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Standardizing Indigenous erasure: A TribalCrit and QuantCrit analysis of K–12 U.S. civics and government standards

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ABSTRACT

This article details a national study of U.S. K–12 civics and government state-mandated standards, drawing specific attention to how Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty are represented. Utilizing QuantCrit methodologies informed by Tribal Critical Race Theory, this study makes visible colonial logics embedded within state civics and government standards that normalize the erasure of Indigenous nationhood, or that subtly and discursively erase Indigenous nationhood in other ways. Additional attention is also given to states that explicitly affirm contemporary Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty within the standards. By examining the ways state standards erase and/or affirm Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty, our hope is to support Indigenous and allied educators in their collective efforts to transform standards in their respective states to more responsibly reflect and support Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty.

KEYWORDS

Civics education; Indigenous studies; QuantCrit; social studies education; state standards; TribalCrit

Introduction

“Hundreds of Indian tribes continue to share treaty relationships with the United States. These Indian *Tribes* are actually Indian *Nations*.” ~ Matthew L.M. Fletcher (2014), Professor of Law (Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa & Chippewa Indians; p. 34)

“Sovereignty is not well understood, either by the public or within the judicial system. Even after gaining a better understanding of the term, few people actually believe tribes are sovereign—or should be sovereign—and cannot conceptualize more than 600 sovereign nations across the United States.” ~*Reclaiming Native Truth* Report (First Nations Development Institute & Echo Hawk Consulting, 2018, p. 10)

There are currently 574 federally recognized Native nations¹ in the United States (National Conference of State Legislators [NCSL], 2020), a number that does not include the many nations currently fighting for federal recognition. Each of these Native nations is recognized by the federal government as sovereign with a variety of “practical powers,” such as:

... the power to adopt its own form of government; to define the conditions of citizenship/membership in the nation; to regulate the domestic relations of the nations’ citizens/members; to prescribe rules of inheritance with respect to all personal property and all interest in real property; to levy dues, fees, or taxes upon citizen/members and noncitizens/nonmembers; to remove or to exclude nonmembers of the tribe; to administer justice; and to prescribe the duties and regulate the conduct of federal employees. (Wilkins, 1997, p. 20)

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Though recognized as sovereign, the sovereignty of these Native nations is also *inherent* (Cobb, 2005; Lomawaima, 2000; Lyons, 2000; Wilkins & Stark, 2018), meaning it is “not a gift from the federal government,” but “the inherent right of every American Indian tribal government . . . [and] a reflection of the indisputable fact that we lived on this land and governed ourselves hundreds of years before Europeans arrived” (Marge Anderson, Chief Executive of the Mille Lacs Band, as cited in Bruyneel, 2007, p. xii).

Despite federal recognition of Indigenous sovereignty in the U.S. Constitution, former policies and practices of treaty negotiations, Supreme Court case law, and Congressional legislation, hegemonic discourses in society and in education continue to ignore (and thus undermine) Indigenous sovereignty. When included, Indigenous peoples and nations are often positioned as historic (Shear et al., 2015) or as racial/ethnic minorities rather than citizens of their respective nations² (Brayboy, 2005; Calderón, 2009; Grande, 2015; St. Denis, 2011; Wilkins & Stark, 2018). Drawing from Ojibwe/Dakota scholar Scott Lyons (2000), we view these positionings as practices of “rhetorical imperialism,” a degradation of Indigenous sovereignty through discourse. As Lyons (2000) observed, the language with which the United States has used to discuss Indigenous sovereignty has subtly shifted:

. . . from “sovereign” to “ward,” from “nation” to “tribe,” and from “treaty” to “agreement,” the erosion of Indian national sovereignty can be credited in part to a rhetorically imperialist use of writing by white powers, and from that point on, much of the discourses on tribal sovereignty has nit-picked, albeit powerfully, around terms and definitions. (p. 453)

Whether intentional or out of ignorance, the discursive erasure of Indigenous sovereignty is congruent with the broader structure of settler colonialism that seeks to eliminate Indigenous lands and life (Tuck & Yang, 2012; Wolfe, 2006).

The purpose of this study is to examine the ways K–12 state civics and government standards (hereafter civics standards for brevity) contribute to or challenge this ongoing colonial legacy of Indigenous erasure. Specifically, we ask: In what ways do state civics standards include or erase Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty? We begin with a brief overview of the literature on civics education and standards, after which we outline Indigenous studies theories that help guide our analysis of the standards. Following a discussion of our methodology, we offer a critical analysis of the standards, revealing colonial erasures, but also importantly, examples in which Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty are included and affirmed. We argue, based on critical analysis of the standards, that states must do more to include and affirm Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty within civics standards.

We recognize that state standards may be an unlikely or questionable pathway for anticolonial work, particularly given that the underlying goal of the standards movement was to bolster “the U.S. economy and its national sovereignty and security” (Sleeter & Stillman, 2005, p. 31). We also recognize the limits (or even skepticism) around investing more time and energy into states and their guiding educational documents, given the ways the state itself is a site of oppression for many Native nations. Nevertheless, we view a critical analysis and revision of states’ guiding civic documents as a strategic (though certainly not the only) anticolonial³ intervention to hold states and educators accountable for recognizing Native nations in their area and to enact civic education that better reflects the civic identities, roles, and responsibilities of Native students, the majority of whom

attend public schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). Developing state educational policies that “Native American education be included in content standards” is one of the “rich set of strategies that states employ to advance Native American education in public schools” (National Congress of American Indians [NCAI], 2019, p. 24). We view efforts to transform civics standards to better reflect Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty as part of a broader set of strategies to advance Native education in public schools, which includes passing and implementing Native studies curriculum mandates, allocating resources and staff to support curriculum implementation and professional development, and collaborating with tribal governments, among others (NCAI, 2019).

Native students attending public schools right now deserve a civic education that recognizes and affirms Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty. Furthermore, recognizing and providing space for Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty within civics is essential to supporting non-Indigenous students in becoming democratic citizens who have the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and actions (Levinson, 2010) to uphold and support tribal sovereignty (Sabzalian, 2019b; Sabzalian & Shear, 2018). As Mashpee Wampanoag Elder gkisedtanamoogk teaches in *Dawnland*, embodying an understanding of Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty provides non-Indigenous peoples the opportunity to become “neighbors with legitimacy” in the United States (Mazo, 2018).

Literature review

Civics education

As Knowles and Clark (2018) highlighted, civics education is a “discipline without a field with contributions coming from political science, psychology, sociology, educational policy, and social studies education” (p. 13). As an interdisciplinary area of study, educators and scholars have long debated the purposes and practices of civics education (e.g., Banks & Nguyen, 2008; Knowles, 2018; Parker, 1997; Sabzalian, 2019b; Sabzalian & Shear, 2018; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Many have advocated for classrooms to serve as spaces for students to develop skills, such as deliberating contentious/controversial issues, that would better serve a democratic society (e.g., Hahn, 2017; Parker, 2003). Others have challenged that notion, highlighting the limitations of such goals (e.g., deliberation and democracy) as potentially creating harmful classroom spaces where minoritized voices are silenced (e.g., Castro & Knowles, 2017; Knowles & Clark, 2018). A strand of critical scholarship within the field has specifically challenged the ways Eurocentrism and whiteness⁴ permeate citizenship education (Banks, 2004; Dilworth, 2004; Duncan, 2020; Gibson, 2020; Knight Abowitz & Harnish, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Rodríguez, 2018; Urrieta, 2004; Urrieta & Reidel, 2008; Vickery, 2015). Rarely, however, have social studies scholars attended to the political realities, identities, and goals of Indigenous peoples and nations. This oversight is documented in Castro and Knowles (2017) extensive review of civics education, which posits that “the research literature mostly attends to African American and Latino ethnic communities and severely neglects the views of [I]ndigenous populations in the U.S. and the relationship between tribal identification and U.S. civic identification” (p. 298).

Indigenous studies scholars have specifically documented the ways social studies curriculum broadly (Calderón, 2014; Masta, 2018; Rains, 2006; Rains & Swisher, 1999; Sabzalian, 2019a) and civics education in particular (Haynes Writer, 2010; Sabzalian, 2019b; Sabzalian & Shear, 2018) conceal and advance colonial discourses and interests. Most recently, Sabzalian's (2019b) review of citizenship education literature highlighted the ways that civic discourses, including those that critically interrogate whiteness and racism, often remain "silent to the ongoing colonization Indigenous peoples continue to face and the ongoing struggles to restore Indigenous lands, nations, and sovereignty," a silence that "delegitimizes Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty while also naturalizing settlement and the sovereignty of the nation-state" (p. 313).

Despite this longstanding and growing body of scholarship, civic education scholars rarely consider the dilemmas that settler colonialism and Indigenous sovereignty pose to the field. It also appears that while the field has spent considerable time studying students' and teachers' conceptions and embodiments of citizenship, there has been little effort to study the very materials that guide such teaching and learning. In some states, such as California, content standards guide textbook adoption (Sleeter & Stillman, 2005); thus, a critical analysis of civics and government standards as guiding documents is imperative.

State standards

Scholarship on state-level standards and textbooks has repeatedly documented inaccurate and Eurocentric representations of Indigenous peoples and nations (Anderson, 2012; Chandler, 2010; Journell, 2009; Rains, 2006; Shear et al., 2015; Sleeter & Stillman, 2005; Stanton, 2014). A national study of K–12 U.S. history standards demonstrated that 87% of U.S. history standards confine Indigenous peoples to a pre-1900 context (Shear et al., 2015). When included, Indigenous experiences are narrated as oppositional to national progress. In Texas, only 4% of the state standards included Indigenous peoples at all (Vasquez Heilig et al., 2012). Journell's (2009) study of American history standards from nine states noted that "[a]ll of the standards studied portray American Indians in a demeaning fashion" (p. 24). Sleeter and Stillman (2005) research highlighting Eurocentrism within California's *History-Social Science Framework and Standards* documented how the framework "casts colonialism not as the taking of land, life, and sovereignty, but rather as the spread of reason, ideas, and liberty" (p. 38). Studies on civics standards, however, are few.

Scholars in political science have examined civics standards for how they promote *hegemonic*, *critical*, *transformative*, or *symbolic* models of civic education (Merelman, 1996). More recently, Journell's (2010) study of Virginia's civics standards found that the standards "still maintain a largely conservative approach to citizenship" (p. 356), despite a growing body of research and literature that advocates for liberal citizenship discourses (e.g., deliberative citizenship, social justice or participatory models, cosmopolitanism). Hilburn et al.'s (2016) study of the depiction of immigration within U.S. history and civics standards from 18 states revealed that the standards repeatedly "told a unified American story with limited local specificity" (p. 242). Research is still needed that examines how civics standards specifically attend to Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty.

Our intervention

This study offers an important complement to the aforementioned literature by utilizing an Indigenous studies lens to specifically analyze K–12 civics and government standards in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Indigenous studies provides a vantage point to examine the ways “practices of U.S. settler colonialism and imperialism are embedded in—that is, produced as norms of—U.S. citizenship,” or what Brandzel (2016) terms “colonial-normativity” (p. 25). By viewing how the standards include or erase Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty, we can evaluate how civics standards support (or fail to support) Indigenous students’ civic identities, as well as how they foster (or fail to foster) civic knowledge and a sense of civic responsibility among all students toward Indigenous peoples and nations.

