context, we question the very nature of our research. In talking with this group of Oklahoma history teachers, we uncomfortably consider the gaze of research—the analytic coldness of inquiry that at times works to separate researcher from the researched. We embark on this questioning by first recognizing that methodology relates to the worldview that undergirds how research is understood and how methods are chosen to conduct the work (Walter, 2006; Walter & Anderson, 2016). In this section, we extend our discussion of settler colonial theory and make use of conversations within qualitative inquiry to reconsider how we go about the research process. We reflect on our own training, stumbles we made at the start of this work, and methodological questions and discourses we continue to consider for what our research with Oklahoma history teachers may become in the future.

### **Reflecting our training: What we learned about qualitative inquiry (and social studies)**

From the beginning of this research collaboration, it was clear to both of us that we approach qualitative work differently. The many conversations we had laid bare the different ways we had been trained as doctoral students to “do” research and understand the role of research in social studies education. As a doctoral student, Sarah took several methodology courses, including two quantitative courses and five qualitative courses. Her more meaningful and lasting learning experiences were in courses focused on narrative (e.g., Andrews, Squire, & Tamboukou, 2008; Riessman, 2007) and poststructural methodologies (e.g., Jackson & Mazzei, 2012; St. Pierre, 2011) and those experiences were markedly different from a previous course she had taken in case study methodology. Dan’s methodological preparation focused on an array of methods (e.g., action research) and critiques with attention to underlying assumptions, but when it came to what to “do,” he felt most prepared regarding grounded theory (GT) methods (i.e., Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999). He was eventually trained in constructivist grounded theory, whereby Kathy Charmaz (2014) refuted GT’s positivist assumptions that truth is *discovered*. While maintaining an analytic stance, Charmaz departed from GT in arguing that researchers *construct* their data and findings and offered flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing data (broadly defined).

We raise the issue of methodological training because it impacts who we become as social studies scholars. Over the past quarter century, a qualitative turn toward descriptive studies of human experience has left qualitative inquiry as the “dominant paradigm” in the field (Dinkelman & Cuenca, 2017, p. 95), but this vague qualitative label offers much ambiguity about the diversity of approaches, assumptions, and methods. It assumes that



“qualitative researchers work to categorize, group, and organize data into discernible representations...” within the study context (Dinkelman & Cuenca, 2017, p. 98). This assumption is one Dan brought with him to the high school as we interviewed teachers. He expected we might code interviews to identify themes and patterns in the ways they talked about teaching and thinking about Indigenous histories. However, Sarah did not subscribe to these assumptions. Sarah approached the work from a vantage point of disruption, which we discuss further in this article. These dissonant assumptions about *research* left us regularly stalled and frustrated. It was not until we untangled our philosophical commitments that we began to see how we were attempting to walk different paths of inquiry.

As we began to confront settler colonialism in our research, more conversations ensued: How were we going to let go of what we were trained to “do”? How can we make time, once we are “out” of graduate school, to unlearn our training so as to open ourselves to methodological possibilities (St. Pierre, 2016)? For Dan, these were especially palpable questions as he was less familiar with the literature and discourses shared throughout this article. For Sarah, too, letting go also called on her to share with Dan her own ongoing journey to rethink the many methodologies and methods she was taught in grad school. We recall Cherryholmes (2006) who asked, “What do we do when we are faced...with an overabundance of possibilities? Why do we do what we do” (p. 10)?

As we wrestled (and continue to wrestle) with a way forward methodologically, we turned to the social studies research literature. Barton (2006), Crocco (2006), Dinkelman and Cuenca (2017), and Segall (2013) raised important questions about the nature of research in social studies education. In addition to the nature of research, these social studies scholars have raised concerns about the lack of attention to theory in research. As Dinkelman and Cuenca (2017), in their review of 25 years of *Theory & Research in Social Education (TRSE)*, noted, “the rise of qualitative research in our field exclusively in empirical investigations using qualitative methods, and not in investigations of qualitative methodologies and their philosophical underpinnings” (p. 121). These scholars, as well as several others, also challenge the field to consider why the field does not take up discussions of the range of methodologies available to us in our conference spaces and journals.

In this regard, Barton (2006) wrote, “Although the social studies research community would surely benefit from discussing the range of such possibilities, many researchers may not perceive the field as being open to such discussions” (p. 5). Crocco (2006) articulated the conditions of the Academy, especially pressures to stay/become relevant in the face of positivist ideals of science-based research. This issue is especially palpable to social studies scholars who may identify within critical theories and/or wanting to use emerging qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Barton (2006) argued further, “If social studies researchers think the field is closed to diverse perspectives and innovative approaches, they are unlikely to initiate discussion of method, either in print or in person” (p. 5). Although not a social studies scholar, Koro-Ljungberg (2016) has spoken to the danger of doing work that pushes against the traditions of academia because “the academic marketplace has limited tolerance for epistemological diversity and methodological flexibility” (p. 6).

