CHAPTER 7

Exploring Place
Indigenous Students in US Higher Education

John L. Garland, Charlotte E. Davidson and Melvin E. Monette-Barajas

In this chapter, we seek to explore the emerging concept of finding *place* in higher education for Indigenous students. The meaning of *place* for displaced and marginalised American Indians in the United States and their relationship with higher education moves beyond physical settings by being inclusive of language, sovereignty, self-determination, identity and data inclusion. Throughout the chapter we interchangeably use the terms *Indigenous*, *Native American, American Indian* and *Native* to refer to US Indigenous peoples. The chapter begins with an analysis of what *place* means to us, and possibly to Native college students. Likewise, we discuss how *place* interacts in non-Native higher education contexts. Our goal here is not to provide a literature review of various issues facing Native students in US higher education, but to explore new thoughts and applications for what it may mean to be an Indigenous person finding their *place* in US higher education. Although we provide numerous references on important new research to ground our work in this chapter, our primary intent is to extend the literature into a deeper discussion on the topic of *place.* Consistent with the theme of this text, we hope that marginalised and displaced peoples around the globe may find our discussion on *place* useful for reframing their higher education experiences.

> Where are you from? What tribe are you? What is your clan? Where is your umbilical cord buried? Although questions like these may be used to establish kinship relations and are common among many Indigenous peoples who strive to embody relational practices, these questions are rarely asked within higher education settings. Said another way, higher education has not sought to be a relative to us and, in effect, our research or scholarship (Davidson, forthcoming).

Thus, how do we find *place* in higher education? For many Native peoples in US higher education, the prior questions describe an

PROOF

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/20813035/WORKINGFOLDER/BHABHA-OPM/9781108496889C07.3D 153 [152–174]
27.1.2020 7:38AM

often-painful awareness that is a result of materially contending with the systematic erosion of our umbilical connections to *place*. From our observations as Indigenous higher education leaders,[1] this process of disconnection is linked to how *Non-Native Colleges and Universities* (NNCUs) – a term used to centre the experiences of Native peoples at historically and predominately White institutions of higher education (Shotton, Lowe, & Waterman, 2013) – have principally operated as an unapologetic colonising structure replicating US society at large. It is a structure that side-lines deeper understanding associated with how *place* uniquely affects the participation of Native students in higher education. In saying this, we are arguing that a sense of belonging – an indicator of student success often highlighted in student development literature (Strayhorn, 2019) – can be improved when a sense of *place* is made central to discussions about educational attainment; for *place* figures strongly in how we, as Native peoples, have long understood, navigated and documented our experiences (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015). Correspondingly, it is impossible to speak about the dis*place*ment and marginalisation of Native Americans in society, and Native American students in US higher education, without a critical discussion of how *place* figures into how they experience these phenomena.

Likewise, as will be discussed later in this chapter, finding *place* for Indigenous students within higher education research takes on new importance in the context of historical marginalisation and dis*place*ment. The ongoing invisibility of Native Americans in higher education and in higher education research, especially in quantitative data, results in a contemporary higher education system that is generationally uninformed and/or misinformed with respect to Indigenous students. This type of systemic ignorance undermines higher education practices, policies and inclusion that seek to develop a sense-of-belonging for Native Americans.

Two concepts critical to understanding Indigenous involvement in higher education are *sovereignty* and *self-determination* which are discussed in detail later in this chapter. However, it is important to be clear now about what makes the presence of Native American students in US higher education *sovereign* and their participation *self-determined*. This is to say that 'Native students live on land that was colonised by the very institutions from which they seek an education. Treaties and other policy agreements, laws, and Native American sovereignty are part of our students' experiences. No other population comes to college with these

[1] We describe our backgrounds as Indigenous higher education leaders in the following section.

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/20813035/WORKINGFOLDER/BHABHA-OPM/9781108496889C07.3D 154 [152–174]
27.1.2020 7:38AM

characteristics' (Springer, Davidson, & Waterman, 2013, 112). And, as we will discuss, the saliency of *place* and dis*place*ment, and their relationships with sovereignty and self-determination, are crucial elements for building a humanising practice of higher education.

The Authors and Higher Education

As authors, we believe it is important to be transparent to the reader when writing about higher education, especially on a topic so closely tied to our own experiences and identities. And, as participants in, and of, higher education we came to understand that an author's position within their work is rarely made explicit. As such, their work takes a settler-colonial authoritarian approach to *what* is knowledge and *who* is allowed to create knowledge and understanding. We believe that by positioning a few details of our higher education journey as Native scholars the reader may enjoy another dimension in their analysis and understanding of this chapter. In particular, we want the reader to know that as Indigenous people we may share several common intersections such as obtaining graduate degrees, attending Non-Native Colleges and Universities, and holding administrative roles. But, these experiences are also unique to each of us and while we cannot speak for other Native scholars, we do believe our analysis of higher education in the context of this chapter generally speaks to issues across individual experiences, tribal affiliations and educational backgrounds.

Charlotte E. Davidson

One of the many ways we acknowledge ourselves as Diné is as Ni'hookáá Diyiin Dine'é (Holy Earth Surface People). We are the children of Nahasdzáán (Mother Earth) and Yádiłhił Shitaa' (Father Sky) and are, therefore, stewards of ecological living systems and environmental communities, broadly, and Dinétah, specifically. Dinétah is a Diné term that means 'among the people', and refers to our ancestral homeland which is delineated by four sacred mountains and geographically encompasses northeastern Arizona, northwestern New Mexico, southwestern Colorado and southeastern Utah. Maintaining a consistent and conscious relationship with this location is achieved in social and material ways such as, but not limited to: beginning the introduction of oneself by identifying the four clan groups one is born into; wearing precious stones, such as turquoise, for purposes of well-being and protection; styling hair in the form of a Tsiyeeł (Diné hair bun); and praying to Diyin Dine'é (Holy

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/20813035/WORKINGFOLDER/BHABHA-OPM/9781108496889C07.3D 155 [152–174]
27.1.2020 7:38AM

People) using plants sacred to Diné. This is all to say that Diné concepts – too many to additionally mention here – and the capacity to enact this grounding knowledge in the world, can and does occur outside of Dinétah. To this point, these practices served as the foundation for my undergraduate persistence at a tribal university in the Midwest region of the United States, as well as my subsequent matriculation to and graduation from a Non-Native College/University (NNCU) in Illinois.