Theoretical foundations

The erasure of Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty is part of a broader structure of Indigenous erasure and elimination (Wolfe, 2006). To make this relationship visible, our analysis of the civics standards is rooted in Tribal Critical Race Theory (hereafter TribalCrit) (Brayboy, 2005, 2013). TribalCrit emerged from Lumbee scholar Bryan Brayboy’s engagement with Critical Race Theory (CRT), a field with roots in critical legal studies that challenged the race neutrality of legal discourse and that was later applied to the field of education by Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), who challenged the neutrality of education and argued that race is central to educational policy, practice, and decision-making. For Brayboy (2013), CRT offered an important framework to understand his own racialized experiences as a Lumbee person, as well as the racialized experiences of other communities of color. Informed and inspired by CRT, Brayboy theorized TribalCrit as a kin framework, revising its core tenets to better reflect the unique legal and political racialized experiences of Indigenous peoples and offer “an analytical lens [that] is a new and more culturally nuanced way of examining the lives and experiences of tribal peoples since contact with Europeans over 500 years ago” (p. 430). According to Mexican/Tigua scholar Dolores Calderón (2019), “TribalCrit is a powerful tool that we should continue to use to expose the complex positioning of Indigenous peoples in the context of colonialism on the one hand and Indigenous traditions, knowledges, and inherent rights to self-government on the other” (p. 2).

Central to this project are the first four tenets of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005):

- (1) Colonization is endemic to society.
- (2) U.S. policies toward Indigenous peoples are rooted in imperialism, White supremacy, and a desire for material gain.
- (3) Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space that accounts for both the political and racialized natures of our identities.
- (4) Indigenous peoples have a desire to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification. (p. 429)

The tenets of TribalCrit situate the erasure of Indigenous nationhood within state content standards as part of a broader structure of colonization that is endemic to the United States.

Moreover, the tenets of TribalCrit ground our advocacy for civics standards that are inclusive of the unique political status of tribal citizens and nations and for the support of Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty as important civic aims.

A vast body of scholarship in Indigenous studies complements TribalCrit by documenting the ways settler society, and its educational institutions, are rooted in policies and practices of Indigenous erasure (Calderón, 2009, 2014; Grande, 2015; la paperson, 2017; Sabzalian, 2019a; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Early settlers came to the United States and, through a triadic structure of Indigenous erasure, chattel slavery, and settler supremacy, remade Indigenous lands into settler property (Tuck & Yang, 2012). However, settler colonialism is not only an historic practice; it is a contemporary structure that organizes life in nation-states today (Wolfe, 2006). As Geonpul scholar Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2015) observed, “It takes a great deal of work to maintain Canada, the United States, Hawai’i, New Zealand, and Australia as white possessions” (p. xi). Maintaining settler society atop Indigenous homelands has required the rehearsal of ideologies that normalize settler superiority (Moreton-Robinson, 2015).

Settler colonialism forwards a useful triad that broadens analyses of white supremacy and antiblackness to also account for Indigenous erasure and dispossession. The triad, however, is also problematic and often misinterpreted as describing racial identities. As la paperson (2017) clarified, “settler–native–slave” are “figurative shorthand . . . to describe relations of power with respect to land. They sound like identities, but they are not identities per se. As *figurae*, they represent sites of exception that reveal the underlying logic of settler colonial power” (p. 9). Although settlement is differentiated along the lines of “race, national-origin, religion, class, dis/ability, sexuality, and gender,” it is important to remember that “[a]ll of these differentiations . . . are underwritten by the dispossession of Indigenous lands and eschewal of Indigenous governance orders” (Snelgrove et al., 2014, pp. 5–6). We recognize that “all non-Indigenous peoples residing in settler states may be complicit in settlement,” while also acknowledging that “not all settlers are created equally” (Snelgrove et al., 2014, p. 6).⁵

Indigenous studies scholars have argued that citizenship education is one of the domains in which the United States continues to disavow Indigenous sovereignty and rehearse its own legitimacy (Haynes Writer, 2010; Sabzalian, 2019b; Sabzalian & Shear, 2018). For example, Sabzalian (2019b) has outlined various ways citizenship education is implicated in the project of Indigenous erasure and a domain in which settler nation-state supremacy has been rehearsed and maintained. By foregrounding the nation-state as the normative frame through which to discuss citizenship and nationhood, citizenship education “naturalizes ideologies of conquest and undermines struggles toward sovereignty” (p. 327). Thus, civics standards that erase the political identities and rights of Indigenous citizens and nations, or Indigenous peoples’ desires for self-determination and sovereignty, are deeply implicated in the project of Indigenous erasure and elimination (Wolfe, 2006).

Indigenous studies scholarship frames our conceptual approach to this study. What follows is an outline of our methodology and the specific methods we used to understand how state civics standards support or undermine Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty.

Methods of inquiry

Research within Indigenous contexts has been fraught with settler colonial logics and practices (Deloria, 1988; Smith, 2012). We are conscious of the ways research, both

quantitative and qualitative, traditionally works to categorize, define, and create Indigenous peoples as *objects* or even *subjects* of inquiry through a Western lens (Kovach, 2009; Tuck & Yang, 2014). Trawlwoolway scholar Maggie Walter and Métis scholar Chris Anderson (2013) also reflected on “why Indigenous peoples in general, Indigenous scholars in particular, and those using qualitative methodologies would view quantitative methodologies with suspicion” (p. 12). By extension they also note, “the quantitative methodologies predominantly used within nation-states that have colonized Indigenous peoples, therefore, are those of the colonizer. This is not meant as a depreciatory statement but, rather, as a simple fact” (p. 16). In recognition of these tensions and to support our inquiry, which involves both quantitative and qualitative tools, we draw from a growing body of research on the value and necessity of quantitative methodologies informed by CRT (Garcia et al., 2018; Gillborn, 2010; Gillborn et al., 2018; Sablan, 2019; Sullivan et al., 2010). This scholarship challenges the purported neutrality and objectivity of quantitative methodologies while also recognizing the potential of quantitative methods to impact policy. As Gillborn et al. (2018) offered, there is “hope in the fact that policy-makers preference for numbers might offer a role for statistics in the radical critique of White supremacy” (p. 174).

Gillborn et al.’s (2018) recent conception of *QuantCrit* frames our counternarrative of state civics standards. A summary of the five tenets of *QuantCrit* include:

- (1) the centrality of racism
- (2) numbers are not neutral
- (3) categories are neither “natural” nor given: for “race” read “racism”
- (4) voice and insight: data cannot “speak for itself” and
- (5) using numbers for social justice. (p. 169)

QuantCrit, they argue, is not “an off-shoot movement of CRT,” but rather, “a kind of toolkit that embodies the need to apply CRT understandings and insights *whenever* quantitative data is used in research and/or encountered in policy and practice” (p. 169, emphasis in original). Sablan (2019) noted that, “descriptive and inferential statistics can be used to demonstrate CRT assumptions and document racial inequity” (p. 183). In this inquiry, we apply tenets of *TribalCrit* to *QuantCrit* in order to document racial *and* colonial inequities within state standards and to use numbers, and the story they tell, for social justice *as well as* for Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty. We specifically worked with the civics and government standards from all 50 states and the District of Columbia to address the following question: *How do K–12 civics and government standards depict Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty?* More specifically, we examined the ways these constructs were *included* and/or *erased* within the standards.

These tenets informed a coding and analysis process that looked for the ways state standards included or erased Indigenous nationhood concepts, such as Indigenous citizenship, nationhood, and sovereignty. Our method of inquiry was also intentional in reading for the generative examples that addressed Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty as a way to affirm the work of Indigenous and allied educators who have shifted discourses, policies, and practices within state standards. This desire-based analysis (Tuck, 2009) of the state standards moves us beyond solely revealing the ways colonial logics are embedded within official knowledge to also acknowledging the labor and love of communities that have sought to embed their interests, aspirations, and priorities within the standards. We

highlight the more promising state standards in an effort to enact research that is useful to Indigenous peoples (Brayboy, 2005; Smith, 2012), in this case, research that supports Indigenous and allied educators with their collective efforts to transform content standards in their respective states to affirm Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty.

Data collection and analysis

To conduct this inquiry, we first downloaded civics and government state-mandated standards from each state's department of education website, including any new/revised standards released before December 2020 (for a complete listing of the curriculum documents we analyzed, see Appendix A). We also identified and coded standards when they were specifically labeled as civics within U.S. history, geography, and economics standards. We then created a coding system, based on TribalCrit tenets, to identify and analyze key concepts within the standards: sovereignty, tribal government or nation, tribal citizenship, treaties, treaty rights, and legal decisions related to the aforementioned concepts. States used different terms, but when a standard addressed one of those concepts, we marked that as an inclusion and categorized that standard within a particular category (e.g., tribe, tribal government, Native nation, American Indian nation were all categorized as "tribal government or nation"). The categories we initially used were later distilled down to sovereignty, tribal government/nation, treaties, and legal decisions/policies.

Several examples clarify our process of inquiry. We coded the following 9th-12th grade standard in Connecticut—"CIV 9-12.1 Distinguish the powers and responsibilities of local, state, tribal, national, and international civic and political institutions" (p. 107)—as an inclusion because it included tribal governments among a list of other forms of government. When standards included multiple key concepts, they were coded for each. For example, the 9th-12th grade Idaho standard—"9-12.G.4.2.3 Analyze and explain sovereignty and the treaty trust relationship the United States has with American Indian tribes with emphasis on Idaho, such as hunting and fishing rights, and land leasing" (p. 58)—was coded for sovereignty, treaties, and tribal government/nation. It is important to note that this study does not use data to compare states or rank them in any way, but rather to unpack and make visible the ways Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty are or are not included in states' conceptions of civics education.

To address how we accounted for the erasure of Indigenous nationhood, we read and coded standards that should have included an Indigenous example but did not, such as a list of governments that ignored tribal governments (i.e., "types of governments in the United States, including federal, state, and local"). For example, we coded the following 3rd grade standard in South Dakota—"3.C.2.2 Explain the basic political roles of leaders in the state and nation" (p. 16)—as an erasure because tribal leaders were not listed among the political leaders students should learn about. However, when a standard addressed a level of government but did not compare that government to other levels, we did not code it as an erasure. For example, we did not code the following 4th grade standard in South Dakota as an erasure—"4.C.3.2 Discuss South Dakota's government and the roles of the three branches" (p. 19)—because it addressed only one level of government.

Before individual readings began, our research team read and coded two states (Connecticut and Wyoming) together to clarify the procedures for addressing our research questions. Each researcher was then assigned a group of states to code (12-13 in total). After

the first round of analysis, we met to review results and planned a second round of reading, which involved a review of each other's work. This second reading provided us space to either confirm or question how we were coding the standards. When discrepancies appeared, we met to discuss them. As we approached the close of the study we reviewed each state two more times as a team, including checking to see if any revised/new standards were released, in order to confirm the final numbers and codes for each state. Ultimately the data and analysis provided here use state standards published up to February 2021.

Considerations for the scope of our inquiry

As with any study, there are limitations and considerations for the scope of our inquiry, several of which parallel Shear et al.'s (2015) study of state standards. First, we recognize that state content standards do not always reflect the actual teaching and learning that takes place in classrooms (Journell, 2009; Shear et al., 2015). Despite individual teacher autonomy and variations in context, critical engagement with state content standards remains an important site of struggle as state standards, particularly in states that also mandate high stakes tests, do influence teachers' instructional practices (Journell, 2009, 2010).

States also differed considerably in their approach to state standards as well as the language used to describe them (e.g., standards, objectives, learning outcomes). Some states isolated civics standards as a standalone area whereas others embedded civics within the other subject areas (e.g., U.S. history, economics, geography). Some states included more exhaustive text, by providing lesson objectives as an example, while others did not. In the analysis of state standards, for example, the breadth and detail of text could be viewed as either helpful in providing guidance to teachers, or harmful because it limits teachers' autonomy in lesson planning. This study does not draw attention to the discrepancies in how states frame their standards. We tried to maintain consistency in how we approached states regardless of the exhaustiveness of their text, as well as maintain internal consistency within each state. For the purpose of this study, our focus is to reveal and unpack specifically how Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty are or are not part of civics education. We also recognize that Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty standards were included within other content areas (i.e., history), even in states that had stand-alone civics standards.

