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Tribal sovereign status:
Conceptualizing its integration into the social work curriculum

by

Amy Fischer Williams

A Banded Dissertation in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Social Work

St. Catherine University | University of St. Thomas
School of Social Work

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Abstract

This banded dissertation contains three related products: a conceptual article, a research article, and the development of an original social work course. Together the products conceptualize, research, and envision how accredited social work programs can integrate *tribal sovereign status* relevant theories and concepts into curriculum to prepare social workers to collaborate and work with Indigenous peoples and communities. The primary conceptual framework that informs the dissertation is decolonization theory. Decolonization entails a broad theoretical spectrum that includes both philosophical-oriented and action-effort approaches to combat the generational effects that colonization has inflicted on Indigenous peoples (Gray, M., Coates, J., Yellow Bird, M., & Hetherington, T., 2013; Aquash, 2013; Mbembe, 2013; Gibson, 2007). An elder epistemological framework is also utilized whereas Indigenous elders are consulted as informers to the research findings and the dissertation work at-large (Christensen & Poupart, 2013).

The first section of this banded dissertation is a conceptual article that focuses on the intersection of decolonization and the social work curriculum. Theoretical and action-efforts of the decolonization theoretical spectrum are examined. Early social work activities in the United States inflicted the dominant cultural values of an imperial or colonial nature on Indigenous Peoples (Gray, Coates, Yellow Bird, & Hetherington, 2013). These values were adapted into social welfare policies and social work standards of practice, and are often dissimilar to Indigenous cultural values. How ideologies of decolonization can be integrated into the social work curriculum, its learning spaces, and its assessment are conceptualized within the context of the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) - Education and Policy Accreditation Standards (EPAS) Competency 2 – Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice.

The second section of this banded dissertation describes a qualitative study. In the exploratory study, 12 social workers with practice experience working with tribal communities were interviewed in order to identify indigenous-relevant content for social work curricula. Content analysis was used to analyze the data. Social work practice-oriented (i.e. historical trauma, cultural appropriation, and identity) and policy-oriented themes (i.e. tribal governance structure, historical policy and action, self-governance, and environmental justice) emerged from the investigation. Aligning with principles of elder epistemology, tribal elders were consulted and provided feedback about the study's findings and the elders provided recommendations for the direction of further research.

The third section of this banded dissertation is the design of a master of social work level course entitled: *Indigenous Communities and Peoples: Effective Social Work Practice*. The 5 curriculum content themes (Table 1) that emerged from the findings of the qualitative study outlined in section two of this banded dissertation are foundational and inform the course learning objectives. Social workers with practice experience working with tribal communities identified and inform indigenous-relevant, tribal sovereign status defining content, for social work curricula. The course is organized into 5 modules and includes both practice and policy-oriented topics. Consistent to the conceptual framework of the research study and the resulting course, decolonization ideologies and action-efforts and elder epistemology are primary course precepts.

Keywords: decolonization, indigenous peoples, sovereignty, social work curriculum, elder epistemology

Dedication

This banded dissertation is dedicated to my children:

Chauncey Kawelaketehatkwa *he dances on the wind* Williams

Levi Loyehsutsluh *he smiles quick* Williams

Belle Mae Yukhilihwiyosta *she who keeps our ways* Williams

You each inspire and make the world a better place.

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Tribal sovereign status:

Conceptualizing its integration into the social work curriculum

This banded dissertation explores how accredited social work programs can incorporate curriculum content to prepare social workers to knowledgeably and sensitively work and collaborate with Indigenous People and communities. There are over 570 federally recognized tribes in the United States (National Congress of American Indians, 2018). Tribes, domestic dependent nations, are sovereign entities with the right and power to self-govern. Tribal nations and citizens have distinct and diverse cultures, life ways, and languages. Concurrently, Indigenous Peoples have in common the historical perpetrations and lived experiences that settler occupation and doctrines such as Manifest Density inflicted. The complexities of these historical incidences and subsequent present-day effects require that social workers attain understanding and knowledge-sets to work with Indigenous Peoples and sovereign tribal nations.

Settler occupation and removal of Indigenous Peoples from their homelands resulted in loss of language, life-ways, land, and culture. These consequences of colonization necessitate that social workers, social work educators, and the profession work with Indigenous Peoples in ways that are not only relevant but that foremost recognize tribal sovereignty (Gray, Coates, Yellow Bird, & Hetherington, 2013). Cognizant of the aforementioned complexities this banded dissertation is deliberated within the 5 contexts outline below:

- The profession's articulated values: service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competency (NASW, 2017);
- A strengths-based perspective and human behavior in the social environment as hallmarks of the social work profession;
- Social work educational standards are set forth by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE, 2015);

- The diversity of Indigenous Peoples and the complexities of tribal nations as sovereign entities within what is now-established as the United States;
- The scant amount of research regarding the social work curriculum specific to Indigenous Peoples and communities.

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) in its 2015 Education Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) revisions included in its Competency 2 - Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice “tribal sovereign status” (p. 7) as a dimension to describe human diversity (CSWE, 2015). The inclusion of tribal sovereign status in the CSWE Standards provides an opportunity for social work scholars, students, and practitioners to conceptualize, research, and reflect on to what extent the profession knowledgeably, sensitively, and skillfully the profession collaborates and works with Indigenous Peoples.

The exploratory facets of this dissertation – how accredited social work programs can incorporate curriculum content to prepare social workers to knowledgeably and sensitively work and collaborate with Indigenous People and communities – is organized into 3 sections. The first section is a conceptual article that reviews the use of decolonization theory and its intersection with social work curriculum. The second section is a research article that stems from a qualitative study where Indigenous social workers inform and speak to what needs to be included in the social work curriculum to prepare professionals to work with Indigenous peoples and communities. The third section is the development of a social work course. The course-design syllabus outlines how the tribal sovereignty related concepts, theories, occurrences, policies, and lived experiences that stem from the inflictions of colonization can be integrated into the social work curriculum. The course content emerged from the findings of the qualitative study in section 2 of this banded dissertation. Preparing social workers for practice and collaboration with Indigenous People and tribal communities is central to the course.

Conceptual Frameworks

Two conceptual frameworks inform this banded dissertation: decolonization theory and elder epistemology. Decolonization is the primary theoretical framework and its tenets are used to analyze and anchor the intersection of the concepts of tribal sovereign status and the social work curriculum. The decolonization conceptual frame is expansive and includes not only theoretic designations and distinctions, but also advocacy and action-efforts (Gray, M., Coates, J., Yellow Bird, M., & Hetherington, T., 2013; Aquash, 2013; Mbembe, 2013; Gibson, 2007). Four ideologies across the decolonization theoretical continuum inform this work: 1) decolonization specific to social work (Gray et al, 2013); 2) indigenous rights and action-efforts related to self-governance (Steinman, 2013); 3) decolonization defined as the rightful return of taken land (Aquash, 2013); and 4) relationships between the colonized and the colonizer to include acts of violence and war (Fanon, 1963).

Gray, Coates, Yellow Bird, & Hetherington (2013) describe decolonization of social work as “acknowledging and harnessing the strengths of Indigenous communities” (p. 33) rather than to further compound the damaging centuries-long effects of colonization on Indigenous Peoples. This perspective aligns with social work’s strength-based and human behavior in the social environment perspectives. The Gray et al (2013) description of decolonization compels the social work profession to both realize and acknowledge the strengths of Indigenous communities, and to understand the injurious effects that colonization inflicts.

The United Nations General Assembly adopted *The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* in September 2007 (United Nations, 2007). The declaration is a global policy statement that acknowledges the rights of Indigenous Peoples to self-govern. Self-governance entails the rights of Indigenous peoples to govern ones’ own affairs, separate

from the governance structures of: occupiers, land settlers, or colonizing forces. It is an ideology that social work practitioners, educators, and scholars can utilize when interfacing with Indigenous Peoples and tribal nations, especially to determine if or to what extent non-indigenous professional involvement is appropriate.

Decolonization is also—more purely—defined as the rightful return of land taken from Indigenous Peoples by colonizing forces. Aquash (2013) describes the United States Manifest Destiny doctrine that led to military and religious invasions of indigenous territories resulting in the loss of land and removal of Indigenous peoples from homelands:

[I]nitial contact with Indigenous people was an incursion, with one of the most notable justifications for obtaining land at the heart of the concept of Manifest Destiny. Manifest Destiny doctrine provided a means for the colonizer to take land from Indigenous people based on the colonizer's religious belief that the land was their God-given right, a rationale stemming from the perception that First Nation peoples' spiritual practices were not Christian, and were, thus, unworthy of being recognized by the colonizing forces that impacted the social and cultural structures of First Nation people. (p. 9)

Decolonization as the return of land to Indigenous peoples aligns with the social work's commitments to social justice as well as policy practice and advocacy work on the macro levels.

The final aspect within decolonization theoretical spectrum of encompasses analysis and action, including war and violence between the colonizer and the colonized. Frantz Fanon was a preeminent theorist of the concepts of decolonization and colonial systems of governments. Fanon describes the colonizer-colonized relationship as sustained and continued, and outlined three dimensions of violence: “colonial violence, emancipatory violence of the colonized, and

violence in international relations” (Mbembe, 2012, p. 22). Fanon explained the colonizer–colonized relationship as based on the need for state expansion and appropriation of resources. Fanon describes anticolonial violence as fruitful and necessary to the self-determination of indigenous peoples, yet not as an end in itself (Gibson, 2007).

Violence is included as a point on the decolonization theoretical spectrum in this banded dissertation not as a social work advocacy-point. Rather, it is a cognizance-cue of the historical actions of war and violence waged against Indigenous Peoples. In the US, this includes policies and declarations of war and treaties resulting in loss of land and resources, and also efforts of emancipatory violence such as the American Indian Movement (AIM). The concepts and knowledge of colonization and decolonization, including historical facts such as war and violence, and the theories that reflect these, are important as social workers embark to work with those who navigate the effects of colonization.

A second conceptual framework used in this banded dissertation is elder epistemology. Christensen and Poupart (2013) describe elder epistemology as ways of knowing, approaches to knowledge, sharing knowledge, and a “keystone in Native American cultures” (p. 42). Elder epistemology, as described by Christensen and Poupart (2013), advocates including indigenous elders and their wisdom in classrooms when teaching First Nation and Indigenous Peoples content. The inclusion of elder epistemology is integrated the research product of this banded dissertation, whereas Indigenous elders serve as advisors and provide input about the direction of future research. Ways of knowing though Indigenous elders is also included in the syllabus product. Indigenous elders have a role in preparing social work professionals to work with Indigenous Peoples and communities. This pedagogy aligns not only with the social work

professional values of inclusion, diversity, and competence, but also with the Indigenous values of respect for elders and acknowledgment of their esteemed status.

Summary of Banded Dissertation Products

This banded dissertation is comprised of three products: a conceptual article, a research article, and the development of a master's-level social work course syllabus. The central focus of the banded dissertation is social work curriculum content, specifically what content needs to be in social work curricula to prepare social workers to best work with Indigenous people and communities. The primary conceptual framework is decolonization theory; attention is paid to the decolonization theoretical spectrum that includes both ideological and advocacy paradigms. Learning and preparing social workers for diversity and difference in practice is central to the social work discipline and because cultural knowledge and sensitivity essential for social work practice, elder epistemology, knowing by means of elders – specifically tribal elders, is additional dissertation conceptual framework.

The concept of *tribal sovereign status* and the integration of knowledge, concepts, and theories around its integration into the social work curriculum are recent adaptations to social work accreditation standards and competency language (CSWE, 2015). The inclusion of tribal sovereign status included as a dimension of diversity outlined in the 2015 Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice – CSWE – EPAS Competency 2 marked an opportunity for social work educators to conceptualize how emerging practitioners are prepared to work with Indigenous people and communities. This three-part banded dissertation: 1) conceptualizes the intersection of the decolonization theoretical spectrum and the social work curriculum; 2) reports the findings of a qualitative research study where Indigenous social workers, and non-Indigenous who are social worker employees of tribal nations, are asked their perceptions of what needs to

be in the social work curriculum to prepare social workers to work with Indigenous people and communities; and 3) the findings, 5 social work practice and policy-oriented curriculum content themes, that emerged from the study are utilized to develop a master level social work course titled: *Indigenous Communities and Peoples: Effective Social Work Practice*.

Together the products of this banded dissertation conceptualize, examine, and envision how social work educators and practitioners can improve social work standards of practice when working with Indigenous peoples and communities. Fundamental to the three products of this banded dissertation, the acknowledgment that tribes are sovereign nations with unique legal statuses, and governments that exercise rights to self-govern is central to effective social work practice on micro, mezzo, or macro levels.

Discussion

Implications for Social Work Education

A primary implication for social work education is that the components of this banded dissertation can promote critical discussion and help to move forward the development and implementation of social work curriculum content to prepare social work practitioners to more effectively work and collaborate with Indigenous people and communities.

