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Abstract

Native men in higher education experience among the lowest persistence and graduation rates in the United States (Condition of Education, 2020). Native men are subjected to systemic barriers brought by settler colonialism such as racism and patriarchal hegemony which negatively impact their perceptions of masculinity and forces them to move away from their traditional cultural teachings (Boyden, et al., 2014; Innes & Anderson, 2015). These systemic barriers also detrimentally impact the perceptions and experiences of Native men in higher education (Poolaw, 2018; Still, 2019). The experiences of Native men in higher education still need to be explored further (Reyes & Shotton, 2018). Native students often feel marginalized, and their experiences are made invisible in education research and statistics, causing their stories to be left untold.

Using Indigenous Storywork (Archibald, 2008) and Critical Race Methodology (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), this qualitative study examines the experiences of 13 Haudenosaunee men in higher education and grapples with Indigenous student perceptions of Indigenous masculinities. This study aims to address the following research questions: How do Haudenosaunee men understand Indigenous masculinities? What are the experiences of Haudenosaunee men in higher education? How do perceptions of masculinity affect Haudenosaunee men in higher education? This is an asset-based study, designed to empower Native students, strengthen Haudenosaunee communities, and to inform practice for higher education professionals who are committed to maintaining inclusive campuses amidst the growing demands of richly diverse populations locally, nationally, and globally.

Keywords: Indigenous men, higher education, masculinities, Indigenous methodologies, Critical race composite counternarrative, Haudenosaunee

HAUDENOSAUNEE MEN AND MASCULINITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION:
PERCEPTIONS, REMINDERS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES TO COMMUNITY

by

Hugh Burnam

B.S. Buffalo State College 2010

M.S. Buffalo State College 2011

Dissertation

Submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
Cultural Foundations of Education

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I am so fortunate to have crossed paths with so many whose presence made this manuscript possible. First and foremost, I give thanks to the Creator who has allowed me to continue to do what I feel called to do, nya:weñhah soñgwaya'di:sa'ih.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication.....	xv
Prelude.....	xvi
Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
Sgeñ:ñoñ/ Greeting.....	2
Purpose.....	3
A Statement of the Problem.....	4
Indigenous Men and Masculinities.....	5
Making Visible the Experiences of Native Women.....	8
American Indian/ Alaska Natives in Education.....	9
Native Education Statistics.....	11
National Statistics.....	12
Study Rationale.....	15
Definition of Terms.....	17
Research Questions.....	18
Methodology.....	18
Significance of Study.....	19
Theoretical Frameworks.....	21
Tribal Critical Race Theory.....	21
Cultural Resilience.....	24
Indigenous Nation Building.....	26
Conversations at my Gram’s Table.....	27
Summary of Chapters.....	28
Chapter Two: Literature Review.....	30
A Haudenosaunee Worldview: Creation, the Great Law, and Gaiwiyoh.....	30
A Haudenosaunee Creation Story.....	31
The Great Law of Peace.....	36
Gaiwiyoh: The Good Message.....	37

A Brief History of Native American Higher Education.....	39
The Colonial Period.....	39
The Federal Period.....	45
The Self-Determination Period.....	52
Native Students in Higher Education.....	56
“Living in Two Worlds”	57
Campus Hostility, Racial Discrimination, and Microaggressions.....	58
Tokenization.....	58
Stereotypes.....	59
In/Visibility.....	60
Academically Underprepared and Social Context.....	60
Financial Barriers.....	61
Family/ Native Role Models.....	62
Non-Native Faculty/ Staff.....	62
Nation-Building: “Giving Back”	62
Native Identity.....	63
Cultural Strength to Persevere.	63
Native Enrollment and Achievement: “Gender Gap”	64
A Haudenosaunee Context in Higher Education.....	65
Figure 1.0 Map of Haudenosaunee Nations 1600- Present Day.....	66
Figure 2.0 Map of SUNY Campuses in New York State.....	68
Haudenosaunee Experiences in Higher Education.....	68
Indigenous Masculinities.....	70
Heteropatriarchal Masculinity.....	71
Complementarity.....	73
In/Visibility.....	76
Lack of Research.....	77
Overlapping/ Intersecting Identities.....	81

Intergenerational Trauma.....	82
Mentors, Fathers, and Role Models.....	83
Decolonizing Patriarchy.....	86
Hosgä:’eñgehda’ (“He carries a burden/ responsibility”/ Warrior).....	87
Summary.....	88
Chapter Three: Methodology.....	90
Research Questions.....	90
Researcher Positionality.....	90
An Indigenous Research Paradigm.....	96
Indigenous Storywork.....	98
Critical Race Composite Counternarrative.....	102
Composite Characters.....	103
Stock Stories.....	104
“Fictionalized” Scenes and their Relevance.....	105
A Pilot Study.....	106
Pilot Study Recruitment.....	106
Pilot Study Participants.....	107
Interviews.....	107
Pilot Study Closing Thoughts.....	109
A Brief Overview of the Study.....	121
Participants.....	122
Table 1.1. Total Participants in Study.....	122
Table 1.2. Undergraduate and Post Graduate Enrollment Status.....	123
Table 1.3. Educational Attainment.....	123
Table 1.4. Ages of participants.....	124
Table 1.5. Indigenous Nation Representation.....	124
Table 1.6. Undergraduate Program/ Major Area.....	124
Table 1.7. Current and Former Student-Athletes.....	124

Interviews.....	125
Data Analysis.....	126
Finding Codes and Themes.....	127
Generating Stock Stories and Composite Characters.....	128
Summary.....	131
Chapter Four: Findings, Part I.....	132
The Composite Characters and Contexts.....	132
Composite Characters.....	132
Teyo Jacobs.....	132
Zack Francis.....	133
Nathan Benedict.....	134
Saro Abrams.....	135
Nick Cook.....	136
Dr. Williams.....	137
Table 3.1. Composite Characters as Constructed from Emergent Themes.....	138
The Context: Big Town University (BTU) and a Haudenosaunee Community.....	140
Big Town University (BTU)	140
Summary.....	143
Chapter Five: Findings, Part II.....	144
Teyo.....	144
Lack of Support/ Underprepared.....	144
Campus Hostility: Dismissing Indigenous Worldviews.....	147
Non-Native Mentorship.....	148
First Generation College Student.....	151
Feelings of In/Visibility.....	152
Higher Education as Settler Colonialism.....	153
Intersectionality.....	154
Zack.....	157

Reluctance to Define Indigenous Masculinities.....	159
Brotherhood.....	162
Pathway: Lacrosse/ Student Athlete.....	163
Alcohol/ Substance Abuse.....	165
Spirituality.....	167
Vulnerability.....	172
Saro and Nathan.....	174
Pathway: Academically Driven.....	175
Pathway: Difference Between US and Canadian Experiences.....	176
Peers/ Partner Support.....	179
Native Student Program Support.....	180
Campus Hostility: Racial Microaggressions.....	181
Grappled with Indigenous Identity.....	182
Culture as Persistence: Elders and Language.....	184
Cultural Dissonance: “Two Worlds” Perception.....	185
Multicultural Opportunities as Strength.....	187
Mentorship/ Role Models.....	188
Culture As Persistence: Diplomacy/ Handling Confrontation.....	191
Culture as Persistence: “Warrior Mentality”.....	193
Culture as Persistence: “Confronting the Archetype”.....	196
Nick.....	198
Grappling with Identity: Sexuality.....	200
Complementarity.....	201
Asking for help as strength.....	204
Mental Health.....	205
Inter/Generational Trauma.....	206
Decolonizing Patriarchy.....	207
Addressing Stereotypes.....	209

Dr. Williams.....	210
Pathway: Military Veteran.....	211
Providing for Family.....	214
Hegemonic Masculinity.....	215
Independence as Strength.....	218
Giving Back/ Indigenous Nation Building.....	220
Chapter Six: Discussion, Results, and Conclusion.....	224
A Statement of the Problem.....	224
The Research Questions.....	225
Discission/ Analysis of Results.....	225
How Haudenosaunee men understand Indigenous masculinities.....	226
Experiences of Haudenosaunee men in higher education.....	229
Pathways to University/ College.....	229
Challenges.....	230
Culture and Community as Strengths.....	233
How perceptions of Indigenous masculinity effect Haudenosaunee men in higher education.....	234
Perceptions, Reminders, and Responsibilities to Community.....	240
Perceptions.....	240
Reminders.....	243
Responsibilities to Community.....	245
Recommendations.....	248
Promote Indigenous Visibility.....	248
Prioritize Indigenous Worldviews in Curricula.....	248
Support Indigenous Sovereignty and Indigenous Nation Building.....	249
Continue to Research the Experiences of Black, Indigenous, Men of Color.....	250
Limitations.....	250
Conclusion: A Letter to my Gram.....	252
Dear Gram.....	252

Epilogue.....	258
Appendices.....	260
Informed Consent Document (Pilot Study)	260
Informed Consent Document (Main Study)	265
Electronic Solicitation.....	272
Interview Guide- Pilot Study.....	273
Interview Guide- The Experiences of Haudenosaunee Men in Higher Education.....	274
References.....	276

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my Gramma Can. Gram, this work is a product of what you taught me. You are *how* I know. Your words, humor, and guidance weave in and out of this project where, like a bright beacon of light, you guide me back home. I love you, Gram. Until we meet again. -Hoots

PRELUDE

One day my Gramma Can walked through the door and said, “Hi” in her own chipper way. She sat down across from me, smiled, and asked, “So, how’s school going?” I sighed and looked down towards the table. The truth was, I felt alone at the university. The Onondaga Nation is a mere 4 miles away from Syracuse University, or “up the hill” as they say, yet I felt so alone there. After a few moments, I responded,

You know—people up there don’t even know who we are. A lot of people at the university don’t even know Native people exist. And if they do, they might think we are just poor, lazy, or alcoholics—all real negative things. They haven’t been through what we’ve been through. They don’t know what we know.

My Gram nodded, carefully listening. I took a deep breath and sat there in silence. My Gram rested her chin on the palm of her hand, looking away, as she thought in silence for a few moments. My Gram often did that. I remember the way that the sun came into the room and made everything bright on that day. The room became silent.

I watched as my son Hugh finished his homework and ran over to his cousin Bryant to play. As I sat there my Gram sipped her coffee. I remember thinking that I love the silence and the thoughtfulness that goes into my Gram’s comments. Eventually she turned to me and said softly,

You know, if you think about it, you probably weren't the first to come across this situation. I understand your frustration. When you get to that stone wall, just think of your Granny. It would have been her birthday two days ago. She'd be so proud of you.

I felt a lump forming in my throat when she said that. Granny Sue (Gehä’) was my Great Grandmother, my Gram’s mother in-law and my Grandpa Jake’s (Gehä) Mom. She was an

Onondaga Clanmother, and a first language Ononda'gega' speaker. Granny passed away when I was in high school and it was difficult for our family, especially for my Mom. I responded to her,

“I feel like I am working against myself; I don't know what I am doing.” That's when she gently said to me, “It all takes time to get change, believe it or not. . . Sometimes, Hugh, the good things take a really long time.”

My Gram, “Candy” Thomas “Gaheñ:dawaks” (meaning: “She shakes the field”) spoke to me during graduate school at Syracuse University. This *one* interaction above was actually *many* interactions throughout my dissertation journey. This exchange did not take one sitting, nor even one conversation, but many conversations with my Gram at the comfort of her dining room table. Of all the people who made this dissertation possible, I recall my Gram's words to show that Indigenous words are medicine that transcend the rigid scope of Western time and space—and that without her words, and enduring love, this dissertation would not have been possible.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

In an Interview with “Zack” (pseudonym), a Native man who graduated from Bigtown University (pseudonym), he described his experiences as a former student-athlete, a standout on the men’s lacrosse team. He connected his college experiences with his family and culture back home in his Haudenosaunee community.

Hugh: “So you used lacrosse as kind of, like a ticket?”

Zack: “[Lacrosse] was a tool to get to the next level, and to travel, and to get an education”

Hugh: “Mhm. What’s it like for you, playing lacrosse as an athlete and being a student?”

Zack: “It’s almost two different obstacles... One is being a college student, which is tough enough as it is. And then, having the athlete side, and then being a Native.” Zack’s eyes lowered. He scratched the back of his neck and continued, “So, encompassed all three of those, that’s pretty tough, because it is hard enough to get to college, hard enough being a Native in college, and having our background education was not always stressed. Um, having cultural, traditional values was always important to all of us, but I also knew education was important as well. I always knew I wanted to go, get an education. I always knew I wanted to come back to the [Haudenosaunee] Nation to help in some degree. So, I wasn’t worried about leaving home, because I knew I would always return home...”

In this excerpt, “Zack” is someone who describes the game of lacrosse, a medicine game among the Haudenosaunee, to excel in higher education. He knew that he wanted to return home to give back to his community. When I think about Haudenosaunee men in higher education, I often think about so many who forged a path for all of those who will come after. It is my hope

that this study shines light on the specific ways that Haudenosaunee men experience higher education and how they understand Haudenosaunee masculinities as they carry on their responsibilities to their communities.

Sgeñ:ñoñ/ Greeting

nyawenhah sgeñ:ñoñ. ganyeñ'gega' nwa'wagoñhwenjyo'deñ'. hotahyo:nih
nwa'wage'se:'deñh, gayei:waknoñsgeh. Hode'nhyahä:dye' niwakseñna'oñweh. Hugh Burnam
oñgyastha' ne' oñ'señ:nihgeha'. "I am thankful you are at peace (greetings). Kanienkehá:ka/
Mohawk is my Nation/ that kind of land/ earth. I am of the wolf clan/ line, of the People of the
Longhouse. My real/ original name is Hode'nhyahä:dye' ("He carries a stick on his shoulder").
Hugh Burnam is what they call me in settler/ non-Native ways." Like many Indigenous peoples
in my generation, I am not a fluent Indigenous language speaker—a result of generations of
systemic Indigenous erasure brought onto us by settler institutions like the Western education
system— but I do feel it is necessary to introduce myself in the ways of my people and our
ancestors before us.