John L. Garland

We are called the Chata People (Choctaw) and are connected to the Mississippian culture sharing a Muskogean language with the Chickasaw, Creek and other tribes. The Choctaw creation story says we emerged from earthen (Yakni) mounds in a land area known as Nanih Waiya which remains a sacred location in current day Mississippi. I am a descendent of Hushi Yukpa (Happy Bird), sister to Chief Pushmataha, and her spouse Major James Garland (a British [Irish] Soldier), and later from their son John Garland from what was known as the Six Towns District of the Choctaw (parts of present-day Mississippi and Alabama). Fortunately, many details about my family history from pre- and post-removal to southeastern Indian Territory (present day Choctaw Nation, Oklahoma) were generally documented in contrast to many tribal family histories that may have been lost during relocation. I was raised a few miles from where the Garland Choctaws ended their removal from ancestral lands to Indian Territory in the 1830s – now commonly referred to as the Choctaw Trail of Tears. My higher education journey began at a two-year Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institution affiliated with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (Eastern Oklahoma State College), bachelor's and master's degrees (the first in my family) from another Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institution but affiliated with the Cherokee Nation (Northeastern State University), and finally a doctoral degree from a Non-Native College/University (University of Maryland – College Park). Collectively, these experiences led to my journey of finding *place* in higher education resulting in a career focused on Native student success.

Melvin E. Monette-Barajas

The Metis are people descended from joint Indigenous and white parents. It is both my maternal and paternal family history where my Anishinaabe (Chippewa) and Cree great-great-great grandmothers married French or

PROOF

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/20813035/WORKINGFOLDER/BHABHA-OPM/9781108496889C07.3D 156 [152–174]
27.1.2020 7:38AM

Scottish fur trappers. Metis are more commonly known as a Canadian Indigenous group; however, the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians are descendants of these people and my homelands are located a few miles below the Canadian border in the Turtle Mountains of North Dakota. This lineage is the norm at home and it created its own culture and language – Michif, which is an identity and a language unique to my homelands. The community strives to preserve the Anishinaabe language, teaches French in the high school, and uses English as the primary language for communication which together form the Michif language. I grew up on this reservation and the Spirit Lake Nation, calling the Turtle Mountains home; the landscape of my mind. I have attended the Turtle Mountain Community College and Cankdeska Cikana Community College, both tribal colleges, and the University of North Dakota.

Brief Historical Review of Indigenous Peoples' Place in North America with Definitions

> Through the process and structuring of settler colonialism, land is remade into property, and human relationships to land are redefined/reduced to the relationship of owner to his property. When land is recast as property, *place* becomes exchangeable, saleable, and stealable. The most important aim of recasting land as property is to make it ahistorical in order to hack away the narratives that invoke prior claims and thus affirm the myth of terra nullius 'nobody's land'
>
> (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015, 64).

One of the deep historical consequences of settler colonialism is the dominant pedagogical discourse that *place* lacks the qualities of a living educator, learning context, and loving relative; a discourse that functions to estrange us from how *place* informs our material relationships with the world. Nevertheless, Native peoples have generally resisted and refused Eurocentric sensibilities that relegate *place* to property even while participating in an often-necessary monetary relationship to land. Hence, our capacity to structure relationships to specific locations has not been entirely eliminated and, thus, it endures.

To attempt an encompassing discussion of *place* is a difficult task given the innumerable ways Indigenous peoples, both individually and communally, envision, cultivate, construct, experience, and define *place*. Likewise, applying an Indigenous pan-ethnic identity for all Native peoples in the United States as a means to solve historical injustices oversimplifies the issues at hand; yet we must begin somewhere. What we posit

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/20813035/WORKINGFOLDER/BHABHA-OPM/9781108496889C07.3D 157 [152–174]
27.1.2020 7:38AM

in these pages is a partial – unfinished – interpretation of *place* as we (re) explore *place* in the context of higher education. For Native American college students, questions such as 'Where are you from? What tribe are you? What is your clan? Where is your umbilical cord buried?' (Davidson, forthcoming) provides for opportunities of *place*ment thereby giving Native peoples primacy in that their answers are often situated in ancient stories of emergence, ancestral attributes of being-ness and principles for living; the totality of which constitutes, what Deloria and Wildcat (2001) term, *personality*. Finding a sense of *place* tends to define and validate one's social connections with others in a world that generally values higher education. Although social connections through higher education have become an important element for perceived worldly success, these connections come at a *place*-cost when Indigenous students remain literally and figuratively invisible throughout most higher education settings. In other words, how can *place* ever be complete without Indigenous peoples?

Deloria and Wildcat recognised very clearly in their book, *Power and Place: Indian Education in America*, that *personality* does not exist apart from place, for together they give epistemological direction to thought and action. To illustrate, we offer respective and very brief glimpses into this lived experience by sharing how *place* is always implicated in the production of knowledge (e.g., the writing of this book chapter) and, because this is so, we always begin such processes from who and where we originate. At this point, it is important to stress that while all Native students are living extensions of *place*, one should not assume that all Native students enter into academic environments with place-based sensibilities. These variations may occur due to historical elements of assimilation and trauma from relocation policies, family dynamics, educational opportunities, and other contributing factors. This is to say that nurturing the continuity of indigenous personality should be a shared goal of Non-Native Colleges and Universities.