Indigenous individuals have a unique legal status as citizens of respective tribal nations. Tribal governments are sovereign entities with legal statuses outlined in the US Constitution, nation-to-nation treaties, and US federal law (Ray, 2011; Echohawk, 2013). However, the cultures, life ways, and languages of respective tribes and their language-bases are distinctive. Although there exists a shared historical-experienced inflection of colonization, and its resulting generational effects, among Indigenous Peoples, understanding and learning about Indigenous People is layered with complexities. There are over 370 federally recognized tribes in the U.S.

(National Congress of American Indians, 2016). Social work programs, educators, and researchers will need to determine how and what curricula content is most pertinent to prepare emerging practitioners in their respective accredited programs.

Another implication for social work education, in addition to the responsibility of the social work profession social workers to recognize and work to understand the complexities and diversity among tribes and citizens of tribal nations, is to for the profession to consider and grapple with its professional humility and if there is a lack thereof in regard to sovereign status. For example, when tribes exercise their tribal legal jurisdiction over child welfare cases, and tribal judges and employees serve on behalf of respective nations, the social work profession and non-tribally employed social workers, need to discern: Is there, and what is the appropriate role for the social work profession in this given situation? That question may underpin many social work practice sectors; however, it is especially seminal when individuals are enrolled tribal members or tribal governments have legal jurisdiction.

A final implication for social work education is this question accredited social programs will need to discern: Now that *tribal sovereign status* is a descriptor of the profession's diversity competency as set forth in the EPAS, where does curricula content relevant to Indigenous People embed in the social work curriculum? Policy courses, practice courses, or is the rightful place throughout the curricula. And as accredited programs grapple with that question, CSWE is positioned with decisions regarding how and if the accrediting body further defines tribal sovereign status in forthcoming curriculum standards.

Implications for Future Research

A primary implication for future research is the direction of inquiry social work scholars will embark upon related tribal sovereignty. Prior to the its 2015 Educational Policy and

Accreditation Standards (EPAS), the Council on Social Work Education described its diversity learning objectives and competencies in all-encompassing language; there was no specific, descriptive language specific to Indigenous peoples. The inclusion of the phrase *tribal sovereign status* in the Council's EPAS Competency 2 - Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice diversity standard changed the trajectory for Indigenous-related content in social work curricula.

Although this banded dissertation focuses on how social work educators can conceptualize principles from the decolonization theoretical spectrum to integrate concepts of tribal sovereignty to improve how social workers work with Indigenous people and communities, this banded dissertation is but one, exploratory qualitative study. There is a great deal of other Indigenous-relevant content (i.e. Indigenous historical trauma, effects and measurement of efforts to decolonize social work, Indigenous environmental justice, sovereignty protections, tribal jurisdiction, Indigenous identity, cultural appropriation, Indian Child Welfare) that is needs to be further researched, evidenced and available in the literature. That presents a serious challenge for scholars and research to respond to the dearth in the literature.

A final implication for social work research is in the area of research methodologies and standards. How do scholars assuredly structure research studies that are culturally sensitive and free from cultural appropriation when Indigenous people and tribal citizens are identified as research subjects? And importantly, who gets to decide what is (or is not) culturally appropriate, especially if researchers are removed from the respective tribal self-governance structures and the cultural nuances and complexities. These are questions are necessary as continued research with Indigenous peoples and tribes are planned.

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Product One

Concepts Regarding Decolonization of the Social Work Curriculum

Amy Fischer Williams

Saint Catherine University | University of Saint Thomas

Author Note:

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Amy Fischer Williams, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, Department of Social Work, Swart Hall, 800 Algoma Boulevard, Oshkosh, Wisconsin 54901.

Contact: williama@uwosh.edu

Abstract

This conceptual article focuses on the intersection of decolonization and the social work curriculum and analyzes theoretical decolonization perspectives within the discipline of social work. The historical roots of the practice of social work can be traced to culturally bound missionary activities of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These activities inflicted the dominant cultural values of an imperial or colonial nature on Indigenous Peoples. The standards set forth by the Council on Social Work Education to prepare social work students to work with Indigenous Peoples, communities, and tribal nations acknowledge Indigenous Peoples as individuals and citizens of their respective tribal sovereign nations. This article explores theories of decolonization and its relationship to tribal sovereignty and applies these concepts to the social work curriculum, its learning spaces, and its assessment.

Keywords: decolonization, Indigenous Peoples, sovereignty, social work curriculum, Council on Social Work Education

Concepts Regarding Decolonization of the Social Work Curriculum

There are 562 federally recognized tribes in the US, with distinct histories, languages, life-ways, and cultural practices (National Congress of American Indians, 2016). Native American tribes and tribal members have unique legal and citizen statuses that are outlined in treaties and U.S. federal law. The social work profession endeavors to work with Indigenous Peoples in ways that are consistent with the principles of human rights and social justice that are fundamental to the discipline and practice. In its description of social work, the International Federation of Social Workers states that “[the] social work profession promotes social change, problem-solving in human relationships, and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being” (2014, p. 409). The profession also strives to meet the needs of Indigenous Peoples in a fashion that is consistent with its six professional ethical values: service, social justice, the dignity and worth of the person, the importance of human relationships, integrity, and competency (National Association of Social Workers, 2017).

The injustices of assimilation, isolation and displacement, and Manifest Destiny (the belief that the expansion of the US across the continent, including the removal of Indigenous Peoples from their lands, was justifiable) perpetuated by the colonizers require that social workers, social work educators, and the profession work with Indigenous Peoples in ways that are not only relevant to but foremost recognize tribal sovereignty (Grey, Coates, Yellow Bird & Hetherington, 2013). Acknowledgement of the distinct complexities of American Indian nations and peoples—historical trauma, loss of language and land, and cultural and legal distinctions—requires social workers to be capable and sensibly prepared to work with Indigenous Peoples and sovereign tribal nations.

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredits social work programs in the US. The CSWE's Education Policy and Standards (EPAS) outline the educational standards underlying the implementation and assessment of the social work curriculum in all U.S. social work programs (CSWE, 2015). For the first time since the CSWE began to accredit social work programs in 1974, the Council's 2015 EPAS included language specific to Indigenous Peoples and nations. Competency 2, "Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice," includes "tribal sovereign status" as one of the dimensions of diversity (CSWE, 2015, p. 7). Prior to the CSWE's 2015 EPAS, cultural competence was addressed, but more broadly and not specific to Indigenous Peoples. The 2015 EPAS, set by the profession's accrediting body, mandates that social work programs and social work educators endeavor to prepare capable and skillful social work practitioners who honor tribal sovereign status and who are competent in their practice with Indigenous Peoples.

The purpose of this conceptual article is to integrate the literature and concepts regarding indigenous decolonization and tribal sovereignty as these pertain to the social work curriculum. The CSWE mandates that social work students must display competency in practice, knowledge, and skills with respect to tribal sovereign status when working with Indigenous Peoples and governments (CSWE, 2015). Tribal sovereign status includes the legal rights of tribes to self-govern, to define and determine citizenry and tribal membership, and to engage in government-to-government relationships with the federal government and other governments, including states, counties, and municipalities. The social work practice curriculum includes both the knowledge and skills needed for working with Indigenous Peoples, which are primarily micro focused, and an understanding of tribal sovereign status, which involves policies and macro practices. This article analyzes and integrates theoretical aspects of decolonization and concepts

surrounding tribal sovereign status to advance the preparation of social workers in their work with Indigenous Peoples and sovereign tribal nations.

Conceptual Framework

This article examines two primary theoretical and conceptual frameworks: decolonization and elder epistemology. The article uses decolonization as the primary theoretical framework to analyze the intersection of the concepts of tribal sovereign status and the social work curriculum. Decolonization is an analytical, activist paradigm. Grey et al. (2013) describe decolonizing social work as follows: “The decolonization of social work first and foremost means acknowledging and harnessing the strengths of Indigenous communities rather than engaging in blaming games that compounding deleterious effects of several hundred years of colonization” (p. 33). The United Nations General Assembly adopted *The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* in September 2007 (United Nations, 2007). The declaration is a global policy statement that acknowledges the rights of Indigenous Peoples to self-govern. Self-governance is a tenet of decolonization, which is a framework that social work practitioners, educators, and scholars can utilize when working with Indigenous Peoples and tribal nations.

Decolonization is also—and more purely—defined as the rightful return of land taken from Indigenous Peoples by colonizing forces. Aquash (2013) describes colonization by means of Manifest Destiny in the context of military and religious invasion:

[I]nitial contact with Indigenous people was an incursion, with one of the most notable justifications for obtaining land at the heart of the concept of Manifest Destiny. Manifest Destiny doctrine provided a means for the colonizer to take land from Indigenous people based on the colonizer's religious belief that the land was their God-given right, a rationale stemming from the perception that First

Nation peoples' spiritual practices were not Christian, and were, thus, unworthy of being recognized by the colonizing forces that impacted the social and cultural structures of First Nation people. (p. 9)

Land acquisition by means of war, policy, and religious entitlement, legitimized by the belief that the colonizer had a God-given religious authority over Indigenous Peoples and their spiritual beliefs, is fundamental to Manifest Destiny policies (Frideres & Gadacz, 2001).

The theoretical spectrum of decolonization encompasses analysis as well as action, including war and violence between the colonizer and the colonized. Frantz Fanon was a preeminent theorist of the concepts of decolonization and colonial systems of governments. Fanon's experiences under colonial power informed his discourses on the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized (Mbembe, 2012). Fanon described this relationship as sustained or continued, largely through the language of violence, and outlined three dimensions of violence: "colonial violence, emancipatory violence of the colonized, and violence in international relations" (Mbembe, 2012, p. 22). Fanon explained the colonizer-colonized relationship as based on the need for state expansion and appropriation of resources. Fanon wrote of anticolonial violence as fruitful and necessary to the self-determination of indigenous peoples, yet not as an end in itself (Gibson, 2007). I include violence in the spectrum of decolonization theory to exemplify and acknowledge the actions of war and violence waged against Indigenous Peoples. In the US, this includes not only policies and declarations of war and treaties resulting in loss of land and resources, but also efforts of emancipatory violence such as the American Indian Movement (AIM). The concepts and knowledge of colonization and decolonization, including historical facts such as war and violence, and the theories that reflect these are

important as social workers embark to work with those who navigate the current and generational effects of colonization.

A second conceptual framework used for this article is elder epistemology. Christensen and Poupart (2013) describe elder epistemology as ways of knowing, approaches to knowledge, sharing knowledge, and a “keystone in Native American cultures” (p. 42). Elder epistemology, as outlined by Christensen and Poupart (2013), advocates including indigenous elders and their wisdom in classrooms when teaching First Nation and Indigenous Peoples content. The inclusion of elder epistemology in curricula to prepare social work professionals to work with Indigenous Peoples and communities aligns not only with the social work professional values of inclusion, diversity, and competence, but also with the Indigenous values of respect for elders and acknowledgment of their esteemed roles.

Literature Review

Although the CSWE did not incorporate “tribal sovereign status” into its EPAS until 2015, there is a body of research on social work best practice for preparing social workers to work with Indigenous Peoples. There is consensus among researchers that this body of research has mostly conceptual articles, with limited empirical studies. For example, Weaver (1999) described the literature on Native American cultural competence as primarily theoretical and conceptual. A decade later, Nicotera, Walls, & Lucero (2010) noted “a dearth of literature on practice with American Indians that adequately translates cultural knowledge” (p. 195), and Hodge and Limb (2010) described a lack of educational content regarding Native American/Alaskan Native (NA/AN) spirituality and assessment methodology. However, there exist three subcategories of research that laid the groundwork for this conceptual article: (a) research in which Indigenous social workers inform the social work practice curriculum, (b) a

body of empirical research that examines historical policy affecting Indigenous Peoples, and (c) empirical studies that examine the experiences of NA/AN social work students and social workers.

Social Workers Inform the Practice Curriculum

One important study of Indigenous social workers informing the social work practice curriculum is Weaver's seminal (1999) study. The study reports findings on the knowledge, skills, and values that are necessary for providing competent service to Native American clients. The study included a survey of 62 Native American social workers and social work students. The findings report a need for understanding diversity within Native American populations, knowledge of their history and culture, and good general social work skills, including tolerance of silence, awareness of one's own biases, and a willingness to display humility and be respectful. Weaver's (1999) study, which found that a diverse Indigenous-informed curriculum is needed as a precursor for culturally knowledgeable social work practice, is important because it provides empirically based material for social work departments and faculty to incorporate into the social work curriculum.