Throughout the course of our collaboration, we often considered what norms social studies, either explicitly or implicitly, demand from methodology. In a review of *TRSE*, Dinkelman and Cuenca (2017) observed the popularity of case study methodology in articles published between 1991 and 2014. As social studies scholars conducting research



under the umbrella of case study utilized a variety of methods (e.g., interviewing, observation), Dinkelman and Cuenca also observed how the growth of a commonality of language provided these scholars space in their writing to focus less on explaining/defending their methodological decisions. Logic extends, therefore, to mean that those who do not use these common methodologies in their qualitative inquiries must spend ample (i.e., more) time in explaining their methodological decisions.

As we work to confront settler colonialism within our research, and how that confrontation challenges us to rethink methodologies, we are not without feelings of uneasiness in bringing this conversation to social studies. “Who wants to discuss research methods if they might be told they’re either disruptive or mistaken” (Barton, 2006, p. 5)? Qualitative inquiry is political. This politicization extends, too, in acknowledging that both research and researchers are “inherently subjective” (Segall, 2013, p. 485). Attempting to break away from at least some of our training, however, puts us in direct conflict with the expectations of the field and of qualitative inquiry to be scientific and objective (Denzin & Giardina, 2015; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Dinkelman & Cuenca, 2017; St. Pierre & Roulston, 2006).

### ***Learning from social studies research within Indigenous contexts***

When we first began this work we turned to social studies education research within Indigenous contexts to learn from their work with teachers and curriculum. As questions about the very nature of research surfaced, we revisited this literature to shift from learning from *findings* to learning from these scholars’ methodological choices. For example, Native Hawaiian scholar Julie Kaomea (2005) wrote about the use of fieldwork, observations, interviews, and documents as methods within a Bakhtinian discourse analysis to how non-Hawaiian Native elementary classroom teachers taught about Native Hawaiian cultures and histories. In another study of teacher practice, Parding’s (2013) interviews of non-Indigenous Australian teachers drew from Miles and Huberman (1994), Gibbs (2007) (for analytic coding), and Yin (2018) (for making generalizations across participants).

In a third study, Vegh-Williams (2013) centered Tribal Critical Race Theory and Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Porou scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s (1999) writings on the need for relationship building to interview (individually and in focus groups), survey, and observe Mohawk and non-Indigenous teachers. Vegh-Williams wrote explicitly on their positionality and use of foundational works by Bogdan and Biklen (2007), Charmaz (2014), and Strauss and Corbin (1998) as part of the analytic coding and constant comparative method put forth in grounded theory. Finally, Lipka and McCarty (1994), in drawing from their previous work in ethnography and action-oriented methods (participant observations, interviews, video analysis, reflexive logs), conducted a case study of Navajo and Yup’ik teachers. As part of their discussion, Lipka and McCarty acknowledged that for “these methods to be effective there must exist a mutual and trusting relationship that is collaborative rather than hierarchical and that values the personal and group relations upon which community-based research can proceed” (p. 268). Like Vegh-Williams and Lipka and McCarty, Diné scholar Tarajeau Yazzie-Mintz (2007) based her work with Navajo teachers using discourses in culturally appropriate pedagogies and utilized portraiture as qualitative inquiry to center responsibility and perspective in the research.

Although these studies drew similar conclusions in the problems and possibilities of teaching about/for Indigenous-centered social studies, they approached the use of popular

methods such as interviews and observations from an array of epistemological groundings. We also learned that there is variation in the space researchers provide for articulating the underlying assumptions of knowing and being of their chosen methodologies when working within Indigenous contexts. Perhaps this variation speaks to a larger issue within academic publishing—does the demand for findings and solutions to research questions deny researchers the time and space needed to unpack why and how they approach the *doing* of research? This question was also present when we looked at the methods and methodologies employed in social studies curriculum research. For example, Geneser (2011) drew from Krippendorf (2012) to conduct a content analysis of the portrayal of Karankawa natives in Texas textbooks whereas Moore and Clark (2004) explored content analysis of textbooks using Marshall and Rossman's (2011) writings about qualitative methodologies. Neither study provided a theoretical lens through which they employed their methods.