An often evolving, and sometimes contradictory, aspect of nomenclature is that some terms may not adequately or accurately define people or groups. This is certainly the case for Indigenous peoples within the borders of the United States of America. As mentioned earlier and in other recent publications (Waterman, Lowe, & Shotton, 2018), the terms *Indigenous*, *Native American*, *American Indian*, *Indian*, and simply *Native* are used interchangeably. However, there may be unique distinctions and experiences when it comes to understanding certain Indigenous peoples in North America where these terms are applied. Some of what is discussed in this chapter applies to *Alaska Natives* and

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/20813035/WORKINGFOLDER/BHABHA-OPM/9781108496889C07.3D 158 [152–174]
27.1.2020 7:38AM

Native Hawaiians as it does to Native Americans in the contiguous forty-eight states, but knowledge and research with the experiences of Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian college students is only now beginning to emerge, thereby illuminating the unique experiences of each. Keeping this in mind while reading this chapter will help to inform and necessarily complicate one's overall understanding of the Indigenous college student experience.

Place as Language and Sovereignty

Individual and shared experiences as tribal members whose families were historically subjected to displacement and oppression bring into focus that tribal connections to *place* are deeply relational; meaning that connection to *place* remains immutable regardless of circumstances. Further, these connections are comprised of a complicated set of human responsibilities linked to spirituality, happiness, restoration, and familial harmony. In experiencing the simultaneous combination of these states, Indigenous peoples may be unwilling to acquiesce readily to the colonising culture of higher education – a culture that can be uncompromisingly committed to sustaining itself as a hegemonic intellectual space. As Deloria and Wildcat (2001) note: 'An introduction into most American institutions of higher education should predictably result in disorientation to any person who understands their personhood as emergent from a specific environment or *place*' (p. 114). What may not be easily discernible is that Deloria and Wildcat's critical observation cannot be understood separate from foundational perspectives about language and sovereignty.

Language

In reflecting on the significance of language for Native peoples, it is essential to note that '… oral traditions persist and are resurging as socializing narratives for moral instruction, healing, community building, and communicative practices' (Nicholas & McCarthy, 2015, 40). In this sense, language is as beautifully distinct as Indigenous peoples themselves, given that a fundamental characteristic of language is its precise connection to knowledges that are local. When we think of individual European countries and their various languages, we often associate cultural uniqueness to those languages and their locations – or *place*. Likewise, Native tribes in the United States have unique languages connecting their knowledge with location and *place*.

PROOF

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/20813035/WORKINGFOLDER/BHABHA-OPM/9781108496889C07.3D 159 [152–174]
27.1.2020 7:38AM

Sovereignty

To open a way for understanding Indigenous conceptions of sovereignty, we look to June McCue (2007), who offers a powerful and deeply spiritual articulation of this term. It is essential to mention that while McCue is Ned'u'ten from Lake Babine in northern British Columbia, what she shares with us – as our northern relation – is a place-focused characterisation of sovereignty; one that may contradict classic Eurocentric framings:

> I can connect sovereignty and self-determination within the distinct context of my people by making an analogy to the trees on my Clan or house territory. The roots, trunk, and bark of the trees represent sovereignty to me. The special sap, food, medicines, and seedlings that come from our trees are symbiotic with the life force or energy of my people and the land, united in a consciousness and connected through the web of life. To me, this is like self-determination or the exercise of sovereignty. The specific species of the trees represents the sovereignty and self-determination inherently and uniquely intertwined within the culture of my people. We have traditional methods to keep our trees strong, healthy, productive, and secure. Like trees, we have continued to stand despite clear-cut logging and other unsustainable natural resource practices by state and industry, insect infestations, and diseases brought about through contact and climate change. We have also survived the fact that states have tried to attempt to change the way we use, regulate, and connect to our territories. Despite colonisation, our sovereignty, self-determination, and cultures live (p. 24).

Education Self-Determination and US Higher Education

Sovereignty and self-determination have become foundational elements to the process of Indigenous independence and *place* within the United States. Utilising past treaties, legal agreements and existing laws, tribes have collectively reasserted sovereignty and self-determination in many areas of tribal governance, including education.

Education Self-Determination

Indigenous communities across present day North America practised successful methods of education, language development, communication and nation-to-nation relationships regionally and across continents prior to Western colonisation – a notion that often gets lost or distorted in so-called American History. Similar to many Indigenous communities around the world where colonial education systems were imposed, the

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/20813035/WORKINGFOLDER/BHABHA-OPM/9781108496889C07.3D 160 [152–174]
27.1.2020 7:38AM

education system of the United States has earned an oppressive, violent and untrustworthy reputation. Guided by racism, broken treaties and policies of colonial assimilation, education policy for Indigenous populations over time have resulted in differential effects for American Indian tribes including the loss of many tribal cultures and languages, structural barriers to individual Indigenous identity, and legal challenges to tribes' abilities to self-govern, just to name a few. Of course, these outcomes were expectations of a US colonial government that invoked manifest destiny and had the goal of blocking Indigenous challenges to Western constructions of civilisation. Similarly, fundamental notions of Christianity have been at play throughout the formation of US education policy whose manipulative belief systems were often used as justification for many of the worst governmental human rights abuses perpetrated on Indigenous communities including forced child-family separations and forced assimilative education.

Colonial education policies towards Indigenous populations in the United States largely continued in various assimilative forms through to the *Indian Education Act of 1972* and the *Indian Self-Determination and Education Act of 1975*. These Acts, precipitated by a 1969 Senate Subcommittee on Indian Education report titled, *Indian Education: A National Tragedy – A National Challenge*, imperfectly set in motion processes by which remaining Indigenous Peoples and Tribes could begin reclaiming their education sovereignty. Aspects of Tribal sovereignty have been strengthening from the early 1800s through to the present day as Indigenous tribes reassert their places in society, especially with regard to education.