Hodge and Limb's (2010) spiritual assessment study also involved Indigenous-informed participants. The study sample was comprised of 50 individuals with specialized knowledge of Native American culture. The research findings grouped practice-oriented insights into four categories: importance of spiritual assessment, pre-assessment considerations, the process of conducting assessment, and potential value conflicts. Hodge and Limb's (2010) study reported how best to prepare social work students for practice with Indigenous Peoples through use of spiritual assessments. The study's culturally based assessment methodologies include spiritual histories, spiritual life-maps, spiritual genograms, and spiritual eco-maps as assessment tools

(Hodge & Limb, 2010). This is an important study because it includes aspects of Indigenous spirituality in social work assessment and practice, which provides culturally relevant assessment examples for practitioners to employ when working with Indigenous Peoples.

Nicotera et al.'s (2010) qualitative study is a third study that focuses on preparation for social work practice that is informed by Indigenous Peoples. The study sample was comprised of eight Indigenous mental health professionals. Two broad categories emerged from the study: practice issues and teaching for change. This study reports five themes for skills and their application in culturally respectful practice with American Indians: contemporary racism, cultural genocide, cultural change, identity, and seeking affiliation. The study closely aligns with decolonizing the social work curriculum ideology; specifically, it includes recommendations to better understand how racism and cultural genocide affect the way that Indigenous Peoples view non-Indigenous social work practitioners. Nicterera et al.'s (2010) research is important because it aims to translate cultural knowledge and provide insights for non-Indian practitioners as they work with Indigenous Peoples.

Historical Policies Affecting Indigenous Peoples

Sovereignty movements and settler policy. Steinman's (2012) article, *Settler Colonial Power and the American Indian Sovereignty Movement*, analyzes the American Indian Sovereignty Movement (ISM) in its legal and historical contexts through a multi-institutional politics (MIP) model. Steinman utilizes a historical tracing method to analyze the ISM and explains the difference between the Emergent Sovereignty Movement (ESM) and the American Indian Movement (AIM) within the larger context of the ISM. The article outlines and discusses specific tribal efforts across regions and tribal governments to reflect legal domination, exercise sovereignty, enact infrastructural power, and resist the paternalistic bureaucracy of the Bureau of

Indian Affairs. The article's analysis of federal, state, and tribal power dynamics, specifically around sustained tribal sovereignty rights, intersects with the social work curriculum and practice. Steinman (2012) discusses the difference between the civil rights movement and the ISM during that era; specifically, the two movements did not have the same goals. The civil rights movement "sought racial equality and inclusion . . . and manifestations of the indigenous movement promoted nationhood and sovereignty" (p. 1119). An understanding of current and historical political, social, cultural, legal, and citizen status distinctions such as this one can prepare social work students, practitioners, and educators to engage with client systems in ways that are consistent with social work's professional and ethical standards.

Action by the ISM to promote the rights of Indigenous Peoples led to federal policy changes such as the enactment of the 1978 Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). The ICWA sets federal requirements for custodial placement of children who are enrolled or eligible for enrollment in a federally recognized Indian tribe. Limb and Brown (2008) employed content analysis to examine whether states met ICWA mandates and federal requirements. The article describes the ICWA as it relates to State Service Plans, and it discusses ICWA compliance, how states evaluate ICWA compliance, and recommendations to develop measurable outcomes for evaluating ICWA compliance. The ICWA and Limb and Brown's analysis advance the argument for further Indigenous practice and policy content in the social work curriculum. The ICWA and its enforcement are directly connected to tribal self-determination and the self-governance rights of Indigenous Peoples. Social work practitioners and educators are better prepared to function as policy practitioners and knowledgably work with Indigenous Peoples and tribal governments when literature exists that includes accurate accounts of U.S. history, ISM action and advocacy,

U.S. federal policies that affect tribal members, and the rights embodied in treaties between the U.S. government and tribal nations.

Decolonization as action. Tuck and Yang (2012) address an important issue regarding the definition and meaning of decolonization: the growing tendency to use the term *decolonization* for other purposes other than describing the regaining of lands and culture that were previously claimed through colonization. Tuck and Yang (2012) provide a succinct definition of decolonization: “[Decolonization] brings about the reparation of Indigenous land and life; it is not a metaphor for other things we want to do to improve our societies and schools” (p. 1). Decolonization is not a metaphor to be appropriated for easy or shallow adaptation in education and the social sciences. Decolonization is distinct from civil and human rights, and although adapted to align with these efforts, decolonization strives for something that is entirely distinct from civil and human rights (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Understanding decolonization as action is critical for social work education. Efforts to decolonize include supporting the rights of tribes to self-govern and reacquire lands through federal trust status. The removal of land from fee status, subject to taxation, and the bestowal of U.S. federal trust status have met resistance from nontribal citizens who reside on lands within the boundaries of reservations established by treaties. Understanding that the return of land through decolonization efforts and the right of tribes to self-govern are distinct from Indigenous human rights is critical for understanding *tribal sovereign status*. Both are important, and social workers must understand the distinction as they prepare for practice.

Efforts to decolonize narrowly include recognition of sovereignty, the right to self-govern, and reparation of land and life. “When a metaphor invades decolonization, it kills the very possibility of decolonization; it recenters whiteness, and resettles theory, it extends

innocence to the settler, it entertains a settler future” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 3). Tuck and Yang describe two aspects of colonialism: external and internal. Internal colonialism is marked by “the expropriation of fragments of Indigenous worlds, animals, plants, and human beings” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 4). Internal colonialism includes attempts to conquer land, resources, and people by military force. It is marked by the “biopolitical and geopolitical management of people, land, flora and fauna within the ‘domestic’ borders” of the colonized nation (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 4). In this form of colonialism, schools, police, surveillance, and prisons are used as mechanisms for controlling Indigenous Peoples. Settlers, those persons who have entered Indigenous lands, attempt to make these lands their own by means of war, political policy, occupancy, and imposed definitions of ownership. This active, dynamic force results in a settler colonialism structure (Tuck & Yang, 2012).

Settler colonialism in social work education. It is important to understand the settler colonialism structure in the context of the social work curriculum. Understanding the settler colonialism structure includes understanding the world view that settlers hold, namely, that land and its resources are there for the settlers’ benefit and profit, albeit through destruction, law, and policy. Settlers and Indigenous Peoples are dissimilar in their creation and origin beliefs and how they view geographic regions and homelands. Indigenous Peoples have creation oral traditions rather than stories or accounts of how they arrived at a place (Tuck & Yang, 2012). It is important in the social work curriculum, and in general, to understand that settlers are not immigrants. Immigrants are subject to the laws of the settlers, whereas settlers create and become the law by means of removing Indigenous life-ways.

It is critical that decolonization not be used as a flippant metaphor in the social work curriculum. Used as a metaphor in a purist manner in the social work curriculum, decolonization

means engaging in action toward the reparation of Indigenous land and life. This—specifically, decolonization by means of violence—is arguably antithetical to other social work values. Ascribing as they do to a more fundamentalist definition of decolonization, Tuck and Yang (2012) and Fanon (1961) may be where Indigenous scholars and activists depart from the social work professional ideology. As social work programs and faculty set forth to discern how best to include *tribal sovereign status* in the baccalaureate and masters level curricula, it would be neglectful not to include the full spectrum of ideologies within the decolonization theoretical spectrum. Emerging social work practitioners will be better prepared to work with Indigenous Peoples and sovereign tribes if tribal histories, the settler colonialism structure, decolonization, Indigenous life-ways, sovereignty, and political policies and laws affecting Indigenous Peoples are included in the curriculum.

The methodology of settler colonialism has both negative and positive aspects, with the negative aspects ranging from outright genocide and clearing of the native title to lands to seeking to replace Indigenous society and life-ways, often in ways that provide some outlet for appeasing settler guilt (Wolfe, 2006). The colonial settler society institutes structural changes that usually include somehow appropriating native symbols and motifs as a counterclaim to the imperial replacement of tribal societies. The replacement of Indigenous cultures with the dominant archetypes of a settler culture seeking to maintain legitimacy and assuage settler guilt by employing symbols emphasizing a particular dominance “will maintain the refractory imprint of the native counter-claim” (Wolfe, 2006, p. 389). It is important for social work research and the social work curriculum to include concepts and examples of cultural appropriation. It is essential for social work students to understand what is culturally sacred and is not for the taking or for profiteering as they set forth to work with Indigenous Peoples and in Indigenous

communities.

Decolonization must not erode into nothing more than an unconscious metaphor (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Decolonization must not be understood in an all-encompassing metaphorical model of “equivocation,” which leads a well-intentioned discussion of decolonization into nothing more than an “empty signifier” (Tuck & Yang, p. 7). In this sense, it is part of colonial society and the desire to “return to settler innocence” when the terminology of decolonization is utilized or otherwise employed without the understanding that decolonization is purely and entirely the return of Indigenous tribal land and the return of tribal life-ways to that land. Settler colonialism, as literally understood, is colonial invasion, a structure, and not an event (Wolfe, 2006).

It is imperative for social workers to understand concepts such as loss of land and language, recovery of land and life-ways through decolonization, settler colonialism as a structure, and settler guilt when working with Indigenous Peoples and tribal governments. It is imperative for social work practitioners to understand historical occurrences, specifically, acts of colonialism that led to the present-day social and economic conditions of Indigenous Peoples, before they embark on intracultural distinctions. Mere visits to Indigenous Peoples on reservations does not provide the historical context from which tribal sovereign status can be understood. Social work educators and programs need to do the difficult work and develop a learning space for social work students to begin to understand the settler colonialism structure.

Experiences of Indigenous Social Work Students and Social Workers

The final category of relevant literature includes empirical studies that examine the experiences of Indigenous social work students and social workers. Cross, Day, Gogliotti, & Pung (2013) surveyed 47 American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN) BSW and MSW students to

determine the challenges associated with recruitment and retention. Their findings and recommendations call for university administrators to make decisions that are sensitive to AI/AN students. Indigenous students are likely to possess knowledge of native culture, and retaining AI/AN social work students will likely increase the competency of the child welfare workforce. Preparing Indigenous social workers across practice sectors as well as in practice settings on and off reservations is an important issue for tribal communities, universities, and social work programs alike. Recruitment and retention of Indigenous social workers is essential for ensuring well-qualified, prepared social worker professionals, not only in child welfare but in all practice sectors.

Weaver's (2000) qualitative study explores the experiences of 63 Native Americans in social work education. Respondents were asked about the cultural content in their social work program. The data were analyzed by decade and showed that there was more cultural content in recent years than in the past. Respondents indicated a need for more cultural content in order to prepare social workers to provide culturally competent services to Native Americans. The findings also indicated that workshops and training materials were needed for social work faculty. McMahon and Allen-Meares (1992), a content analysis of social work articles proposing intervention strategies with minorities, also contributes to the empirical body of literature for preparing emerging social workers to engage in practice with Indigenous Peoples. There is a need for further studies, especially inclusive of ethnic minorities, to inform social work practitioners (McManon & Allen-Meares, 1992; Weaver, 2000). Conceptual and historical analysis research will help in more clearly responding to the CSWE EPAS charge to include sovereign tribal status among social worker competencies. Literature that includes the lived experiences of Indigenous social work students and practitioners provides an important lens into

what is needed in the profession's curriculum to adeptly and sensitively work with Indigenous Peoples and sovereign tribal governments.

Tribal sovereign status is a short phrase, only three words. However, when the CSWE approved its 2015 EPAS and included tribal sovereign status as part of the "Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice" competency, there emerged a need to improve and bolster research-based curriculum content for faculty and social work programs to prepare emerging social work professionals regarding how to best work with Indigenous Peoples and sovereign tribes.

Colonization, federal policies such as Manifest Destiny, forced cultural assimilation, and loss of land, language, and culture, taken together with the great number of tribes and the diversity therein, make educating in the broad area of tribal sovereign status a complex endeavor. It requires research in a range of areas, including best practice with tribes and tribal citizens, perspectives gleaned from the lived experiences of Indigenous Peoples, and historical knowledge, including federal policy, treaties, and wars. Decolonization theories and elder epistemology provide a framework for researchers, social work programs, and social work educators to embark on infusing tribal sovereign status content into the curriculum in authentic and well-researched ways that truly honor the sovereign status of tribal nations.

Discussion

The CSWE includes tribal sovereign status in its 2015 educational standards, in Competency 2: "Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice." This addition was a marked shift, being the first time that Indigenous peoples and tribal nations were directly referenced since the CSWE began accrediting social work programs. The inclusion of tribal sovereign status, ultimately to be taught and measured in the social work baccalaureate and foundation-level master's competency-based accredited programs, raises important pedagogical questions for

social work education. Foremost, the interpretation of tribal sovereign status covers a wide range of potential social work education curriculum material, including 1) research specific to best practice when working with Indigenous Peoples and tribal nations, 2) an understanding of the unique legal status of Indian Nations within the US, including the concepts of citizenry and domestic dependence, 3) social welfare policy that affects Indigenous peoples and nations (i.e., the Dawes Act of 1887, the ICWA of 1978, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, and the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act), and 4) examination of the large number of federally recognized tribes within the US and their consequent linguistic and cultural diversity, as well as historical accounts that include the egregious events and consequences of colonization. There is a dearth of literature in all of these areas, making it difficult for social work programs, faculty, and students to access the information needed to best prepare social work students to work with Indigenous Peoples and sovereign nations. Further, ongoing research is needed.