Additionally, while our analysis examines whether or not state civics standards recognize Indigenous nationhood, our project does not take up important debates and critiques within Indigenous studies about the politics of recognition. Indigenous studies scholars, such as Klopotek (2011), A. Simpson (2014), and Coulthard (2014), have questioned politics of recognition and whether this theory of change cedes too much power to nation-states. We do not take up these questions in this study, in part, because we believe that states, and their accompanying content standards, have an obligation to recognize Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty regardless of whether Indigenous peoples may decide their own time and energy are better spent fostering practices of resurgence rather than recognition (Coulthard, 2014; L. B. Simpson, 2011, 2017). We also recognize that the concept and struggle for Indigenous sovereignty exceeds narrow definitions of political sovereignty. For the purpose of this study, we do not take up those debates and critiques within Indigenous studies, in part because legal and political notions of sovereignty remain an effective basis for Native advocacy and rights (Barker, 2005; Deloria, 1998; Wilkins, 1997).⁶ This study looks directly for whether and how the concept is reflected within civics standards. We

should also clarify that Indigenous systems of governance have existed since Time Immemorial, and many of the tribal governments in place today differ from those systems. We do not take up Indigenous legal and political traditions in this article, but we do posit that knowledge of Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty more broadly can be an important catalyst for helping Native youth reclaim and revitalize Indigenous systems of governance.⁷ Overall, we believe this study offers a valuable contribution to the research on state standards, and more importantly, to educators and advocates seeking to create and adopt state standards that are more inclusive of Indigenous nationhood and that better equip students to understand and support Indigenous sovereignty.

Findings

The big picture, by the numbers

In our analysis, we documented the number of inclusions and erasures of Indigenous nationhood across elementary and secondary standards. We specifically looked for the aforementioned concepts (sovereignty, tribal government/nation, treaties), as well as specific policies or legal decisions that impact Native nations (e.g., Indian removal, *Worcester v. Georgia*). We further sought to determine the number of erasures within K–12 civics standards. We organized data by tallying the number of inclusions and erasures by state, making the state the unit of analysis as seen in Appendix B. We examined the numbers in a variety of ways, including how Indigenous nationhood was addressed in elementary (K–5) and secondary grades (6–12), as well as whether Indigenous nationhood was addressed in a contemporary context or had a historical focus.⁸

Indigenous nationhood was addressed 403 times across all 50 states and the District of Columbia (Figure 1), with 39.5% of the Indigenous nationhood concepts located within K–5 grades ($n = 159$) and 60.5% located within 6–12 grades ($n = 244$), as shown in Figure 2. Further, 41.2% of the civics standards that addressed Indigenous nationhood were situated within an historical, pre-1900 context ($n = 166$). Inclusion of standards for Indigenous nationhood were also concentrated within a cluster of states, as seen in Figure 3. The six states⁹ that addressed Indigenous nationhood more than 20 times account for nearly 40.2% ($n = 162$) of the identified Indigenous nationhood standards in this study.

It is essential to point out that 14 states—Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, New Hampshire, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia, and Wisconsin—did not include Indigenous nationhood at all within their K–12 civics standards. Additionally, 13 states included fewer than 5 standards addressing Indigenous nationhood. When combined, these findings reveal that over half of the states include little to no mention of Indigenous nationhood in their K–12 civics standards (52.9%, $n = 27$). Our analysis also demonstrates that the erasure of Indigenous nationhood was almost as frequent as its inclusion, with 386 standards that could have included Indigenous content but did not. Figure 4 offers a visual representation of the number of erasure standards coded in each state, with lighter colored states currently having the most erasure (i.e., 39 erasures in Pennsylvania).

Foundational Indigenous nationhood concepts, including tribal sovereignty and treaty rights, were also absent in the majority of states. Sovereignty was mentioned 38 times within the civics standards; however, nearly three-quarters of the states failed to mention tribal

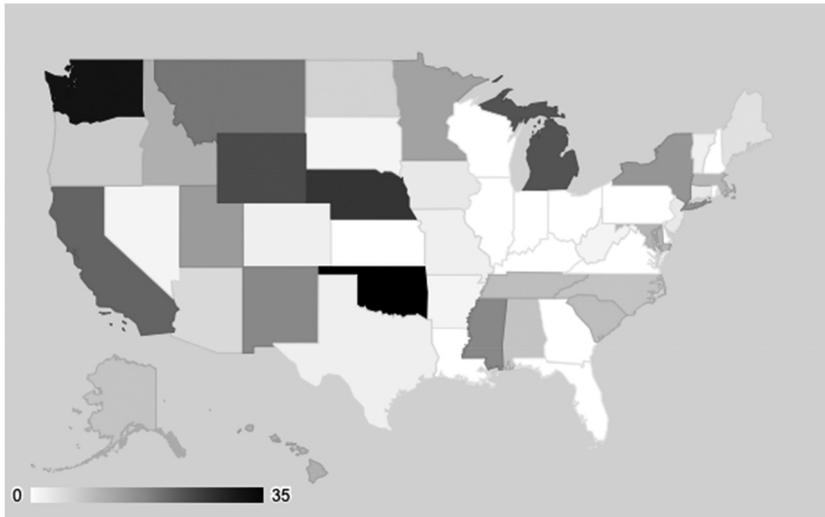


Figure 1. Number of civics standards that address Indigenous nationhood, by state.

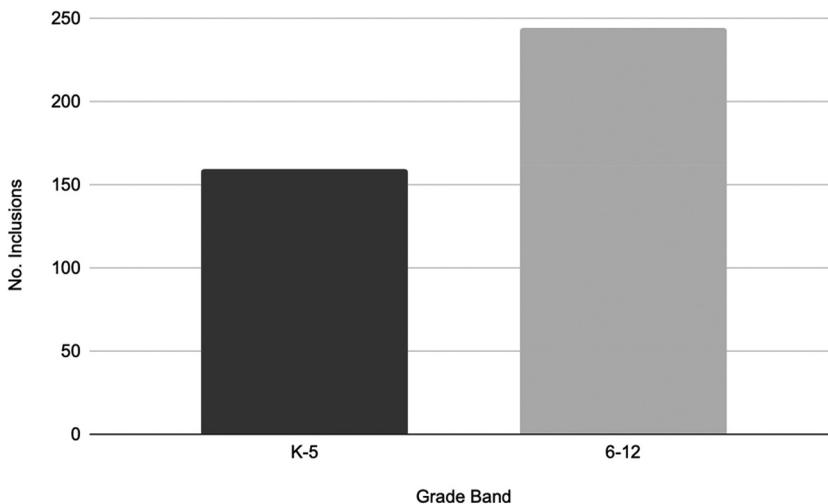


Figure 2. Number of civics standards that address Indigenous nationhood, by grade band.

sovereignty (72.5%, $n = 37$). Treaties and treaty rights followed a similar pattern. Although mentioned 34 times within the civics standards, nearly three-quarters of the states failed to mention treaties (72.5%, $n = 37$). As [Figures 5 and 6](#) illustrate, sovereignty and treaty rights were also more likely to be addressed within secondary standards, with two-thirds of the sovereignty-related standards (68.4%, $n = 26$) and over three-quarters of the treaty-related standards (79.4%, $n = 27$) located within 6–12th grade civics standards. Of the 14 states that did include tribal sovereignty, half of those waited until middle or high school to address the concept (50%, $n = 7$). Oklahoma was a notable exception, with 5 standards addressing sovereignty within K-5 standards, and 4 within 6–12 standards. Of the 14 states that

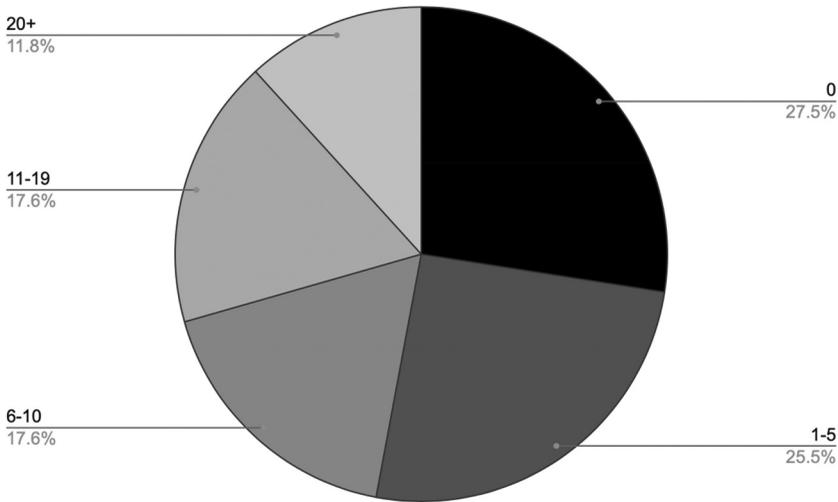


Figure 3. States grouped by number of standards addressing Indigenous nationhood.

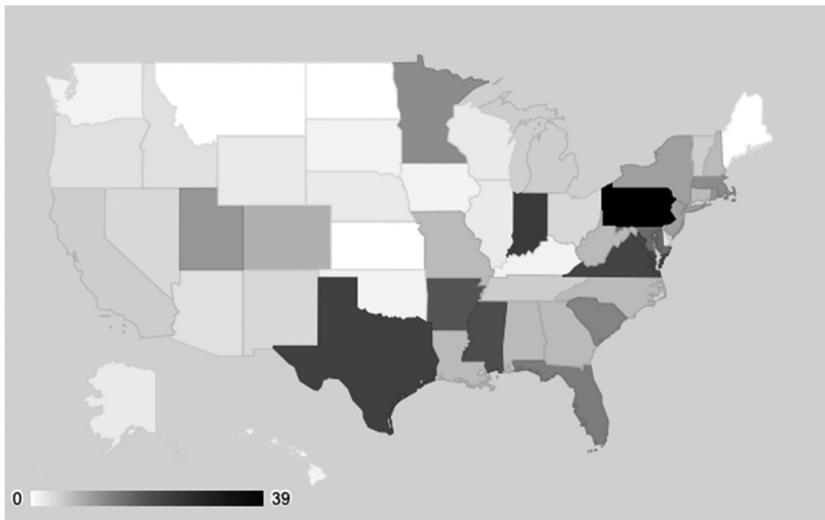


Figure 4. Number of civics standards that erase Indigenous nationhood, by state.

included treaties, over half waited until middle or high school to address the concept (64.3%, $n = 9$).