Tribal sovereignty has been built on a patchwork of legal challenges that Indigenous peoples, tribes and their allies have brought through the US legal system based on treaty violations, maltreatment, illegal land seizures, and various other legal and human rights claims. Over time, there have been many setbacks and several important legal successes (Grande, 2004). These successes have had the effect of creating opportunities for remaining tribes and their governments to begin recovering from colonial rule. However, one of the primary desired outcomes of early colonial government policy was to make invisible Indigenous peoples and their history. It was this effort at making Indigenous peoples invisible within the overall US population that persists as one of today's primary challenges for Indigenous higher education. Likewise, when tribal governments adopted early federal policies of so-called blood quantum requirements for proof of tribal membership (proving how much 'Indian blood' one has), these

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/20813035/WORKINGFOLDER/BHABHA-OPM/9781108496889C07.3D 161 [152–174]
27.1.2020 7:38AM

processes were often fraught with limited documentation of familial histories and other hurdles required to prove such connections.[2]

Many Indigenous peoples in the United States belie assuming visual constructs of race in the United States whereby citizens have been racially socialised to categorise people by phenotype (skin colour) and/or physical characteristics. As such, racist questions such as 'how much Indian are you?' persist in US education culture as a means for racialising one another and displacing marginalised racial populations. These experiences add to the overall racist experiences and psychosocial invisibility of present-day Indigenous college students who frequently come from mixed-race and mixed-tribal families but who may be culturally connected to their tribe(s). In other words, when one is assumed by others to be White/European-American because of their skin colour or physical characteristics, a Native student who is exploring their racial identity may consciously choose to pass as White in predominately White environments that may be hostile to an Indigenous identity. Otherwise, should the student be in a supportive environment, they may find paths for safely exploring their Indigenous identity. Such psychosocial experiences during pivotal developmental periods may result in limiting or ignoring aspects of one's racial identity development. Relatedly, US blood quantum policy for federal recognition remains a barrier for many Indigenous communities and such blood quantum policies are applied to US Indigenous peoples in ways not applied to any other group or population in the United States today.

As a result of this collective history, Indigenous students are invisible on most non-Native college/university campuses. This invisibility is both structural and visual. As mentioned earlier, one of the more insidious results of racism in the United States is a hyper focus on skin colour as an indication of one's socially constructed race. In addition to possible visual ambiguity around racial identity, Indigenous identity also challenges racial categorisation since it is also directly tied to tribal citizenship (defined below).

One of the key aspects of tribal sovereignty is that tribes have regained limited nation-to-nation status as domestic dependent nations within the US federal government. This means that each federally recognised tribe's government has opportunities for a government-to-government relationship with the US federal government. As a result, tribes now retain the authority to determine who are (and are not) their citizens. Currently,

[2] For more information about blood quantum please visit: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blood_quantum_law.

PROOF

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/20813035/WORKINGFOLDER/BHABHA-OPM/9781108496889C07.3D 162 [152–174]
27.1.2020 7:38AM

there are over 500 federally recognised Indigenous tribes with which Native college students may affiliate. Typically, Indigenous peoples identify with a single tribe, but some may have mixed Indigenous heritage and therefore affiliate with more than one tribe. Federal recognition of Indigenous populations and tribes has been and remains a difficult and politically perilous process for Indigenous populations. Not having federal or state recognised tribal status severely limits a tribe's ability to be a sovereign entity within the United States thereby limiting access to important education resources. Federal and state limitations on tribal recognition contribute to issues of Indigenous invisibility as many higher education programs and scholarships follow federal requirements of proving citizenship, or affiliation, with a federally recognised tribe. A few tribes may have state recognition and may not be federally recognised, resulting in confusing barriers for many Indigenous students seeking funding and access to higher education today. In other words, if a tribe is not recognised by the federal government, its members may have access to even fewer Native higher education opportunities than those of federally recognised tribes.

Higher Education

The aforementioned historical issues continue to have real-world consequences for Indigenous people and their success in US higher education. As with all populations, Indigenous peoples have always been engaged in education, both pre- and post-colonial, through oral and written traditions. Indeed, today many tribes have reconstituted their education initiatives through modern education departments within tribal government structures. Although most focus on pre-college education, several tribes, such as the Navajo, Choctaw, and Ho-Chunk Nations have developed effective higher education departments and programs.

One of the major elements of contemporary Indigenous higher education initiatives was the creation of Tribal College and Universities (TCUs). Beginning with the *Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities Assistance Act of 1978* and subsequent related acts, today there are more than thirty Tribal College and Universities ~~that enrol~~ about 8 per cent of Indigenous college-going students (Sanders & Makomenaw, 2018).[3] The remaining majority of Indigenous college students are enrolled at Non-Native Colleges and Universities. NNCUs can include other minority-serving

[3] To learn more about Tribal Colleges & Universities please visit the American Indian Higher Education Consortium's website: aihec.org.

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/20813035/WORKINGFOLDER/BHABHA-OPM/9781108496889C07.3D 163 [152–174]
27.1.2020 7:38AM

institutions (e.g. Hispanic Serving Institutions, Historically Black Colleges & Universities) and predominantly/historically White institutions – where the majority of Indigenous students are enrolled. A relatively new higher education initiative among Non-Native Colleges/Universities is the Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institution (NASNTI) designation where 10 per cent or more of their student enrolment identifies as Indigenous, as defined by the United States Department of Education – making these institutions eligible for various grants and support. NASNTI designated universities are currently working in collaboration with one another to connect their campuses with research to enhance the overall success of their Indigenous students using evidence-based approaches. Currently, there are more than twenty colleges and universities designated as NASNTIs in the United States (WICHE, 2018).

Across the United States, Indigenous students comprise about 1 per cent of the total college-going population with the Indigenous population nearing 2 per cent of the overall US population (Waterman, Lowe, & Shotton, 2018). Although this statistic contributes to structural visibility barriers, meaning Indigenous peoples may be difficult to notice within the larger US populations, there are deeper issues at play. In order to understand the current status of Indigenous college students one should contextualise present-day higher education data availability. In quantitative research, discussed more fully later in this chapter, American Indian data are frequently missing in research studies exploring college student racial experiences due to what is known as the American Indian research asterisk (Garland, 2007).