Another way to address the lack of knowledge and curriculum content to remedy the pedagogic shortcomings in social work education would be to partner with First Nations Studies (FNS) programs and utilize the literature and epistemological approaches that FNS scholars and programs employ. Elder epistemology is a way of knowing and teaching that includes Indigenous elders and their experiences and wisdom in curriculum content relating to Indigenous Peoples. Use of elder epistemology as a teaching and learning methodology for preparing social workers to work with Indigenous Peoples aligns not only with the traditional Indigenous values of respect toward elders and acknowledgement of their esteemed roles, but also with the social work professional values of inclusion, diversity, and competence. A pedagogical commitment to elder epistemology can also uphold and ensure a connection between social work programs and

the tribal sovereign nations that are geographically within the region of the respective universities. Elder epistemology is not limited to rural and reservation settings; it also includes elders residing in urban areas. Tribal elders and their wisdom, regardless of geographic location, are a critical part of social work education and preparing practitioners to understand the complexities entailed by the CSWE charge to include tribal sovereign status in the social work curriculum.

In addition to acquiring a clear conceptual understanding of tribal sovereign status and related epistemological considerations, there is a need for theoretical frameworks as the profession continues to embark on improved social work professional readiness and scholarship with respect to Indigenous Peoples. Decolonization is a theoretical framework that provides a wide spectrum of historical paradigms and conceptual models for learning, analyzing, and considering the effects of colonization. Colonization includes but is not limited to war, loss of land, language, and culture, and forced assimilation. Decolonization is a theoretical framework that provides a context for students and scholars, as well as Indigenous Peoples, to more deeply comprehend and effectively address the egregious effects of colonization, including historical trauma and cultural appropriation.

Tribal nation histories and intersecting U.S. government policies relating to Indigenous Peoples underlie complex historical traumas, and an understanding of these histories and policies is necessary for framing an understanding of the complexities. Generational effects of Indian boarding schools, removal of Indigenous children from their homes for the purpose of assimilation versus the military cost of genocide, and an existence away from parents, grandparents, and extended family are critical aspects for understanding the historical trauma. As social work students begin to prepare to work with tribal nations and citizens, it is necessary for

them to comprehend this trauma, coupled with the fracturing and interruption of life-ways, including loss and endangerment of Indigenous languages and cultural teaching.

Theories of decolonization provide a context for social work students, faculty, and programs to begin to understand tribal sovereignty status. However, the preparation of social work practitioners is not limited to curricular content on policy and historical domains. Their preparation also includes professional practice development to incorporate skills to effectively work with diverse individuals, families, groups, and communities. What is entailed as emerging professionals acquire knowledge of and skills to work with Indigenous Peoples is intricate. Adding preparatory professional practice skills and infusing the humility necessary for working with Indigenous Peoples and communities adds to the pedagogical complexities. Social work curricula, programs, and students are in great need of scholarship that includes the voices of Indigenous Peoples so that social work learning spaces, research, and the profession at large are informed, inclusive of decolonization action and free from cultural appropriation.

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Indigenous social workers inform the social work curriculum: A qualitative study

Amy Fischer Williams

Saint Catherine University | University of Saint Thomas

Author Note:

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Amy Fischer Williams,
University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, Department of Social Work, Swart Hall, 800 Algoma
Boulevard, Oshkosh, Wisconsin 54901.

Abstract

To understand what *tribal sovereign status* means in the context of preparing social workers to practice and collaborate with indigenous individuals and communities, three relevant research areas present in the social work literature: (a) studies in which Indigenous Peoples inform the social work curriculum and programs, (b) studies on settler colonialism structures and decolonization actions, and (c) studies on historical trauma. Understanding the complexities of tribal sovereignty is one facet to prepare social workers to practice with knowledge, skill, and sensitivity. In this exploratory qualitative study, 12 social workers with practice experience working with tribal communities were interviewed in order to identify indigenous-relevant content for social work curricula. The primary conceptual framework that informed the study is decolonization theory. Content analysis was used to analyze the data. Three practice-oriented curriculum themes emerged: historical trauma, cultural appropriation, and identity. Four policy-oriented themes emerged: tribal governance structure, historical policy and action, self-governance, and environmental justice. The findings suggest that social work teaching that includes content about the unique legal status of tribal nations and citizenry, the impact of colonization, and policy specific to Native American people is essential as practitioners prepare to work among Indigenous Peoples. Post-data analysis tribal elders were consulted, consistent with elder epistemological practices, to discuss the findings and to provide recommendations about the direction of future research.

Keywords: tribal sovereign status, social work curriculum, Indigenous Peoples, decolonization, elder epistemology

Introduction

The social work profession endeavors to work with Indigenous Peoples and communities in ways that are consistent with the principles of human rights and social justice that are fundamental to the discipline and practice. The International Federation of Social Workers' description of the social work profession includes promoting social change, solving problems in human relationships, and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being (2014). As a profession, social work further strives to meet the needs of Indigenous Peoples in a manner that is consistent with its professional ethical values: service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competency (NASW, 2017).

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredits social work programs in the US. The CSWE's Education Policy and Standards (EPAS) outlines the educational standards with which the social work curriculum is implemented and assessed in all U.S. social work programs (CSWE, 2015). For the first time since the CSWE began to accredit social work programs in 1974, the Council's 2015 EPAS included language specific to Indigenous Peoples and nations. Competency 2, "Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice," includes "tribal sovereign status" as one of the dimensions of diversity (CSWE, 2015, p. 7). Prior to the 2015 CSWE EPAS, cultural competence was addressed, although more broadly and not specific to Indigenous Peoples. Through the inclusion of tribal sovereign status as one of the dimensions of diversity, the accrediting body mandates that social work programs and social work educators prepare capable and skillful social work practitioners who honor tribal sovereign status and are responsive in their practice with Indigenous Peoples.

However, although this context provides structure (i.e., a clear definition of the discipline, shared professional values, and CSWE educational standards) for social work programs to prepare practitioners to work with Indigenous Peoples and communities, there is a shortage of research that informs what should be included in the social work curriculum regarding Indigenous Peoples and communities and all that tribal sovereign status entails.

There are 573 federally recognized tribes in the US (National Congress of American Indians, 2018). Tribes, domestic dependent nations, are sovereign entities with the right and power to self-govern. One aspect of self-governance is the ability of tribal nations to establish their respective tribal nation citizen statuses, including who is eligible for tribal citizenship enrollment. United States federal law and treaties between tribal nations and the U.S. federal government outline the unique legal and citizen statuses of Indigenous Peoples who live within the established borders of the US. The historical removal of Indigenous Peoples from their homelands by means of war, cultural assimilation and oppression, and the implementation of Manifest Destiny (the belief held by colonizers that removal of Indigenous Peoples from their homelands and subsequent land-grabs were justifiable for the expansion of the US) originate with colonization. Settler occupation and removal of Indigenous Peoples from their homelands resulted in loss of language, life-ways, land, and culture. These consequences of colonization necessitate that social workers, social work educators, and the profession work with Indigenous Peoples in ways that are not only relevant but that foremost recognize tribal sovereignty (Gray, Coates, Yellow Bird, & Hetherington, 2013).

The present study's research question was developed within the following contexts: 1) the defining hallmarks of the social work profession, 2) the profession's articulated values, 3) the educational standards outlined by the CSWE, 4) the diversity of Indigenous Peoples and the

complexity of tribal nations in the US, and 5) a scarcity of research regarding the social work curriculum specific to Indigenous Peoples and communities. The research question is: From the perspective of Indigenous social workers, what should the social work curriculum include to prepare professionals to work with Indigenous Peoples and communities? The research design is qualitative. Indigenous social workers, BSW- or MSW-level practitioners were interviewed for the study. Grounded theory and elder epistemology are employed for the data analysis. The purpose of the study was to garner perspectives from Indigenous social workers regarding social work curriculum content. Through this study, Indigenous Peoples, specifically Indigenous social workers, inform the social work curriculum regarding how to infuse concepts surrounding tribal sovereign status and how to best work with Indigenous Peoples and communities.

Literature Review

This section reviews the literature regarding three categories of curriculum content relevant to preparing social workers to work with Indigenous Peoples and communities: (a) studies in which Indigenous Peoples inform the social work curriculum and programs, (b) studies on settler colonialism structures and decolonization actions, and (c) studies on historical trauma.

Social Workers Informing the Practice Curriculum

Several authors have pointed out the importance of Indigenous Peoples having a role as educators within social work. One such writer, Weaver (2000), conducted a qualitative study that explored the experiences of 63 Native American students engaged in social work education. Respondents were asked about the cultural content in their social work program. They indicated a need for more cultural content to prepare social workers to provide culturally competent services to Native Americans. The findings also indicate that workshops and training materials are needed for social work faculty. A content analysis of social work articles proposing

intervention strategies with minorities (McMahon & Allen-Meares, 1992) also contributes to the empirical body of literature on preparing emerging social workers to engage in practice with Indigenous Peoples. McMahon and Allen-Meares (1992) and Weaver (2000) also express a need for further studies, especially inclusive of ethnic minorities, to inform social work practitioners.

Research has shown the importance of embedding culturally and historically relevant pedagogical approaches in the curriculum as social work students prepare for practice. Nicotera, Walls, & Lucero's (2010) qualitative study identifies culturally respectful practice approaches to working with American Indians. Two broad categories emerged from the study: practice issues and teaching for change. Practice issues included contemporary racism, cultural genocide, cultural change, identity, and seeking affiliation. Nicotera et al.'s (2010) qualitative research translates cultural knowledge and provides insight for non-Indian practitioners as they work with Indigenous Peoples. This body of research closely aligns with decolonizing the social work curriculum ideology and includes recommendations to better understand how racism and cultural genocide affect the way Indigenous Peoples view non-Indigenous social work practitioners.

Weaver's (1999) seminal study reports findings on the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for social work practice with Indigenous Peoples. In the study, 62 indigenous social workers inform the social work curriculum and also provide knowledge on the areas of diversity within Native American populations, knowledge of history and culture, and knowledge about good general social work skills that include tolerance of silence, awareness of one's own biases, and a willingness to display humility and be respectful. This empirically based groundbreaking study provides crucial recommendations for social work practitioners and educators to incorporate into social work's professional practice and curriculum.

Colonialism Structures and Decolonization Action

Colonial structures and sovereignty. Cultural and economic survival of Indigenous Peoples, the original peoples of a geographic region who have experienced colonialism, is a worldwide issue (United Nations, 2008). It is important for social welfare policy makers and social workers to understand the historical impacts of colonization as well as the present-day effects of colonial structures, and especially to understand that colonization is often marked by removal from one's homeland by military force. As social workers embark on professional practice that intersects with Indigenous Peoples and communities and as social work educators formulate curriculum content, it is important to acknowledge that social work played a role, complicit and passive, that contributed to the fractured experiences of Indigenous families. In a conceptual article, Day (2016) defines cultural survival as "the right to be recognized as a people, to be treated fairly in political and economic dealings, to be able to preserve one's culture, land, and language, and to have equal access to housing, education, health, and employment opportunities" (p. 2). Gray et al. (2013) argue that the social work profession should participate in decolonization efforts, specifically, addressing the impact of unjust practices of multinational companies, not-for-profit organizations, and public agencies on Indigenous Peoples.

Decolonization and self-determination are means by which Indigenous Peoples and tribal governments can counter the effects of colonization. Decolonization is theoretical and action-oriented. Aquash (2013) describes decolonization as countering cultural assimilation and as processes of reclaiming Indigenous identity. Aquash further argues that because colonization occurred within educational systems (i.e., residential and boarding schools), it is natural for current decolonization efforts to be achieved through education, specifically, by reclaiming positive identities for communities, individuals, and families. Self-determination is the right to

self-govern, to participate in democratic processes of governance, and to determine one's own economic, social, and cultural development (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 2018). Sovereignty, the legal right of tribes to self-govern, is outlined in treaties between the U. S. government and American Indian Tribes (Kalt & Singer, 2004). Exercising sovereignty and the right to self-govern are essential to the collective land, cultural, language, citizen, and natural rights of Indigenous Peoples (Gray et al. 2013).

Settler colonialism, colonization by means of land settlement and establishment of settler-enforced land title and law, is a form of indigenous extermination. Wolfe (2006) discusses the difference between settler colonialism and genocide; specifically, settler colonialism is a structure—a structure of elimination. Wolfe argues that genocide and settler colonialism converge, and also that there is a distinction in that “settler colonialism is inherently eliminatory but not invariably genocidal” (2006, p. 387). Because settler colonialism does not entail overt upheaval of the rule of law, Wolfe argues that settler colonial “assimilation can be a more effective mode of elimination than conventional forms of killing (2006, p. 402). An understanding of settler colonialism and decolonization is important for social work’s curriculum and professional practice to ensure that practitioners and educators are prepared to function respectfully and competently with Indigenous Peoples and communities.