Stanton (2014b), on the other hand, wrote extensively on the foundations of postcolonial theory, decolonization, and Indigenous ways of knowing as a frame to examine U.S. history texts. Stanton (2012) additionally drew on critical theories of race and Indigenous studies in providing a foundation for her analysis of popular curricular texts. As with Stanton, Shear, Knowles, Soden, and Castro (2015) also used teachings from postcolonial theory to ground their mixed methods study of U.S. history standards. Anderson (2012) provided a brief discussion of his multiperspective critical conceptual framework to ground a textual analysis (citing Wertsh and Cornbleth) of state standards representations of Indigenous content. Journell (2009), however, did not explicitly provide a theoretical frame for his content and interpretive analysis (citing Schwandt) of state-level standards representations of Indigenous peoples. Although we acknowledge scholars undertake research for a variety of reasons, audiences, outlets, and possible outcomes, we argue that researchers, ourselves included, must take better care to articulate how we approach the use of specific research methods within Indigenous contexts. Trawlwoolway scholar Maggie Walter and Métis scholar Chris Anderson (2016) urge us to understand that “the lack of an acknowledged theoretical base can disguise the unacknowledged cultural assumptions and perspectives that will inform our work. Operating outside a developed theoretical framework does not make our research value-free” (p. 13).

We consider Stanton's (2014a) discussion of methodology when thinking about social studies research. Drawing from Standing Rock Sioux scholar Vine Deloria Jr.'s writings, Stanton remarked, “the tendency of research, including qualitative work, to undermine the experiences and perspectives of Native communities to advance the Eurocentric conceptualizations of inquiry, recognition, and success claimed by the ‘academic community’” (p. 573). Even as we write these words—to be published in an academic journal—we take to heart Stanton's discussion of the colonizing, hierarchical privileging of academic research and publication, noting that as with other Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars advocating for change that they often do so by “making the path by walking it” (Ríos, McDaniel, & Stowell, 1996; quoted in Stanton, 2014a, p. 573). How can we live and work without reconstituting settler colonialism? Or will settler colonialism always be with us, yanking at our ankles, continuously tripping us? What could/should that work look like, and how could/should it read in publications like *TRSE*? These are questions we continue to consider as we reflect on work we have each done in the past and on the work we conduct now and in the future.

### ***Reimagining our work: Learning (and attempting) to disrupt***

As we wrestle with our own training, examples from the field (including our own work), and emerging discourses in qualitative inquiry, we may begin to imagine what changes we may need to enact in our research with Oklahoma teachers. Conventional qualitative inquiry attempts to be constructionist and representational using well-known methodologies like case study or grounded theory that collect, organize, and analyze data, whereas turns in discourses to disrupt qualitative inquiry (e.g., post qualitative, new material, new empirical inquiry) decenter and disrupt everything *we think we know* about qualitative work (Aghasaleh & St. Pierre, 2014). Instead of clearly defined boundaries between researcher and data, these methodologies blur that relationship, bringing to the forefront the messiness of qualitative inquiry as always already subjective and entangled (Aghasaleh & St. Pierre, 2014; St. Pierre, 2011). Research from within these messy spaces, Koro-Ljungberg (2016) articulated, challenge researchers to understand that qualitative inquiry is not linear, nor is it necessarily circular. Qualitative inquiry, therefore, can be traveled from/within/across multiple directions. Decisions are made, however, in the writing and the use of commonly held vernacular (e.g., data, analysis). Texts presented from these research spaces provide no answers but instead open us up to “temporary breathing pauses, halts, and energy voids that initiate new series of moments and extensions of thought” (Koro-Ljungberg, 2016, p. 4).

In thinking about rising discourses in qualitative inquiry to resist and how, if at all, it could be utilized to better understand settler colonialism’s presence in our research, we refer to Unangax scholar Eve Tuck and and K. Wayne Yang (2014):

Analytic practices of refusal involve an active resistance to trading in pain and humiliation, and supply a rationale for blocking the settler colonial gaze that wants those stories. Refusal can comprise a resistance to making someone or something the subject of research; it is a form of objectless analysis, an analytic practice with nothing and no one to code. (p. 812)

Refusal, for Tuck and Yang, is more than saying no. Refusal comes before, during, and after—it seeks to interrupt settler colonialism in academic life. Settler colonialism seeks to control the way things and people are known, labeled, and understood (Smith, 1999; Tuck & Yang, 2014). In our conversations with teachers, we talked before and continue to talk about why we do the work, how to conduct the work, for what purpose we think the work is important to social studies education, and how to share what we are learning. In revisiting our conversations with teachers and our “research meetings” over Google Hangout, we take seriously the need to interrogate our own actions—were there stories of pain we unconsciously searched for? Were there decisions along the way that made the teachers unhuman, mere objects for analysis? If we are to analyze the presence of settler colonialism in social studies, we must also name its presence always already next to and within us as researchers and rethink not only how we were trained in qualitative inquiry but also in our current and future decisions in our work.