Strides for greater inclusion of Indigenous student quantitative data across higher education settings are largely the result of the efforts ~~of~~ Indigenous identifying higher education researchers. To-date most data inclusion has come in the form of *place*-based, or tribe-specific, qualitative research. Yet, due to the overwhelming lack of quantitative research data on Indigenous college students in comparison with other student populations, evidence-based research from large quantitative data sets remains sparse thereby allowing myths and stereotypes about the Indigenous student experiences to pervade higher education settings. These stereotypes include the notion that Indigenous peoples do not generally seek a college education or that we are unsuited for so-called modern higher education (Waterman, Lowe, & Shotton, 2018). Even more invisible within higher education data are Indigenous faculty and staff. A deeper discussion of the ethical issues surrounding Indigenous data invisibility, and possible remedies, is presented later in this chapter; however, this single issue of

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/20813035/WORKINGFOLDER/BHABHA-OPM/9781108496889C07.3D 164 [152–174]
27.1.2020 7:38AM

quantitative data invisibility remains a substantial barrier to the deeper understanding of Indigenous college students, their experiences, and their overall *place* in higher education.

In spite of these issues, an Indigenous sense of *place* is proving to be a powerful force in US higher education. Indigenous access to and success in higher education is slowly improving due to Indigenous activism ~~and~~ perspectives are slowly shifting to a success lens rather than a deficit lens on Indigenous college students (Shotton, Lowe, & Waterman, 2013; Waterman, Lowe, & Shotton, 2018). Historically, issues of low pre-college graduation rates~~,~~ and low college-going and graduation rates of Indigenous students were framed in research as problems of Indigenous students and their communities rather than issues of institutional access, climate and invisibility.

In spite of many existing and historical barriers, the last twenty years has seen concerted efforts to guide more Indigenous students towards post-secondary opportunities, including those at the graduate and professional levels, thereby shifting the landscape towards more positive and visible outcomes in the fields of education, arts, science, technology, engineering and medicine. One example is the growing American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) which, in addition to supporting a growing community of Native scientists and engineers, works closely with higher education and the corporate sector providing college scholarships and direct support to Indigenous students seeking careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) fields. Likewise, Indigenous communities have developed non-Indigenous education allies throughout federal, state, campus and community groups such as the College Board (home to the PSAT & SAT college preparation assessments) and Achieving the Dream (an organisation focused on supporting two-year institutions). These types of partnerships ensure that Native voices are present as initiatives are developed and research is conducted.

Likewise, as more Indigenous students have entered graduate-level education in recent decades, more Indigenous faculty and researchers are being represented in the fields of Higher Education and Student Affairs, often as visible leaders on their campuses identifying and addressing barriers to inclusive campus environments. The presence of Indigenous scholars in fields where few or none may have existed has had transformative effects across academic disciplines such as education and medicine – many of today's Indigenous graduate students, including authors of this chapter, are among the first Indigenous students to graduate from academic disciplines at their colleges and universities.

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/20813035/WORKINGFOLDER/BHABHA-OPM/9781108496889C07.3D 165 [152–174]
27.1.2020 7:38AM

The expanding inclusion of Indigenous perspectives and practices is shifting outdated Western notions of what is considered knowledge, research and success towards more inclusive pedagogical outcomes for everyone especially in higher education as illuminated by recent publications written by Indigenous scholars Shotton, Lowe and Waterman (2013).

Unfortunately, one of the challenges of having so few Indigenous people within large bureaucratic structures like higher education is the burdening of Indigenous students, faculty and staff with continually educating the campus community *about* Indigenous students, communities and tribes. This is a direct contributor to a phenomenon known as racial battle fatigue (Smith, Yosso, & Solorzano, 2006) and may negatively affect Indigenous faculty, student and staff campus experiences and threaten, progress in finding *place*. Beyond simply increasing the number of Indigenous students, faculty and staff, which has its challenges given population statistics, campuses have few immediate solutions for addressing this type of fatigue. Equally challenging is determining what solutions may be most effective for supporting Native college students, faculty and staff who may be experiencing racial battle fatigue given an overall lack of research available to inform higher education practice.

This issue also highlights an inherent challenge around diversifying college campuses in that although Indigenous people share a common settler-colonial history, there is immense within-group diversity among Indigenous peoples. A citizen from one tribe is likely not an expert on another as many tribes are as distinct as European nations. Each tribe may have its own language, history, governmental structure and varying degrees of higher education support. Likewise, tribes may share regional similarities and experiences, but regional differences across landscapes and bordering countries have made some tribes culturally distinct over the millennia. Alternatively, an interesting outcome of Indigenous diversity during colonisation in the United States is that tribes have turned their shared negative and oppressive settler-colonial experiences into a unifying inter-tribal catalyst for positive collective action and education advocacy. Among the best examples of this collective effort is the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) which includes all Native tribes by advocating on their behalf with US federal agencies to improve, expand and enhance funding, supportive legislation and federal policies, and Indigenous-centric approaches to educational outcomes.

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/20813035/WORKINGFOLDER/BHABHA-OPM/9781108496889C07.3D 166 [152–174]
27.1.2020 7:38AM

Asserting Indigenous *Place* through Data Inclusion and Research in Higher Education

As noted earlier, an important element of finding *place* in US higher education includes being represented in relevant higher education data and research. Until recently, Native students and faculty were generally not represented among quantitative research data meant to inform the higher education community through evidence-based publications. During the last two decades in particular, Indigenous scholars have been persisting through graduate programs in the fields of higher education administration and college student affairs administration and then into administrative and faculty ranks. This increased presence of Indigenous peoples within the academy has helped to guide new awareness and research around their higher education experiences resulting in progress for asserting an Indigenous *place* through data inclusion.

Indigenous researchers are reshaping higher education in ways unimaginable just a few decades ago, particularly in the professional practice areas of student affairs and higher education administration (Minthorn & Shotton, 2018). The field of student affairs administration in particular has become an increasingly effective vehicle for activism and inclusion for both Native professionals and research on Indigenous college student experiences. From national associations for Indigenous student affairs and higher education professionals to campus co-curricular opportunities for Native students, awareness and inclusion of Indigenous peoples and their data are incrementally improving yet remain far from equitable.