I am of the Mohawk Nation, and I grew up in several places. I was born and raised on the
Onondaga Nation and later in predominately white border-towns to Indigenous communities.
Like many Haudenosaunee, I have grown accustomed to living within different Haudenosaunee
communities and adjusting to different customs and languages. For example, in my home
community in Onondaga, we introduce ourselves and greet one another first by saying that
"nyawenhah sgeñ:ñoñ" (I am thankful that you are at peace) or we may ask "sgeñ:ñoñ kheñ" (are
you at peace?). In Kanien'kéha/ Mohawk language we greet people by asking, "skennen'kó:wa
ken" ("Is the peace great?") or simply "Shé:kon" ("still great").

Our greetings are in reference to one of our original teachings prior to European contact

called the Great Law of Peace, which binds our Haudenosaunee Nations together. Despite forced elective governments (Busatta, 2009; Clements, 2016) and blood quantum requirements (Tallbear, 2013) by the US and Canada, individual Indigenous identity and Haudenosaunee nationhood were and *still* are dependent upon a Haudenosaunee person's maternal lineage (Hill, 2017; Williams, 2018). Governance, lineage, and family structures are all based in gendered roles and traditional Haudenosaunee ways of knowing before European contact, and yet now some of these concepts often shift in today's society, threatened by a settler colonial Western ideology. I will go more into depth with this in chapter two.

Among the Haudenosaunee, a greeting of peace also means to understand a longstanding and rich history of incorporating peace into daily life and into governance, into families and into communities. My intention is to have a good mind. Carrying teachings of peace, I intentionally center Haudenosaunee worldview throughout the rest of this study.

Purpose

Native students between the ages of 25-29 were reported to have earned a bachelor's degree or higher, at a rate of 14 percent— which is among the lowest, in comparison to other races (Hassar et al., 2020). Native men (39%) lag Native women (61%) in bachelors and associates degrees awarded from postsecondary institutions (de Brey et al., 2018). The purpose of this study is to examine Indigenous men and masculinities in higher education. I aim to answer the following questions: What are the experiences and perceptions of Haudenosaunee men in higher education? How do Indigenous students understand Indigenous Masculinities? How do definitions of masculinity affect Haudenosaunee men in higher education? This is an asset-based study, designed to empower Native students, strengthen Haudenosaunee communities, and to inform practice for higher education professionals who are committed to

maintaining inclusive campuses amidst the growing demands of richly diverse population nationally and globally.

A Statement of the Problem

Native men in higher education experience among the lowest persistence and graduation rates in the United States (Condition of Education, 2020). Native men are subjected to systemic barriers brought by settler colonialism including racism and patriarchal hegemony which negatively impact their perceptions of masculinity and forces them to move away from their traditional cultural teachings (Boyden, et al., 2014; Innes & Anderson, 2015). These systemic barriers also detrimentally impact the perceptions and experiences of Native men have in higher education (Poolaw, 2018; Still, 2019). The experiences of Native men in higher education still need to be explored further (Reyes & Shotton, 2018; Salvador, 2015). Native student experiences are often marginalized and made invisible in education research and statistics, leaving their stories left untold.

Reyes and Shotton (2018) describe that enrollment rates of Native men (40%) are low in comparison with Native women (60%) (p. 7) which also reflects patterns in graduation rates of Native men (18%) and Native women (26%) (Musu-Guillette et. al., 2017). Although Native men may enroll, persist, and graduate at lower rates than Native women in higher education, Native men *still* earn higher wages than Native women overall, while earning low in comparison with other races as a collective (US Census, 2016). Since many Haudenosaunee come from matrilineal/ matriarchal roots, I wondered about ways that Native men may both struggle to provide for family and to “fit” within a patriarchal system that runs counter to matrilineal/ matriarchal worldview.

I want to understand the ways that Haudenosaunee men may define Haudenosaunee

masculinity and also how Native students define Indigenous masculinity in higher education. I also wanted to understand the experiences of Haudenosaunee men in higher education.

Waterman and Lindley's (2013) study revealed the work that needs to be done around the experiences of Native men in higher education. Reyes and Shotton (2018) write, "Our understanding of the experiences of Indigenous males in particular remains incomplete" (p. 7).

Indigenous Men and Masculinities

Researchers suggest that Indigenous men and masculinities are influenced by patriarchal/ colonial hegemony which forces them to move away from their traditional cultural teachings (Boyden, et al., 2014; Hokowhitu, 2012; Innes & Anderson, 2015; Lee, 2013; Mckegney, 2012; Tengan, 2002). Lee (2013) writes that Diné (Navajo) men and masculinities have been influenced by their own cultures as well as American ideology. Diné men are forced to adhere to the crisis of masculinity, a sort of "performance" as "self-made, individualized men" within the context of their Indigenous lives (p. 4). This affects the ways that Diné men perceive their realities and understand their self-worth. Lee (2013) writes that, "Diné peoples, and many indigenous peoples, have damaged relationships between men and women based on the consequences of colonization" (p. 3). Diné reality that Lee (2013) describes exists similarly among Native peoples, including the Haudenosaunee (Antone, 2015).

Although Native men may enroll, persist, and graduate at lower rates than Native women in higher education, Native men earn higher wages than Native women overall (US Census, 2016). I wondered about social/ cultural pressures experienced by Native men and Native women to provide for family, to work, and to compete with wages of non-Native people generally. Since many Haudenosaunee come from matrilineal/ matriarchal roots, I wondered about ways that Native men may both struggle and benefit to earn wages in order to provide for family and to

“fit” within a patriarchal system that runs counter to matrilineal/ matriarchal worldview. How may Haudenosaunee values shift within the deeply rooted reality of gender and class disparity which Native men consciously and subconsciously internalize, perhaps perpetuating settler colonial hegemonic masculinity?

Considering all of this, I also wondered how work in trades and potential for higher earnings may affect Haudenosaunee male enrollment rates in higher education. As I considered more about socio-economic status, higher education, Haudenosaunee gender and masculinity, I thought about the trades, sports and family/ community.

Iron work/ Trades. Iron work is a common trade practice among Haudenosaunee men and some Haudenosaunee women (Hammil, 2004; Weitzman, 2014). Haudenosaunee communities are commonly very proud to be iron workers, including members of my own family and community, like my Dad and my Grandpa. I thought about the possibility for higher earning potential as an iron worker, which does not require a degree in higher education, and how this may influence Haudenosaunee men’s thoughts about whether or not to attend higher education. Although iron work is an often celebrated profession among Haudenosaunee, I’ve also heard many Haudenosaunee iron workers say, “You should still get your education”.

Lacrosse/ Sports. Lacrosse has been changed to become a collegiate and commercialized sport, perceived heavily as a “preppy”, white collar, and white male-dominated access point to higher education (the term “lax bro” came to mind) (Downey, 2018). Lacrosse is a medicine game, originally created by many Native peoples and known by Haudenosaunee, as “Dehonjikwaes” or “Tewaá:raton”. This is a game that is still played and practiced today among the Haudenosaunee in ceremonies by men, and for competition and recreation by men and women (Downey, 2018). Contentious discourse among Haudenosaunee about inclusion of

women's lacrosse has existed well within the last 50 years, maybe longer (Bassett, 2018; Delano, 1970). I wondered about Haudenosaunee men's perspectives on lacrosse as a way to access higher education, while at the same time, may prove to be complex as Native men and women struggle to maintain their sense of identity within a white-male dominated sport (ironically).

Family/ Community. I wondered about ways that family may influence Haudenosaunee men's experiences in higher education. I thought about gendered relations within family units and within larger communities of Haudenosaunee clans and nations. I thought about the shifting of gender roles among the Haudenosaunee, stemming from the past, to the context of today within a settler colonial context (Venables, 2010). In what ways do the complexities of family, community, and gendered Haudenosaunee worldview interact with life today?

In *the Gender of Flint*, Simpson (2014) reveals some of these complicated and politicized conversations among Mohawk people/ Kanienkehá:ka (Haudenosaunee), through socially and culturally constructed gender roles, in what she calls a "neotraditional" argument of taking "precontact" gender roles in Haudenosaunee communities and bringing them "into the contemporary" (p. 162). When a participant, a Mohawk woman, said to Simpson that Mohawk women are, "the caregivers and own the territory, and the caregivers of the children and keep the communities going while the men are away" (p. 162) this response aligns gendered teachings from the past and places these teachings into today's context, a relatively common Haudenosaunee response. Further, when Simpson (2014) asks a Mohawk man in her study, an iron worker at a local bar, to describe his feelings about gendered roles and Haudenosaunee identity, he provocatively re-prompts Simpson to define for herself, issues of gender, masculinity, and Indigenous nationhood (p. 170). I think his response acts as an important caveat for this study because I want to understand the ways that Haudenosaunee men may define *for*

themselves what Haudenosaunee masculinity means to them and also how those definitions may affect the experiences of Native students in higher education. Overall, I wondered about the gendered experiences of my community, I also wanted to know more about gendered Indigenous identity as Haudenosaunee men.

Making Visible the Experiences of Native Women

While I wondered about low enrollment, low persistence, and low graduation rates among Native men in higher education, I also wondered about the gendered relationships in my community from the perspectives and experiences of Native women. I wanted to know how all Native students understood Indigenous gender dynamics as well.

Native women living in Native communities are murdered at 10 times the national rate compared with people of other races (Bachman, et. al., 2008). *Teen Vogue* (Hopkins, 2018) reported that there were 5,700 cases of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women in the United States. *NPR* reported that when researchers Abigail Echo-Hawk and Annita Lucchesi asked 71 cities across the United States: *How many Native/ Indigenous women have gone missing or murdered?* Their queries were met with silence or confusion from nearly 60 percent of police departments that they asked, leaving a gap of at least 506 disappearances nationally (Domonoske, 2018).

I find it troublesome that national discourse around this issue is not more prevalent generally and that (the day that I wrote this section) US Congress was convinced to track missing and murdered Native peoples in the US (Savana's Act, 115th Congress, 2017-18). If the stories and experiences of Native women are all too often silenced, and crimes against them unreported, I wonder if the statistics on MMIW may also coincide with gendered experiences of Native women in higher education. I wanted to understand more from Native women about their

thoughts on their perceptions of Indigenous masculinities, and how these gendered constructs shaped their higher education experiences, which informed my pilot study. I share data from my pilot study in Methodology Chapter Three.

American Indian/ Alaska Natives in Education

Native students are often described as “at risk”, invisible, continue to be ignored, and labeled as “the problem” in educational institutions and research (Brayboy & Lomawaima, 2018; Shotton, Lowe, & Waterman, 2013). Native students remain at the bottom of mainstream achievement levels in education (Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2014; Rodriguez, 2018), are constantly discriminated against (Carney, 2017; Tachine, Cabrera & Yellow Bird, 2017) and experience issues with identity and cultural conflict (Chee, Shorty & Robinson Kurpias, 2019; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991).

As of 2020, according to the United States Census Bureau, 5.7 million people in the United States identify as American Indian/ Alaska Native or American Indian/ Alaska Native in combination with other races, which is approximately 1.7% of the United States population (United States Census Bureau, 2020). American Indians/ Alaska Natives have experienced alarming rates of cultural, language and land loss (LaDuke, 2017; Palmer, 2017), high rates of gendered and sexual violence (Lucchesi & Echo-Hawk, 2018; Rosay, 2016), the highest rates of poverty (Boomgarden, 2019; Empey, Garcia, & Bell, 2021), high rates of suicide (Leavitt, et al., 2018), lower life expectancy (Donovan, et al., 2015), and among the highest rates of alcohol and substance abuse along with mental health issues (Gone & Trimble, 2012).

One of the most harmful forms of forced assimilation and cultural genocide occurred with residential boarding schools among Native peoples (Brayboy, 2005; Carney, 1999; Grayshield et. al., 2015; Sky, 2015). The United States and Canadian governments sanctioned

the often involuntary and forced removal of Native youth from their homes and communities between primarily 1880 to 1930 (Little, 2017) and recorded as late as the 1980's (Johnston, 2015) which resulted in state-sponsored assimilation efforts through Western education and Christianity (Grayshield, et. al, 2015). Brayboy (2005) writes that education assimilation and cultural genocide policies were put into place to “kill the Indian and save the man” (p. 430). Native peoples experienced a large-scale systemically enacted loss of Native identity, language, culture and worldview. Well-documented cases of mental, physical, and sexual assault, often perpetrated by school administrators and staff onto Native youth, led to emotional and psychological trauma which severed Native familial and community relationships (Brave Heart, et al, 2011; Gregg, 2018). The psychological terror that Native Elders and community members experienced from residential boarding schools still reverberates today, some only one or two generations removed from our youth today.

While the United States makes promises of a socially conscious, equal, and equitable American Indian education, Native students are still experiencing issues of exclusion, racially charged and gendered micro-aggressions, the highest rates of bullying, and educational pitfalls kindergarten- higher education and beyond (Brayboy, & Lomawaima, 2018; Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2014; Davidson, Shotton, & Waterman, 2018). The US government (Mcfarland et al, 2019) reported that American Indian/ Native students experience the highest rates of bullying, ages 12-18, than any other race, at a rate of 27 percent compared to White students (23%), Black students (23%), Hispanic (16%) and Asian (7%) (Mcfarland, 2019, p. 74).

But since Native public-school teachers make up less than 1 percent of teachers, most Native students do not have opportunity to “see” teachers like them. This is compared to White teachers (80%), Hispanic (9%), Black (7%), Asian (2%), and Mixed race/ two or more races

(1%) (Mcfarland et al. 2019, p. 77). Native teachers also report the lowest average income (\$48,600) compared to Asian (\$61,350), Hispanic (\$56,240), White (\$55,120), Black (\$52,420), and Mixed race/ two or more races (\$52,750) (Mcfarland, 2019, p. 81).