These are loaded conversations as they remain entrenched in a power differential. As researchers, we always already assume a place of authority over the “subjects” of our inquiry—in the way we write interview questions, the way we establish coding structures, and the way we document our findings. This presumption of authority is one way settler colonialism operates in academic spaces. We struggle with how to engage in learning from

the experiences of social studies teachers in colonized spaces (Oklahoma and curriculum) while simultaneously resisting the forces of settler colonialism in the structures of research. We are again confronted with ourselves and our training. Kaomea (2016) argued that different methodological techniques are needed if research is going to break free of Western-centric ways of researching, and these different tools are especially important for Indigenous and historically marginalized scholars and communities. We ask, too, if there are methodological ways non-Indigenous scholars can unlearn, disrupt, and relearn qualitative inquiry in the support of resistance and refusal?

In their work toward thinking with theory, Jackson and Mazzei (2012) commented, “We don’t obtain knowledge by standing outside of the world; we know because we are of the world. We are part of the world in its differential becoming” (p. 120). From a methodological perspective, thinking with theory disrupts “the theory/practice binary by decentering each and instead showing how they *constitute or make one another*” to create a multiplicity of possible knowledges (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 5, emphasis in original). These makings and unmakings, according to Jackson and Mazzei, occur within a threshold—the space “in the middle” (p. 6) where texts (e.g., initial research questions, interview data, theory, research literature, study location(s), researcher positionalities) meet and create entries and exits, responses and reactions, understandings and questions.

Zapata and Van Horn (2017) commented that thinking with theory opens research beyond the goal of answering the *why* and seeks to understand the many possibilities of *how*. In other words, thinking with theory is not a linear process toward definitive answers to rigid research questions; it is not formulaic, but instead embraces messiness and what can be made possible by opening the research process to the unexpected. Drawing from Ward (2015), Kuby et al. (2016) reflected, “thinking with theory is useful because it is fluid and open, rather than truncated by prescriptive steps and sections, making research processes (i.e., methods, theory) relatively inaccessible to and independent of one another” (p. 142).

Disrupting qualitative inquiry in this way actively resists the traditions of coding, which according to Jackson and Mazzei (2012) “situates the researcher at a distance from the data” (p. 11). Although some conventional qualitative methods make researchers close to and familiar with the data through the process of coding, these conventional qualitative methods maintain the idea that researcher and data are separate entities. Thus, coding, in Jackson and Mazzei’s (2012) view, concerns itself more intimately and persistently with the macro by taking “us back to what is known... a focus on the macro produced by the codes might cause us to miss the texture, the contradictions, the tensions, and entangled becomings produced in the mangle” (p. 12). In this way, thinking with theory refuses the binary between researcher and researched, and therefore, data and researcher(s) are in an always entangled relationship (i.e., knowing and being are not separate).

Further challenging the idea of coding as part of a linear, analytical structure for research, St. Pierre and Jackson (2014) argued,

The work of post-coding analysis cannot be neat, tidy, and contained. Furthermore, it cannot be easily explained either during or after analysis. It certainly cannot be replicated because it is emergent and experimental. In addition, its space-time cannot be secured in the traditional linear “process” trajectory of data collection> analysis> representation. (p. 717)

Similar to the many researchers over the past quarter century who have sought to emancipate qualitative inquiry from the positivist, mid-20th century assumptions from

which analytic coding emerged (Charmaz, 2014), we struggle with tensions between methods, positionality, and purpose. In our conversations with Oklahoma history teachers, we uploaded transcripts to Google Docs and have been considering how to resolve the differences in our methodological training, how not to analyze teachers' actions into *tidy findings*, but instead, learn from their experiences to consider what work should come next, and how to share that in a publication.

For Tuck and Yang (2014), coding is a tool of invasion because it results in the production of “settler colonial knowledge and to produce it for the academy” (p. 813). As we contend with our conversations with Oklahoma history teachers, we must confront a question on the purpose(s) of doing the research in the first place. Who should that work benefit? Tyson (2006) further challenged us to consider this question. She argued, “The reward(s) of the academy can deceive us to believe that our work is emancipatory when it is not” (p. 46). We must engage in constant and consistent privilege checking—as tenure track faculty at major research institutions where the expectation of research and writing are high, we are conscious of both the dangers of researching within a field that still wrestles with the acceptability of critically oriented work and the safety our positions in the Academy provide to advocate for change in spaces where we no longer live full-time, specifically K-12 social studies classrooms.