Although Native data inclusion among quantitative research on college students remains generally elusive, *qualitative* research studies and data have been more inclusive of Native students due to their person-centred nature. In particular, research is developing around the experiences of Indigenous students on the topics of improving campus climate, increasing quality campus involvement, sustaining Indigenous identity while achieving academic success and expanding access to academic offerings (Shotton, Lowe, & Waterman, 2013; Waterman, Lowe, & Shotton, 2018). However, similar studies using *quantitative* research findings across racial groups rarely include Indigenous student data due to their low statistical power in comparison with other racial group data – a phenomenon known as the *American Indian Research Asterisk* (Garland, 2007).

Although by its nature, qualitative research may be contextually limited to campus, tribal, and Native-specific communities and may not hold transferrable elements across tribes or campuses; these person-centred

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/20813035/WORKINGFOLDER/BHABHA-OPM/9781108496889C07.3D 167 [152–174]
27.1.2020 7:38AM

studies have indeed provided key insights into many Indigenous college student experiences and topics where scant research previously existed. As data inclusion efforts improve for Indigenous college student research, one area that remains relatively unexamined is research on within-group differences. For example, research data on Native college students with disabilities is virtually non-existent among research on Native students or among research on college students with disabilities (Garland, 2018).

Finding our *place* in higher education is all but impossible if we tend to be invisible within data sets. Data invisibility is not just a Native American issue but likely affects any numerically small or marginalised population who finds their data missing or underrepresented in research. Quantitative researchers often say they simply cannot add statistical power to groups with few data in comparison to larger group data. Indigenous scholars have countered these concerns with calls for special reporting mechanisms within quantitative research protocols beyond simply placing an asterisk next to Indigenous data indicating the sample or population size was too small for inclusion and analysis. Proposed solutions include adding a separate section for quantitative reporting formats discussing what may be gleaned from any group data with low statistical power and for researchers to discuss the extent to which they sought data inclusivity, especially where small racial/ethnic populations and historically marginalised groups are concerned. The simple act of acknowledging whose data are missing or could not be analysed is only a first step to quantitative research transformation and inclusion. Full inclusion occurs when all quantitative group data, regardless of statistical power, finds a place for analysis and discussion within the quantitative researcher's framework.

Another prevailing ethical issue connected to Native data invisibility concerns titles for research reports and articles. This becomes an ethical concern when a given study's title says that it examines data by 'race' thereby implying it covers all races yet does not include Indigenous data within the study itself or acknowledge that it is missing. One only needs to review recent peer-reviewed journal articles that focus on research across racial groups in higher education to find examples of this phenomenon. This widely accepted practice adds to the overall invisibility of Indigenous people, raising serious ethical concerns among researcher training.

Ethical Considerations for *Place* in Research

Several aspects of Indigenous-centric approaches to research with Indigenous people have been adapted and incorporated into an ethical

PROOF

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/20813035/WORKINGFOLDER/BHABHA-OPM/9781108496889C07.3D 168 [152–174]
27.1.2020 7:38AM

research framework for higher education and may provide useful applications for other marginalised and displaced populations. Unfortunately, generally accepted higher education Institutional Research Board (IRB) protocols do not necessarily require cultural competence, or deep understanding of research subjects by the researcher who engages Indigenous research participants. Due to Indigenous communities' past experience with the US education system as a tool for forced assimilation and acculturation that resulted in cultural harm (Takaki, 1993), research with Indigenous peoples should be guided by trustworthy research practices. This necessitates reversing the body of American educational research comprising methodologies and methods that are damage-centred or designed through deficit lenses that portray Indigenous peoples and communities as defeated and broken (Tuck, 2009).

American Indian researchers have proposed an array of standards and recommendations for conducting research with American Indians (Caldwell et al., 2005; Mihesuah, 2005; Mihesuah & Wilson, 2004; Tuiwai-Smith, 2006). In his study of American Indian college student involvement, Garland (2010) outlined several of these standards and recommendations, integrating them into a set of guidelines for research with Indigenous college students, which is discussed in detail below. The guidelines include: a decolonising frame of understanding; participatory involvement of Indigenous peoples; researcher cultural competence; and beneficent outcomes for American Indian students.

A *decolonising frame of understanding* is rooted in identifying and naming Western colonial imperialism related to Indigenous peoples. This is especially important within institutions of higher education where understanding differing notions of intellectual and cultural property rights are often negotiated (Tuiwai-Smith, 2006). In recent decades, many American Indian tribes have regained their sovereignty and are now ensuring that research is conducted *for* tribal members as opposed to simply *on* their people.

As late as the nineteenth century, research practices were inextricably linked to the Royal Society (London) and Paris Academy, which viewed scientific and social understanding as best researched on 'more primitive' cultures (Tuiwai-Smith, 2006). These cultures often included Indigenous peoples who were intellectually constructed as expendable subjects of society because they were considered 'savages' or 'primitive' humans thereby relieving researchers of any moral or ethical responsibility to the subjects themselves, as they furthered their desired research outcomes. Of course, US colonial actions were also influenced by this thinking as

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/20813035/WORKINGFOLDER/BHABHA-OPM/9781108496889C07.3D 169 [152–174]
27.1.2020 7:38AM

evidenced by the United States' troubled past with cultural hierarchies and social strata, including most egregiously the history of African slavery, in which human beings were ranked from most to least civilised. Although today these frameworks are mostly rejected within institutions of higher education, paternalism has frequently emerged as a philosophical approach among well-meaning but misguided researchers. Paternalism in research implies the researcher knows what is best for the participant in the pursuit of a research study and could result in unethical treatment of participants. Harding et al. (2011) explore this and other details of researcher-tribal engagement expanding on the ethical considerations mentioned here.

Participatory approaches to research, widely encouraged today when working with American Indians and their communities, fully emerged in the late twentieth century as one response to a paternalistic philosophical approach. Participatory research means that researchers and participants work together to define the research project and its purpose, and determine appropriate methods of data collection, and outcomes. Caldwell et al. (2005) describe this approach as an 'ongoing process of interaction between the researcher and research participants that allows the examination of Native strengths and emphasizes the use of Native knowledge' in solving issues (p. 8). Participatory research involving American Indians is important because it is viewed as the process of involving participants in ways that are empowering, emancipatory and ultimately beneficial to the quality of life (Macaulay, 1998). Understanding American Indian culture is crucial to full participatory research and building trust between researcher and participant.