Brayboy, Solyom and Castagno (2015) reaffirm that, “In spite of modest gains in achievement levels over the past thirty years, Native students collectively remain at the bottom of mainstream achievement measures” (p. 154). Though the research in this field has been growing, and I am thankful for the Indigenous researchers and non-Indigenous ally researchers who tireless work in this field, the research unfortunately it is still sparse in comparison with mainstream education efforts.

Native Education Statistics

While searching for statistics on Native students in higher education, I often found asterisk symbols like (–), *, (!) that described, “not applicable”, “not available”, or “interpret data with caution” meaning, there “may be too few cases for a reliable estimate” (McFarland, et al., 2018; Shotton, Lowe, & Waterman, 2013) which made it more apparent that Native students are often invisible in higher education statistics and research. In this small section, I briefly describe my own educational experiences and then I provide national statistics on Native education broadly.

Before I embarked on researching Native education statistics, I reflected on my own high school graduating class in 2004. I graduated with total of 15 Native students in high school: 10 women and 5 men, respectively.

Native Women. Out of 10 women with whom I graduated high school, four of them attended college as traditional undergraduate college students and graduated college/ university with bachelor’s degrees. Two women enrolled later as non-traditional undergraduate students,

returning to college and they graduated with bachelor's degrees. Two women earned master's degrees. In total, six out of ten Native women graduated from college, with two out of ten completing a master's degree.

Native Men. Out of five Native men with whom I graduated high school, two enrolled as traditional undergraduate students and graduated with bachelor's degrees. I was the only one earned a master's degree.

Native college graduates. Among all of my Native peers in high school, eight out of fifteen (53%) Native students graduated with bachelor's degrees, six (40%) Native women and two (13%) Native men. Three (20%) Native students completed (or will complete) master's degrees, two (13%) Native women and one (6%) Native man. This reality prompted me to think further about the lack of Native male attendance and completion in education, especially higher education.

National Statistics

Of the national statistics that I managed to find; I have found issues of access, persistence, and graduation rates of Native students in higher education to be alarming. I am also concerned about the lack of enrollment, persistence, and graduation rates among of Native males. The data highlighted below reveals this topic of concern. The following information comes from the National Center of Educational Statistics (NCES, 2019). I begin with high school completion data, postsecondary enrollment, associate's degree attainment, bachelor's degree attainment, and master's degree attainment.

High school Completion. Native students in K-12 are among the lowest performing student population in the United States. In 2019 the National Center for Educational Statistics (Hussar, et al., 2020) reported that 85 percent of Native American/ Native students were high

school completers, in comparison with Hispanic/ Latinx students (86%), White students (96%), Black students (91%), and Asian (97 %) (p. 237). Native girls graduate from high school at a rate of 90.9 percent while Native boys graduate high school at a rate of 76.5 percent (NCES, 2017).

Postsecondary Enrollment. American Indian/ Alaska Natives make up 129,000 or 1 percent of undergraduate enrollment rates (McFarland et. al., 2018). As of 2017, American Indian/ Alaska Natives between the ages of 18-24, enrolled in colleges at a rate of 20 percent, the lowest enrollment rate in comparison to every other racial group measured, including White (41%), Black (36%), Hispanic/ Latinx (36%), Asian (65%), Pacific Islanders (33%) and two or more races (41%) (Mcfarland, 2019). The US Department of Education (2018) reported that in 2016, Native women enroll in higher education degree granting institutions at a higher rate than Native men: Native women enroll at 60 percent compared to Native men who enroll at 40 percent, respectively (de Brey, et. al., 2019, p. 128).

Associates Degree Attainment. According to the *Condition of Education* (2020) data on 2019 education statistics reveals that Native students between the ages of 25 and 29 were reported to have earned an associate's degree or higher, at a rate of 23 percent, which is the lowest rate compared to Pacific Islanders (36%) Hispanic students (31%), Black students (40%), students with two or more races (45%), White students (56%), and Asian students (78%). (Hassar, et al., p. 205). The US Department of Education (2018) reported that in 2015-2016, Native women graduate at a rate of 65 percent compared to Native men who graduate at a rate of 35 percent, respectively (de Brey, et. al., 2019 p. 147).

Bachelor's Degree Attainment. According to the *Condition of Education* (2020) data on 2019 education statistics reveals that Native students between the ages of 25-29 were reported to

have earned a bachelor's degree or higher, at a rate of 14 percent, which is among the lowest, in comparison to Hispanic students (21%), Pacific Islanders (22%), Black students (29%), students with two or more races (34%), White students (45%), and Asian students (71%). (Hussar, et. al., 2020, p. 206). According to Musu-Guilette (2017) American Indian/ Alaska Natives graduate 4-year college within four years at a rate of 23 percent, in comparison with Black students (21%), White (44%), Hispanic/ Latinx (30%), Pacific Islander (27%), and Asian (48%). American Indian/ Alaska Natives graduate college within six years at a rate of 41 percent as compared with Black students (41%), White (63%), Hispanic/ Latinx (54%), Pacific Islander (50%), and Asian (71%) (p. 108). In 2015-16, Native men (39%) lagged behind Native women (61%) in bachelors and associates degrees awarded from postsecondary institutions (de Brey et al., 2019, p. 147).

Master's Degree Attainment. In the 2019-2020 academic year Native American/ Alaska Natives students reportedly earned a total of 3,549 master's degrees from post-secondary institutions in the United States (NCES, 2021). According to the American Council on Education (2017) American Indian/ Native peoples, ages 25 and older, earned master's degrees at the lowest rate of 5.1 percent in comparison to Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islanders (5.3%), Hispanic or Latinx (5.3%), Black students (7.1%), White students (10.5%), and Asian students (17.9%). Native women (2,187) earned more master's degrees than Native men (1,225) (NCES, 2016, p. 569). In 2015-16, Native women were awarded master's degrees (65%) at a higher rate than Native men (35%) (NCES, 2015).

I am astounded that Native peoples have exhibited such an incredible amount of resiliency, despite the state sanctioned attempts at eradication where the United States and Canada tried to "deal with the Indian problem" (Little, 2017, p. 9). Native students may be measured as low performing, but it is also crucial to remember that Western standards are not

necessarily culturally sensitive (Banks, 2004, p. 189), Western standards fail to measure what is important for Native students and communities (Champaign, 2006; Nelson-Barber & Trumbell, 2015) and Western standards do not adequately measure non-traditional (age 25 and older), reverse transfer, or adult returning Native student achievement (Waterman & Sands, 2016). Although these statistics reflect a deficit framework about Native students, it is important to consider that this is not the whole picture.

Study Rationale: Haudenosaunee men in higher education

Native men's experiences in higher education need to be explored further (Reyes & Shotton; 2018). According to the video footage collected on April 30th, 2018, two Native brothers from the Mohawk Nation in Akwesasne were visiting Colorado State University, where they planned to take a college tour. After arriving late and jumping on the tour that they had registered for, a mother on the tour, a white woman, called the police on them, citing "odd behavior" and that they were wearing "black clothing" (Andone & Silverman, 2018). Apparently, their presence made her "nervous." The problem did not stop there. The two Native students were pulled from the tour and questioned by campus police. News of this hit media outlets across the United States, including *CNN*, *The New York Times*, *NBC*, and *Inside Higher Ed*, as well as local newspapers all the way back in the boys' home Mohawk territory in Akwesasne, a territory that borders Upstate New York and Quebec, Canada. Both brothers stated that this was their dream school. Both were racially profiled, and I wonder: *What did their race and gender have to do with it?*

Haudenosaunee students report feelings of being alone or feelings of alienation on higher education institutions (Waterman, 2007; 2012; 2019). Often Haudenosaunee students will practice what Waterman (2012) describes as going home as means to college success, a strategy

which provides support for them from their families, communities, cultural teachings, and ceremonies while attending college. Waterman (2007) writes,

Despite the increased workload of remaining connected to family and community, participants juggled a double curriculum: their academic program and by taking a structured language class and/or participating in Haudenosaunee ceremonies and traditions. Unfortunately, in this study, only the men experienced meaningful mentoring (p. 35)

In the block quote above, one line stuck out to me. I am not exaggerating when I write that this quote stuck out to me for *years*. Waterman (2007) writes, “Unfortunately, in this study, only the men experienced meaningful mentoring” (p. 35). In her study about the experiences of Haudenosaunee students in higher education, Waterman noticed a difference in mentorship between male and female participants, mentorship which was meaningful for men but *not* for women. I wondered about *why* Haudenosaunee women had not received the same type of mentorship that males received and what that mentorship would or should have looked like. Gender has *something* to do with this all, I thought over and over, for a long time.

Native students also utilize their Indigenous cultures as a form of cultural capital or cultural wealth in order to persevere in higher education (Waterman & Lindley, 2013). Yosso (2005) describes “cultural wealth” and “cultural capital” to mean to shift from a White middle class standard of viewing pedagogy, research, and policy by which Others are judged, towards the affirming aspects of home and the cultures that students of color value (p. 82). Waterman and Lindley (2013) re-center the experiences of Haudenosaunee and Northern Arapaho women in higher education, to discuss the cultural wealth and cultural capital that Native women use as forms of resilience in higher education, discussing Indigenous sovereignty, nationhood, and

“giving back” which shifts lens to view these values, *not as deficits*, but as crucial life-affirming forms of perseverance in higher education. Their study made me appreciate the true power of Indigenous worldview, languages, and community. Waterman and Lindley’s (2013) study also revealed to me the work that needed to be done around the experiences of Native men in higher education.

Definition of Terms

- I use “Indigenous” or “Native” when referring to “Native Americans” and “American Indians (AI)”. All are Native peoples within past and present-day settler colonial United States. I may use articles that read “Aboriginal,” or “First Nations” when referring to Native peoples in past and present-day colonial Canada. National statistics on Native peoples might be presented in this dissertation as “American Indian/ Alaska Natives (AI/AN)”
- Haudenosaunee means “They [mixed group] build houses”. I used this term to refer to the “Six Nations”, “Iroquois Confederacy” or the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora.
- This dissertation is written in English but I also switch between Ononda’gega’ (Onondaga language) and Kanienkéha (Mohawk language) to represent my home community in Onondaga and my Nation/ maternal line as Kanienkehá:ka or Mohawk. To me, this represents the complexity of a Haudenosaunee identity
- Two-Spirit, being of both male and female spirits. This also describes fluid gender and sexuality within Indigenous communities, most often referred to as LGBTQI (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, queer, and intersex). I will often use “Two Spirit” or 2SLGBTQI within a Native context in this paper.

- I use the word, “Gehä” a Haudenosaunee word which means “now passed on” or literally “used to be,” as a term of respect to refer to people who have died/ passed away or passed on to the Skyworld. I use this word when referring to deceased Haudenosaunee knowledge holders, leaders, respected community members.

Research Questions

The following overarching and exploratory questions guide this research on the experiences of Haudenosaunee men in higher education.

Overarching Research Questions:

How do Haudenosaunee men understand Indigenous Masculinities?

What are the experiences of Haudenosaunee men in higher education?

How do perceptions of masculinity affect Haudenosaunee men in higher education?

Exploratory Questions

What does gender mean within the context of Native students in higher education?

What does “masculinity” have to do with Indigenous student experiences in higher education?

What were the experiences that led Native men to higher education?

What were the experiences of Native men during college/ university?

Methodology

Using an Indigenous research paradigm (Archibald, 2008; Kovach, 2010; Smith, 2013; 1999; Wilson, 2001; 2008), I focus on the issues that colonization brings to Indigenous peoples. I also employ two methodologies to examine Indigenous experiences and worldviews within settler colonial systems of dominance and power including Indigenous Storywork (Archibald, 2008) and Critical Race Methodology (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

I use *Indigenous Storywork* as methodology (Archibald, 2008). Coast Salish scholar, Jo-

Ann Archibald (2008) describes an Indigenous philosophical concept of holism, which addresses the development of a whole person and is “mutually influenced by one’s family, community, band, and nation” (p. 11). Archibald (2008) writes about holism as an “interrelatedness between intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and physical realms to form a whole person” (p. 11) and in order to understand Indigenous education, we must understand these philosophical underpinnings embedded within the cultural practices and worldviews of Indigenous peoples. An Indigenous education is only made meaningful to us as individuals when our Nations, communities, and our families are contextualized within the matter.

I also use Critical Race Methodology (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001; 2002) to this research in order to center participants’ *experiential knowledge* (Delgado, 1995a; 1995b; 1996) and to express my commitment to social justice as a researcher and towards the elimination of racism in education, focusing on issues of race, gender, and class (Matsuda, 1991; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). I use Composite Counter-Storytelling approach (Ladson-Billings, 1996; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Samuels-Wortley, 2021) by employing stock stories and counter stories through the creation of composite characters (Delgado, 1989; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) in order to challenge majoritarian stories or “the master narrative” about Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

Significance of the Study

Listening to and telling stories of teachings, protocol, and experiences are critically significant for Indigenous peoples (Archibald, 2008). To quote Leslie Marmon Silko, “the old folks said the stories themselves had the power to protect us and even to heal us, because the stories are alive” (Silko, 1996). This study moves beyond the deficit-framework of the statistics on Native students in higher education, toward an affirming, empowering, and critical lens of

viewing Indigenous life. That said, institutions of higher education in the United States are becoming more and more diverse and with it comes the need to address deficits, inequalities, educational pitfalls and disparities, injustice in education and even outside of higher education in the workplace. The interviews conducted in this study take a more holistic approach to *reveal* the lived experiences of Native men higher education that deficit-based statistics may have missed, all within a culturally relevant storytelling framework. Of particular significance to this study are *two* societal problems: This study (1) addresses the high departure rate of student of color from higher education (Hubain, et al., 2016; Johnson, et al, 2014) and (2) makes *visible* Indigenous lifeways and worldviews amidst a colonial presence (Grande, 2015).