The emerging narrative, by the wording

To enrich our thinking about the numerical data, we examined *how* Indigenous nationhood was included within civics and government standards, as well as the explicit and subtle ways that Indigenous nationhood was erased. Below, we detail specific patterns, including: the meaningful inclusion of Indigenous nationhood, the explicit erasure of Indigenous nationhood, and the subtle erasure of Indigenous nationhood. We end this section by drawing

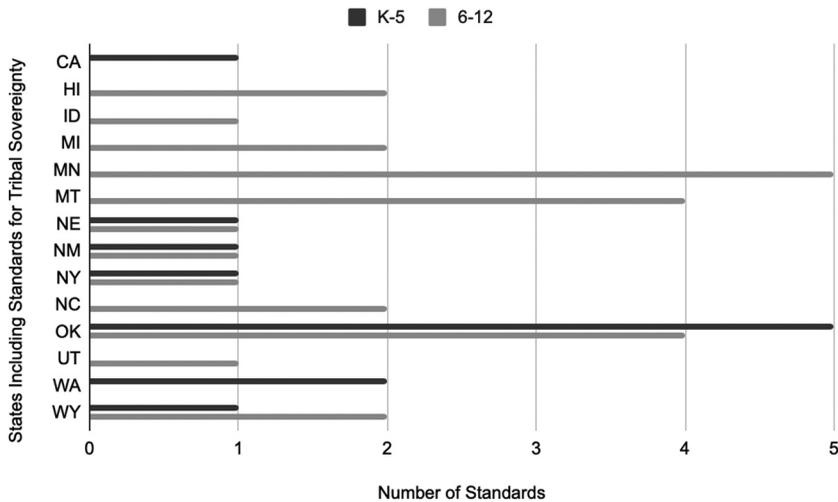


Figure 5. Number of civics standards that address tribal sovereignty, by state and grade band.

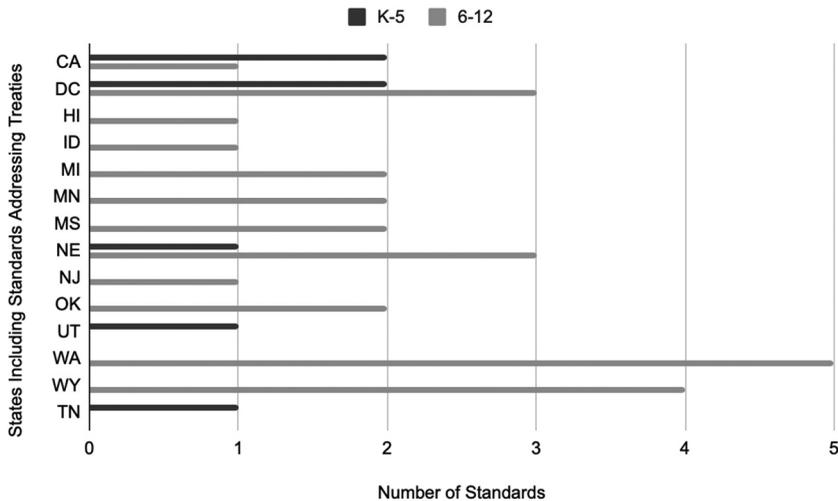


Figure 6. Number of civics standards that address treaties, by state and grade bands.

particular attention to several states that have done significant work to improve their standards to better reflect Indigenous nationhood early and often.

The meaningful inclusion of Indigenous nationhood

We begin with examples of the meaningful inclusion of Indigenous nationhood across K–12 civics standards, highlighting examples in elementary, middle, and high school. These examples, as seen in [Table 1](#), provide a backdrop from which to contrast the erasure of Indigenous nationhood, as well as compare other (at times problematic) forms of inclusion.

Numerous additional examples highlight the ways tribal governments are given equal footing to local, state, and the federal governments or how the context of tribal governments is framed as an important site through which to understand policies, rules, laws, and



Table 1. Examples of civics standards that address Indigenous nationhood.

Code	Examples
<p>Sovereignty Includes the term sovereign. Does not include references to other concepts of sovereignty, such as “popular sovereignty.”</p>	<p>Within each code, we provide examples of elementary, middle, and high school. The featured code is bolded (though some standards feature multiple codes).</p>
<p>Tribal government/ nation Includes references to tribes, tribal governments, or specific Native nations; references to tribal citizenship and leadership; and instances where the political structures, institutions, and rights of Native peoples are discussed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>New Mexico (5th)</i>: 3-A 5.4 compare and contrast the basic government sovereignty of local, state, tribal and national governments (p. 7) ● <i>Montana (By 8th)</i>: 2.3 Students will identify the significance of tribal sovereignty and Montana tribal governments’ relationship to local, state and federal governments (p. 3) ● <i>Idaho (9th-12th)</i>: 9–12.G.4.2.3 Analyze and explain sovereignty and the treaty trust relationship the United States has with American Indian tribes with emphasis on Idaho, such as hunting and fishing rights, and land leasing (p. 58) ● <i>Minnesota (4th)</i>: 4.1.4.6.1 Describe tribal government and some of the services it provides; distinguish between United States and tribal forms of government (p. 38) ● <i>North Dakota (8th grade)</i>: 8.4.6 Compare the functions and structure of local, state, tribal, and federal governments within North Dakota (p. 44) ● <i>Utah (7th-12th)</i>: “5.5: Students will research issues of civic importance in which city, county, tribal, or state governments have a role. Students will use their research to develop and write a policy proposal to the appropriate governmental entity, such as a board, commission, council, legislator, or agency. (civics)” (p. 8) ● <i>Tennessee (3rd)</i>: 3.29 Explain the cooperation that existed between colonists and American Indians during the 1600s and 1700s, including: fur trade, military alliances, treaties, and cultural exchanges” (p. 50) ● <i>Washington (7th)</i>: “C3.6–8.3 Recognize that, according to the United States Constitution, treaties are ‘the supreme law of the land;’ consequently, treaty rights supersede most state laws” (p. 58) ● <i>Michigan (HS)</i>: C—3.2.4 Analyze sovereignty of tribal governments in interactions with U.S. governments, including treaty formation, implementation, and enforcement between federal, state, and local governments and tribal governments. (p. 128) ● <i>Tennessee (5th)</i>: 4.18 Analyze the impact of Andrew Jackson’s presidency, including: the Indian Removal Act, Trail of Tears, and preservation of the union. (p. 57) ● <i>Oregon (8th)</i>: 8.6 Examine and evaluate landmark Supreme Court decisions up to 1900 and the impact of the decisions on government practices, personal liberties, and property rights. (such as Marbury v. Madison, Cherokee Nation v. Georgia, Plessy v. Ferguson, Dred Scott v. Sandford, Yick Wo v. Hopkins). (p. 19) ● <i>Washington DC (HS)</i>: 11.2.2 Outline the reasons for the development of federal Indian policy, the wars with American Indians, and their relationship to agricultural development and industrialization. (p. 66)
<p>Treaties Includes treaties made with Native nations and discussions of treaty rights. Does not include treaties made between nation-states (i.e., Treaty of Paris).</p>	
<p>Legal decisions Includes policies and legislation that impact Native nations (e.g., Supreme Court Cases, the Dawes Act, Indian Removal).</p>	

leadership. For example, a 1st grade standard in Washington examines the civic concept of diplomacy through the context of tribal nations: “C3.1.2 Identify different types of relationships and diplomacy tribal nations exercised with European nations, colonies, and the United States” (p. 18). The 3rd grade standard in Oklahoma—“3.1.5 Define the concept of civic virtue and responsibilities of the citizen at the local, state, and tribal levels, including respect for diversity” (p. 15)—teaches students that tribal governments are an important sphere for civic virtues and responsibilities. In Nebraska, 4th grade students are prompted to “SS 4.1.1.e Justify the important roles that leaders and citizens serve in Nebraska government” and given examples, including “governor, state senators, judiciary, tribal leaders, [and] advocacy group participants” (p. 22). In Minnesota, 6th grade students are encouraged to examine rights and sovereignty within the contemporary context of Anishinaabe and Dakota peoples: “6.1.5.10.1 Explain the concept of sovereignty and how treaty rights are exercised by the Anishinaabe and Dakota today. For example: Organization of tribal government, gaming rights, hunting and fishing rights” (p. 57). Beyond explicitly addressing sovereignty and treaty rights, specifically naming Anishinaabe and Dakota peoples within the Minnesota standard offers an important intervention into the generic or monolithic ways that Indigenous peoples/nations are typically characterized. (It is important to note, however, that addressing nations by name within the standards would be too difficult for some states given the sheer number of Native nations within the state.) Also, in Utah, tribal governments are one of the contexts in which 7th-12th grade students examine budgets: “4.3 Students will propose and defend budget priorities at either the local, state, tribal, or federal level; and share their findings with appropriate stakeholders” (p. 47).

We highlight these examples to denaturalize settler citizenship and nationalism within civic standards and to provide a practical model for states to reconsider how Indigenous nationhood can be reflected within the sphere of civics. The aforementioned examples also provide an important backdrop and contrast to the ways Indigenous nationhood are ignored or erased in the following sections.

The explicit erasure of Indigenous nationhood

A clear pattern that emerged in our analysis is the explicit erasure of tribal governments from broader discussions of governments. Governance was often framed solely in terms of local, state, and national governments. [Table 2](#) offers a sampling of standards that illustrate this widespread pattern, which cuts across all grade levels, K–12.

As a category, erasure not only documented instances where tribal governments were ignored, but also instances in which civic roles and responsibilities of tribal citizens were erased. For example, the 9th-12th grade standard in Florida—“SS.912.C.2.3 Experience the responsibilities of citizens at the local, state, or federal levels” (p. 157)—discusses civic responsibility solely in relation to local, state, and federal governments despite the presence of two federally recognized tribal nations in the state. States were also inconsistent in patterns of inclusion and erasure, as demonstrated by the concurrent 9th-12th grade standards in Idaho: “9–12.G.4.3.2 Explain the implications of dual citizenship with regard to American Indians (p. 58), followed by “9–12.G.4.3.3 Identify the ways in which citizens can participate in the political process at the local, state, and national level” (p. 58). In the latter instance, discussion of how tribal citizens can participate in the political process of their respective tribal nations is missing, overlooking an important aspect of Indigenous students’ civic identities and avenues for political engagement.

Table 2. Examples of standards that erase Indigenous nationhood.

Code	Examples
<p>Erasure Includes instances where Native nations, citizens, leaders, political symbols, etc. could be listed, but are absent. Does not include instances where only one sphere of government, citizenship, or leadership is discussed.</p>	<p>An asterisk next to the state name denotes states in which state or federally recognized tribal nations are located.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Alabama*</i> (K): Identify symbols, customs, famous individuals, and celebrations representative of our state and nation. Examples: symbols—United States flag, Alabama flag, bald eagle . . . (p. 14). ● <i>Texas*</i> (3rd): “(7) Government. The student understands the basic structure and functions of various levels of government. The student is expected to: (A) describe the basic structure of government in the local community, state, and nation; (B) identify local, state, and national government officials and explain how they are chosen; and (C) identify services commonly provided by local, state, and national governments (p. 12) ● <i>Rhode Island*</i> (3rd and 4th): Students demonstrate an understanding of United States government (local, state, national) by . . . a. identifying the levels (local, state, national) and three branches of government, as defined by the U.S. Constitution, and the roles and purposes of each (e.g., checks and balances) (C&G 2 (3–4)—1, p. 7) ● <i>Ohio</i> (4th): Individuals have a variety of opportunities to participate in and influence their state and national government. Citizens have both rights and responsibilities in Ohio and the United States. (Government 15) (p. 19) ● <i>Pennsylvania</i> (4th grade): Identify positions of authority at the local and state, and national level (5.3.4.D) (n.p.) ● <i>Colorado*</i> (5th): 4.8.2.d Describe how the decisions of the national government affect local and state government. (p. 69) ● <i>Florida*</i> (7th): SS.7.C.3.14 Differentiate between local, state, and federal governments’ obligations and services” (p. 73) ● <i>Massachusetts*</i> (8th—12th): USI.15 Explain the varying roles and responsibilities of federal, state, and local governments in the United States. (H, C) (p. 67) ● <i>Louisiana*</i> (HS): C.4.4 Describe the major revenue and expenditure categories and their respective proportions of local, state, and federal budgets. (p. 30)

At first glance, it may not appear problematic to learn about local, state, and national governments. However, the erasure of Indigenous governance within broader discussions of governments reifies settler conceptions of governance. As our previous section on meaningful inclusion demonstrated, tribal governments can be included seamlessly within civics standards. The erasure of Indigenous nationhood is not inevitable, but ideological, and particularly disconcerting in states with state or federally recognized tribal nations, such as Alabama, Colorado, Florida, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Texas (refer to Table 2 above).