Decolonization as action. The concept of decolonization is diverse in its meaning and interpretation. An understanding of the range of its meaning (i.e., social change versus action) is essential as social workers collaborate with Indigenous Peoples and communities. Tuck and Yang (2012) and Gray et al. (2013) address important issues regarding decolonization and the spectrum of its meaning. Tuck and Yang argue that decolonization is not a metaphor to be used in education and the social sciences, but rather that it is more narrowly defined as the return of

land to Indigenous Peoples. Tuck and Yang describe decolonization as “the reparation of Indigenous land and life; it is not a metaphor for other things we want to do to improve our societies and schools” (p. 1). Two examples of Tuck and Yang’s definition of decolonization, placing tribal land into federal trust status and returning land ownership from non-Indigenous ownership to tribal ownership, encompasses the rights of tribes to self-govern. Land decolonization efforts have been met with resistance from nontribal citizens residing on lands within reservation boundaries established by treaties (Gray et al., 2013; Tuck & Yang, 2012).

The American Indian Sovereignty Movement (AISM) is an example of decolonization as action and a means to contest colonial structures. Steinman (2012) examines the AISM in the context of settler colonial power. An understanding of federal and state statutes, specifically in regard to sustained tribal sovereignty rights, intersects with social work’s curriculum and practice. The 1978 Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) is an example of a policy that intersects with social work. The ICWA outlines federal requirements for custodial adoption and foster care placement for children who are enrolled or eligible for enrollment in a federally recognized Indian tribe. Steinman outlines the differences between the AISM and the civil rights movement as political action endeavors. AISM promoted sovereignty and nationhood, while the civil rights movement fought for equality and inclusion.

Historical Trauma

A lasting effect that stems from acts of colonization experienced by Indigenous Peoples is intergenerational trauma. Day (2016) describes intergenerational trauma as an aspect of historical trauma that “resonates across generations and is passed on to current generations” (p. 9). Indigenous Peoples, regardless of their continent and geographical region of origin, often have shared histories and similar lived experiences that stem from acts of colonization, including

military violence, removal from homelands, loss of language, land, and culture, removal and relocation of children to residential and boarding schools, and disruption of their means to grow, collect, and procure foods. (Day, 2014, 2016; Wasserman, 2005). Historical trauma and intergenerational trauma research findings substantiate implications for long-term child development, health, and mental health among Indigenous Peoples (Day, 2014, 2016).

Researchers across disciplines have documented Indigenous health disparities and their links to historical trauma (Pearce et al., 2008; Whitbeck, Adams, Hoyt, & Chen, 2004). Historical trauma and its generational transmission impact health to the present day. Mohatt, Thompson, Thai, & Tebes (2013) explain how historical trauma can function as a public narrative and thus shift the focus to present-day experiences and resiliency and away from historical “causal variables that influence health” (p. 128). Public narratives are a means to establish a discourse in which individuals shape a collective memory and express common experiences and identities (Wertsch, 2008).

Consistent with the standards of best social work practice, empirical measures and assessment tools are needed to test the relationship between historical trauma and health disparities. Historical trauma is discussed in the literature in multiple ways: as an outcome, as a means for or explanation of intergenerational transmission of undesirable behaviors, and as an etiological agent (Walters, Simoni, & Evans-Campbell, 2002). Culturally responsive measures are essential as social workers collaborate with Indigenous Peoples and communities. Walls and Whitbeck (2012) discuss the use of a historical trauma (HT) measure, the Historical Loss Scale. Walls and Whitbeck reconceptualize Indigenous HT with this measure and focus on HT-related stressors. Literature to conceptualize historical trauma, a definition specific to Indigenous

People, and a documented connection to health disparities are all relevant to the social work curriculum and the preparation of social work practitioners.

The CSWE approved its 2015 EPAS to include tribal sovereign status as an aspect of its “Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice” competency. The inclusion of tribal sovereignty is noteworthy and represents the first time Indigenous-specific language has been included in the profession’s educational standards. This revision in the CSWE’s EPAS necessitates accredited social work program reviews of how tribal sovereignty concepts and standards of best practice are taught to emerging social work professionals. The sovereign status of tribal nations cannot be taught without its historical contexts. Sovereignty is tied to colonizing events. The historical and lived experiences of forced cultural assimilation and loss of life, land, language, and culture, combined with the diversity of tribes and bands, make educating emerging social work professionals about tribal sovereign status a complicated matter.

Conceptual Framework

Indigenous Peoples have been imperiled by colonialism and significantly impacted by the effects of centuries-long settler-colonial dynamics. Acknowledging the consequences of the loss of Indigenous land, language, and life-ways coupled with political and economic oppression, the conceptual framework for this study is liberatory praxis. Friere (1970) describes *praxis* as meaning an action that is formed by and tied to certain values and *liberatory* as meaning to free or to set free.

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Friere (1972) considers the relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed. Several tenets of the dynamics of the oppressor and oppressed are relevant for having Indigenous Peoples inform social work curriculum. In the first dynamic, the oppressor suppresses the rights and freedoms of the oppressed and proliferates the status quo

(Mathis, 2015). The oppressor argues that the status quo is the best option and that it has evolved over time (Mathis, 2015). As a second dynamic, Freire (1972) outlines the concept of *conscientization* or an understanding of the self (the oppressed's understanding) within the context of the oppressor's actions. Conscientization provides a format for the oppressed to strategize liberation from the oppressor's status quo. Third, Freire argues against the "banking model" of education and advocates moving beyond "deposits," where students are recipients of deposited knowledge. Freire instead promotes an awareness-based model in which students have an opportunity to become cognizant of their incompleteness, as increased awareness is essential for educational change and liberation. Finally, Freire promotes dialogue as a mechanism for decolonization, specifically, dialogue that is free from manipulation and control.

Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) is another conceptual lens that informed this study. Fanon's action-based decolonization theory is relevant for the decolonization and liberatory praxis theoretical spectrum because it includes war and violence as means to decolonize and liberate. Fanon's discourse about the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized was informed by his lived experience under colonial power (Mbembe, 2012). The inclusion of Fanon's argument for violence as a means to decolonize does not equate to advocating the use of violence in professional social work. Rather, it is a scholarly acknowledgment of the existing range of theoretical decolonization perspectives. Indigenous resistance to colonization, including violence, has occurred in the US (i.e., the American Indian Movement Wounded Knee and Alcatraz Island occupations). Fanon explains the relationship between the colonized and colonizer as predicated on the colonizer's need for territorial expansion and appropriation of resources and further argues that anticolonial violence is necessary for the self-determination of Indigenous Peoples (Gibson, 2007). Appropriation of

natural resources and occupation of land are contributors to Indigenous historical trauma. Fanon identifies three dimensions of colonizer–colonized violence: “colonial violence, emancipatory violence of the colonized, and violence in international relations” (Mbembe, 2012, p. 22). It can be argued that including violence in the theoretical and action spectrum of decolonization as a means to decolonize stands in stark contrast to social work professional values as outlined in the profession’s code of ethics and is antithetical to principles of nonviolence. It is, however, an authentic historical response to colonization, and therefore its inclusion in social work literature can inform the conceptual understanding of colonization. Friere and Fanon have distinct conceptualizations of movements to liberate colonized Indigenous Peoples. Friere’s and Fanon’s concepts, as well as those of scholar theorists who are less polarizing, informed this research, and they help in conceptualizing the importance of the voices of those who are marginalized.

Methods

This qualitative exploratory study aimed to inform the social work curriculum with respect to the CWSE’s (2015) EPAS. The descriptor *tribal sovereign status* (CSWE, 2015, p. 7) is included in CSWE Competency 2, “Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice,” as a dimension of diversity. In this study, thematic analysis was used to examine recorded interviews of Indigenous and non-Indigenous social workers employed by federally recognized tribes. The purpose of the study was to explore and glean perspectives from Indigenous social workers to inform the concept of tribal sovereign status, an important dimension of diversity in social work curricular content. In this study, the researcher aimed to provide a preliminary answer to the research question: From the perspective of Native American social workers, what should the social work curriculum include?

Sample and Population

Nonprobability snowball sampling was used to recruit the research participants. Two Native American BSW- or MSW-level social workers engaged in professional practice on two woodland tribal reservations in the U.S. Midwest were identified to begin the sampling process. Sample group members who met the sampling frame criteria were asked to locate other participants who met the criteria until the sample group was identified (Grinnell & Unrau, 2014). The sampling frame for the research study included (a) Native American BSW- or MSW-level social workers who were engaged in or retired from social work practice—these could be employed by or retired from sovereign tribal nations or other social welfare agencies or governments, and (b) non-Native BSW- or MSW-level social workers who were engaged in social work practice as employees of a sovereign tribal nation. Native American social workers from reservations other than the two reservations where the snowball sampling was initiated were allowed to participate in the sample.

Twelve social workers were interviewed. Eleven were female, and one was male. Ten social workers identified themselves as Native American, with primary representation from woodland tribes and lesser representation from the Plains nations. Two social workers identified themselves as non-Indigenous; these were both Indian Child Welfare (ICW) workers, and their combined Indigenous-relevant practice experience within tribal reservation boundaries exceeded 40 years.

Data Collection

After being told the purpose of the project and the rights of the participants and providing their consent, individual research participants were interviewed in public community buildings, in private meeting spaces (i.e., a tribal community library conference room, tribal social service private offices, and coffee shops with private meeting spaces). The interview sessions were

audio-recorded and transcribed by a transcription service specializing in academic transcription. The interviews ranged from 24 min to 1 hr 12 min.

Data Analysis

Content analysis. Content analysis was used to analyze the research data with open and selective coding. The systematic process involved simultaneous data collection and analysis (Cho & Lee, 2014). Once the data were collected, a systematic process of open coding was used to begin the conceptual labeling and develop categories. The researcher used paper memo strips and assigned color coding to determine relationships between codes (respondents' words) and categories (the word patterns that emerged between respondents). A number of themes emerged through the open and selective coding processes. Once the themes were identified, illustrative and explanatory quotes were selected as examples of each theme that emerged.

Elder epistemology. Together with tribal elders, the researcher reviewed the themes that emerged after the point of saturation (the threshold where no new codes and categories emerged in the analysis). Elder epistemology (Christensen & Poupart, 2013) was a guiding framework for this research. Consistent with this framework, three tribal elders served as advisors after the data analysis part was completed. Tribal elder advisors contributed to and were consulted regarding the identification of categories and themes that emerged from the data. Consistent with elder epistemology, Christensen and Poupart (2013) describe the important role of tribal elders and argue that it is essential to incorporate their knowledge whenever possible and appropriate. Elder epistemology "encompasses integrity and empathy for other beings" (Christensen & Poupart, 2013, p. 114). Tribal elders provided valuable perspectives about what the directions and priorities of future research should be.

Protection of Participants

As the researcher is a doctor of social work (DSW) student, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the researcher’s institutional home approved conducting this research. The researcher is also an employee at a regional public university. Per its institutional policy, the employing institution reviewed the IRB and determined that IRB approval should remain with the degree-granting institution’s IRB. Policies set forth by the IRBs at both the employing and degree-granting institution were followed. The degree-granting institution granted final IRB approval.

Research participants were asked to identify any verbal, speech pattern, and cultural linguistic cues they could discern. Speech and word patterns that could potentially, although remotely, lead to identification are not used as thematic examples in this article.

Results

Seven themes emerged in this study:(a) historical trauma, (b) cultural appropriation, (c) cultural identity, (d) tribal governance structure, (e) self-governance, (f) historical policy and action, and (g) environmental justice. The identified themes needed to have been discussed by several interviewees. The seven themes are organized into two primary areas that are common in social work curriculum design: courses that are heavy in professional conduct and practice-intensive professional preparation, and courses that are policy-intensive. The themes are discussed below based on how they cluster within the practice-intensive and policy-intensive curricula areas, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Emergent policy and practice subthemes

<p>I. Professional Conduct & Practice Themes <i>Subthemes (practice-oriented)</i> Historical Trauma Cultural Appropriation Identity</p>	<p>II. Policy & Sovereignty themes <i>Subthemes (policy-oriented)</i> Tribal Governance Structure Self-governance Historical Policy and Action Environmental Justice</p>
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Professional Conduct and Practice-intensive Themes

Historical trauma. Preparing social work students to work with communities and individuals who have experienced historical trauma is an issue that was consistently raised in the interviews. One respondent spoke to not only the importance of historical trauma but also the interrelatedness of and distinction between historical and generational traumas:

I see that historical trauma and trauma overall, I feel it needs to be a whole class within itself because honestly— I work in a Native American community ... so obviously there is a strong prevalence of historical trauma and generational trauma—and generational trauma is huge—which roots back to the historical trauma and the cycle of trauma. The majority of the families that I've worked with, there is that feeling piece that needs to occur, and there's healing and a reconnection.