As higher education institutions strive to measure student enrollment and document student experiences, as multiracial identities become more prevalent in the United States. Smith (2015) reminds us that multiracial categories should be made available for students who may identify as such. Researchers describe that when more racial identification categories are made available for Native American/ American Indian, enrollment numbers actually increase (Smith, 2015). In contrast, Waterman, Lowe, and Shotton (2018) write that when student data was collected and “new racial identification options” were introduced in 2011, Native American/ Alaska Native identified students actually decreased as the “number of students who identified with two or more races increased” (p. 30). This contributes to the continued erasure of Native-identifying students in higher education nationally. Multiracial categories, though crucial for creating a sense of belonging and well-being for students who identify as multiracial (Kermsmeyer, Dou, & Oberbroeckling, 2021), are not always representative of the population.

To further detail the complexity of Native identity, I add an excerpt from Champaign (2005),

Contemporary native identities are to a large extent based in relation to nation-states.

While native peoples have identities that predate the formation of the nation-states, and many aspects of these pre-state identities continue to persist and make their weight felt in everyday life, native identity is largely defined in relation to colonizing cultures and state governments (p. 3).

This quote illuminates the growing *need* to study the experiences of Native students, in order to accommodate diverse Indigenous identities. All Native students bring their identities with them to the settler institutions of higher education. While they continue to navigate these often hostile spaces, may we remember that Native students are defined by their own worldviews from their own Nations and tribes which predate settler-colonial relations *and also* that Native identities are simultaneously defined by the culture of the colonizer, enacted by settler governments, which systemically drove a dark history of Indigenous erasure for hundreds of years. In essence, this study reveals intersectional conversations about race, class, sexuality, and colonialism in order to empower Haudenosaunee students, strengthen Native communities and inform practice in higher education institutions.

Theoretical Frameworks

Throughout this research, I eventually understood that three vital aspects of the experiences of Native students in higher education consistently came to mind: Indigenous identity, Indigenous sovereignty, and student resiliency. To guide this research, I use the following theoretical frameworks: Tribal Critical Race theory (Brayboy, 2005), Cultural Resilience (Heavy Runner & Marshall, 2003), and Tribal Nation Building (Brayboy, Castagno, & Solyom, 2014). Below I discuss these frameworks to bring clarity to the audience of this paper.

Tribal Critical Race Theory (Tribal CRT)

Tribal Critical Race Theory (Tribal CRT) (Brayboy, 2005; 2006) comes out of the foundations of the ontologies, epistemologies, and worldview of Indigenous communities, with influences from Critical Race Theory (CRT) as evolved from Critical Legal Studies (CLS) in the 1970's which exposes the contradictions in the law that aid in the maintenance of hierarchical structures of society and the perpetuation of racism in society (Gordon, 1990). CRT came to the education field in the 1990's which aimed to give validation to the "narrative accounts" and testimonials of the liminal or "marginalized" groups in society who, not only experience racism, but discrimination surrounding gender and class as well (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000; Villenas & Deyhle, 1999; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2016).

Brayboy (2005) reminds us that assimilation policies are rooted in the continuous imperial legacy of colonial governments and education policies that seek material gain. Additionally, Indigenous peoples aim to retain sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification that are rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing, culture and knowledge. This supports the notion that Indigenous peoples have lived experiences that have been marginalized but that yet are empowered through their stories, which are not separate from theory, and geared towards social change or liberation. Brayboy (2006) writes that there are 9 tenets to Tribal CRT:

1. Colonization is endemic to society.
2. U.S. Policies toward Indigenous people are rooted in imperialism, White supremacy, and a desire for material gain.
3. Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space that accounts for both the political and racialized natures of our identities.

4. Indigenous peoples have a desire to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification.
5. The concepts of culture, knowledge, and power take on new meaning when examined through an Indigenous lens.
6. Governmental policies and educational policies toward Indigenous peoples are intimately linked around the problematic goal of assimilation.
7. Tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future are central to understanding the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, but they also illustrate the differences and adaptability among individuals and groups.
8. Stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being.
9. Theory and practice are connected in deep and explicit ways such that scholars must work towards social change (pp. 429-430).

Tribal CRT argues that *colonization* is “endemic to society today” while additionally “acknowledging the role played by racism” (p. 430). Brayboy (2005) remarks that Tribal CRT aims to “expose the inconsistencies in structural systems and institutions—like colleges and universities—and make the situation better for Indigenous students” (p. 441). This theoretical frame enables the researchers to begin to understand Indigenous students using “older stories, traditions, epistemologies” to initiate a process to think and consider their lived experiences. Perhaps Haudenosaunee students utilize their own worldviews, cultures, languages, and stories to understand the colonization process within institutions such as colleges and universities. Higher education institutions must continue to acknowledge this long, dark history in order to address the needs of Native students.

Cultural Resilience

Seeing students “as promise”, HeavyRunner and Marshall (2003) write that life-affirming, culturally supportive, and nurturing family centeredness in Native students will ensure their success in higher education. As opposed to viewing Native students as “at risk” deficits, HeavyRunner and Marshall (2003) describe ways to facilitate Native student growth by supporting their spiritualities, family strength, emphasis on Elders, oral traditions, Tribal identities and providing support networks in order to ensure Native resilience. HeavyRunner and Marshall (2003) write, “The languages of our people unlock the philosophy of our miraculous persistence... every Indigenous language has a word that means persistence” (p. 3). In this study, I use cultural resilience to discuss Haudenosaunee men and masculinities in higher education through focus on home-going, language revitalization efforts, cultural and ceremonial practice, interaction with Native Elders, and mentors as predictors of academic success in higher education.

As a way of situating Tribal CRT and Cultural Resilience, I show the way that scholars have discussed cultural wealth (or “cultural capital”) as a form of student perseverance or resilience within higher education (Tierney, 1999; Sólorzano, Villalpando, & Oseguera, 2005; Waterman & Lindley, 2013). In Tara Yosso’s (2005) “Whose culture has capital?” Yosso generates insight from CRT theorists, through the use of forms of cultural wealth in order to challenge the status quo in higher education and in US society. Fundamentally, Yosso (2005) uses work from Critical Race Scholars (Anzaldúa, 1990; Delgado Bernal, 1998, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2000) in order to ask: “Whose knowledge counts and whose knowledge is discounted?” (p. 69).

Yosso (2005) cites Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) who argues that “the knowledges of the upper and middle classes are considered capital valuable to a hierarchical society” and that being born into a family whose knowledge is considered to be “valuable” is of considerable amount of capital within a hierarchical society. If one was not born into a family whose knowledge is deemed valuable, Bourdieu and Passeron (1997) write that one could “access the knowledges of the middle and upper class and the potential for social mobility through formal schooling” (Yosso, 2005, p. 70).

While notions of capital within Western, hierarchical frameworks are predominantly described as monetary or middle/ upper class “wealth”, a definition of wealth that is typically inaccessible to historically marginalized populations, Yosso (2005) introduces ways, that through Critical Race Theory, help to challenge that Western framing of wealth (Anzaldúa, 1987; hooks, 1994; Delgado Bernal, 1997). Students from historically marginalized backgrounds can challenge this status quo by asserting their *own* forms of knowledges from their own communities in order to challenge Western paradigms, knowledges which Yosso calls “cultural capital”.

Forms of cultural capital, to Yosso are not deficits, but rather strengths— based in cultures, epistemologies, and knowledges from the homes, communities, and worldviews of people of color. Yosso (2005) writes that there are least six forms of cultural capital— *aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and resistant capital* which empower students of color and also Communities of Color in education. Yosso (2005) suggests that “CRT centers the research, pedagogy, and policy lens on Communities of Color and calls into question White middle class communities as the standard by which all others are judged” whereby “shifting of the research lens allows critical race scholars to ‘see’ multiple forms of cultural

wealth within Communities of Color” (p. 82). Students may utilize this form of capital, from their communities, to persevere in higher education.

Indigenous Nation Building

Brayboy, et al. (2012) writes that Tribal Nation building is the ability for Indigenous peoples to self-govern and practice their sovereignty in order to meet their own health, cultural, political, economic, and educational needs of their Nations. While Self-Determination suggests that Native peoples decide what they need on their own terms as Nations, Native peoples must also educate their own people on their own terms, depending upon what that community needs. Therefore education and training become crucial components for Indigenous Nation building and sustaining well-being within many Native communities. However, while higher education continues to not meet the needs of Native students which contribute to issues of access, low persistence rates, and low graduation rates among Native students in higher education, Native communities’ ability to self-govern is severely threatened.

Brayboy, et al. (2012) argues that “In modern day society and accounting for globalization an economic notion of nation building in order for a tribe to be economically and politically successful, it must also be educationally successful (p. 27). While access to and completion of higher education may be labelled as a way for people to “better their lives”, Native peoples have a relationship to higher education that is much different than most students who may not be members of another Nation that has a special relationship with the US government. In higher education, Native students experience issues with access, persistence, degree attainment, financial barriers, racism, sexism, few role models, incongruence in curriculum, a lack of academic preparedness, and inhospitable institutions. While Native students, faculty, and staff alike experience many barriers in higher education, low persistence levels contribute to

further issues within Native communities whom are trying to provide for their families, communities and Nations. Institutions of higher education must continue to thrive to create inclusive environments for Native peoples entering at increasing rates.

While diverse Native communities continue to decide what their needs are within their Nations including issues with education, culturally relevant curricula, and language revitalization; higher education is still needed within indigenous communities. Brayboy (2012) writes that higher education institutions should engage into conversation with local Indigenous peoples to determine how those institutions can meet the needs of Indigenous communities. Lastly, policymakers, researchers and higher education practitioners should consider the long-term effects of hostile education climates for Indigenous peoples (p. 175). Haudenosaunee communities, like all Native communities, are diverse in their needs and practice their sovereignty in different ways that higher education institutions need to understand.

Conversations at my Gram's Table

While I struggled to find my own voice and autonomy in this work, I found it best to situate the work within a local, Haudenosaunee context so that my community *and I* could understand it well. I thought to myself: *Where do I go for help when I need it?* Immediately, I heard my Gram's comforting, reassuring, and critical voice in my mind. I thought about her table where many discussions happened over the course of my Ph.D. journey.

Tachine (2015) writes that metaphors are a part of the research and they may be used to, "visualize and connect difficult thought processes" while also enabling the research to "explore, be creative and illustrate ideas" (p. 29). I refer to *Grandmothers' Pedagogy* (Tachine, 2017) throughout this dissertation to critically engage the reader and to allow myself to understand my own research, the writing process, and to draw important connections between Haudenosaunee

and Western worldviews. While I use this deliberately constructed space to continuously develop as an Indigenous researcher in an education setting, I also use this to provide clarity to the reader about Indigenous lifeways in education (Huber, et al., 2013). Growing up, I sat at my Gram's table. Here I shared meals, learned about my identity, processed information, received critique, and developed as a human being. Now I use her table as a window, essentially as a counter-narrative about Indigenous ways of knowing, in order to address much of what has been said about us.

This pedagogy sets the stage to best examine issues of gender and for people—Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike—to challenge Eurocentric frameworks of patriarchy, heteronormativity, and sexism. I use my Gram's table as a voluntarily filled but “deliberately created” space (Greene, 1993. p. 219) to understand the way that I could help the audience understand this work, while develop my thinking about my responsibility in education. I use this concept to organize data, support an Indigenous lens, and to introduce complexities of gender from an Indigenous perspective within this dissertation. I now provide a brief outline of the chapters of this dissertation.

Summary of Chapters

In Chapter One, I introduced the problem, the purpose of the study, methodology I use, the significance of the study, and a brief layout of the chapters. In Chapter Two (Literature Review), I acknowledge all of the immense work that has be done before me. I describe issues in Native education past and present, theories about Indigenous masculinities, literature about Native student persistence and experiences in higher education, and also the theoretical framework that I use in this study. In Chapter Three (Methodology) I describe how I conduct the research using an Indigenous research paradigm: the pilot study, research design, rationale for this study,

storytellers, and consideration for my positionality. I also provide a more in-depth description of the research questions, data collection and data management. In Chapter Four (Findings: Part I) I introduce the characters in the story and provide the context. In Chapter Five (Findings Part II), I create composite characters as themes and show data within the context of their higher education experiences. In Chapter Six (Discussion, Results, and Conclusion) I offer implications for policy, practice and research based in the experiences of the participants.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a literature review that 1) examines key teachings on Haudenosaunee worldview before and after invasion, 2) describes a brief history of Native Americans in higher education, 3) describes Native and Haudenosaunee student enrollment and achievement in higher education today, and lastly 5) offers theories about Indigenous masculinities within a Haudenosaunee context. I thank all who came before me and for the knowledge that they have produced as it pertains to this study. I think most of all this section speaks to Indigenous survival and resiliency on Turtle Island, North America.

A Haudenosaunee Worldview: Creation, the Great Law, and Gaiwiyoh

I intentionally begin this literature review first by describing Haudenosaunee ways of knowing that I felt were relevant to this study. I provide key teachings up until settler colonial invasion and after. An Oneida Faithkeeper, now passed, Bob Antone (gehä') (2015) wrote,

One cannot be Indigenous or contemplate Indigenous Masculinities without the original knowledge of Creation informing and supporting one's spirit and thought.

Haudenosaunee knowledge is permeated with a theological world view rooted in a pragmatic spirituality of dream, storytelling, relationship, morality, dependency, thankfulness, and operating with a Good Mind. (p. 21)

Antone's words orient this literature review in a way that provides a foundation from which to examine the experiences of Haudenosaunee men and Indigenous masculinities from a Haudenosaunee worldview. For the scope of this study, I use Hewitt (1903) a translated text from an Onondaga version of Creation as told by first language Ononda'gega' speaker John Arthur Gibson (Seneca) from Six Nations (Ohsweken). Gibson's version is known by many as the most comprehensive and authoritative written version.