The subtle erasure of Indigenous nationhood

Indigenous nationhood was erased in subtle ways, often even as we categorized a standard as an inclusion. Here we describe several patterns of subtle erasure, including positioning Indigenous nationhood in the past, positioning Native nations as “groups,” positioning

Indigenous nationhood as mature knowledge, and positioning Indigenous nationhood as optional.

Relegating Indigenous nationhood to the past. Framing Indigenous nationhood within a historical context was a clear pattern in the standards. As stated previously, 40% of the civics standards that addressed Indigenous nationhood were situated in a pre-1900 historical context. In some states, including Arkansas, Maryland, Missouri, New Jersey, Tennessee, and West Virginia, *each* of the included standards had a historical focus. Other states, such as Alabama, Mississippi, New York, and Texas, had a predominately historical focus.¹⁰ (Idaho was notable in that each of its Indigenous nationhood standards are situated in contemporary context.)

An historical focus on Indigenous nationhood, in and of itself, is not inherently problematic. However, without corresponding attention to Indigenous nationhood within a contemporary context, the standards reproduce Indigenous erasure by failing to account for Native nations' ongoing political status, sovereignty, and rights today. In Alabama, for example, students learn about "prehistoric and historic American Indian cultures" (p. 24), the Trail of Tears, the Indian Removal Act, American Indian cultures and nations before the Industrial Revolution, Supreme Court cases that impacted Indigenous peoples, and the Dawes Act, but never mention contemporary Indigenous nations and their ongoing struggles to maintain their lands, rights, and sovereignty. By positioning Indigenous nationhood in the past, state civics standards reproduce dominant settler narratives that Indigenous peoples have vanished, disavowing Indigenous sovereignty and naturalizing settlement and the supremacy of the nation-state. In this way, civics standards replicate or otherwise problematically support damaging narratives of Indigenous peoples found in U.S. history standards (see Shear et al., 2015).

Framing Native nations as "groups." Another subtle pattern of erasure involved standards that described Native nations as "groups," illustrated in the following 4th grade standard in Texas: "(14) Government. The student understands how people organized governments in different ways during the early development of Texas. The student is expected to: (A) compare how various American Indian groups such as the Caddo and the Comanche governed themselves" (p. 17). While we included the standard in our final count since it discussed Caddo and Comanche governance, framing tribal nations as "groups" subtly diminishes Indigenous nationhood. Texas was not alone in this pattern: a sampling of language in other states includes "Native American groups" (Mississippi, New Jersey, North Dakota, and New York), "Native American tribal groups," (South Carolina), "Native groups" and "tribal groups" (Massachusetts), or "cultural group" (Maine), each of which reflects the discursive erasure of Indigenous sovereignty and a practical way "rhetorical imperialism" (Lyons, 2000) operates in civics standards.¹¹

Waiting until middle or high school to teach about Indigenous nationhood. Waiting until middle or high school to address Indigenous nationhood is another way Indigenous erasure was reflected in the standards. In North Carolina, for example, students learn about tribal governments once in 5th grade—"5.C&G.1.1 Explain how ideas of various governments influenced the development of the United States government (Roman, Greek, Iroquois, European and British)" (p. 16)—an example, we note, that is also set within an historical

context. It is not until *high school* that students learn about tribal sovereignty and governance. Other states follow a similar pattern of waiting to teach about Indigenous nationhood: Arkansas, Nevada, North Dakota, and Vermont wait until middle school, and Connecticut, Iowa, New Jersey, and South Dakota wait until high school. The absence of Indigenous nationhood in the early grades reproduces normative and sedimented beliefs about key civics concepts that students will have to unlearn later. Indigenous nationhood is not “mature” knowledge; rather, it is vital civic knowledge for even young learners.

Positioning Indigenous nationhood as optional. Our last example involves positioning Indigenous nationhood standards solely or primarily within elective courses. In North Carolina, for example, seven of the eight standards that included Indigenous nationhood were within an elective American Indian Studies course. Similarly in North Dakota, 6 of the 8 standards addressing Indigenous nationhood were within the North Dakota Studies courses, which is a middle school requirement, but high school elective. Placing Indigenous nationhood standards within elective courses implies that knowledge of Indigenous nationhood is optional, rather than essential to civic education.

A brief note about Essential Understandings

Before moving on to states that more comprehensively address Indigenous nationhood, it is important to acknowledge advocacy in various states for what are commonly referred to as “Essential Understandings” (EUs), which are “key concepts that are agreed upon by tribal nations in the state to help educators understand and frame Native American education topics” (NAEI, 2019, p. 21).¹² Following the lead of Montana, which in 1999 “brought together representatives from all the tribes in Montana and created the Seven Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians” (Montana Office of Public Instruction, 2019, p. 2), several states, including California, Colorado, Nevada, North Dakota, South Dakota, Oregon, and Wisconsin, among others developed and distributed EUs. These documents were designed to foster a more accurate and respectful knowledge base of Native peoples and nations in their respective states among K–12 public students. EUs are important as they “provide a framework, vetted by tribal nations and/or other entities, from which to build teaching practices” (NAEI, 2019, p. 21). Importantly, advocates of EUs argue that knowledge of Indigenous nationhood is not only essential to supporting Indigenous students, but also reflects core civic knowledge for all students. As the Introduction to Montana’s EUs states, “An educated and contemporary Montana citizen has basic knowledge of Montana tribes” (Montana Office of Public Instruction, 2019, p. 1).

Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty permeate the Essential Understandings. In North Dakota, for example, EU #5, Tribal Policies, Treaties & Sovereignty, states that “Native people practice self-determination, developing tribal policies and practicing political activism. Despite a history of US policies and Treaties that have often been detrimental, Native people are members of sovereign nations that predate the US government” (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, 2015, p. 3). Oceti Sakowin EU #6 in South Dakota, Sovereignty and Treaties, emphasizes that “Tribes as sovereign nations have the authority to enter into government to government relationships” (South Dakota Office of Indian Education, 2018, p. 3), and in Oregon, Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty are reflected in separate EUs on Sovereignty and Tribal Governments (Oregon Department of Education, 2019).

Each of these documents reflects collective and strategic advocacy for students' knowledge of Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty. As the NCAI (2019) report *Becoming Visible: A Landscape Analysis of State Efforts to Provide Native American Education for All* highlighted, creating "stand-alone Native American education standards" was an important milestone in states that have been successful in implementing Native curriculum. While acknowledging the importance of these initiatives to develop EUs, we also advocate that Indigenous nationhood standards be integrated within civics standards (and social studies more broadly). As separate documents, the EUs risk being seen by teachers as supplemental or extra and not *essential*, as advocates have argued. The Oceti Sakowin EUs in South Dakota, for example, are required curriculum and directly redress gaps within South Dakota's state civics standards. However, we worry that without *also* integrating the Native standards within the civics standards, teachers may deem such stand-alone standards as extra, and thus optional (despite state mandates). Thus, we are advocating for a both/and approach: create Native standards developed in partnership with tribal nations *and* integrate those standards within the state's content standards. Washington state, which recently integrated Since Time Immemorial curriculum within its state content standards, provides a model for how states can update their standards to reflect these important Indigenous initiatives.

States that comprehensively address Indigenous nationhood

A handful of states more comprehensively address Indigenous nationhood within their civics and government standards. Oklahoma included Indigenous nationhood 35 times within the standards. Washington state followed with 32 standards that reflect Indigenous nationhood, and other states also incorporated Indigenous nationhood standards frequently, including Nebraska (27), Wyoming (24), Michigan (23), California (21) Montana (19), Washington DC (19), and New Mexico (17), each with few erasures (including no erasures in the state of Montana). Importantly, Michigan, Oklahoma, Wyoming, and Nebraska offer instructive examples of how states can update and revise standards to better reflect Indigenous nationhood.

When we began our study, for example, Michigan had only 3 standards that included Indigenous nationhood, each of which was framed historically. However, the standards adopted in June 2019 reflected a critical shift. Students now learn about tribal governments in 3rd grade, laying the groundwork for learning about the Iroquois Confederacy, federal/tribal relations, the ways Native relations are framed in the U.S. Constitution, and policies and legal decisions that have impacted Indigenous Peoples. Oklahoma's 2012 standards addressed Indigenous nationhood 16 times in total; however, only one of those was within elementary school. Oklahoma's 2019 revisions (featured in Appendix C) include Indigenous nationhood 15 times within K-5 civics standards. Moreover, Oklahoma far exceeds other states in addressing tribal sovereignty, addressing sovereignty 9 times (5 times in elementary, 4 times in secondary) and accounting for 25% of the standards of that address sovereignty overall. Wyoming (featured in Appendix C) also reflects an important shift toward including Indigenous nationhood within civics standards. Whereas Wyoming's previous standards addressed Indigenous nationhood only 6 times and waited until the 8th grade to do so, students now learn about Indigenous Tribes of Wyoming in 2nd grade and repeatedly throughout the 5th, 8th, and 10th grade standards. Similarly, Nebraska's 2019 standards offer a critical revision of their prior standards, including Indigenous nationhood standards early and often throughout the K-12 standards, which is likely due to efforts by the Nebraska Department of Education to involve Native stakeholders in

the process of rewriting the state's social studies standards (NCAI, 2019, p. 29). The transformation in Michigan, Oklahoma, Wyoming, and Nebraska offers important examples for other states to follow.

To support other states in transforming their civics standards to better reflect Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty, Appendix C features four states—Oklahoma, Washington (State), Wyoming, and Montana—which we believe serve as exemplars to support these critical revisions. We draw attention to these states, not only because their attention to Indigenous nationhood surpassed the majority of other states and included few erasures, but also because the majority of Indigenous nationhood standards in these states were set within a contemporary context and addressed Indigenous nationhood early and often.

Although our study does not claim to identify the exact reason why these states' civic standards surpassed others, there are some common features among these states, according to the NCAI (2019) report *Becoming Visible*. Each of these four states—Oklahoma, Washington (State), Wyoming, and Montana—were identified as “Native American Opportunity States” and scored highly in terms of their implementation and support of Native education (Montana, Oklahoma, and Washington scored between 9–12, indicating a “higher level of implementation,” and Wyoming scored in the 6–8 range, indicating “medium level of implementation”).¹³ More specific features of these states include: substantial budgets to support Native curricula (Oklahoma, Washington state, and Montana each had over 100,000 USD in their state budget); full- or part-time staff within the state education agency who are dedicated to Native education (8 in Montana, 6 in Oklahoma, 3 in Washington, and .4 in Wyoming); Native content within the state's standards (including the state *requirement* that Native curriculum be taught in K–12 public schools in Montana and Washington); and a “high” (Wyoming) or “moderate” (Montana, Oklahoma, Washington) level of tribal government engagement by state education agencies. Levels of policy, financial, personnel, and curricular support, as well as collaboration with tribal nations may be why some states had civics standards that better reflect Indigenous civic realities and rights.

Discussion and implications

Our data demonstrate that states vary widely in their attention to Indigenous nationhood within state mandated civics and government standards. Such variance is problematic, particularly given how essential knowledge of Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty is for understanding and supporting Indigenous nations' ongoing struggles to protect their rights, lands, languages, lifeways, and communities today. The majority of state civics standards we surveyed do not foster knowledge of Indigenous nationhood or sovereignty. While standards are but one influence on student learning, we are concerned that the erasure of Indigenous nationhood from such guiding documents will contribute to students being ill-equipped to challenge the colonial status quo and enact forms of citizenship that account for and protect tribal sovereignty.