This advocacy must also continue to be checked because we (Sarah and Dan) also do not live within Indigenous communities. We are White. We do not face the same dangers critically oriented scholars of color face in openly challenging racism and settler colonialism. We increasingly come to see that writing about research is not enough. We must acknowledge Tuck and Yang's (2014) teachings, that “refusal is not a code word for critical research, socially engaged, or culturally sensitive research. It is not the reflexive caveat, the hand-wringing, the flash of positional confession before proceeding as usual” (p. 814). In attempting to do qualitative inquiry differently, we stumbled. Thinking with settler colonial theory forces us to consider the nature of settler colonialism in our own research practices. As Chickasaw scholar Byrd (2011), in her critique of poststructural thought, asserted, “Every time flow or line of flight approaches, touches, or encounters Indianness, it also confronts the colonialist project that has made the flow possible. The choice is either to confront that colonialism or to deflect it” (p. 17). In our work, we come face-to-face with settler colonialism in the ways knowledge is defined in Western research, presented at conferences, and applied in schools. We ask, can choices in methodology be(come) an act of resistance? Can new turns in qualitative inquiry confront settler colonialism in dynamic ways that support ongoing efforts to potentially decolonize education research (e.g., Smith, 1999)?

### ***Researcher tensions and concerns when writing about teachers***

Castagno and Brayboy (2008) noted, “An unfortunate reality of [Indigenous] education is that the vast majority of teachers lack much of the necessary knowledge to provide an effective, high-quality, and culturally responsive education to Indigenous youth” (p. 972). Castagno and Brayboy contended that this necessary knowledge includes “an awareness and understanding of Indigenous cultures, histories, and political issues” (p. 972). In advocating for preservice teachers and classroom teachers to consider civics education differently, Alutiiq scholar Leilani Sabzalian and Shear (2018) drew from Mexican/Tigua scholar Dolores Calderón's (2009) writings on colonial blindness, which refers to practices

“that normalize Western knowledge organization and assumptions” in education (Calderón, 2009, p. 54). These underlying issues discussed in previous research created tension for us as we considered how to work differently with the teachers’ reflections on their teaching and curriculum. Not only were we still unpacking how we see/hear/feel the world of qualitative inquiry differently, we came to understand we approached thinking about our conversations with teachers differently as well.

Take, for example, Megan, a White teacher with six years of classroom experience: “As far as our book goes, and well our pacing guide, we talk about where they were before, what their lifestyles were like. Then we talk about the introduction of Jefferson, how he wanted to assimilate Native Americans into White culture.” She went on to reflect, “Then we talk about with kids, well what does that mean for Native Americans? And then [students] all say, well then, they lose their culture, they lose their customs and all of that and then we talk about the process of treaties convincing tribes to move west and about how over time the sentiment changes and they no longer care about assimilation, they just want them gone because they want more land.” Similarly, Cathy, a White teacher with 10 years of classroom experience runs a simulation of the removals every year. She commented, “[Students taking on the roles of Indigenous peoples] have food, water, shelter, their family, transportation. I read an excerpt or something that occurred during the removals...they basically wager these things and at the end, the ones who have survived, who have some of these things left, are still standing, and those who are sitting down or seated are the ones who did not make it.” Writings from within settler colonial studies continue to challenge the way we read Cathy’s comments in as much as simulating removal opens the “settler colonial imagination in which the Native (understanding that he is becoming extinct) hands over his land” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 14).

The tension we continue to grapple with is how to address when settler colonialism if, when, and/or how it was being reenforced through the ways teachers talked about their pedagogy and curriculum. If we think about the conversations with teachers as data, then we must consider what to do with it—do we code it, analyze it, claim it, or do we engage it differently? For Dan, he came to conversation thinking about the data first (what the teachers had to say), with theory on the backburner until analysis of data ensued. Sarah, on the other hand, came grounded in settler colonial theory. We both arrived in Oklahoma, despite several conversations to set up the study, with different methodological training. We are not, as previously discussed, at a distance from the conversations. Dan knew these teachers, worked with them in previous contexts, and was from the community. Sarah was not, but she was close to the problems of Indigenous representations in social studies.

We began to see that not only were we talking inquiry differently, we were thinking about how we might address our research questions differently given teachers’ stories, particularly in whether/how to hold them responsible for any/all settler logics they reinforce, consciously or not. As we realized tensions between ourselves as researchers, we asked new questions: Was there more to what the teachers were teaching than what they were sharing in conversation? How does this intersect with the mandated curriculum and demands for standardization? How do (in)visible issues of power (between the researcher and researched, as well as between researchers) become part of what is being said or not said?