A Haudenosaunee Creation Story

The Creation Story began in the Skyworld. The Standing Tree (The Tree of Light/Celestial Tree) was planted in the Skyworld and underneath it, a dark water world. Only few Beings lived in the dark water world below, while many Beings lived in the Skyworld above, including human beings. In the Skyworld, a dying old man had a vision about the future of his niece and nephew, who were kept away from public sight. They were “down-fended” or “kept pure” with “Goodness of mind”. After he passed, his spirit gave direction to his niece and nephew about the responsibilities that they would fulfil. From this point, the young girl, Aweñ’ha’i’ (“Ripe Flower”), his niece, became the center of the story. Her Elder Brother would not be heard from again until much later in the story. Before he passed, Ripe Flower’s uncle and her mother arranged a marriage between Ripe Flower and a well-known speaker among the Skyworld Beings, he was known as the Hodä’he’ (“He has a Standing Tree” or “Skychief”).

The Skychief became a suitor for Ripe Flower and she had to follow direction from Skychief and her Mother regarding marriage protocol. Ripe Flower was secluded and had various handsome suitors, whom she was instructed to ignore. One day, while a lacrosse game was to be played for the Skychief’s enjoyment, Skychief predicted that Ripe Flower would encounter a handsome lacrosse player who would ask her for a drink of water. Skychief instructed her to ignore the lacrosse player and Ripe Flower agreed. While Ripe Flower carried the bucket of water from a nearby river back to the lodge of the Skychief, as predicted, the lacrosse player introduced himself to Ripe Flower and asked her for a drink of water. Ripe Flower consented, giving him a drink. After realizing what she had done, she collected another bucket of water, and went back to the lodge. When Ripe Flower arrived back, Skychief knew that Ripe Flower had done what he had forbidden her to do. Skychief, concerned by this issue,

immediately told her mother of the ordeal.

After learning about this issue, Ripe Flower's mother immediately prepared a basket of bread and mixed huckleberries and returned to the lodge of the Skychief in order to "confirm the matter" (p. 478) stating that her daughter is ready for marriage. Skychief agreed to the marriage and exchanged dried deer meat but the Skychief then told her mother that Ripe Flower goes from "place to place" and should return home with her mother. Ripe flower left with her mother back home, where her mother reminded her to ignore other potential suitors. Eventually Ripe Flower met other handsome Beings, many of whom could be mistaken for her husband, the Skychief, but following instruction from her mother, she ignored their presence. When she ignored them, they turned all into animals and ran away from her. She was now ready to return to the lodge of her new husband, the Skychief.

Upon her return to his lodge, she explained to him that she had ignored other suitors. Skychief was happy that she had "passed through the ordeal" (p. 479). Through custom, Skychief and Ripe Flower "breathed habitually" and "put their feet together" (sole to sole), and soon Ripe Flower became pregnant. Skychief's mind became troubled, so he called a meeting among various Beings, whom he asked to guess his dream. While attempting to guess Skychief's dream, all Beings guessed wrong, until the Meteor Being guessed correctly. Meteor's guess: to uproot the Standing Tree, also known as "Tooth" or Yellow Dog Tooth Violet, a medicine known to prevent childbirth (Hill, 2008). Skychief, with a troubled mind, escorted Ripe Flower to the edge of the uprooted tree where she sat with her feet dangling over the threshold of both worlds. In a fit of jealous rage, Skychief pushed her, and her unborn baby, into the abyss. He also sent Meteor plummeting down with her. As they fell into the lower water world, *into this world*, she became known from this point on as *Skywoman*.

As they plummeted toward the water world below. Meteor accompanied Skywoman, he gave her dried deer meat and corn to help her to survive. Meteor then told Skywoman that her husband, the Skychief, wrongfully accused him of the same thing that he accused Skywoman, he accused them of adultery. He explained that could only accompany her so far and that he had to leave her. She was thankful. In the lower world, Loon was the first to see a woman falling from the sky. Many of the various Beings met to figure out what they should do to assist her. Turtle immediately agreed to provide his back for her to land on. Muskrat, Beaver, and Otter dove down into the great water, to retrieve mud to put onto the Turtle's back. Seagulls flew to the sky and carry her so that she fell gently on the turtle's back. This continent became what Haudenosaunee know as *Turtle Island* (eventually, North America) and Skywoman with her unborn daughter were its first human inhabitants.

As the Earth grew and expanded; Skywoman's daughter was born (many versions say that Skywoman danced on the soil over various seeds, which made the Earth expand: the dance is known as the women's shuffle dance, still practiced today). In the story, Skywoman now became known as "Elder woman" and the story *only briefly* centers the perspective Elder Woman's daughter. Her daughter grew quickly on the vastly expanding Earth, where she wandered and met several suitors, various Beings who took human and animal form. Eventually she found a partner, a Turtle Being. Her mother, elder woman, approved of their partnership because he has a good reputation among the Earth Beings, as he was "immune" or could resist evil sorcery and attacks. With the consent of her mother, she married the Turtle Being. One night, the Turtle Being brought two arrows into the lodge, one arrow with a point and the other without a point. He continuously straightened the arrow without a point then he instructed his wife to sleep with the arrows on her body, side by side, until the morning. She did and when

morning came, he took the arrows from the lodge and he left.

Soon the young woman became aware that she was pregnant with two male twins in her body. One twin was of a Good Mind named “Skyholder” and the other twin was of a Bad Mind (mischievous mind) named “Flint”. Some say that his head was shaped like an arrow tip, and that this is the origin of the Mohawk hair style. Inside of their mother, the twins argued about how they should be born and enter the world and what they were going to do when they got there. Skyholder was born the conventional way. Flint, however, forced his way through the side of his mother, killing her in the process. Flint blamed their mother’s death on Skyholder. Elder Woman, now known as Grandmother, grieved her daughter’s death, and banished Skyholder from their dwelling. Skyholder also saw his brother Flint, cutting off their mother’s head. Flint would later give it to their grieving Grandmother. Clearly, they were affected by evil forces on Earth, sometimes described as a serpent.

The story then shifts to center the perspective of Skyholder. He wandered the Earth and eventually met his father, the Turtle Being, who taught him how to hunt and how to create things on the Earth including different plants, animals, birds, and eventually human beings. When Skyholder Created human beings, he instructs the first man and first woman that they would need one another, to not distress one another, and that they two are to be bound together, only separating in death. Skyholder became the Creator of “Good” things on the Earth and his grandmother became impressed with his abilities to Create and provide. Flint then became jealous of his brother’s abilities and with his Creative powers, Flint made life-threatening cold and frost, dangerous waterfalls, and poisonous Beings that would destroy Skyholder’s Creations. Flint would hide Skyholder’s Creations for long periods of time during the winter, now known as hibernation, to which Skyholder would have to find them again. The Twins’ father, Turtle Being,

visited Skyholder, and told him that Skyholder must retrieve Flint's powers – the power of the arrow tip or the power of winter – and to destroy evil, sometimes described as a serpent or simply, “jealousy”. Skyholder tricks his brother Flint into giving him some of his Creative power. Skyholder and Flint would continue to battle on Earth, become separated by islands to join back together by an ice bridge which Flint created. Skyholder met many other Beings on Earth during this time who, aided him and at times competed with him.

The power of Creation was ultimately decided in a betting game between the Twins, orchestrated by the grandmother. Thunderous warfare erupted between the Twins, which caused a period of brief darkness on the Earth, with Skyholder being victorious. Utilizing his newly acquired power, Skyholder sent his brother Flint to look over the underworld and to look over the nighttime on the Earth. Flint agreed to take on the responsibility with little to no argument. Skyholder then established a plan to seize his mother's head from his angry Grandmother, of which he is eventually successful. Skyholder then sent his grandmother back to the Skyworld where he visited his Great Uncle, his Grandmother's Elder Brother. Skyholder gave his Great Uncle the responsibility to give light to the world as the Daytime orb (the Sun) and his Great Uncle agreed, to which it is discussed that the people would look to Elder Brother the Sun for masculine guidance. Skyholder then cast his mother's head into the nighttime sky to give his mother the responsibility to look over Flint to become the Nighttime Orb (the Moon), to which the people would look to Grandmother the Moon for feminine guidance.

The story shifted again to the perspective of the people. Skyholder gave people the responsibility to give thanks (Thanksgiving Address), ceremonies for specific parts of the Creation story, the Creation of maternal clans or family lines, and protocol for governance (The Great Law of Peace). It is as if we are now living this part of the Creation Story and it is our

responsibility to carry on our instructions. I am no expert in the Creation story, rather, I am curious as to the ways that gendered interactions and more specifically, “masculinity” is portrayed in the story and what this may mean for *this* project.

I provide this version of Haudenosaunee Creation in order to reveal how our ancestors thought; and perhaps how we *still* think today. The lens in the story shifted from Ripe Flower/Skywoman to the Twins, and then to humans. To me, this story is about reciprocity which teaches us about gendered responsibilities, family and community duties, and partnership roles as it pertains to Haudenosaunee thought and the production of knowledge. In this regard, John Mohawk (2005) wrote that Western scholars have often failed to understand the connection between the cosmology of Haudenosaunee Creation and the ceremonial life of the Haudenosaunee. On Haudenosaunee Creation, John Mohawk wrote,

. . . one of the major themes of the narrative pointedly answers a central question about Haudenosaunee identity. Who are we? We are the people who carry on the ceremonials of thanksgiving. Why do we do these ceremonials? Because we recognize our great fortune as receivers of the gift of the Giver of Life. The people who compose this narrative did so to transmit the message to future generations. As long as there are Haudenosaunee people, the narrative tells us, they will perform the Great Gamble for Life. For as long as the Haudenosaunee exist, according to this tradition, they will remember this story. (Mohawk, 2005, p. v)

The Great Law of Peace

The Haudenosaunee, also known as the Iroquois Confederacy or the Six Nations were initially known as Five Nations, unified under what, in Onondaga language (Ononda’gega’) is called Gayaneñ:hsä:’go:nah or in English, “the Great Law of Peace.” Long before European

contact, some say over 2,000 years ago (Porter, 2008), the Great Law of Peace was established by a Huron, known as “the Great Peacemaker,” who sought to unify all of the warring communities. After years of his commitment to peace, and with assistance from leaders – men and women – he was able to unite the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca and become the Haudenosaunee or, the Five Nations (Barreiro, 1992; Mohawk, 2016). Eventually, during colonial European invasion, Tuscarora joined the Haudenosaunee in 1722 after escaping settler aggressions in North Carolina (Printup, & Patterson Jr, 2007) to become the Six Nations.

The Mohawk Nation is known as the *Keepers of the Eastern Door*, the Onondaga Nation known as the *Keepers of the Central Fire*, and the Seneca Nation as the *Keepers of the Western Door*. These three Haudenosaunee Nations are called this because geographically Haudenosaunee territory represents a Longhouse, spanning across what is now New York State and Southern Ontario, and parts of Quebec with doors at each end and a fire in the center. For the Haudenosaunee, this geographical representation symbolized the peacemaking process. Those Nations who sought peace traditionally did so by entering the Eastern Door (Mohawk), or the Western Door (Seneca), and if it was decided that they were not a threat, they were brought through the “Longhouse” to the central fire (Onondaga) to accept the Great Peace. The Mohawk, Onondaga, and Seneca Nations are known as the Elder Brothers while the Oneida, Cayuga, and Tuscarora Nations are known as the Younger Brothers. While peace unified these Nations under the Great Law of Peace, this traditional geographical representation also depicted a governing body and a structure that allowed Haudenosaunee to make important decisions about our communities regarding trade, hunting, protection, labor, and the land (Hill, 2017).

Gaiwiyoh: The Good Message

In 1799, approximately 200 years post-European invasion, the Haudenosaunee were in a weakened state. They lost 95% of their land during corrupt treaty negotiations between the United States after the American Revolution (Hauptman, 2008). While the Haudenosaunee were losing their lands, they were dying from disease, alcohol, forced Christianity, forced Western education and ongoing warfare. During this period, the Haudenosaunee were still governed by the Great Law of Peace, and their unity was seen as a threat to settler colonial life.

During the American Revolution, the Clinton-Sullivan campaign commissioned by George Washington, devastated Haudenosaunee communities (Hellenbeck, 2015) burning Haudenosaunee villages from the east to the west, Mohawk territories to Seneca territories, to what is now Buffalo, NY. A Seneca man known as Ganyadai:yoh (Handsome Lake) became a prominent religious leader with visions that he saw in 1799 and 1800, which would later be known as “Gaiwiyoh” or “The Good Message.” After a considerable amount of push-back from Haudenosaunee communities, the Good Message brought a semblance of balance back to many who, on one hand were struggling to maintain their traditions, cultures, and ways of knowing; while on the other, were trying merely to survive.

Antone (2015) explains that Handsome Lake’s message continues the original teachings of non-violence, tenets of the Great Law of Peace. The Good Message serves as a reminder of matrifocal identity as rooted in the Mother Earth, Grandmother Moon, and Clan Mothers as bearers of our identities while living in a world that is changing as a result of settler colonial invasion. Many scholars and Haudenosaunee community members explain that Handsome Lake’s message fused together traditional Haudenosaunee spirituality with Quaker values including Christian influence and shifted gendered relationships among the Haudenosaunee from matrilineal or matrifocal, to patriarchal (Hauptman, 2008, Slater & Yarbrough, 2012).

Since the early 1800's, Gaiwiyoh became an integral part of Haudenosaunee religious/spiritual beliefs, much of which is sacred, or even controversial to the Haudenosaunee today. In several Haudenosaunee communities, teachings of Gaiwiyoh are critical to Haudenosaunee survival and a sensitive topic, especially since ceremonies and are "off limits" for Western scholars in the colonial academy. Thus, I tread lightly on this topic. However, later in this chapter I write more depth about Indigenous masculinities, as it relates to the scope of this study, and in part, to Gaiwiyoh. Since there seem to be more open dialogue within our communities about Gaiwiyoh and other teachings, I have decided to examine Gaiwiyoh as it pertains to our gender relationships and ways that we have adapted to a changing world.