Over one-quarter of the states surveyed failed to address Indigenous nationhood within their state standards. The absence of Indigenous nationhood within civics standards is particularly troubling in 9 of those 14 states, which are home to state or federally recognized tribal nations (NCSL, 2020).¹⁴ Virginia, for example, is home to both state *and* federally recognized tribal nations; however, Virginia's state civics

standards do not address Indigenous nationhood at all. The absence of Indigenous nationhood in these states not only erases Indigenous students' civic identities, roles, and responsibilities, but also undermines the potential for all students to develop civic knowledge and skills that can support tribal sovereignty. While it is true that five of these 14 states (Illinois, Kentucky, New Hampshire, Ohio, and Pennsylvania), are not currently home to any state or federally recognized tribal nations, we argue that *public schools have a responsibility to teach about Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty, even when no tribal nations are recognized within a state*. Proximity to Native nations should not influence the responsibility of public schools to educate all students about Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty. Whether students live in cities, suburbs, or rural communities or whether they live close to or distant from tribal nations, social studies education has a responsibility to educate students about Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty. As guiding documents, civic education standards must reflect this responsibility and commitment.

In addition to the moral obligation to include Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty within civic education, there are a variety of practical reasons to do so, even in areas where people view themselves as “perfect strangers” (Dion, 2008) to Indigenous peoples and nations. Native nations in the United States continue to advocate for and successfully restore their rightful recognition as nations. This ongoing advocacy by tribal nations means that the political landscape of states is constantly changing. In 2018, for example, six tribal nations within the state of Virginia gained recognition through an act of Congress. In 2019, the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians was successful in their fight for recognition in the state of Montana. Importantly, *these Native nations have always been nations*, despite their federal status. Students should be prepared to understand and relate with tribal nations should new tribal nations become recognized in their state. Further, over 35 million people in the United States move each year. Tribal nations are located within *each* of the top 10 states people are moving to (Idaho, Nevada, Arizona, Oregon, Montana, South Dakota, North Carolina, Vermont, Florida, and Colorado) (Holmes, 2018). Knowledge of Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty is imperative if those moving across state lines are to embody modes of civic responsibility that account for the tribal nations within their new state. Knowledge of Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty is also vital for immigrant students to learn what it means to live in diaspora responsibly (Haig-Brown, 2009).

Indigenous nationhood was also addressed more frequently in the secondary civics standards, with 60.5% of Indigenous nationhood standards included in 6–12th grade. Indigenous nationhood knowledge is vital for young learners, not only to affirm the civic identities of young Native students, but to ensure that all students recognize from an early age that by nature of living within the United States they are in relationship to Native nations and struggles for self-determination and sovereignty. Indigenous nationhood is not mature knowledge, but foundational knowledge. Moreover, over 40% of Indigenous nationhood standards were set within a pre-1900 context. While an historical focus is crucial in understanding the history of federal, state, and tribal nations, without a concurrent contemporary focus, the standards reinforce deep-seated societal and curricular patterns of Indigenous erasure.

The silence around tribal sovereignty and treaties was particularly troubling. Nearly three-quarters of the states surveyed failed to include tribal sovereignty or treaties within

their civics standards. This silence echoes a recent national study, *Reclaiming Native Truth*, which found that sovereignty is “grossly misunderstood,” and “its origins, details and rights are not clear, even for people charged with upholding it” (First Nations Development Institute & Echo Hawk Consulting, 2018, p. 10) This study further found that “most policymakers have little knowledge of Native issues and do not understand treaties or trust obligations to tribes, since many do not have tribes in their districts” (p. 22). For many Indigenous nations and Indigenous studies scholars, “sovereignty is the bedrock upon which any and every discussion of Indian reality today must be built” (Lomawaima, 2000, p. 3). Further, according to the Constitution, treaties remain the “supreme Law of the Land.” Without attention to tribal sovereignty or treaties, it is unlikely students will develop civic knowledge that can understand and defend this important reality or Indigenous peoples’ legal rights.

Our research amplified the absence of Indigenous nationhood by documenting the various ways Indigenous nationhood was erased, patterns of erasure that reflect the broader societal erasure of Indigenous nations, as nation-state typically see themselves in relation with other nation-states (Champagne, 2015; Sabzalian, 2019b). Civics standards, as a reflection of this broader pattern of privileging nation-state sovereignty, often rendered Indigenous nations and Indigenous sovereignty object within the constructs of citizenship and civic life. The standards we surveyed routinely positioned local, state, and federal governments as the normative frames through which to understand key civics concepts, such as civic roles and responsibilities, leadership, patriotism, or the functions of government, among others. By normalizing settler forms of civics and governance, our analysis demonstrates that state standards often (though not always) contribute to the discursive and rhetorical erasure of Indigenous sovereignty (Lyons, 2000) and reinforce nation-state supremacy. Though we are cautious not to overstate the influence state standards have on actual curriculum and instruction, we recognize a connection between these important state-sanctioned documents and the ways official knowledge directs teachers to ignore or erase Indigenous students’ civic identities and the realities, struggles, and aspirations of Indigenous nations.

Our data also demonstrate that even when Indigenous nationhood was addressed within the standards, Indigenous nationhood could also be subtly erased. Framing Native nations as “groups,” for example, reflects the discursive erasure of Native nations, and one of the subtle ways civics standards can reproduce rhetorical imperialism (Lyons, 2000). The language of “tribes” absent any corresponding discussion of nationhood, sovereignty, or treaties, and particularly in states whose sole focus was historical, also discursively erases Indigenous nationhood. This finding complicates efforts to merely *include* Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty, suggesting that without corresponding attention to *how* civics standards are framed, the inclusion of Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty can actually function as an “enclosure” (Richardson, 2011), neutralizing or containing the meaning of Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty within colonial logics of erasure.¹⁵ As “groups” or as “tribes” that existed long ago, the civics standards discursively strip Indigenous nations of their ongoing rights and sovereignty, and position Native nations within the *safety zone*, a zone that delineates “safe” from “dangerous” forms of difference and neutralizes those forms of difference that “threaten American uniformity and national identity” (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006, p. 3). The inclusion of Indigenous peoples or tribes

within civics in and of itself does not necessarily challenge colonial erasure. Civics standards must include Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty within the context of Indigenous peoples' ongoing civic and political realities, which include efforts to restore Indigenous lands, lifeways, and nations.

Finally, our research identified a handful of states that meaningfully include Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty and affirm Indigenous nationhood in both elementary and secondary standards. We hope that educational leaders and policy makers looking to rewrite their state standards learn from states that already reflect and affirm Indigenous students' civic identities and enlist all students in the democratic civic imperative of advancing Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty. How states address rewriting civics standards to better reflect Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty will differ depending on local context. Some states may have existing infrastructure, such as an Office of Indian Education, that can facilitate tribal consultation and support this work. Other states may need to work within their state legislatures to develop such infrastructure and relationships with Native nations. Regardless of how states work to revise state civics standards, Indigenous educators and tribal nations should be involved. As the NCAI (2019) report, *Becoming Visible*, found:

Quality educator materials developed with tribal consultation contain concepts that tribal nations know of, approve of, and wish to share with the general public. When a curriculum is developed in collaboration with tribal nation(s), the content usually delves more deeply and profoundly into information and knowledge related to specific histories, locations, languages, and ways of knowing. Native American curricula endorsed by local tribal nations also reinforces tribal sovereignty and self-determination. (p. 35)

Similarly, tribal consultation and collaboration can foster civics standards that are respectful, accurate, and endorsed by tribal nations.

We also recognize the value of regional approaches. As state boundaries are politically constructed and do not necessarily reflect Native nations' homelands, in some areas developing regional partnerships may be an appropriate avenue for collaboration. For example, the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (2021) is a regional partnership between the Yakama Nation, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, and Nez Perce Tribe to "to ensure a unified voice in the overall management of the fishery resources, and as managers, to protect reserved treaty rights through the exercise of the inherent sovereign powers of the tribes" (para. 2). This partnership, which recognizes the interrelated struggles to protect the lands, waters, and sovereignty of Indigenous nations in the region, offers one potential model for collaboration that transcends state boundaries.

For states or departments with few (or no) Indigenous staff, the appendix in the NCAI (2019) report *Becoming Visible* provides a toolkit of resources to support those working to advocate for Native education within their state and provides questions, worksheets, and resources to help "Understand the Current Status of Native American Education Efforts in Your State," "Mobilize Support through Coalition Building in Your State," and ultimately, "Develop a Native American Curriculum for Your State" (pp. 38–49). In some instances, collaborating with regional or national organizations, such as the National Indian Education Association (NIEA), the NCAI, the Native Nations Institute, or the Native Governance Center, may also be a viable option. However states pursue revising

their civics standards, as part of a broader effort to support Native curriculum in the state, we believe that Indigenous educators and tribal nations should be involved in, if not leading, this process.

Conclusion

“I have long advocated that the discourse of democracy must be fused with considerations of sovereignty, particularly indigenous sovereignty, if it is ever to realize its potential” (Grande, 2008, p. 85)

Through our TribalCrit and QuantCrit analysis of civics standards in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, we made visible the ways official knowledge in state content standards include or erase Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty. We drew attention to the magnitude of these erasures, as well as the ways these erasures occurred. Further, we amplified the scope of erasure by discussing the consequences of citizenship education that fails to account for Indigenous nationhood. We argued that erasing Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty has implications for whether Indigenous students will see their civic identities reflected and affirmed in curriculum and whether all students will view the support of Indigenous sovereignty as part of their democratic civic responsibility. We also took note of states that more comprehensively addressed Indigenous nationhood early and often within civics standards, both to affirm these efforts and to provide support to other states in their critical revision of this content.

Our research demonstrates that while civics standards have made progress toward fostering more diverse conceptions of citizenship, civics standards remain deeply invested in the nation-state. Indigenous studies scholarship has highlighted the deeply entrenched colonial ideologies and investments that maintain nation-state supremacy (Benally, 2014; Calderón, 2014; Moreton-Robinson, 2015; Sabzalian, 2019b). For example, Benally (2014), in her observation of Indigenous studies curriculum debates in Arizona, noted the acceptance of curriculum on tribal “history,” but the elimination of the curriculum’s focus on tribal “governments” and “sovereignty.” Drawing on Lomawaima and McCarty (2006, p. 2014) “safety zone theory,” Benally argued that the debates reflected a desire to privilege “safe” and erase “dangerous” forms of cultural difference. Tribal sovereignty, the “most important part” of the proposed legislation, was deemed “too dangerous” (Benally, 2014, p. 20). A key implication here is that to successfully integrate Indigenous nationhood into state standards, educational policy makers and advocates must anticipate resistance and be prepared to articulate why knowledge of Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty matters. Such advocacy should not only communicate why knowledge of Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty matter for Indigenous students (though from a lens of equity and justice this should be enough), but also why knowledge about Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty matters for *all* students.