Methodologically, we continue to learn from Nêhiyaw and Saulteaux scholar Margaret Kovatch's (2010) writings toward decolonizing, Indigenous frameworks that analyze power differentials and seeks both structural and personal transformation. We also consider the case Kuntz (2015) made against working with interviews as a "mechanism for understanding experience and processes of meaning-making" (p. 47). In confronting settler colonialism in our research we are further challenged to reconcile not only the conversations we have had but what else needs to be done as part of the inquiry—although the Oklahoma history teachers did not create the settler colonial spaces they teach in, they are responsible if they ultimately reinforce settler colonial thinking that harms Indigenous communities (Sabzalian, *in press*).

### ***Returning to positionality as imperative to resist extractive research practices***

According to Brown, Carducci, and Kuby (2014), "Disruptive researchers often feel they do not have a choice with respect to the work they do. On many occasions, the research emerges from the researcher's personal biography or lived experience" (p. 6). In confronting ourselves, we wrestle with the settler within and the contradictions present in working toward aims of justice while continuing to live with the privileges of being settlers. As Tuck and Yang (2012) noted, "We don't intend to discourage those who have dedicated careers and lives to teaching themselves and others to be critically conscious of racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, xenophobia, and settler colonialism" (p. 21). We are not to give up on our efforts to serve as allies; instead, Tuck and Yang (2012) ask us to "consider how the pursuit of critical consciousness, the pursuit of social justice through a critical enlightenment, can also be settler moves to innocence—diversions, distractions, which relieve the settler of feelings of guilt or responsibility, and conceal the need to give up land or power or privilege" (p. 21). Learning from Indigenous methodological writings, such as research proposed by Opaskwayak Cree scholar Shawn Wilson (2008), we must take responsibility for our place within relationships and the accountability and reciprocity we must have to teachers and communities. Similarly, as Smith (1999) noted, research is a "powerful intervention" that must be carefully implemented and shared because "researchers are in receipt of privileged information" (p. 176).

As we contend with important theoretical and methodological questions, we argue for upending conventional Western research's demands for findings/the ability to provide definitive answers and for confronting ourselves, to question why we are doing this work and for whom it benefits or harms. We must consider how social studies needs to change, to call out settler colonialism present in our teaching, curriculum, and research. Not only does past research matter, so does what we do in response to what we learn. Moves toward innocence—these distractions—only serve the interests of settler colonialism and White supremacy. The choices we make matter, not only in our work with Oklahoma history teachers but also as a field. Koro-Ljungberg (2016) further challenges us to consider our choices:

Methodologies are choices, often onto-epistemological and theoretical, and cannot be divorced from the values, beliefs, backgrounds, bodies, and affects of the researcher or the research context. Methodologies are political, and they have power to disempower, empower, and validate and invalidate experiences, data, lives, and material." (p. 79)

We are responsible to the teachers in our research, to the stories they tell, to the peoples impacted directly and indirectly from their pedagogical choices (students, school community, and Indigenous communities served by the school), and the methodological decisions we make to resist or to refuse must stem from an ethic of responsibility. Central to this responsibility is resisting “logics of extraction” that set the researched/subject as fixed, distanced from the researcher, with justice happening “out there” instead of acknowledging that inquiry is always already subjective with the researcher “immersed and known” (Kuntz, 2015, p. 45). We are not absent, as Kuntz (2015) describes, from ontological debates about the decisions we make and the impact those decisions have on people’s lives.

### **Considerations for engaging (with) decolonization and justice work**

For whom do we seek justice? How, if at all, does justice-oriented work in social studies reinforce or upend settler colonial logics? How do the theoretical and methodological decisions we make inform our understanding to move forward in our own work? Patel (2016) wrote,

Not disconnected from the ways that affirmative action agendas in higher education are promoted out of an interest of diversity for learning rather than countering systematic and intertwined forms of advantage for white men, social justice can be equated with diversity but not decentering cultures of privilege. (p. 89)

Although Patel does not call on educational researchers to forgo “social justice” outright, she challenges us, especially as we consider our conversations with Oklahoma history teachers, to reconsider how the history of social studies research is reflective of the struggles over curricular decision making, control for (re)presentations of Indigeneity, and issues of power. Similarly, Wolcott (2018) challenged social justice work to make known the ways diversity work, which is oft connected to justice projects, reify anti-Blackness in education. We see this call as an extension of the urgency we feel in further addressing how settler colonialism is present in our research as social studies scholars.