This respondent further explained the importance of culturally relevant approaches when working in the area of historical trauma, specifically, acknowledging culturally specific characterizations of family, clan, and community structures to redefine and promote community and individual wellness:

A reconnection, maybe it's not their family necessarily but you think of Indigenous ways, your family is not just your blood family, that extends out to your extended family, your clans, your community and so maybe it's some restructuring of what that family looks like— because you see a lot of times when that generational trauma is so deep-rooted that there's not a lot of support for some of these parents and they kind of need to restructure what that family

support looks like and who are those individuals who can offer them the support that they need to do some healing and revamp what their family [looks] like.

Cultural appropriation. The importance of understanding cultural appropriation (i.e., adopting others' cultural traits as your own or theft of cultural items or practices from the originating culture) emerged as another theme. It is essential that social workers develop as culturally responsive and knowledgeable social work practitioners at the micro level with individuals and at the macro level when working with Indigenous Peoples, reservations, and urban Indian communities. One respondent provided an example of the significance and meaning attached to cultural items and clarified aspects of appropriation:

I was telling some of my classmates, I'm like, "You think wearing that headdress, it looks cute. You might think it's pretty cool because you want to wear it to this awesome music festival, but there's meaning behind it. I don't think you understand it. In my tribal community, a woman who wears a headdress is considered a war mother. A war mother is a mother who is mourning for her child to come back home, or is mourning because her child has been killed, or died in war. That's a symbol of respect in the community that you have to give. That this is someone that can lose somebody, or has lost somebody. These are individuals who are men, who have headdresses and acquire that through ceremony, through bloodline depending on the tribe."

Cultural appropriation includes both material and nonmaterial items. This respondent went on to discuss ways to stop pejorative language or actions that are assumed by a non-Indigenous person to be acceptable or "for the taking":

I don't think that they understand that ... those are things that even my closest friends who are not native, sometimes I have to tell them. Hey, don't touch my eagle feather. I'm not getting mad at you, I'm just letting you know because here's why, or here's why that word Chief, Pocahontas, makes me upset. That's not okay for you to call me that.

Identity. The three themes outlined above—historical trauma, cultural appropriation, and identity—are significant for inclusion in social work curriculum content areas and courses that are professional-conduct and practice intensive. These themes, communicated by Indigenous social workers, should inform social work programs, educators, practitioners, and students regarding issues that are especially relevant when working with Indigenous Peoples and communities. These three themes are central for the practice-oriented preparation of professional social workers.

Sovereignty Policy Themes

Four themes emerged that cluster within the area of policy-oriented courses and curriculum: tribal governance structure, legal rights of tribes to self-govern, historical policy and action, and environmental justice. Social work policy and history courses are systemic in the discipline's curriculum. Practitioners are prepared to professionally embark on macro-level planned change processes in such a way that history and policy are contextualized in order to critique and inform policy development. Research participants in this study discussed subjects germane to an Indigenous-inclusive social work curriculum.

Tribal government structure. Tribal government structures are unique, and there are variations between and within tribal nations. Several respondents spoke to the importance of not only understanding the definition of sovereignty as it relates to U.S. federal law, but also

grasping the distinct legal and jurisdictional aspects of tribal sovereign status. One respondent offered the following:

I think having some curriculum on the history is important as well as the jurisdiction of federally recognized tribes, and how different [we] are from outside of the reservations. And also the tribal codes are important to know. Not many of my colleagues or professors that I've had in the past are really aware of the differences in the community and how the tribe runs, what tribal councils are, and [the role of] tribal chairmen ... so it's really important social workers know how tribes function.

Self-governance. Another theme that emerged was the importance of the right of tribes to self-govern, specifically, noninterference of other governments (i.e., local, state, federal) trying to influence or attempting to control matters where tribes have jurisdictional powers. One respondent offered tribal citizenship (establishment of who is a member of a tribe) as an example of the importance of self-governance:

I think talking about Blood Quantum Policies— That's a huge governance [issue] over tribal people pretty much measuring how much Indian blood you have. No other race is measured in that way. Indigenous people really have this thought in their mind that "If I don't have enough blood, I'm not a Native American. I don't belong to this tribe." I like to think of Blood Quantum as silent genocide, because it really was put in place to weed out Native people, and one day Native people will no longer exist.

Historical policy and action. The theme emerged that social workers should be able to contextualize how acts of colonization and the histories of distinct tribes intersect with political

and social actions, specifically, those affecting Indigenous Peoples and nations. One respondent explained that it is necessary to first understand history to grasp the evolution of social-welfare-related policy; notice how this discussant also included a connection to tribal sovereignty, the legal right of tribes to self-govern:

Right now you have practicing social workers in child welfare who are working with Native American youth and families who do not still understand the importance and the value of ICWA, but then again, that goes back to history, because they don't know history. Because if you understood the history and you understood again that disproportionality of Native American children who have been removed and again, removed from families, removed from their culture, have lack of identity, have lost that connection. All these things are so intertwined with each other, so when you have people who don't understand that and don't understand sovereignty and the rights of tribes to be able to practice in a way—to have our own rights to be able to operate in a manner that is fluid with our own values and beliefs.

Another respondent provided the ICWA as a policy example and also included a statement about the historical perceptions of social workers in Native communities, thus emphasizing the importance of maintaining the ICWA:

I think the Indian Child Welfare Act is important to teach to social work students because there is still the assumption among tribal people that social workers are bad. That they will take you from your home, they will take everything that you have— Don't answer your door if a social worker comes. I think it would be really important if social workers knew those assumptions.

Environmental preservation and justice. Indigenous cultural values in the area of environmental preservation and justice also emerged as a policy-oriented theme. Person-in-the-environment and human behavior and the social environment are long-standing hallmarks of social work's professional distinction. One respondent explained how current environmental issues are pertinent to the social work curriculum, specifically in the context of overall wellness. Notice how tribal history, specifically, removal of Indigenous Peoples to reservations, is referenced at the end of this exemplary quote—another example of the connection between the themes that emerged in the study:

I think what should be included in that [curriculum] is: understand that how climate change is directly [impacting], how reservations that are impacted by surrounding [oil, natural gas] fracking, or let's say mining, or paper mills, how that's going to affect [the environment]. I think the discussion in [the] curriculum needs to be there. I think that looking at some of these contemporary issues could really pose good discussions, like Standing Rock, No DAPL. The mine that is going up here, that's going to impact us. I think that those are real good discussions. The reason why it's important is because we can't move. We can't move our reservations somewhere else. We can't move a sacred site somewhere else.

Discussion

Conceptual Framework

The theoretical decolonization continuum and elder epistemology served as conceptual frameworks for this study. Tuck and Yang (2012) and Fanon (1961) represent distinct approaches to decolonization theory and action. Tuck and Yang argue that decolonization should

be narrowly defined as the return of land to Indigenous Peoples by the colonizers. In their interpretation, decolonization action varies in its forms and actions. Fanon (1961) argues that because colonization is a violent oppressive act, decolonization also entails and warrants the use of violence. These theorists contrast as well with Friere (1970), who argues that oppressors also need to have a role, which is to examine their own role in the oppression. Further, the oppressed have a role to play in their own liberation and particularly need to understand the role of politics in their world and education and to cocreate their world, thereby liberating it from the structures of oppression.

Brief Findings Summary

The study respondents were Indigenous social workers along with select non-Indigenous social workers with extensive practice experience who were employed within tribal reservation boundaries. This exploratory study sought out Indigenous social workers, along with select non-Indigenous social workers with extensive experience practicing within tribal structures, for their perspectives in order to inform the social work curriculum. The researcher specifically looked for Indigenous social workers who would speak to what, from an Indigenous-oriented practice perspective, should be included in the social work curriculum. Two primary curriculum content areas were identified in the data analysis: (a) curriculum content in areas that are conducive to social work courses where the focus is on preparing students for practice, and (b) curriculum content in areas that align closely to social work courses that focus on policy and history. Subthemes for the two primary curricular content areas in the study were also identified, as outlined in Table 1.

What should be included in practice courses? In terms of preparing students to emerge as culturally informed and sensitive practitioners when working with Indigenous Peoples and

communities, three important curricular subthemes emerged in the data analysis: historical trauma, cultural appropriation, and identity. Historical trauma includes knowledge and awareness of shared historical experiences of colonialism (e.g., loss of land, culture, life-ways, and language, the Indian Wars, Manifest Destiny, and boarding schools) and their generational impact on Indigenous Peoples and communities. Cultural appropriation includes adding or including culture-specific knowledge in social work courses regarding wrongful use and/or theft of cultural material or nonmaterial items from the cultures of others. Identity refers to the importance of social workers understanding how the formation of personal and cultural identity among Indigenous Peoples and communities is essential to their psychological and physiological wellness. The theme of identity includes having Indigenous Peoples and tribal governments rather than colonizing forces establish tribal national citizenship and definitions of family relationships.

Elder Epistemology

Elder epistemology refers to ways of knowing through elders. This study employed the tenets of indigenous elder epistemology. Christensen and Poupart (2013) describe the important role of tribal elders and argue that it is essential to incorporate their knowledge whenever possible and appropriate. Consulting with tribal elders is not only a way to incorporate elder knowledge; it is culturally respectful. Importantly from a research validity perspective, it is also a way to check the themes that emerged from study. Checking with tribal elders allows for increased clarity and to validate findings that emerged from the data to be connected back to a tribal community perspective.

Three indigenous elders, two female and one male, served as advisors and informed this study post-data analysis. The elders contributed to and were consulted regarding the

identification of categories and themes that emerged from the data and provided recommendations about the direction of the research. Here is an example of how a theme from the findings grounded back to tribal communities and indigenous lived experiences: an elder who was consulted on this study is one generation removed from both parents being removed and sent to Indian boarding schools. The elder explained with personal child treatment examples the importance for social workers to understand that these historical events are painful and not far removed from the present-day.

Another elder discussed the importance of social workers to understand trauma, specifically that “healing occurs over generations, not because someone wills it to be gone”. Another elder comments focused on the qualifications of social works. That not only should social workers understand indigenous history and tribal governance structures, but that it cannot be assumed that an indigenous social worker understands their own history and culture.

Another elder focused on appropriation and cultural identity, specifically to discuss the pain that Indian mascots can inflict on *our children* and how that pain can be internalized. Overall, the elders expressed a need for social workers to better understand indigenous history; the impacts of loss of land, language, and life ways; and the sovereign status of tribes. Although tribal elders affirmed the need for social workers to be well prepared to work with and for indigenous peoples and nations, there was also a reminder for social workers to acknowledge their role in removal of indigenous children from their homes in the boarding school era.

Potential Implications

In the context of earlier literature (Steinman, 2012; Weaver 1999, 2000), this study can potentially contribute to improved standards of social work practice by further informing social work’s principles of best practice in the social work curriculum when working with Indigenous

Peoples. Other implications include: (a) social work education should be inclusive of Indigenous-centric policy and practice standards when working with Indigenous Peoples, (b) professional practice methods should be informed by decolonization theory and action, and (c) expanded research should explore the use of elder epistemology as an aspect of culturally based programs and practice development.

Strengths and Limitations

The primary strength of this study is that Indigenous social workers are the primary respondents and provide a preeminent voice to inform the social work curriculum regarding Indigenous content areas. The exploratory nature of the study is another strength; the open-ended question, *From the perspective of Indigenous social workers, what should be included in the social work curriculum?*, provided a format that allowed respondents to potentially identify a wide range of content areas stemming from both their own practice experience and their cultural identities and tribal affiliations. A final strength of this study is the exemplary quotes. Indigenous people make up 2% of the U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014), and the percentage of professional Indigenous social workers is even smaller. The availability of Indigenous voices, specifically those educated as social workers and current practitioners, is a valuable asset as social work programs and educators design the social work curriculum.

As is often the case, a strength can also be a limitation. The exploratory nature of the study is also a limitation. Although the study led to broad identification of themes, by design the study does not drill into specific themes with the precision that a quantitative design would have.

Directions for Future Work

The Indigenous respondents in the study came primarily from woodland tribes in the upper Midwest of the US. Woodland tribes in the same geographic region comprise the study's

non-Indigenous social worker participants. Representation from social workers from specific tribes in other regions would be more representative of Indigenous Peoples. Future studies could also expand on the exploratory nature of the study. The study could be replicated to assess whether its themes reemerge. The identified themes can also be used to move beyond an exploratory study. Each individual theme, or the primary practice-orientated versus policy-oriented curriculum areas, could be studied in more depth. Finally, specific curriculum contents could be developed from each extended study.