A Brief History of Native American Higher Education

In order to understand the experiences of Haudenosaunee students in higher education, it is important to understand the history of higher education within the context of settler colonial invasion. State-sanctioned policies toward cultural genocide and forced assimilation were enacted by the US and Canadian governments which would inform Native education, self-determination, identity, and life experiences past and present. Haudenosaunee worldview and livelihood were forever transformed.

The Colonial Period (1568-1776)

During the "colonial period" (Carney, 1999) settlers had skewed interpretations of Native peoples as "savage" and "less than human" eventually brought about the forced Christianization and education of Native/ Indigenous peoples with the creation of "colleges for Indians" (Carney, 1999, p. 21). Disease, warfare, and the Beaver Wars decimated Haudenosaunee life.

In 1452, a Papal Bull from Pope Nicholas V bestowed "special graces . . . to invade, search out, capture, vanquish, and subdue all Saracens and pagans whatsoever" (Mudimbe, 2005)

all over the world initiated what is known as the Doctrine of Discovery, the “special graces” to subjugate Indigenous lands and Indigenous peoples. In 1493 Pope Alexander VI introduced "Inter Caetera" which validated Christian conquest over non-Christians all over the world including “the New World”, classifying Indigenous peoples among the “flora and fauna” and later as “sub-human” and so too, labelling Indigenous intellect as “savage” or “barbarous” (Dussias, 1997). Christopher Columbus wrote in his diaries about his encounters with Indigenous Peoples (Taino) that they would be, according to Calloway (2016) “good and intelligent servants” who would “become Christians very easily, for it seemed to me that they had no religion” (p. 73). Calloway (2016) writes that Europeans judged Native men as “lazy” because there were “no sailing ships, no wheeled vehicles, stone arches, churches, iron tools, steel weapons, or guns” and Native women as “drudges” because “women cultivated the crops” (p. 75).

In 1609 at the Southern end of what is now called “Lake Champlain”, Mohawks encountered their long-time enemies, the Huron and Algonquin, who were accompanying European strangers, French Jesuits, and Samuel de Champlain. According to Calloway, (2016) this is when the Mohawk saw strangers, Europeans, for the first time and quickly became familiar with European firearms, as some were shot and killed by the French (Calloway, 2016). This event marked the beginning of Mohawk and larger Haudenosaunee livelihood as interpreted by the settler gaze. The Onondaga use the term “ha’she:nih” (Woodbury, 2003) and similarly in Mohawk “ra’seronn:ih” to refer to a white man, which does not refer to race, but that translates to “he makes knives” a term used to refer to a French man, or “white man” (J. Brant, personal communication, April 10, 2021). At a presentation for the Two-Row Wampum Renewal in 2013 Campaign, Jake Edwards (Onondaga) said “ha’she:nih” refers to the way that white men used

knives or “blades to clear-cut land”, an unusual sight for the Haudenosaunee (J. Edwards, personal communication, 2013).

“Haudenosaunee” means “The People of the Longhouse” or literally translates to “they build houses.” Since contact, the French called the Mohawk people, “Iroquois,” a derogatory term with roots in Algonquin language to mean “Black Snake People” or “Rattlesnake People,” and interpretations referring to male genitalia, a term meant to belittle and demonize the Haudenosaunee (Mohawk, 2002). Since this interpretation came to be, the Mohawk and by extension the entire Haudenosaunee, were largely referred to as the “Iroquois” or the “Iroquois Confederacy”.

In 1613 Dutch fur traders and the Haudenosaunee established an agreement which confirmed a government-to-government relationship called the Two Row Wampum or *Guswentá*. The agreement was the first-established treaty relationship between Haudenosaunee and settlers that embodied friendship based in non-interference in affairs of governance (Hill 2017; Lyons, 1986).

By 1640, disease “halved” the Haudenosaunee population (Horn-Miller, 2005). Adriaen Cornelissen Van Der Donck (2008) wrote about disease among the Mohawk that decimated their numbers during the early seventeenth century,

[The] Indians affirm that before the arrival of the Christians, and before the small pox broke out amongst them, they were ten times as numerous as they are now, and their population had been melted down by this disease, whereof nine-tenths of them have died.

(p. 183)

While disease devastated the Haudenosaunee, forced Western education and Christianity would also threaten Haudenosaunee survival.

Settler colonial education of Native peoples or “Indian savages” surged on as largely an education based on Christian conversion. In 1622, Henrico would have been the first “college for Indians”, even prior to Harvard by about fourteen years, whose aim, according to Carney (1999), was for Indians to “return to their own peoples as missionaries so they could teach and convert others” (p. 22). In 1622 settler college tenants provoked Chief Opchanacanough (Powhatan) making Powhatan people upset, which led to skirmishes and eventually a Native uprising, leaving 347 college tenants dead (Kramer, 2016). The college would never be.

Harvard University was founded in 1636 with no mention of “Indian education” as one of its purposes for construction (Carney, 1999) despite receiving 200 pounds (worth approx. \$57,000 today) plus forty-five pounds yearly for Indian education and missionary work from the “Boyle Fund” a fund from deceased and renowned chemist, Robert Boyle, an early governor of the Propagation of the Gospel Among the Indians in New England (Layman, 1942). Pre-Revolutionary War, Harvard only enrolled six Native students, with five of them dying during attendance or right after attending (Carney, 1999).

William and Mary was founded in 1693 and, similar to Harvard, also did not mention Indian education at its founding. William and Mary also qualified for funding from the “Boyle Fund” which stated that “Christian faith may be propagated amongst the Western Indians” (Wright & Tierney, 1991) with essentially assimilationist policies and aims to provide *advanced education* and integrate Native students into white society. The college would receive 14 pounds per year and be funded to construct a building for an “Indian school.” William and Mary, would not construct a building for Native students until 30 years later in 1723. Only 16 students attended William and Mary during the colonial era with none earning a bachelor’s degree.

According to Carney (2017) it was customary for William and Mary to “purchase Indian children captured in warfare” (p. 29) in order to benefit from the Boyle fund or to insert the school into treaty provisions. In 1711 General Spottswood urged the Tuscarora to send “a minimum of two children from each of eight chiefs of Tuscarora towns be sent to William and Mary as hostages to secure the treaty” (Carney, 1999, p. 29). The Tuscarora refused because they did not express interest in white education. Some years later, many of the Tuscarora escaped settler violence and aggression by trekking from North Carolina to Haudenosaunee territory between 1713 and 1722, officially joining the Haudenosaunee to become the “Six Nations” in 1722 (Printup, & Patterson Jr, 2007).

In 1744, the Haudenosaunee were urged again to send children to William and Mary, chief Conassatego (Onondaga-Megwe) politely refused. As documented in the memoirs of Benjamin Franklin (2007) when commissioners from Maryland and Virginia continued to press the issue, Conassetego responded to them more assertively,

We have had some experiences of it. Several of our young People were formerly brought up at the Colleges of the Northern Provinces, where they were instructed in all your Sciences; but, when they came back they were bad Runners, ignorant of every means of living in the woods; unable to bear either cold or hunger; knew neither how to build a cabin, take a deer, or kill an enemy; spoke our language imperfectly; were therefore neither fit for Hunters, Warriors, nor Counsellors, they were totally good for nothing. . . We are, however, not the less obliged by your kind offer, though we decline accepting it; and, to show you our grateful Sense of it, if the Gentlemen of Virginia will send us a dozen of their sons, we will take Care of their Education, instruct them in all we know, and make Men out of them (Carney, 1999, p. 463)

William and Mary always struggled with Native enrollment as exemplified above and were met with resistance from Native peoples.

In 1754 during the Albany Plan of the Union “Grand Council,” Benjamin Franklin referred to the Haudenosaunee Great Law of Peace and compared governing structure of the colonies,

It would be a very strange Thing, if Six Nations of ignorant Savages should be capable of forming such an Union, and be able to execute it in such a Manner, as that it has subsisted Ages, and appears indissoluble; and yet a like Union should be impracticable for ten or a Dozen English Colonies. (King, 2006, p. 458)

While scholars argue that the Haudenosaunee Great Law of Peace significantly influenced founders of the US Constitution and United States democracy (Barreiro, 1988; King, 2006; Lyons, 1986; Schaff, 1988) unlike the Haudenosaunee, the US would leave out rights of women (King, 2006). Resolution 76 100th Congress recognizes Haudenosaunee influence on the US Constitution. Venables (2010) remarks that three main factors contributed to the corruption of cultural values of the Haudenosaunee: epidemic disease, the Beaver Wars, and the American Revolution (p. 41). It was the American Revolution that would compromise the unity brought by the Great Law (Calloway, 2016; Venables, 2010; Walle, 2004). According to Hauptman (2008) some leaders advised an acceptance of white culture, while others did not.

Founded in 1769, Dartmouth expressed commitment to Native students. Before its enactment, Dartmouth founder, Eleazar Wheelock, started a boarding school for Native youth called Moor’s Charity School in 1754 (Garrod & Larimore, 1997) where Native youth learned “farm education” which he called “husbandry” which pressed Native youth to go back home and “teach” in their communities as Indian missionaries. He found assistance from a young man

named Samson Occum (Mohegan) who converted to Christianity and was seen as the “preeminent” Indian scholar of the entire colonial era (Carney, 1999). While living in poverty, Occum, Wheelock’s most successful student, wanted the “poor Indians” to get an education. Occum recruited a young Joseph Brant (Mohawk) as a student when he was 16 years old, to attend Wheelock’s school. Brant would attend for two years and eventually become a Mohawk chief and through his education and as an influential leader, he would prove to be a vitally important figure among the Haudenosaunee, who would later struggle for survival during the American Revolution (Reyhner & Eder, 2017).

Occum became an “exotic” tool for Wheelock to use in order to appeal to investors in Great Britain. They received funding but Wheelock moved away from focusing on Native students, causing both Occum and Wheelock to part ways. Dartmouth, the “Indian College” would go down in history to not graduate any Native students prior to 1776 and before 1800 it only enrolled a total of 25 Indian college students, with only three graduates. Despite receiving a Western education at these colleges, Native peoples did not gain anything financially and Carney (1999) describes, “white society remained closed to the Indian, educated or otherwise” (p. 39). While this education remained closed to Native students, the Boyle Fund, the fund allocated specifically for Native students, helped keep prestigious universities like Harvard, William and Mary, and Dartmouth alive.

The Federal Period (1776-1964)

The “Federal Period” spans from the American Revolution to the 1960’s (Carney, 1999). In order to expand, the United States sought Native lands to settle and as a result aimed to build relationships with Native peoples through treaty negotiations. Over 100 years between 1778 and 1871, 645 treaties were negotiated between the United States and separate Indigenous nations/

tribes. Settler society forced a combination of religious (Christian), agricultural, industrial, and domestic training or “low level” and “servant work” onto Native peoples. “Prestige” and upward mobility were disseminated largely through Christian doctrine and Western scholarship designed by, and given primarily to white men as “inheritors” of Indigenous land and wealth (Carney, 1999).

Leading up to the American Revolution, Haudenosaunee leadership were caught in deeply shifting times with their old ways of survival in the balance. Chiefs of the Haudenosaunee wished to stay out of the struggle between Great Britain and the American Settlers, but it was young men, or “Warriors” who became divided, having to defend their homes and communities. The American Revolution became a Haudenosaunee civil war (Calloway, 2016). An Onondaga Chief explained,

Times are altered with us Indians. Formerly the Warriors were governed by the wisdom of their uncles and the Sachems, but now they take their own way & dispose of themselves without consulting their uncles and Sachems— while we wish for peace and they are for war (Penrose, 1981, p. 115)

While leadership expressed neutrality, Haudenosaunee families were being encroached upon by settler threats, which made it difficult to remain neutral during life-threatening events made only worse a few years later. Largely many individual warriors of the Mohawk, Seneca, and some Onondaga sided with the British and many of the Oneida and Tuscarora Nations sided with the Americans, which split the Haudenosaunee (Hauptman, 2008) but a large amount of the split came from individual choice and not by the Haudenosaunee as a governing body.

In 1779, George Washington commissioned a scorched earth campaign known as “The Sullivan Expedition” to “ensure total destruction of Iroquoia” (Koehler, 2018, p. 427) a military

attack that would decimate the Haudenosaunee. George Washington, and every U.S. President since, would be known as “Hanadaga:yas” which translates to “Town Destroyer” or “He ravages/ raids towns habitually” (Woodbury, 2003, p. 488). At the founding of the US, Washington’s and Jefferson’s views on Native peoples was that Indians could “adapt to white culture” and predicted that native peoples would fully assimilate while simultaneously delivering Indigenous lands to white settlers.

Chief Joseph Brant, educated at Moor’s Charity School (later renamed as Dartmouth), led Native community members from warfare during the American Revolution west to Ontario, Canada on a land known as the Haldimand Tract, which included over 1 million acres of land that served as the “buffer zone” between the British and the Americans (Hill, 2017). While this land was granted to Brant and his followers in 1784 by the Haldimand Treaty, over 200 years most of it is now “illegally” settled on by non-Native people and reinforced by settler colonial government (Canada). All except 5% of the original land is land known as Six Nations, Ohsweken (McCready, 2009). Six Nations remains the largest First Nations reserve in Canada today (McCarthy, 2016).

At the founding the United States and the loss of 95% of their land, the Haudenosaunee were in despair. The loss of land was a great disturbance to the family structure of the Haudenosaunee. In 1799 Handsome Lake (known as “Ganyadaiyoh”), a former warrior, advocated to reject assimilation efforts including “white man’s” education, religion, gambling, alcohol, and musical instruments through Gaiwiyoh, “the Good Message”, an important and perhaps even controversial teaching that split the Haudenosaunee, largely due to Quaker/ Christian elements within the teaching (Slater & Yarbrough, 2012).