By extension of Patel’s (2016) call, we consider Winn’s (2014) introduction to the idea of humanizing research via her reading of Paulo Freire. Specifically, Winn called on us to understand the ways research works to make human beings more or less human, and that for research to become more human, we as researchers have to relocate our own humanness. Researchers are, whether we will admit it or not, part of the work. Having a “critical meta-awareness,” as Souto-Manning (2014) described, allows researchers to be more fully human, to embrace humility as a necessary part of our work (p. 203). This awareness extends, as Souto-Manning discussed, to recognizing our position(s) within physical spaces and systems. With respect to this positionality, Diaz-Strong, Luna-Duarte, Gómez, and Meiners (2014) reflected, “scholars are professionalized to produce discrete products, to acquire and keep jobs, to build expertise, to be objective, and to advance the discipline of the field” (p. 17). Likewise, “walking the well-intentioned road to hell, Western scholars dedicated to the best interests of indigenous peoples often unwittingly participate in the Western hegemonic process” (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008, p. 141). As White, non-Indigenous social studies scholars, we are learning to recognize the ways settler colonialism exists within research, to recognize that research is always already “moral and political,” and that we have a responsibility to become more human and change our research practices (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 3).

To this end, we consider Mi'kmaq scholar Marie Battiste (2008) who asserted, "At the core of this quest is the issue of how to create ethical behavior in a knowledge system contaminated by colonialism and racism" (p. 503). We contend with research as relational, or as Patel (2016) noted, "attending to our role within shifting contexts, our own shifting roles, in a constant state of flux with each other" which "affords the opportunity to unfurl the grip of control and instead situate ourselves as answerable" (p. 68). These attentions to ethics and position also speak to the long view of decolonizing education. Specifically, Nishnaabeg scholar Madeline Whetung and Sarah Wakefield (2018) have called on researchers to reconsider a justification of research in an ethics protocol to instead attend to how to create relationships with research participants that explicitly name issues of place, power, and privilege. What can such attention to accountability look like methodologically? How can we utilize the turns in qualitative inquiry that challenge settler colonialism as embedded within Western scientific traditions?

Tuck and Yang (2018b) noted that research engaging a decolonizing methodology may still use tools recognizable in traditional qualitative inquiry, such as interviews or surveys. The significant difference, however, is that a decolonizing methodology utilizing Indigenous theory seeks relational validity (the research relationship) rather than empirical validity. Similarly, Tuck and Yang raise important distinctions we must attend to when we think about social justice as a framework for qualitative inquiry. They argue that what is considered valid in social justice research "resonates with people's lives and informs their power to make change. Social justice education in this respect has a general commitment to social change, even though that change is not necessarily decolonizing" (p. xiii). This issue is especially important to consider within social studies, as social justice has become increasingly more familiar in the field's work. As Oto (*in press*) articulated, "While we might argue for the critical importance of social justice *in* curriculum and pedagogy, our research leaves the concept of social justice alone and untroubled." Whereas social studies has sought to attend to social justice as a goal (as discussed in Bickmore, 2008) of our work, the field has not taken up the problems and possibilities of social justice *as* research.

In considering decolonization and/or justice as methodology, we must remain steadfast in our confrontations with settler colonialism, especially in as much as we (Sarah and Dan) remain beneficiaries of the colonial system. How can we learn from Indigenous scholars' work in theory and methodology without appropriating their ways of knowing and being or reinstituting settler colonialism? Although decolonization and justice research have their divergences, Tuck and Yang (2018a) consider how we, researchers doing work under the "rising sign of social justice," may want to reconsider the goals of our work. As Tuck and Yang (2018a) noted, "Rather than the goal of political unity with commonly shared objectives, an ethic of incommensurability acknowledges that we can collaborate for a time together even while anticipating that our pathways toward enacting liberation will diverge" (p. 2). This position may very well be where we are stuck with our work with Oklahoma history teachers, especially as we have come to better understand the methodological tensions between us. There is no room for judgment under this social justice sign, Tuck and Yang urge, but rather a need to commit to doing work in contingent collaboration.

Moreover, these discussions made us confront our research aims. Was our purpose to better understand Oklahoma history teacher decision making *toward* social justice or to

engage justice-oriented inquiry *as the work* with Oklahoma teachers? If we limit our investigations to data we only *plan* to “collect” then we start to see the limits of our inquiry and the need to see data as multiple in a world in need of justice. In thinking about the presence of settler colonialism in research, we are still learning how to work differently while simultaneously attempting to work differently. We keep in mind Kuntz (2015) who argued,

Phenomenological inquiry or grounded theory or ethnographic work is not about which wrench to use on what type of pipe or whether one should use a hammer or a screwdriver in particular methodological-improvement circumstances. These are examples of reducing methodology to the level of procedure, and my concern is that our conversations regarding methodological responsibility have become unnecessarily procedurized, as though discussions at the level of technique are a way forward to any sort of real change in education inquiry. (p. 121)

Reducing methodology to the level of technique—or method—emphasizes that which is already known or knowable in “codified knowledge systems” (p. 121). Simply put, only focusing on method rather than delving into methodology hampers our abilities to serve in the interest of social change, or in our specific situation, the teaching of Oklahoma history within Indigenous contexts.