To be clear, addressing Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty within the civics standards is but one of the many anticolonial education interventions we believe are needed to better support Indigenous students in public schools and better educate all students about Native nations. Developing infrastructure within state education agencies to support Native education, engaging in tribal consultation, passing Native studies curriculum mandates, and funding the development and implementation of Native curriculum, for example, are other interventions that are necessary and that meaningfully complement this work (NCAI,

2019). An example from a recent study in the *Reclaiming Native Truth* Report (NCAI, 2019) shows how such efforts complement one another. Stephanie Fryberg (Tulalip) and her colleagues found that, “Learning about systemic oppression was the only information tested that led to significantly greater support for protecting tribal sovereignty rights, eliminating Native-themed mascots and providing Native communities with resources meant to promote resource equity” (First Nations Development Institute & Echo Hawk Consulting, 2018, p. 48). We take this finding to mean that attention to Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty within civic education must take place within an anticolonial context and be part of a broader effort to transform the ways Indigenous studies curriculum is taught. We believe that “now is an ideal time for tribal nations, tribal citizens, and other stakeholders to organize and work alongside state decision-makers to fund, develop, and implement Native American curriculum efforts” (NCAI, 2019, p. 35). Transforming state standards, the very documents that establish the “desired learning outcomes of education” (NCAI, 2019, p. 5), is a crucial part of this effort, and one of the strategies states have used to “advance Native education in public schools” (NCAI, 2019, p. 24).

Knowledge of Indigenous nationhood must be central to students’ understanding of civics and governance (Haynes Writer, 2010; Sabzalian, 2019b; Sabzalian & Shear, 2018). Indigenous students deserve to have their civic identities affirmed within civic standards and their civic roles and responsibilities framed in relation to their respective nations. Non-Indigenous students also deserve a robust conception of civics that attends to Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty and the accompanying responsibilities. To uphold tribal sovereignty, *all* students must recognize Indigenous nations *as* nations that have sovereign rights, including the right to determine the presence and future course of their nations. As Sabzalian (2019a) has written elsewhere,

The youth educated in public schools may be the next generation of lawyers, natural resource managers, educators, social workers, or any other profession that might be crucial in upholding sovereignty (whether it’s through an understanding of Indian law, upholding important fishing, hunting, and gathering rights, educating Native youth, or recognizing the impact generations of child removal have had on a nations’ sovereignty). They will also be the next generation of voters whose ballots support or undermine sovereignty; the next generation of policy makers whose decisions impact Native nations. (p. 169)

Civics standards should reflect and reproduce the core knowledge, skills, attitudes, and actions (Levinson, 2010) students need to recognize and uphold tribal sovereignty. As this study has shown, there are models for how to do this. Indigenous and allied advocacy in states like Oklahoma, Wyoming, Washington, and Montana have demonstrated that including Indigenous nationhood within state standards is possible; however, these states remain the exception. Moving forward, we hope that the inclusion of Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty within state standards is no longer exceptional, but becomes standard.

Notes

1. In this article, we use the terms Native nation, Indigenous nation, and tribal nation interchangeably and intentionally to acknowledge the *nationhood* of Indigenous peoples. Though the term “tribe” may be imposed and rooted in Eurocentric understandings of Indigenous nationhood, we also recognize that tribe and tribal nation remain important referents for many nations (e.g., The Klamath Tribes, Eastern Pequot Tribal Nation), in part, because “Indian

tribes” are named in Article one, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution, and many treaties were negotiated with “tribes.” For the purpose of this article and the points we are trying to make with respect to nationhood, we intentionally draw on the discursive power of the term “nation,” using tribe as a standalone referent when used by Native nations or scholars themselves, or when citing specific civics standards.

2. We recognize that some Native students may be descendants, rather than enrolled citizens, of their nations and that not all Native nations are recognized by the U.S. federal government. We also recognize the fraught and complex terrain of identity, belonging, and rights that those who are not enrolled as citizens of their nation or those who belong to unrecognized nations must navigate. The decision of who or who is not a citizen is ultimately up to Native nations, but the landscape of citizenship is constantly changing, and many Native nations are crafting more inclusive definitions and criteria of belonging (i.e., Vizenor & Doerfler, 2012). Moreover, unrecognized nations continue to be successful in their struggles for federal recognition and the restoration of their rightful status as nations. For the purpose of this article, we intentionally foreground the terms *citizen* and *nation* to draw attention to the political identities of Native peoples and the political relationship between tribal governments and state and federal governments.
3. We use the term anticolonial, following Patel (2016), to “draw into relief the ways in which settler coloniality must be known to be countered,” a contrast and complement to the term decolonial which “should always address material changes” (p. 7).
4. Following the scholarship of Crenshaw (1991), we do not capitalize white, given that “‘white’ . . . is not a proper noun, since whites do not constitute a specific cultural group” (p. 1244). See also Hawkman and Shear (2020) whose edited volume also takes an ethical and political stance in refusing the capitalization of white.
5. One pitfall of the triad, according to la paperson (2017), is how it leads to “misconstrued question[s]” such as, “are Black people settlers?” (p. 8). This question elides the “*impossibility* of settlement” for many Black people, who are routinely positioned through antiblackness as “‘out of place’ on land” (p. 8). la paperson urged us to move beyond simple, binary questions of whether Black people (or other people of color) are settlers, and instead, ask more specific questions, such as “when and where have Black communities [and other communities of color] been settlers? When and where do they cease to be settlers?” (pp. 8–9).
6. Other conceptions of sovereignty beyond political sovereignty (Wilkins & Stark, 2018) include intellectual sovereignty (Warrior, 1992), rhetorical sovereignty (Lyons, 2000), visual sovereignty (Raheja, 2010), and food sovereignty (Whyte, 2016), among others. For more on sovereignty, including Native feminist theories that challenge gendered discourses of sovereignty, see Barker (2005) and Teves et al. (2015).
7. For more on Indigenous legal and political traditions, see Borrows (2000, 2017), L. B. Simpson (2017), Vizenor and Doerfler (2012), and Williams (1997).
8. States varied in how they organize elementary, middle, and high school grade bands. For the purpose of this study, we categorized K–5 as elementary and 6–12 as secondary. For the purpose of this study, and to align our research with Shear et al.’s (2015) prior study, we counted standards as historical if they featured people, nations, events, laws, policies, etc. prior to 1900.
9. These six states were California, Michigan, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Washington (State), and Wyoming.
10. Each of the standards in Alabama was historical; however, one standard mentioned World War I and, thus, did not meet the pre-1900 cut off. Similarly, both standards addressing Indigenous nationhood in Texas were historical; however, one of the standards addressed the American Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 and so did not meet the pre-1900 cut off.
11. The framing of Native nations primarily as “cultural groups” echoes language used by national organizations, such as the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), which overtly refers to Native nations as groups (i.e., NCSS (2012), which encourages students to study an “American Indian cultural group” (p. 90)), or which more subtly discusses Native peoples/

nations within the theme of “culture” (i.e., NCSS, 2010, p. 69), but not the themes of “power, authority, and governance,” or “civic ideals and practices.”

12. Terminology varies, including “Enduring Understandings” in Wisconsin and Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings in South Dakota, among others.
13. For details on how the report determined “Native American Opportunity States” and assigned ranking scores, see the “Methodology” section (NCAI, 2019, pp. 11–15). In general, levels of implementation and support were determined through a literature review, informant interviews, and a survey, which asked about state policies and resources, levels of collaboration with tribal governments, and curriculum implementation efforts, which were then compiled into a ranking system and to determine “Native American Opportunity States.” “States were then ranked on a scale of 0–4 based on their answers to questions in each of the three areas, with a higher score meaning more substantial Native American education resources or efforts are in place” (NCAI, 2019, p. 13).
14. NCSL (2020) offered the following explanation for how they determine which state/federally recognized tribal nations to count: The following state-by-state listing of Indian tribes or groups are federally recognized and eligible for funding and services from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), there are currently 574 federally recognized tribes. For more information on federally recognized tribes, click here. The list also includes Indian tribes or groups that are recognized by the states, when the state has established such authority. This acknowledges their status within the state but does not guarantee funding from the state or the federal government. State-recognized Indian tribes are not federally recognized; however, federally recognized tribes may also be state-recognized. (para. 1).
15. One could argue that sovereignty, as a Western concept strategically appropriated by Indigenous peoples to further their own struggles for land and rights, is an enclosure of Indigenous epistemologies, or that advocacy for Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty within states civics standards is an enclosure given “how it proceeds within this prestructured and thus enclosing structure of education” (Richardson, 2011, p. 337). This study values Indigenous advocacy for civics standards that reflect Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty while recognizing that Indigenous theories and practices of civics exceed these concepts.

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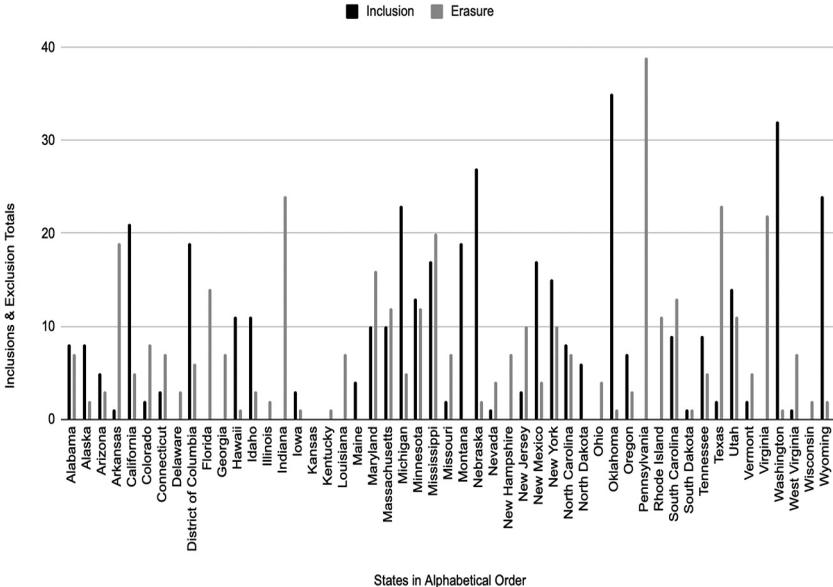
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Appendix B. Inclusions and erasures of Indigenous nationhood in civics standards, by state (bar chart)



Appendix C. Examples of Indigenous nationhood standards in exemplar states

Profiles of states that meaningfully address Indigenous nationhood

Oklahoma: 35 Mentions of Indigenous Nationhood

3rd:

- 3.1.2 Explain that tribal governments in Oklahoma have a right to self-government known as sovereignty. (p. 15)
- 3.1.5 Define the concept of civic virtue and responsibilities of the citizen at the local, state, and tribal levels, including respect for diversity. (p. 15)
- 3.3.4 Identify cultural similarities and differences of the existing sovereign tribal nations in Oklahoma, especially those near the local community. (p. 16)
- 3.3.6 Describe the migrations, settlements, relocations and forced removals of American Indians. (p. 16)
- 3.3.8 Distinguish between the points of view of both American Indians and settlers regarding the opening of territories in Oklahoma for settlement. (p. 16)

4th:

- 4.1.2 Compare powers exercised by the local, state, and national levels of governments, recognizing tribal sovereignty as a tribal nation's inherent right to self-govern. (p. 18)

5th:

- 5.2.6 Explain that tribal sovereignty is a tribal nation's inherent right to self-govern. (p. 22)
- 5.3.4 Compare the Iroquois Confederacy's representative government to the early attempts of the colonies to unite as one nation. (p. 23)
- 5.4.4 Describe the relationship between the federal government and sovereign American Indian nations, as established under the Constitution of the United States. (p. 24)

6th:

- 6.3.7 Identify and explain topics related to indigenous sovereignty. (p. 26)

8th:

- 8.1.1 Describe the political climate in the British colonies prior to the French and Indian War including the policy of salutary neglect, mercantilism through the Navigation Acts and colonial reaction through the Albany Plan of Union; compare the Iroquois Confederacy to early attempts to unite the colonies. (p. 31)
- 8.1.2 Summarize the political and economic consequences of the French and Indian War including imperial policies of taxation, the Proclamation of 1763, and the migration of colonists into American Indian sovereign territories. (p. 31)
- 8.2.2 Evaluate the motivations and points of view of various populations to remain loyal to Britain, join the patriot cause, or choose neutrality, including:

- A. Patriots and Loyalists and their political, economic, and family interests
- B. American Indians and the preservation of their homelands, cultures, and trade
- C. women and their political status
- D. free and enslaved blacks and their petitions to colonial governments for a ban on slavery. (p. 32)

- 8.3.4 Explain the significance of the Commerce Clause in establishing a constitutional relationship between Indian tribes and the United States government. (p. 33)
- 8.4.2 Describe President Washington's attempt to develop a cohesive Indian policy, which included respectful interactions with American Indian leaders, treaties to delineate tribal lands, and precedent-setting practices of assimilation. (p. 35)
- 8.5.3 Analyze the acquisition of the Louisiana territory, the contributions of the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery Expedition, and the eventual establishment of the Indian Territory. (p. 35)
- 8.7.3 Analyze the impact of Jackson's policies and decisions concerning American Indian nations and their tribal sovereignty as a nation's inherent right to self-govern, including:

- A. non-adherence to federal treaties
- B. disregard for the Worcester v. Georgia decision
- C. forced removals of American Indians (p. 36)

- 8.8.4 Analyze the consequences of westward expansion, including the impact on the culture of American Indians and their homelands, and the growing sectional tensions regarding the expansion of slavery. (p. 36)

- 8.12.5 Evaluate the impact of federal policies including:

- A. Homestead Act of 1862 and the resulting movement westward to free land
- B. impact of continued displacement of American Indians
- C. President Grant's Peace Policy on Indian affairs
- D. the development of the Transcontinental Railroad. (p. 38)

HS:

- USG.3.3 Summarize and explain the relationships and the responsibilities among national, state, tribal, and local governments. (p. 52)
 - USG.3.4 Explain that tribal sovereignty is a tribal nation's inherent power to self-govern, such as challenges made regarding the Major Crimes Act. (p. 52)
 - USG.3.5 Analyze how the Commerce Clause established the initial constitutional relationship between the Indian tribes and the United States government. (p. 52)
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Profiles of states that meaningfully address Indigenous nationhood

Washington State: 32 Mentions of Indigenous Nationhood

Kindergarten

- C3.K.1 Identify names and locations of tribal nations and bands in your area (p. 18)
- C3.K.2 Identify key technologies and natural resources tribal nations and bands in their area values prior to contact with Europeans and Americans (p. 18)
- C3.K.3 Understand key values, relationships, and characteristics tribes in their area had prior to contact with Europeans and Americans. (p. 18)

1st:

- C3.1.2 Identify different types of relationships and diplomacy tribal nations exercised with European nations, colonies, and the United States (p. 18)

2nd:

- C2.2.1 Know that tribes create rules and laws for the public or common good for their community (p. 18)
- C2.2.2 Explain the roles of different people that help to govern the tribal community (p. 18)

3rd:

- C3.3.1 Explain that tribes have lived in North America since time immemorial (p. 19)
- C3.3.2 Know and understand that tribes have organizational structures (councils, chairman, etc) that are formed to benefit the entire tribe (p. 19)
- C3.3.3 Explain how tribes of North America work to help the people of their tribes (p. 19)

4th:

- C2.4.1 Distinguish the responsibilities and power of state, local, and tribal government (p. 16)
- C2.4.2 Describe how and why local, state, and tribal governments make, interpret, and carry out policies, rules, and laws (p. 16)
- C3.4.1 Recognize that tribes have lived in North America since time immemorial (p. 19)
- C3.4.2 Know and understand that tribes have organizational structures (councils, chairman, etc) that are formed to benefit the entire tribe (p. 19)
- C3.4.3 Explain how tribes of Washington state and the government of the United States are on the same level (nation-to-nation) (p. 19)
- C3.4.4 Demonstrate that tribal sovereignty is “a way that tribes govern themselves in order to keep and support their ways of life” (p. 19)
- C3.4.5 Define the complexity of sovereignty for federally recognized tribes in Washington state. Identify ways in which the United States Constitution recognizes tribal sovereignty as unique from other types of sovereignty (p. 19)
- C4.4.4 Explain that tribes work within specific structures of governments to create, manage, and enforce their own laws that are best for their people (p. 22)

By the end of 7th grade:

- C1.6–8.2 Explain the structure of and key ideals set forth in fundamental documents, including the Washington state constitution and tribal treaties with the United States government (p. 55)
- C2.6–8. 2 Distinguish the structure, organization, powers, and limits of government at the local, state, and tribal levels (p. 56)
- C3.6–8.3 Recognize that, according to the United States Constitution, treaties are “the supreme law of the land;” consequently, treaty rights supersede most state laws (p. 58)
- C3.6–8.4 Explain elements of the agreements contained in one or more treaty agreements between Washington tribes and the United States (p. 58)

By the end of the 9th/10th grade:

- C2.9–10.1 Explain how citizens and institutions address social and political problems at the local, state, tribal, national, and international level (p. 80)
- C3.9–10.1 Analyze the impact of constitutions, laws, treaties, and international agreements on the maintenance of national and international order (p. 81)
- C4.9–10.4 Explain how social and political problems are addressed at the local, regional, state, tribal, national, and international level (p. 82)

By the end of the 11th/12th grade:

- C2.11–12.1 Analyze citizens’ and institutions’ effectiveness in addressing social and political problems at the local, state, tribal, national and/or international level (p. 80)
 - C2.11–12.2 Analyze the origins, functions, and structure of government with reference to the United States, Washington state, and tribal constitutions (p. 80)
 - C3.11–12.1 Evaluate the impact of constitutions, laws, treaties, and international agreements on the maintenance of national and international order or disorder (p. 81)
 - C4.11–12.4 Evaluate citizens’ and institutions’ effectiveness in addressing social and political problems at the local, state, tribal, national, and/or international level (p. 82)
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Profiles of states that meaningfully address Indigenous nationhood

Wyoming: 24 Mentions of Indigenous Nationhood

By 2nd:

- SS2.1.1 Understand that schools, tribes, communities, and the United States have rules that have to be followed. (p. 9)
- SS2.1.2 Identify the symbols and traditional practices, including those of Indigenous Tribes of Wyoming (e.g., Arapaho and Shoshone flags, songs, and pledges), that honor patriotism in the United States. (p. 9)
- SS2.1.3.a Identify how Indigenous Tribes of Wyoming honor people and celebrate through events (e.g., Native American Veterans Day, Native American Heritage Day, Wyoming Native American Day, Pow Wows). (p. 10)

By 5th:

- SS5.1.2 Understand the basic local, tribal, state, and national political processes (e.g., campaigning and voting). (p. 9)
- SS5.1.4 Understand the purpose of the U.S. legal system and that tribal governments have separate legal systems. (p. 10)
- SS5.1.5.a. Understand how the Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone are sovereign nations with their own systems of governance (i.e., each has a General Council and a resolution form of government). (p. 10)

By 8th:

- SS8.1.1.a Explain the rights, duties, and responsibilities of being a tribal member on the Wind River Indian Reservation (e.g., inherent rights, treaty obligations, and tribal sovereignty). (p. 9)
- SS8.1.2 Explain how to participate in the political process. (i.e., tribal, local, state, and national elections). (p. 9)
- SS8.1.3 Explain the historical development of the United States Constitution and treaties (e.g., 1868 Fort Bridger Treaty) and how they have shaped the United States, and Wyoming, and tribal government. (p. 10)
- SS8.1.4 Understand the difference between United States civil and criminal legal systems within the federal, state, and tribal levels. (p. 10)
- SS8.1.5.a. Describe how the U.S. Constitution creates a special relationship with tribal governments (i.e., Plenary Power, Indian Commerce Clause—Article I, Section 8, Clause 3; Supremacy Clause—Article VI, Clause 2; Cherokee Nation v. Georgia). (p. 10)
- SS8.1.6 Understand the basic structures of various political systems (e.g., tribal, local, national, and world). (p. 11)

By 12th:

- SS12.1.3 Analyze the historical development of the United States Constitution and treaties (e.g., 1868 Fort Bridger Treaty) and how they have shaped the United States and Wyoming Government (tribal, local, state, federal). (p. 9)
- SS12.1.3.a Analyze the historical development of governance of the Indigenous Tribes of Wyoming through U.S. Congressional Acts and U.S. Supreme Court decisions (e.g., Per Capita Act, Marshall Trilogy, U.S. v. Shoshone Tribe of Indians) (p. 10)
- SS12.1.4 Distinguish the difference between civil and criminal legal systems and how they apply at the federal, state, and tribal levels (p. 10)
- SS12.1.5.a. Describe the inherent powers held by Indigenous Tribes of Wyoming due to their sovereignty. (e.g., taxation, membership, per capita payments, fish and game) (p. 10)
- SS12.1.6.a Compare and contrast various tribal political systems (e.g., ideologies, structure, and institutions) within the United States. (p. 11)

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Profiles of states that meaningfully address Indigenous nationhood

Montana: 19 Mentions of Indigenous Nationhood

By 4th:

- 2.2. Students will recognize local, state, tribal and federal governments and identify representative leaders at these levels (e.g., mayor, governor, chairperson, president). (p. 3)
- 2.3. Students will identify the major responsibilities of local, state, tribal and federal government. (p. 3)
- 4.4 Students will identify and describe famous people, important democratic values (e.g., democracy, freedom, justice) symbols (e.g., Montana and U.S. flags, state flower) and holidays, in the history of Montana, American Indian tribes, and the United States. (p. 5)
- 4.7 Students will explain the history, culture, and current status of the American Indian tribes in Montana and the United States. (p. 5)

By 8th:

- 2.2 Students will identify and describe basic features of the political system in the United States and identify representative leaders from various levels (e.g., local, state, tribal, federal, branches of government). (p. 3)
- 2.3 Students will identify the significance of tribal sovereignty and Montana tribal governments' relationship to local, state and federal governments. (p. 3)
- 4.4 Students will identify significant events and people and important democratic values (e.g., freedom, equality, privacy) in the major eras/civilizations of Montana, American Indian, United States, and world history. (p. 5)
- 4.7 Students will summarize major issues affecting the history, culture, tribal sovereignty, and current status of the American Indian tribes in Montana and the United States. (p. 5)
- 5.2 Students will apply economic concepts to explain historical events, current situations, and social issues in local, Montana, tribal, national, or global concerns. (p. 6)
- 6.4 Students will compare and illustrate the unique characteristics of American Indian tribes and other cultural groups in Montana. (p. 7)
- 6.1 Students will compare and illustrate the ways various groups (e.g., cliques, clubs, ethnic communities, American Indian tribes) meet human needs and concerns (e.g., self esteem, friendship, heritage) and contribute to personal identity. (p. 7)

By 12th:

- 2.4 Students will relate the concept of tribal sovereignty to the unique powers of tribal governments as they interact with local, state and federal governments.
 - 4.4a Students will analyze the significance of important people, events, and ideas (e.g., political and intellectual leadership, inventions, discoveries, the arts) in the major eras/civilizations in the history of Montana, American Indian tribes, the United States, and the world. (p. 5)
 - 4.7 Students will Analyze and illustrate the major issues concerning history, culture, tribal sovereignty, and current status of the American Indian tribes and bands in Montana and the United States (e.g., gambling, artifacts, repatriation, natural resources, language, jurisdiction). (p. 5)
 - 6.4 Students will evaluate how the unique characteristics of American Indian tribes and other cultural groups have contributed to Montana's history and contemporary life (e.g., legal and political relationships between and among tribal, state, and federal governments). (p. 7)
-