Andrew Jackson would eventually enact Indian Removal; legislation which forced all Indians be removed west, beyond the Mississippi River (Fixico, 1986). By 1840, this policy was enacted Indian, an event which many Indigenous peoples remember as “the trail of tears”, one of the most horrific events in Native American history. In the case of the Cherokee Nation versus Georgia (1831), Indigenous Tribes/ Nations in the United States are described as distinct political entities, which are capable of self-governance while also being “dependent nations” as internal to the United States. United States views itself in a paternalistic role with Native peoples. Worcester versus Georgia (1832) decided that “tribes and the United States, not the states, had jurisdiction over tribal lands” (Carney, 1999, p. 44) which of course implies that indigenous tribes/ nations work with the United States on a “nation to nation” footing and that tribes operate higher than states.

While to the US a “nation to nation” relationship was a “progressive” term being enacted of the time, the US also opted to pressure Western “democracy” onto Native communities, encouraging the abandonment of traditional governments (Hauptman, 2008). While to some, an installation of a “democratic” government might seem to be a liberal, progressive idea, and even sought by some Haudenosaunee Nations, the “Tribal” or “elective council” systems were often forced upon these communities through police, state, or provincial aggression through marginalization and erasure of traditional councils, laws and practices (Clements, 2016; Simpson, 2014).

This era is also infamous for bringing rise to residential Indian boarding school system, an ethnocentric framework that fueled cultural genocide of Indigenous peoples under “progressive” settler colonial ideology. The federal governments focus was to eradicate Native cultures, Carney (1999) writes,

In the colonial period, the purpose was religious conversion. During the federal period, it was this peculiarly lower echelon assimilation . . . whereas, in virtually every known society, a central purpose of education is the stewardship and passing on of culture, white education as offered to the Indian dwelled on the dissolution of their culture. In rush to replace it with white culture, Indian culture was ignored or denied, viewed as not worth knowing. (p. 50)

Since contact, white settlers debated about what to do with Native Americans, whether it was best to assimilate, remove, or to kill out Native peoples.

The Report of the Special Committee to Investigate the Indian Problem of the State of New York, also known as the Whipple Report (1889) investigated, what they called “reservation life” among the Indians of New York State in 1888 through almost solely a deficit-based lens. This controversial report would generate letters to Chairman Whipple to inform legislation in New York State with a strong emphasis on full Haudenosaunee assimilation into US society and their lands given to the United States. Full assimilation and full integration were championed by education administrators including the multiple school superintendents in upstate New York and Charles Sims, the then Chancellor of Syracuse University (New York State. Legislature. Assembly. Special Committee to Investigate the Indian Problem, & Whipple, J. S., 1889). This controversial report justified the large-scale assimilation of Haudenosaunee children into residential schools in New York State.

By 1900, Native children attending schools numbered 26,355 which represented probably one-third of Native children in the United States (Carney, 1999). Low attendance in residential schools also reflected Indigenous refusal and resistance to white education. Indian residential schools denied Native children the right to speak their languages, instead they were educated

only in English, focused solely on European culture, and Christian education was made mandatory – all as prerequisites to US citizenship. Eventually, amid reports of sexual violence from school administrators, high rates of disease, and death at Indian residential schools, Indian education made up some of the most traumatic experiences that Native peoples had to face, trauma which still echoes to this day (Lomawaima & Ostler, 2018). Residential schools would not begin to close until 1919 with the last to close in 1980 (Carney, 1999).

Haudenosaunee attended several residential boarding schools. The Carlisle Indian Industrial School, which was founded in 1879 as the first off-reservation, federally funded residential Indian boarding school and also served as the “model” for Indian residential schools like it (Carney, 1999). The school’s founder, Richard Henry Pratt, coined the term, “kill the Indian and save the man”. Carlisle enrolled approximately 2,000 Haudenosaunee students, mostly Seneca, Cayuga, Oneida, and some Onondaga (Churchill, 2004). The first residential school for Native peoples in Canada, called the Mohawk Institute was known by most as “The Mush Hole” also echoes a dark history. The Mush Hole, located in Brantford, Ontario at the Grand River, Six Nations (Ohsweken) territory, operated from 1885 to 1970 and was nicknamed “the Mush Hole” because it was reported that in 1966 “90% of the children” had suffered from dietary deficiency and they ate only porridge 3-4 times per day (Maracle & Mosby, 2020). In Cattaraugus Seneca territory, 2,740 total Haudenosaunee students attended the Thomas Indian School (Thomas Asylum of Orphan and Destitute Indian Children) between 1855 and 1957, a 102 years history. This school, according to Burich (2016) enrolled kids, even “as young as infants, kept them as long as possible, and limited their access to their parents” (p. 13).

Churchill (2004) writes that it was reported that children reduced to eating from the “swill barrel”, where they picked out soggy bits of food that was “intended for the pigs” (p. 32).

Reports of sexual abuse, violence, malnutrition, disease, and death was common (Churchill, 2004). Well documented instances of abuse, neglect, nutrition deficiencies prompted students to cultivate “cultures of resistance” by stealing food, foraging, possessing “contraband”, speaking their native languages or running away (Churchill, 2004, p. 51).

At the height of the residential boarding school era, in 1862 the Morrill Act was passed by the federal government, an act which dispossessed almost 1 million acres of Indigenous lands to colleges and universities with Cornell University, receiving almost a tenth of the total land granted (O’Connell, 2020). The Indian Removal Policy was most favored by settler society, but while Indian land was being stolen, bought, then resold through the Allotment Act (or the Dawes Act, 1887) the “Indian problem” became much more prominent when land became unavailable and westward expansion had forged on. Racism and warfare increased and so too did the “progressive” agenda to remove Indians through federal policies like Grant’s “Peace Policy” (1868), designed to move Native peoples onto reservations.

The Snyder Act or also known as the Citizenship Act of 1924 made all Native peoples US citizens. The “progressive” United States thought of this as a “gift” and to many Native peoples it may have been perceived this way, but to many it was also perceived as an infringement upon Indigenous sovereignty in a nation-to-nation relationship. The Haudenosaunee sent runners to Washington DC to deliver a message stating that they reject US citizenship, or what they perceived as “forced” US citizenship (Porter, 1999b; Porter, 2005). In higher education, the Snyder Act centralized all of Indian education to what became known as the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).

But in 1928, John Collier was the main contributor of the Meriam Report also known as *The Problem of Indian Administration*, which heavily critiqued the BIA for mismanagement of

Native livelihood and well-being which suggested several changes in Indian education (Rusco, 1991). Changes included the removal of residential Indian boarding schools and to allow Native youth to attend Reservation day schools or to be integrated into public schools. The report advocated for strong recognition of Indigenous culture and worldview and it also strived to give Native peoples the ability to choose assimilation or separation, to accept citizenship or to exist as a “wards of the state” (Carney, 1999, p. 101). This report helped to create Johnson-O’Malley Act (1934) which authorized \$250,000 for vocational and trade student loans, while a maximum amount of \$50,000 went towards college and the Indian Reorganization Act (or the Wheeler-Howard Act) (1934) which was often referred to as the Indian “New Deal”.

The enactment of the Indian Reorganization Act ended the Dawes Act. Carney (1999) writes, “the emphasis pertaining to education was more on voluntary, not forced, assimilation into the larger society, but it was still assimilation” (p. 102-103). During the Early 1900’s, many Native peoples would reject US education, as it would mean full integration into US society but after this bill, the BIA reported a 34% increase of Native peoples into education from 385 Native peoples enrolled in college and three years later 515 Native students enrolled in college.

The Self-Determination Period (1960’s-Present)

During the turn of the twentieth century, the Native American population dwindled around 237,000 nationally, at least that which was reported. It wasn’t until the late 1960’s that the Self-Determination period (Carney, 1999) made significant strides towards Native self-governance and Native-run colleges and universities.

The 60’s and 70’s saw BIA chartered schools such as the Institute of American Indian Art in Santa Fe (1962), the Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence Kansas (1970), and the Southwest Indian Polytechnic Institute in Albuquerque, New Mexico (1971). The BIA

controlled colleges were only one aspect of Native education, as protests soon occurred and told a different story of Native/ Indigenous education in the US. In 1969 “the Indians of All Tribes” took over Alcatraz Island asserting that the island, Native land, should be used for an Indian University (Smith & Warrior, 1996).

The American Indian Movement (AIM), a group which advocated for Native rights often through protest and force, was very critical of the BIA and its “corrupt” management of Indian communities. While colleges grew separate from the BIA, including more tribally ran colleges, and with continued protests against the BIA from many Native communities, Indian education would be transferred to the Department of Education in 1979. The pulse of Native communities and the assertion of their own needs continuously not being met, could be heard through groups like AIM which led to their popularity amongst Native communities. In what is known as the BIA takeover, AIM demanded education reform in The Twenty Points that they presented very publically (Carney, 1999), demands centering on need for Indigenous sovereignty, education, and racial equity.

In 1966 the BIA’s first Native commissioner, Robert Bennett (Wisconsin-Oneida), emphasized the need for Native governments to “take control” of their own aspects of Indian life from the federal government, centering Native education. In 1969 the Kennedy Report (Echohawk, 2009) documented issues with Native education including a high (49%) drop-out rate in high school for Native students, a “lack of progress” according to Kennedy. Several reforms and bills were passed in the 1970’s including the Indian Education Act of 1972, the Indian Self-Determination and Educational Assistance Act of 1975, the Education Amendments Act of 1978, the Tribally Controlled Community College Act of 1978, and the Higher Education Act of 1978 (Reyhner & Eder, 1995; Lomawaima, 2000). By 1979 the BIA saw further increased

enrollment in Native higher education with 14,600 undergraduates and 700 graduate students (Carney, 1999, p. 108).

The Tribally Controlled Community College Act of 1978 saw rise to other community colleges like Sinte Gleska University (1970), D-Q University (1971), Oglala Lakota College (1971) and more Native colleges in the ensuing years up until the early 1990's. In 1973 the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) (1973) was formed to provide assistance to tribal colleges, to lobby for the colleges, to advocate for Native students, for language revitalization efforts, and culturally relevant curricula, and to support tribal relations (Brayboy, Fann, Castagno, & Solyom, 2012).

In the 1970's Haudenosaunee communities started "survival" schools focusing on language revitalization. In 1972, Mohawks of Kahnawa:ke started the "Indian Way School" then in 1978, communities members started the Mohawk "Survival" School where they withdrew many of their children from public school and enrolled them in the Mohawk Survival School (White, 2015). The following year, the Mohawk Freedom School in Akwesasne began operation committed to k-12 language immersion for Mohawk speakers. Drastically underfunded, community members who were committed to the survival of their ancestral knowledge struggled to maintain the school. One school administrator said, "When you operate on a shoestring budget, you learn to adapt. We used to pull straws to see whose getting paid this week" (White, 2015, p. 64).

In 1994, Congress gave land grant status to tribal colleges, a status first authorized through the Morrill Act in 1862 (Sorber, 2018), an analogy which makes me laugh since the Act would not grant land back to Native peoples, rather it would grant endowments still "owned" by the US but allow tribal use. Native operated colleges would continue to shift their focus to

languages, cultures, and Native self-determination, some which are evident with Little Big Horn College in Montana (Crow) that would operate with 75% of students speaking Crow languages as their first language and it being embedded within the curricula as the primary language (Carney, 1999).

In the 1990's-2000's several resources, institutions and group organizations formed to assist Native students, primarily Haudenosaunee, who were headed to post-secondary institutions. According to Dr. Lori Quigley (Personal communication, April, 26, 2020) Marlene Johnson (Seneca) and Minerva White (Akwesasne Mohawk) founded the Native American Indian Education Association/ National Indian Education Association (NAIEA/ NIEA) in 1992. Two Native American Consortia were created and still operate today, including the Northern Consortium at SUNY Potsdam and the Western Consortium at SUNY Fredonia. A third Consortium was created at SUNY Binghamton but has since largely fallen out of operation ("Native American SUNY", 2020). The "init-tho listserv" was created out of SUNY Western Consortium, which includes a compilation of resources for college-bound Native students, primarily serving Haudenosaunee students. Cheryl John coordinates the listserv today.

In 1991 Akwe:kon (meaning "all of us" in the Mohawk language) was founded at Cornell University, which began operations as a living quarters for Native and non-Native students focusing on the celebration of Native culture and heritage ("Akwe:kon", 2020). In 1995 Six Nations Polytechnic was founded, offering college and university accredited programs in agreement with surrounding higher education institutions ("History", 2019). In 2006 the Haudenosaunee Promise Scholarship was established at Syracuse University which provides an academic scholarship to enrolled, on-territory, Haudenosaunee students who gain acceptance to

Syracuse University. A Haudenosaunee Honors Scholarship was established for non-resident Haudenosaunee students as well (“Haudenosaunee Promise Scholarship”, 2020).

While the building blocks of Indian education were being put into place, Native self-determination promoted the growth of Native student enrollment in higher education, especially in tribally controlled colleges. For Native peoples, real education has long been intrinsically linked with expression of sovereignty or self-determination. If community members, education administrators, staff, and scholars want to understand Native issues in higher education, they must first understand politics of settler colonial imposition of forced Western education, assimilation, and cultural genocide. They must then understand the integral role that Indigenous sovereignty plays in higher education for Native students and for Native communities.

Native Students in Higher Education

Today 5.7 million people in the United States identify as American Indian/ Alaska Native, which is approximately 1.7% of the United States population (United States Census Bureau, 2020). While studies are limited, scholars have increasingly studied Native student experiences, persistence, and achievement in higher education for over 30 years. If left unsupported, Native students may feel invisible, alone, alienated, discriminated against, tokenized, stereotyped, perceived as the “problem” (deficit-based models), and misrepresented eventually bringing higher Indigenous student dropout rates (Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2014). Given this growing body of research, studies suggest that several factors contribute to Native student persistence, including the importance of Native cultures and languages, “giving back” to family and community, and commitment to Indigenous nation-building (Davidson, Reyes, Shotton, 2018; Shotton, & Waterman, 2018; Tachine, Cabrera, & Yellow Bird, 2017). In

this section, I provide descriptions of many of the issues that Native students may experience in institutions of higher education.