Conclusion

Commitments, acknowledgement, and social-political action regarding aspects of diversity along with sensitivity to the distinction and uniqueness of populations and individuals are hallmarks of the social work profession. Through its EPAS, the CSWE presents the curriculum standards for accredited social work programs, and an essential aspect of social worker preparation is diversity standards. Indigenous individuals and Peoples are recognized in the CSWE's diversity standard in the 2015 EPAS with the descriptor *tribal sovereign status*. Theoretical decolonization perspectives and elder epistemology were the contextual frameworks for this research project. This exploratory qualitative study involved interviewing Indigenous social workers and select non-Indigenous social workers who have experience working on Indian reservations and garnering all of their perspectives on what should be included in the social work curriculum specific to tribal sovereign status, in order to prepare emerging social workers to work with Indigenous Peoples and communities. The findings indicate that Indigenous-relevant content is recommended for both policy-oriented and practice-oriented social work courses. Historical trauma, cultural appropriation, and cultural identity were identified as practice-oriented curriculum content themes. Tribal governance structure, historical policy and action,

self-governance, and environmental justice were identified as policy-oriented curriculum content themes. Further research is necessary in this area of the social work curriculum and social work professional preparation. The diversity of Indigenous Peoples, their distinct languages, cultures, and life-ways, and dissimilar colonization experiences over centuries warrant ongoing research that will continue to develop knowledgeable and sensitive practices for working with Indigenous Peoples and communities.

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Indigenous Communities and Peoples: Effective Social Work Practice

Amy Fischer Williams

Saint Catherine University | University of Saint Thomas

Author Note:

Correspondence concerning this document should be addressed to Amy Fischer Williams,
University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, Department of Social Work, Swart Hall, 800 Algoma
Boulevard, Oshkosh, Wisconsin 54901.

Abstract

The accrediting body of social work programs, the Council on Social Work Education, outlines Engaging Diversity and Difference in Practice as one of its competency-based standards in the social work curriculum. One facet of diversity and difference in practice, as described in the educational standards, is tribal sovereign status. The Council first specifically included tribal sovereignty in its 2015 educational standards (CSWE, 2015). This document platforms the development of an original master's level social work course titled *Indigenous Communities and Peoples: Effective Social Work Practice*. Decolonization is the theoretical conceptual framework that informs the course design, and tribal sovereign status content is central to the learning objectives. The course incorporates theories and concepts specific to tribal sovereignty into social work curricula with the intent to prepare social workers to work and collaborate with Indigenous people and communities. The *Indigenous Communities and Peoples: Effective Social Work Practice* course integrates the findings of a qualitative study where Indigenous social workers were asked to inform the curriculum content. The organizational strata of the course include 5 learning modules: colonialism and historical trauma, tribal sovereign status and policy enactment, tribal governance structure and self-governance, indigenous cultural identity, and environmental justice. The course syllabus is outlined and includes: the course description, learning objectives, assigned readings and materials, measurements to align with CSWE dimensions, course assignments, annotated notes to the instructor, and rubrics. Social work programs and faculty can also consider the incorporation tribal sovereign status content into existing courses.

Introduction

The decolonization theoretical spectrum was drawn on as the primary conceptual framework for the purpose to develop a social work course that incorporates concepts of *tribal sovereign status* into the social work curriculum. Decolonization theory includes both ideological-orientations and action-oriented approaches as options to redress the inflictions of colonialism on Indigenous Peoples (Gray, M., Coates, J., Yellow Bird, M., & Hetherington, T., 2013; Aquash, 2013; Mbembe, 2013; Gibson, 2007). This social work course development project draws on existing social work literature, specifically studies in which Indigenous Peoples inform the social work curriculum and programs (Weaver, 1999; 2000). Literature that conceptualizes settler colonialism structures (Steinman, 2013; Wolfe, 2006) as well as scholarship that examine the effects of historical trauma further inform this newly developed course (Whitbeck, L. B., Adams, G. W., Hoyt, D. R., & Chen, X., 2004; Walls & Whitbeck, 2012).

This document outlines an MSW-level course design entitled *Indigenous Communities and Peoples: Effective Social Work Practice*. The development of this course is an aspect of the banded dissertation requirement for the doctorate of social work program at the University of St. Thomas and St. Catherine's University, and emerges from an exploratory study where the perspectives of indigenous social workers were collected to inform the social work curriculum about *tribal sovereign status*. Tribal sovereign status refers to the rights of indigenous peoples and tribes to self-govern.

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) is the accrediting body of baccalaureate master's degree programs in the United States and its territories. CSWE's Commission on Accreditation (COS) develops the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), the

measure by which social work programs secure accreditation and reaffirm their accreditation status. Prior to the 2015 Standards, although diversity was addressed broadly, there was not specific reference to tribal sovereignty or indigenous peoples. The descriptor *tribal sovereign status* is now included as a dimension of CSWE 2015 EPAS Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice.

The revisions in the 2015 Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) – Education and Policy Accreditation Standards (EPAS) provide an opportunity for social work educators and researchers to consider how programs will incorporate concepts related to tribal sovereignty into curricula. The integration Indigenous-relevant content intersects with social work practice perspectives on micro, mezzo, and macro levels, and is germane to both social work policy and practice courses.

The primary purpose of this course is to prepare advanced-level social work practitioners to more effectively work with indigenous peoples and communities. In order to facilitate a greater understanding of the distinctiveness of indigenous people and tribes, historical and legal frameworks of colonization, sovereignty, and action-efforts to decolonize are used to contextualize the course. The theoretical framework of decolonization and elder epistemology as a pedagogical approach further scaffold the course.

The course is designed as an in-person, 3-credit course to occur over a 15-week semester. With modification, it is possible to adapt the course to a hybrid format. Five central themes are used to organize the course and form its learning modules. These themes emerged from the study whereas Indigenous social workers were asked their perspectives about what should be in social work curriculum to best prepare social workers to work with Indigenous people and tribes.

COURSE TITLE

Indigenous Communities and Peoples: Effective Social Work Practice

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This MSW-level course examines historical and contextual factors that have contributed to the lived experience of Indigenous peoples in North America. The intersection of federal policy and *tribal sovereign status* is studied, with specific attention to how each influence effective social work practice. The course is organized into five primary topics: colonialism and historical trauma; tribal sovereign status and policy action; tribal governance structure and self-governance; cultural identity; and indigenous environmental justice. The course is taught from a decolonizing social work theoretical perspective and elder epistemology “ways of knowing by means of elders” is utilized.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the connection between the acts of colonialism waged on the Indigenous Peoples of North America and historical and generational trauma. (Module 1)
2. Analyze and critically evaluate the major theoretical frameworks of decolonization. (Module 1)
3. Explain tribal sovereign status and its intersection with tribal self-governance, indigenous identity, and citizenry. (Module 2 & 4)
4. Analyze and critically evaluate the effects of U.S. federal policy enactment specific to indigenous peoples and respective indigenous action responses, and their intersection with the social work. (Modules 2 & 3)
5. Understand and explain the significance of tribal self-governance and sovereignty.
6. Identify and explain acts of colonization and indigenous efforts of decolonization that shape indigenous cultural identity. (Module 4)
7. Identify an indigenous-salient environmental justice effort, and in the context of tribal self-governance analyze the applicability of social work planned change efforts (Module 5)
8. Deliberate and reflect on the course material using the pedagogical approach of elder epistemology. (Modules 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

Competencies and Dimensions

The assessment and measurement of CSWE Accreditation Standards into the social work curriculum of accredited programs is competency-based. The CSWE EPAS (2015) competency addressed in this course is Competency 2 - Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice defined in Table 2. The matrix of course assignments, behavioral indicators, and aligning dimensions (values, knowledge, affective reaction, and critical thinking) are outlined in Table 3.

Table 2:
2015 EPAS Competency 2 – full text

<p>Below is Competency 2 – Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice – it is referenced from the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) – Education Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). The phrase <i>tribal sovereign status</i> is one aspect of the social work profession’s diversity competency. It is provided here for reference and to contextualize integration of sovereignty concepts within the at-large curriculum.</p>
<p>Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that, as a consequence of difference, a person’s life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power. Social workers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels; • present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences; and • apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies. <p style="text-align: right;">(CSWE, 2015, p. 7)</p>

The table below outlines how the generalist behaviors and dimensions are measured in the *Indigenous Peoples and Communities: Effective Social Work Practice* course. The performance

descriptors also can be adapted into other social work courses where Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice is measured. Performance descriptions, corresponding course assignments, and dimensions are summarized. Students demonstrate proficiency by means of the course assignments. Competency ratings are also measured as part of the field practicum assessment, the signature pedagogy of social work education.

Table 3
Measurement of generalist behaviors and dimensions

Generalist Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice		
Performance Description	Assessment procedures and assignments	Dimensions
2.1 Apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.	Discussion Posts Environmental Policy Paper	Values Critical Thinking Affective Reaction
2.2 Present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences.	Tribal Elder Panel Discussion Discussion Posts Tribal Sovereign Status Paper	Values Knowledge Affective Reaction Critical Thinking
2.3 Apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.	Discussion Posts In-class discussion Environmental Policy Practice Presentation	Values Knowledge Affective Reaction

MODULE 1: COLONIALISM and HISTORICAL TRAUMA

This module introduces colonialism and decolonization within social work disciplinary and theoretical frameworks. Attention is given to the colonialism and its connection to historical and generational trauma. Discernment of sensitive and knowledgeable social work practice coordinated with indigenous people and communities is studied and deliberated.

Annotated note to instructors: In this module students map the theoretical terrain of decolonization. We are seeking to become comfortable with concepts and delineations such as: western, non-western, indigenous, indigenization, colonialism, and decolonization, and then thinking about how these concepts relate to historical and generational trauma. Students are then introduced to elder epistemology and the cultural significance of knowing and learning through elders.

Module 1: Learning Objectives

1. Understand the connection between the acts of colonialism waged on the Indigenous Peoples of North America and historical and generational trauma.
2. Analyze and critically evaluate the major theoretical frameworks of decolonization.
3. Deliberate and reflect on the course material using the pedagogical approach of elder epistemology.

Readings

Gray, M., Coates, J., Yellow Bird, M., & Hetherington, T. (2013). *Decolonizing social work*.

Surrey, UK: Ashgate.

Chapter 1 “Indigenization, Indigenous Social Work and Decolonization: Mapping the Theoretical Terrain” by Mel Gray and Tiana Hetherington

Chapter 4 “Why Decolonized Social Work is More than Cross-Culturalism” by Ann Joselynn Baltra-Ulloa

Ehlers, C., Gizer, I., Gilder, D., Ellingson, J., & Yehuda, R. (2013). Measuring historical trauma in an American Indian community sample: Contributions of substance dependence, affective disorder, conduct disorder and PTSD. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence, 133*(1), 180–187.

Smith, A. (2005). Conquest: Sexual violence and American Indian genocide. In *Boarding school abuses and the case for reparations*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

Chapter 2 Boarding School Abuses and the Case for Reparations.

MODULE 2: TRIBAL SOVEREIGN STATUS and POLICY ENACTMENT

This module reviews tribal sovereign status and U.S. government policies with attention to the intersection of tribal governments and citizenry. Domestic Dependency, the Allotment Act, Reorganization, Termination and Restoration era, and Self-determination are examined with attention to the relevancy and implications to social work practice on the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

Annotated note to instructors: Key to this module is for students to understand the foundational legal structures that underpin tribal sovereign status (i.e. treaties, nation-status, law of the land status, and the US Constitution). Once this foundational knowledge is achieved, tribal case examples are introduced. Policies around Menominee termination and restoration are included here as examples. However, additional or different assigned readings and case studies that pertain to tribes closer to your respective university or region may be used to illustrate tribal sovereignty and its related policy.

Module 2: Learning Objectives

1. Explain tribal sovereign status and its intersection with tribal self-governance, indigenous identity, and citizenry.
2. Analyze and critically evaluate the effects of U.S. federal policy enactment specific to indigenous peoples and respective indigenous action responses, and their intersection with the social work.
3. Deliberate and reflect on the course material using the pedagogical approach of elder epistemology.

Audio

Deer, A. (n.d.). *Menominee Indians lecture the Menominee Nation*. Madison, Wisconsin:

American Indian Studies Program University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Readings

Echohawk, J. E. (2013). Understanding tribal sovereignty: The Native American Rights Fund. *Expedition*, 55(3), 18–23.

Smith, A. (2005). Conquest: Sexual violence and American Indian genocide. In *Boarding school abuses and the case for reparations*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.
Chapter 7 *Anticolonial Responses to Gender Violence*.

Steinman, E. (2012). Settler colonial power and the American Indian Sovereignty Movement: Forms of domination; Strategies of transformation. *American Journal of Sociology*, 117(4), 1073–1130. doi:10.1086//662708

Menominee Restoration Act: Public law 93–197, H.R. 10717, 93rd Cong. (1973).