Cultural competence in higher education research and practice is a broadly accepted expectation (Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2019). However, with broad cultural differences across Indigenous tribes in the United States, cultural competence can be difficult to ensure, even as it remains a necessary element for all researchers including those identifying as Indigenous. Currently, there is no formal mechanism to ensure a researcher's cultural competence in relation to study participants. Cultural competence is defined as a skill set that enables one to effectively engage persons from culturally and racially diverse populations respectfully and ethically (D'Andrea, Daniels, & Noonan, 2003). Others expand this definition to include gender, social class, sexual orientation, and most importantly understanding how one's own worldview is used as a lens for seeing others (Constantine & Ladany, 2001; Sue & Sue, 1999). As mentioned earlier, IRB processes serve an important research review function, but study approval does not necessarily imply cultural competence on

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/20813035/WORKINGFOLDER/BHABHA-OPM/9781108496889C07.3D 170 [152–174]
27.1.2020 7:38AM

behalf of the researcher when studies include participants from other cultures and ethnicities. American Indian scholars have called for increased cultural competence when conducting research with American Indians and collecting data on American Indians (Caldwell et al., 2005; Mihesuah, 2005; Mihesuah & Wilson, 2004; Tuhiwai-Smith, 2006). Researchers should include American Indians in all research activities where American Indians are involved. When Indigenous involvement is not possible, the researcher should consult with a culturally competent advisory group including appropriate tribes to ensure the research process is in the best interest of the American Indian participants.

A final essential element to inclusive Indigenous research demands that research *benefit the Indigenous participants*. It is suggested that a research project be conducted only if American Indian participants will benefit from the research process as well as its findings (Caldwell et al., 2005). This includes how the research study is framed and designed. For example, higher education literature on college student retention has been shifting from deficit perspectives of Indigenous student success to perspectives on institutional barriers and contributions to Indigenous student success (Padilla et al., 1997). Past student deficit perspectives have aided many colleges and universities in avoiding their responsibilities for addressing institutional barriers to student success. In other words, while certain student (research participant) characteristics may contribute (or not) to collegiate success, institutions are increasingly examining how their institutional policies, campus climate, and student and faculty diversity contribute to student success and barriers. Likewise, campuses are beginning to expand their responsibility for how certain student variables such as first-generation status, experiences of students of colour including Indigenous students, and issues with access to higher education are affecting institutional outcomes (Waterman, Lowe, & Shotton, 2018).

These and other ethical considerations for the higher education research community may be helpful for improving inclusive data collection, research and evidence-based practice. Although not a panacea, the simple awareness of what researchers have come to take for granted when conducting research studies on college campuses may itself be an act of settler-colonial resistance and Indigenous inclusion.

Full representation and participation of marginalised and displaced populations within higher education settings cannot effectively happen unless they can be positively counted, noticed and acknowledged. In other words, finding *place* in higher education research is of paramount importance. Representation within research data may at first appear to be

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/20813035/WORKINGFOLDER/BHABHA-OPM/9781108496889C07.3D 171 [152–174]
27.1.2020 7:38AM

something that could be addressed at later points in the overall work of inclusion for displaced and marginalised people, but we believe it should be primary. Without data visibility and inclusion, it is almost impossible to affect positive change for our communities in our increasingly data-driven world.

Our Hope

Discussing the power of globalisation on the future of Indigenous identity, Renn (2012) writes that, 'American Indian identity can be understood in the context of Indigenous peoples around the world, a perspective that does not negate the very real and often tragic consequences of U.S. [colonisation], but which enhances that perspective by joining the [successes] of Indigenous peoples on several continents.' (p. 25).

Our hope is that this chapter expands discussion around a sense of *place* for Indigenous peoples as we work collectively to enhance access and success for Indigenous students in higher education. Indigenous peoples continue to explore *place* in the face of displacement, violence and invisibility within US culture; but as discussed in this chapter, *place* is also an immutable aspect of being Indigenous, so it is not easily extinguished. Although much work remains, finding and asserting Indigenous places in higher education for Native students, faculty, and staff is taking root and new momentum brings cautious optimism for future positive outcomes.

REFERENCES

Caldwell, J. Y., Davis, J. D., Du Bois, B., Echo-Hawk, H., Erickson, J. S., Goins, R. T., Hill, C., Hillabrant, W., Johnson, S. R., Kendall, E., Keemer, K., Manson, S. M., Marshall, C., A., Running Wolf, P., Santiago, R. L., Schacht, R., & Stone, J. B. (2005). Culturally Competent Research with American Indians and Alaska Natives: Findings and Recommendations of the First Symposium of the Work Group on American Indian Research and Program Evaluation Methodology. *American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research: The Journal of the National Centre*, *12*(1), 1–21.

Constantine, M. G., & Ladany, N. (2001). New Visions for Defining and Assessing Multicultural Counseling Competence. In J. G., Ponterotto, J. M. Casas, L. A. Suzuki, & C. M. Alexander (Eds.), *Handbook of Multicultural Counseling* (2nd ed., pp. 482–498). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

D' Andrea, M., Daniels, J., & Noonan, M. J. (2003). New Developments in the Assessment of Multicultural Competence. In D. B. Pope-Davis, H. L. K. Coleman, W. M. Liu, & R. L. Toporek (Eds.), *Handbook of*

PROOF

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/20813035/WORKINGFOLDER/BHABHA-OPM/9781108496889C07.3D 172 [152–174]
27.1.2020 7:38AM

Multicultural Competencies in Counseling and Psychology (pp. 287–311). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Davidson, C. E. (forthcoming). A Hidden Cartography: Navigating the Non-Matrilineal Terrain of Academe. In R. Minthorn, C. Nelson, & H. Shotton (Eds.), *Indigenous Motherhood in the Academy*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Deloria, Jr., V. (2004). Marginal and Submarginal. In D. A. Mihesuah, & A. C. Wilson (Eds.), *Indigenizing the Academy* (pp. 16–30). Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Deloria, V., & Wildcat, D. R. (2001). *Power and Place: Indian Education in America*. Boulder, CO: Fulcrum Resources.