### “Endings”

We have no definitive answers to give, no checklist to provide. We are still learning to unlearn. Such an ending to an article is, perhaps, the most frustrating part of what Western science demands—a solution to a problem. For Sarah, this unlearning process continues in reading, in learning from other collaborative research and writing spaces with her colleagues in Indigenous studies and qualitative methodologies, and in reflexive writing that can better inform her social studies research decisions. For Dan, this project brought him face-to-face with how reliant he is on the ways he knows to “do” research and the importance of reconsidering possibilities to ensure all aspects of a study are congruent from theory to methodology. As we continue our individual journeys, we will collectively return to our conversations with Oklahoma history teachers, with the methodological tensions between us (although we understand each other much better now having engaged in this writing process) and what decisions we may need to take together to move this work forward.

In this continued journey of unlearning, we are reminded how Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández (2013) contended that settler colonialism in education was a “project of *replacement*, which aims to vanish Indigenous peoples and replace them with settlers, who see themselves as the rightful claimants to land, and indeed, as indigenous” (p. 73). Engaging the experiences of Oklahoma history teachers, their curriculum, and settler colonialism certainly challenges us to confront the multidimensional problems of representation and inclusion as part of social studies research methodology. Settler colonialism violently forced (and continues to force) Indigenous bodies and lands into the grasp of American-ness. As we look-learn-question-debate-hope for a way forward, beyond what we believe may be the limits of traditional qualitative methods, we consider Métis scholar Wanda McCaslin and Denise Breton (2008): “If, as is often said, we cannot get to a good place in a bad way, then we cannot get to a good society or a good relationship between peoples as long as colonialism is the dominant model” (p. 513). Settler colonialism, in its demand for land, for bodies, for

assimilation, for exact and knowable answers, must be challenged in the ways it exists in the layers of our research and specifically within methodology. We are responsible for the work we produce and should, thusly, be responsible, if we want to rightly work on the side of justice, to each other and to the communities who welcome us into their lives.

We return, then, to the central question that plagued us at the start of this theoretical and methodological journey. What responsibility do we have to confront settler colonialism in our research? It is entirely our responsibility. It is also the responsibility of the field, not only to confront the foundations of settler colonialism that continue to harm historically marginalized communities, but to also open ourselves up to doing work differently. As Dinkelman and Cuenca (2017) argued, “Also important will be developing a scholarly culture that provides an encouragement and support for researchers willing to explore the boundaries of emerging approaches to qualitative research” (p. 111). We are calling for an opening, an expansion of what can be made possible when we dive deeply into critically thinking about the foundations of the work we do, especially for social studies research working within a frame of social justice. We hope, as others have urged, that social studies research opens physical spaces, in our conferences and journals, to not only continue dialoguing about how, why, and for whom we do research, but also to hear the voices of and learn from members of our social studies community attempting to do qualitative inquiry differently.

## Notes

1. Absentee-Shawnee Tribe of Indians, Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town, Apache Tribe of Oklahoma, Caddo Nation of Oklahoma, Cherokee Nation, Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, Citizen Potawatomi Nation, Comanche Nation, Delaware Nation, Delaware Tribe of Indians, Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, Fort Sill Apache Tribe of Oklahoma, Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma, Kaw Nation, Kialegee Tribal Town, Kickapoo Tribe of Oklahoma, Kiowa Indian Tribe of Oklahoma, Miami Tribe of Oklahoma, Modoc Tribe of Oklahoma, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma, Otoe-Missouria Tribe of Indians, Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma, Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma, Ponca Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma, Quapaw Tribe of Indians, Sac and Fox Nation, Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, Seneca-Cayuga Nation, Shawnee Tribe, The Chickasaw Nation, The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, The Osage Nation, Thlopthlocco Tribal Town, Tonkawa Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma, United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma, Wichita and Affiliated Tribes (Wichita, Keechi, Waco, and Tawakonie), Wyandotte Nation (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2016).
2. There are 573 federally recognized Native nations within the United States, as well as additional nations recognized at the state level (National Congress of American Indians, 2018).
3. We acknowledge that umbrella terms often the risk of collapsing the diversity and plurality of histories, experiences, languages, governments, religions, languages, and political movements. In our work, when not addressing a specific person or nation, use the naming phrase “Indigenous” when referring to of peoples and nations living on the lands now called the United States since time immemorial. We purposefully choose to capitalize terms (e.g., Arvin, Tuck, & Morrill, 2013; Sabzalian & Shear, 2018).

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