Recommended

Benton, T. H. (1846). Senator Thomas Hart Benton on Manifest Destiny. *Congressional Globe*, 29(1), 917–918.

MODULE 3: TRIBAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE and SELF-GOVERNANCE

This module surveys the tenants of tribal governance structure in the U.S. It also examines self-governance as exercised by tribal governments. Self-governance case studies relevant to social work practice are deliberated.

Annotated note to instructors: In this module students are introduced and examine specific policies that are specific to acts and exercise of sovereignty. There is opportunity in this module, once the policies are read or discussed, to consider the stereotypes and misinformation about tribes and tribal members. For examples: the treaty rights to hunt and fish, land in trust versus fee status, the gaming and casino operations, taxation etc. can be explained once there is foundational knowledge of tribal sovereign status coupled with an understanding of self-governance. This module also the understanding of elder epistemology and the role of elders is

strengthened. It is important for students to consider the status of elders prior to the elder panel learning experience.

Module 3: Learning Objectives

1. Analyze and critically evaluate the effects of U.S. federal policy enactment specific to indigenous peoples and respective indigenous action responses, and their intersection with the social work.
2. Deliberate and reflect on the course material using the pedagogical approach of elder epistemology.

Readings

Akee, R. Q., Spilde, K. A., & Taylor, J. B. (2015). The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act and its effects on American Indian economic development. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 29(3), 185–208. doi:10.1257/jep.29.3.185

Cross, T. (2011). A mission not impossible: Understanding and reducing disparities and disproportionality. Retrieved from National Indian Child Welfare Association website: https://www.nicwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/MissionNotImpossible_DisparitiesDisproportionality.pdf

Daehnke, J., & Lonetree, A. (2011). Repatriation in the United States: The current state of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 35(1), 87–97.

Di Palma, J. (2014). Adoptive Couple v. Baby Girl: The Supreme Court's distorted interpretation of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978. *Loyola of Los Angeles Law Review*, 47(2), 523–538.

Larkin, J. J., & Luppino-Esposito, J. (2012). The Violence Against Women Act, federal criminal jurisdiction and Indian tribal courts. *BYU Journal of Public Law*, 27(1), 1–40.

Guest Speaker

Elder epistemology “ways of knowing” is utilized in this course. A small panel (2-3) of indigenous elders is convened in during Module 2. The course instructor will assemble a panel discussion whereas tribal elders discuss their lived experience: cultural identity, respective band/or tribal worldview, cultural distinction and values, and perspective about social work practice standards when working with indigenous communities and peoples. The discussion panel is an interactive experience whereas students plan for the guest speaker opportunity.

Recommended

National Indian Child Welfare Association. (2018). *A guide to compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act*. Retrieved from <https://www.nicwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Guide-to-ICWA-Compliance-2018.pdf>

Ray, F. (2011). Preserving Indian preference for Native American self-governance. *American Indian Law Review*, 36(1), 223–252.

MODULE 4: INDINGEOUS CULTURAL IDENTITY

This module examines historical and present-day complexities of indigenous cultural identity, belonging, and tribal citizenship statuses. Pre and post-colonization indigenous life-ways and identity are reviewed. Indigenous imagery, mascots, and cultural appropriation and their intersection with identity are examined. Indigenous resiliency, sovereignty preservation, and decolonization action-efforts are explored.

Annotated note instructors: In this module students are introduced to aspects affecting indigenous identity to include imagery and mascots. Concepts of self-governance are purposefully introduced before cultural identity so it is clear that tribes have the right to determine their membership. The Ratteree & Hill (2017) readings provide clear examples of colonialism in the 21st century. This module also provides space to discuss or integrate readings Two Spirit identity and people and/or urban Indian communities.

Module 4: Learning Objectives

1. Identify and explain acts of colonization and indigenous efforts of decolonization that shape indigenous cultural identity.
2. Deliberate and reflect on the course material using the pedagogical approach of elder epistemology.

Readings

Chaney, J., Burke, A., & Burkley, E. (2011). Do American Indian Mascots = American Indian People? Examining implicit bias towards American Indian People and American Indian Mascots. *American Indian & Alaska Native Mental Health Research: The Journal of the National Center*, 18(1), 42–62.

Christensen, R., & Poupart, L. M. (2012) Elder teachers gather at Manitou Api, Manitoba: Igniting the fire, gathering wisdom from all nations. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 25(7), 933–949. doi:[10.1080/09518398.2012.720733](https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2012.720733)

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“Vampire Policy is Bleeding Us Dry – Blood Quantums, Be Gone!” p. 77-79 by Suzan Shown Harjo

“Reconsidering Blood Quantum Criteria for the Expansion of Tribal Jurisdiction” p. 260-270 by Rebecca M. Webster

Recommended

Kingstone, L. (2015). The destruction of identity: Cultural genocide and Indigenous Peoples. *Journal of Human Rights*, 14(1), 63–83. doi:[10.1080/14754835.2014.886951](https://doi.org/10.1080/14754835.2014.886951)

MODULE 5: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

This module examines indigenous environmental justice concepts, policies, and political action-efforts. Through the use of case studies, the intersection of tribal, federal, and local environmental law and policy is studied. Environmental action-efforts are compared and analyzed. The social work planned change process is critically analyzed to discern to what extent the social work professional macro-level involvement has a place in indigenous environmental justice issues.

Annotated note to instructors: The use of environmental case studies, activism, and legal precedent are useful for students to understand Indigenous environment justice and how it intersects with colonial land grabs. The environmental assessment tool kit can be applied to regional or global environmental onslaughts. The content in this module provide an opportunity to analyze and discuss the parallels between human injustices and environmental injustices.

Module 5: Course Objectives

1. Identify an indigenous-salient environmental justice effort, and in the context of tribal self-governance analyze the applicability of social work planned change efforts.
2. Deliberate and reflect on the course material using the pedagogical approach of elder epistemology.

Required

Hoover, C., Cook, K., Plain, R., Sanchez, K., Waghivi, V., Miller, P., & Carpenter, D. O. (2012).

Indigenous Peoples of North America: Environmental exposures and reproductive justice.

Environment Health Perspectives, 120(12), 1645–1649. doi:10.1289/ehp1205422

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community capabilities. *Global Environmental Politics*, 10(4), 12–35.

Women's Earth Alliance and Native Youth Sexual Health Network Alliance Partnership. (2018).

Environmental Assessment Toolkit. *Violence on the land, violence on our bodies:*

Building an Indigenous response to environmental violence. Retrieved from

<http://landbodydefense.org/resources/environmental-assessment>

Documentary

Fox, J. (Producer), Dewey, M. & Spione, J. (Codirectors). (2017). *Awake, a dream from*

Standing Rock [DVD]. United States: Bullfrog Films.

Recommended

Olive, A. & Rabe, A. (2016). Indigenous environmental justice: Comparing the United States and Canada's legal frameworks for endangered species conservation. *American Review of Canadian Studies*, 46(4), 496–512. doi:10.1080/02722011.2016.1255654

LaDuke, W. (1999). *All our relations: Native struggles for land and life*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

Chapter 1 Akwesasne: Mohawk mothers' milk and PCBs

Chapter 4 Nuclear waste: dumping on the Indians

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Module 1: Written Discussion Post

Online discussion post: Drawing from the assigned module readings, write a 400 word essay that: discusses the theoretical tenets of “decolonizing social work” and the relationship between colonization and historical trauma. Respond to the original discussion posts of two classmates. Discussion post responses build on the theoretical tenets and deliberate the intersection of social work professional practice with historical trauma. Two response posts required. Limit response posts to 150 words.

Module 2: Written Discussion Post

Online discussion post: Drawing from the assigned module readings, write a 400 word essay that: discusses “settler colonial dynamics” in the context of the Allotment Act, Termination and Restoration, and/or Self-determination. Respond to the original discussion posts of two classmates. Discussion post responses build on the policy discussion and deliberate the intersection of indigenous activism at the macro level. Two response posts required. Limit response posts to 150 words.

Module 3: Written Discussion Post

Online discussion post: Drawing from the assigned module readings, write a 400 word essay that: discusses *tribal governance structure*. Use one of the required readings to illustrate how tribal governance and sovereignty are enacted. Respond to the original discussion posts of two classmates. Discussion post responses build on the policy case examples (i.e. Indian Child Welfare Act, Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, or Violence Against Women Act) and deliberate policy intersection with social work professional practice. Two response posts required. Limit response posts to 150 words.

Module 4: Written Discussion Post

Online discussion post: Drawing from the elder panel discussion and the module readings, write a 400 word essay that: discusses *indigenous identity* and its intersection with social work professional practice. Respond to the original discussion posts of two classmates. Discussion post responses build on elder panel and readings, and reflect on ethical professional practice rooted in practice humility and acknowledgment of self-governance and sovereignty. Two response posts required. Limit response posts to 150 words.

Tribal Sovereign Status Paper

Select 1 tribal nation or band whose reservation is located in the United States. Develop a 12-page research paper that outlines the intersection of nation-to-nation treaties, federal policy or law, and tribal laws and self-governance policies that both attempt to erode and sustain the sovereign status of the tribe you have selected. Begin the paper with an introduction of the nation or band you have selected for the assignment. Organize the paper historically. Identify and contextualize the occurrences and policies that have and do contribute to the Nation’s sovereignty.

Environmental Policy Practice Paper

Identify an indigenous-salient environmental policy and activism issue. Conduct a literature review and write a 12-page research paper. Include the following sections in the paper: 1) introduction and policy description, 2) historical and political context, 3) cultural significance to indigenous peoples and territories, 4) description of activism and resistance, 5) address jurisdictional and sovereignty issues related to the selected policy, and 6) discuss social work ethical response in the context of tribal self-governance to the policy issue.

Table 4
Rubric for tribal sovereign status and environmental justice assignments

The rubric below outlines the assignment dimensions and related descriptors for use in grading the Tribal Sovereign Status and Environmental Justice assignments.			
Dimension	Description	Comments	Points
Topic and Introduction: 2 pts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Topic is clear and succinctly introduced ○ Direction of paper is evident and well-established 		
Content: 6 pts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Minimum of 8 scholarly sources ○ Extent to which the selection of sources build the argument or rationale of the paper ○ Sources contribute to the execution and flow of the paper ○ Connection to social work practice on micro, mezzo, and macro levels is evident 		

Organization: 4 pts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Employs logical progression throughout ○ Sentence and paragraph structure contributes to the organizational flow of the paper 		
Writing Quality: 6pts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clearly written ○ APA format throughout ○ Grammar and spelling 		
Discussion: 2pts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reflective discussion addresses implications for social work practice 		
Total Points:			

Environmental Policy Presentation

Students present to the class the respective Environmental Policy Paper findings. Incorporate the 6 sections addressed in the paper and integrate teaching visual aids (i.e. PowerPoint, video clips, handouts). Presentations are 12-15 minutes in length, and presenters facilitate a brief post-presentation class discussion not to exceed 5 additional minutes.

Table 5
Rubric for environmental justice presentation assignment

Individual Presentation Skills		
Exemplary	Competent	Developing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The presenter spoke clearly, slowly, and loudly enough. ○ The presenter used expressive, appropriate body language. ○ The presenter used all the time allotted but did not speak too long. ○ The presenter used anecdotes appropriately to liven up and illustrate the presentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The presenter was understood but sometimes unclear; however, intelligibility was not compromised. ○ The presenter’s body language did not distract significantly. ○ The presenter’s timing was too long or too brief. ○ Anecdotes were used, but they were over or underused to liven up or illustrate the presentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The presenter mumbled, spoke too fast or too slow; intelligibility was compromised. ○ The presenter’s body language distracted seriously from the content. ○ The presenter barely used the time allotted or used excessively too much time. ○ The lack of anecdotes made the presentation dull.
Individual Content		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facts and examples were detailed, accurate, and appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facts and examples were mostly detailed, accurate, and appropriate, but 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facts and examples were seriously lacking in detail, inaccurate, or

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Theories and content were accurately described and appropriately used. ○ Analyses, discussions, and conclusions were explicitly linked to examples, facts, and theories 	<p>there were lapses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Theories were referenced but they were either not accurately described or not appropriately used. ○ The connection between analyses, discussions, and conclusions is evident, but it is not explicitly linked to examples, facts, and theories. 	<p>inappropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Theories and content referenced were inaccurately described and inappropriately used or not referenced or used at all. ○ There is no clear connection between analyses, discussions, and examples, facts, and theories.
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The rubric is adapted from: (Stevens & Levi, 2005)

SUMMARY OF STUDENT EVALUATION REQUIREMENTS

Online Discussion Post Assignments (4 @ 7 points each)	28%
Class Participation and Leadership	12%
Tribal Sovereign Status Paper	20%
Environmental Policy Practice Paper	20%
Environmental Policy Practice Presentation	10%

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