Garland, J. L. (2018). American Indian Students and Ability Status: Considerations for Improving the College Experience. In S. J. Waterman, S. C. Lowe, & H. J. Shotton (Eds.), *Beyond Access: Indigenizing Program for Native American Student Success*. (pp. 139–150). Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Garland, J. L. (2010). *Removing the college involvement 'research asterisk': Identifying and rethinking predictors of American Indian college student involvement*. Dissertations & Theses: Full Text. (Publication No. AAT 3426253).

Garland, J. L. (2007). Review of the Book Serving Native American Students: New Directions for Student Services. *Journal of College Student Development*, *48*, 612–614.

Grande, S. (2004). *Red Pedagogy: Native American Social and Political Thought*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

Harding, A., Harper, B., Stone, D., O'Neill, C., Berger, P., Harris, S., & Donatuto, J. (2011). Conducting Research with Tribal Communities: Sovereignty, Ethics, and Data-Sharing Issues. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, *120*(1), 6–10. DOI:10.1289/ehp.1103904

Macaulay, A. C. (1994). Ethics of Research in Native Communities. *Canadian Family Physician*, *40*, 1888–1890.

McCue, J. (2007). New Modalities of Sovereignty: An Indigenous Perspective. *Intercultural Human Rights Law Review*, *2*, 19–29.

Mihesuah, D. A. (2005). *So You Want to Write about American Indians: A Guide for Writers, Students, and Scholars*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Mihesuah, D. A., & Wilson, A. C. (2004). *Indigenizing the Academy: Transforming Scholarship and Empowering Communities*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Minthorn, R. S., & Shotton, H. J. (2018). *Reclaiming Indigenous Research in Higher Education*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Nicholas, S. E., & McCarthy, T. L. (2015). The Continuum of Literacy in Native American Classrooms. In J. Reyhner (Ed.), *Teaching Indigenous Students:*

PROOF

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/20813035/WORKINGFOLDER/BHABHA-OPM/9781108496889C07.3D 173 [152–174]
27.1.2020 7:38AM

Honoring, Place, Community, and Culture (pp. 36–50). Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.

Padilla, R. V., Treveno, J., Gonzalez, K., & Trevino, J. (1997). Developing Local Models of Minority Student Success in College. *Journal of College Student Development*, *38*, 125–135.

Pope, R. L., Reynolds, A. L., & Mueller, J. A. (2019). *Multicultural Competence in Student Affairs*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Renn, K. A. (2012). Creating and Re-creating race: The Emergence of Racial Identity as a Critical Element in Psychological, Sociological, and Ecological Perspectives on Human Development. In C. L. Wijeyesinghe & B. W. Jackson, III (Eds.), *New Perspectives on Racial Identity Development: A Theoretical and Practical Anthology* (2nd ed.) (pp. 11–32). New York: New York University Press.

Sanders, D., & Makomenaw, M. A. V. (2018). Getting Started Locally: How Tribal College and Universities Are Opening Dors to the Undergraduate Experience. In S. J. Waterman, S. C. Lowe, & H. J. Shotton (Eds.), *Beyond Access: Indigenizing Program for Native American Student Success*. (pp. 51–64). Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Shotton, H. J., Lowe, S. C., & Waterman, S. J. (Eds.) (2013). *Beyond the Asterisk: Understanding Native Students in Higher Education*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Smith, W. A., Yosso, T. J., & Solorzáno, D. G. (2006). Challenging Racial Battle Fatigue on Historically White Campuses: A Critical Race Examination of Race-Related Stress. In C. A. Stanley (Ed.),*Faculty of Colour: Teaching in Predominantly White Colleges and Universities* (pp. 299–327). Bolton, MA: Anker.

Springer, M., Davidson, C. E., & Waterman, S. J. (2013). Academic and Student Affairs Partnerships: Native American Student Affairs Units. In H. J. Shotton, S. C. Lowe, & S. J. Waterman (Eds.), *Beyond the Asterisk: Understanding Native Students in Higher Education* (pp. 109–124). Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Strayhorn, T. (2019). *College Students' Sense of Belonging: A Key to Education Success for All Students*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Sue, D. W., & Sue, D. (1999). *Counseling the Culturally Different: Theory and Practice* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Wiley.

Takaki, R. (1993). *A Different Mirror-A History of Multicultural America*. Toronto, Canada: Little, Brown, and Company.

The United Nations General Assembly (2007). *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Retrieved from www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

Tuck, E. (2009). Suspending damage: A letter to communities. *Harvard Educational Review*, 79(3), 409–427. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.79.3.n0016675661t3n15

PROOF

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/20813035/WORKINGFOLDER/BHABHA-OPM/9781108496889C07.3D 174 [152–174]
27.1.2020 7:38AM

Tuck, E., & McKenzie, M. (2015). *Place in Research: Theory, Methodology, and Methods*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Tuhiwai-Smith, L. (2006). *Decolonising Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London, England: Zed Books.

Waterman, S. J., Lowe, S. C., & Shotton, H. J. (Eds.) (2018). *Beyond the Access: Indigenizing Programs for Native American Student Success*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

WICHE: *Native American-serving nontribal college summit July 26–27 sparks progress toward budding alliance*. (July, 2018). www.wiche.edu/media-release/native-american-serving-nontribal-july-2018-college-summit

Wilson, A. C. (2004). Reclaiming Our Humanity: Decolonisation and the Recovery of Indigenous Knowledge. In D. A. Mihesuah, & A. C. Wilson (Eds.), *Indigenizing the Academy: Transforming Scholarship and Empowering Communities*. (pp. 69–87) Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

PROOF