“Living in Two Worlds”

Native students often express the feeling of “living in two worlds.” Tachine (2015) notes that “living in two worlds” was a concept recorded by anthropologists as early as 1928 and conceptualized by Native peoples since contact and has become prevalent within higher education (p. 49). Researchers describe “living in two worlds” as ongoing struggle of Native students to connect their experiences in college with the epistemologies and ways of knowing from home territories and communities (Brayboy, 2005; Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2014). Pressure to conform to the assimilatory landscape of the colonial academy, according to Brayboy, Solyom, and Castagno (2014) may make Native students “feel as if they must distance themselves from family and culture and, therefore, be forced to live in ‘two worlds’...” (p. 169).

According to Tachine (2015) some scholars who may refer to Native students living and negotiating between two cultures, one being the dominant majority culture on campus and another being their culture of origin (p. 49). But to many scholars, the “Two Worlds” dilemma is assumed. Okagaki, Helling & Bingham (2009) describe that in order to excel in college, Native students must believe that they can be true to their ethnic identity. Huffman (2001) argues that culturally traditional Native students (e.g., students who identify strongly with their traditional culture) experience college as “estranged” (aggressively rejecting perceived assimilation of the dominant culture) or transculturated (little to no desire for assimilation from the dominant culture). According to Huffman (2001) transculturated students were able to negotiate two cultures while simultaneously maintaining a strong identity with their culture of origin; and were therefore more likely to persist in higher education. The assumption of living in “two worlds”

largely depends on the perceptions of the students and how they navigate cultural dissonance within multicultural, multi-racial, multi-ethnic spaces in higher education.

Campus Hostility, Racial Discrimination and Microaggressions.

Campus hostility, racial discrimination and microaggressions continue to be a detrimental factor for Native students (Garland, 2013; Keene, 2015). Guillory and Wolverton (2008) explain the critical importance of assisting students through issues of discrimination, “helping Native American students deal with instances of campus hostility and difficulty in transitioning from the high school social environment to that of college also impacts whether they decide to stay or leave college” (p. 60). Tachine, Cabrera, and Yellow Bird (2017) describe “microaggression” as the “subtle, commonplace experiences of prejudice that marginalized groups encounter on a regular basis” which could have a cumulative effect on Native students including premature exit, feelings of isolation, and depression (p. 787). Campuses may rely too heavily on deficit-based models of Native student persistence (Fish & Syed, 2018) focusing too often on “at-risk”, poverty, low academic performance, violence or abuse (Barlett & Freeze, 2019; Masta, 2018; Shotton, Lowe & Waterman, 2013), and not enough on strengths-based models like language revitalization, cultural integrity, Native community, and self-determination (sovereignty), creating more campus hostility for students to overcome (Waterman, Lowe, & Shotton, 2018).

Tokenization

Brayboy, Solyom, and Costagno (2015) write that Native students may feel “tokenized” or that they are pressured to “speak on behalf” of all Native peoples or that they have to work “twice as hard to prove that they are capable of being in their program” (p. 165) while being expected to represent an entire population (Moon, 2003; Shotton, 2008). Issues of misrepresentation are prevalent within higher education and it is inappropriate to expect a Native

student to officially “represent” an entire population, as they may only represent themselves and their *own* Native identity. Native students may feel uncomfortable with being tokenized, as non-Native students, professors, and staff may misinterpret, stereotype, or appropriate cultural differences (Brayboy, 2015, p, 165). Even higher expectations may be placed upon them than their peers do might not have to “prove” that they belong, based on difference.

Stereotypes

Native students struggle with stereotypes on college and university campuses (Catagno & Lee, 2007). Keene (2015) writes that Native peoples are “followed” by common misconceptions and stereotypes of Native peoples in “shopping malls and grocery stores, featured in Halloween costumes and Disney movies” and that Native peoples are only really represented as “Savage warriors, subservient squ*ws, or mystical shamans, and always set in the historic past, in contrast to contemporary modernity” (p. 102). This experience also “follows” Native students into higher education. Campus communities, including students, faculty, staff, and administrators may hold limited knowledge or stereotypical views of Native students and if it goes unaddressed, leads to an unwelcoming and hostile climate for Native students (Tachine, Cabrera & Yellow Bird, 2017).

Masta’s (2018) narrative inquiry on the “everyday experiences” of Native graduate students describes colonialism as a contributor to stereotypical views of Native Americans from the perceptions of the larger campus community. Masta (2018) writes that the practicing and normalizing of colonialism on college and university campuses (land dispossession, domination, economic oppression, etc) shapes the existence of those who have profited from it, therefore creating an “antiquated and stereotypical view of Native American history and current events” from the larger campus community, which “for Native American students, this shaping can also

lead to a crisis-in-narrative about their position in higher education” (p. 832). In their academic environments, Native students are then confronted everyday with people who contribute to the ongoing effects of colonization on campus through a stereotypical and settler colonial lens. Masta (2018) writes, “When students ‘open up’ about being Native American, they often encounter people who treat their existence as something exotic and unique or they treat their existence as one of assimilation” (p. 823).

In/Visibility

While institutions of higher education boast “inclusive” and “diverse” initiatives, Native students often feel invisible on college and university campuses or discriminated against based on campus community misperception of Native peoples (Brayboy, 2004; Reitz, Breton, & Dion, 2009; Shotton, Lowe, & Waterman, 2013). Brayboy (2004) describes “in(visibility)” as “taking two opposing states” and describing how they are “ultimately related” for Native students in postsecondary institutions. Being “visible” and being “invisible” are two states that Native students are ultimately marginalized, oppressed, excluded, or assimilated through surveillance or erasure (p. 128).

Brayboy (2004) also writes that Native students on campus may feel that they are made “invisible” by the larger campus community, making students feel alone, assimilated, or alienated, as if their Native identity is being erased by the larger dominant group. Simultaneously, Native students may also be “visible” or “hyper-visible” by the campus community but only often as surveilled, stereotyped, criminalized or other deficit-based frameworks.

Academically Underprepared and Social Context

National data suggests that Native students struggle throughout their educational experiences, K-12 and higher education; Native students are underprepared academically (Musu-Gillette, et. al., 2017; Snyder & Dillow, 2012). Tachine, Cabrera, and Yellow Bird (2017) note that Native student experiences and academic achievement were often examined solely through, “individual student factors” like low grade point average, low standardized test scores, lack of financial aid, and low motivation (p. 787). This, however, is only part of the story. According to Wolf, David, and Butler-Barnes (2017) academic-social context plays a vital role in academic achievement for Native students, especially feelings of belonging to campus, in fact many scholars have discussed this in length (Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2015; Oxendine, 2015). Brady, Strong, and Fryberg (2020) warn that scholars often rely too heavily upon aggregated data without examining social, cultural, and historical issues, “overreliance on aggregated data breeds misunderstanding and reifies negative stereotypes, which ultimately perpetuates a cycle of underperformance among Native American students” (148). While Native students may be academically underprepared, it is important to consider social, cultural, and historical implications as well.

Financial barriers

Unmet financial need may hinder Native student ability to persist in higher education (Guillroy & Wolverton, 2008; Hill-Zuganelli, Cabrera, & Milem, 2017; Youngbull, 2018). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 86% of American Indian college students received financial aid and 46% were low income, first generation college students (U.S. NCES, 2015). While competition for financial aid among minority populations grows, Youngbull (2018) writes that “American Indian students have to seek other funding options, but often experiences a lack of access to information on additional financial aid sources

(p. 126). Experiences like this complicate Native student access to college and persistence to graduation.

Family/ Native Role Models

Native students are empowered by the important life-giving roles that their family plays in their college experiences (Heavyrunner & DeCelles, 2002). Tachine (2017) suggests that Elders may play a vital role in Native student persistence, particularly Grandmothers. Of 10 Native students in her study on Native student experiences, Tachine (2017) writes that all 10 students revealed “remarkable stories of grandmothers and identified how vital their grandmothers were in guiding them through various challenges in college” (p. 159). Tachine, Cabrera, and Yellow Bird (2016) write, “In most Native societies, family extends beyond the nuclear and includes extended members such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and clan relatives” which may motivate Native student to “overcome difficulties”, to persevere and succeed academically (Guillory & Wolverton, 2008; Jackson et al., 2003; Minthorn, 2015; Waterman, 2012).

Non-Native Faculty/ Staff

Non-Native faculty and staff play an important role for Native students (Tierney, 1991). Since campuses often have so few (if any) Native faculty or staff, “Non-Native faculty, typically White faculty, should familiarize themselves with issues surrounding Native students” (Guillory & Wolverton, 2008, p. 60). Non-Native faculty and staff who foster a welcoming environment; who are willing to listen and learn from Native students, play vital roles in the success of Native students. Non-Native faculty, staff, and administration must also learn from Native faculty, Native community members, Native educational coordinators or Native Elders (Guillory, 2009).

Indigenous Nation-Building: “Giving Back”

Native students feel a sense of responsibilities, which are often interconnected with the good of their *whole* home community, as opposed to more *individual* responsibilities that might be more present at the academy (Waterman, 2012). Anderson, Innes, & Swift, (2012) write that Indigenous community members make connections “between identity and notions of responsibilities” which maintains that Native peoples “carry responsibilities that contribute to the collective and nourish relationships with all creation” (p. 271). “Giving back” not only aids in the successful completion of a high school diploma and college degree but most importantly; “giving back” empowers Native students to practice nation-building (Brayboy, Solyom, & Costagno, 2014; Salas Reyes, 2019; Smith, et. al, 2014; Guillory, 2009; Waterman & Lindley, 2013).

Native Identity

Guillory (2009) explains that, “Strengthening of cultural identity also appears to be a strong contributor to college persistence” (p. 15). While postsecondary institution campuses may not often reflect Native students, it is crucial for Native student identity that Native students “see” themselves on their campus and in their studies. Huffman (2008) writes, “How much difficulty American Indian students will face in college depends in large measure on how they see and use their ethnic identity” (Huffman, 2008, p. 3). Native student identity is tied with their responsibilities to their family and home communities.

Cultural Strengths to Persevere

Although Native students experience tension –straddled between the settler academy and their Indigenous ways of knowing – Native worldviews and cultures also help Native students to uncover aspects of their own persistence, resilience and cultural capital which derives from their homes, families, and communities (Wolverton & Guillory, 2008). Waterman & Lindley reveal

that Native women expressed aspects of “community, family, tradition, cultural integrity” were representative of “anchors” which “provided the sustenance to be Native American women in the United States” (p. 158). Waterman & Lindley (2013) explain that while Native students rely on cultural traditions as strengths, Native students have a sense of obligation and responsibility to carrying on their traditions and ways of knowing, that not only form a deeper and “broader understanding and practice of kinship” (p. 147) and community, which is in-connection with maintaining sovereignty, practicing self-determination, and commitment to nation building.

Native Enrollment and Achievement: “Gender Gap”

Many scholars reveal that Native male enrollment, persistence, and degree attainment in higher education severely lags behind Native female enrollment, persistence, and degree attainment (Aud et al, 2011; Musu-Guillette et. al., 2017; NCES, 2015; Reyes & Shotton, 2018; Shotton, Lowe, Waterman, 2013; Waterman & Lindley, 2013). As cited in Chapter 1, Shotton, Lowe & Waterman (2013) reveal that there is a “gender gap in the enrollment” between Native men and women in higher education (p. 5). Nearly 6 in 10 Native students enrolled in institutions of higher education are Native women with the remaining portion being Native men. Prior to this, about 30 years ago, the enrollment of Native women compared to Native men was about the same (Aud et. al., 2011; Shotton, Lowe, & Waterman, 2013).

Reyes and Shotton (2018) write, that “Indigenous women are entering college at a higher rate than Indigenous men and make up about 60% of the total Indigenous student population” (p. 7). Reyes and Shotton (2018) claim that this shift in enrollment for Indigenous men and women has “not been fully explored” and that the “understanding of the experiences of Indigenous males in particular remains incomplete” (p. 7). It is important to note that while Native women enroll and graduate at higher rates than Native men in higher education, Native men still get paid more

than Native women throughout the United States (US Census, 2015; 2016).

A Haudenosaunee Context in Higher Education

This section provides context to Haudenosaunee student experiences in-relation to land. While the Haudenosaunee have lost 95% of their lands in New York State, Ontario, and Quebec due to the colonization process (Hauptman, 2008), the Jay Treaty recognizes Haudenosaunee territories that transcend the so-called “US/ Canadian” border.

New York State remains home to 64 state university campuses, and over 100 private institutions of higher education (Waterman, 2007). Twenty one postsecondary institutions exist in Ontario, Canada, and 18 in Quebec, Canada. This means that there are over 200 institutions of higher education that exist on contested or disputed Haudenosaunee lands. As Haudenosaunee students continue to attend and enroll in these postsecondary institutions, they will continue to have extremely diverse educational experiences on either side of the border.

The Treaty of Amity, Commerce, and Navigation (also known as “The Jay Treaty”) (1794-95), according to nickels (2001) acknowledges Native peoples dwelling on either side of the US/ Canadian border to,

freely to pass and repass by Land, or Inland Navigation, into the respective Territories and Countries of the Two Parties, on the Continent of America...and to navigate all the Lakes, Rivers, and waters thereof, and freely to carry on trade and commerce with each other” (p. 316)

Haudenosaunee would use this treaty to assert their rights to the land, trade, and commerce on both sides of the “Canadian/ US” border. Akwesasne Mohawk territory was cut in half—straddling both the US and Canada— by the colonial border.

Haudenosaunee live in their traditional homelands and on their respective Nation territories, in border communities, and cities across North America in United States and Canada. Haudenosaunee Nation territories have shrunk considerably. The pictures below depicts land loss and movement/ removal of the Haudenosaunee today, after hundreds of years of settler colonial presence. Haudenosaunee communities also reside in Wisconsin and Oklahoma. Many Haudenosaunee citizens live on and off of Native territories, many in rural locations, urban communities, and across North America and some in various countries globally. Haudenosaunee students receive an education on and off Nation territories.

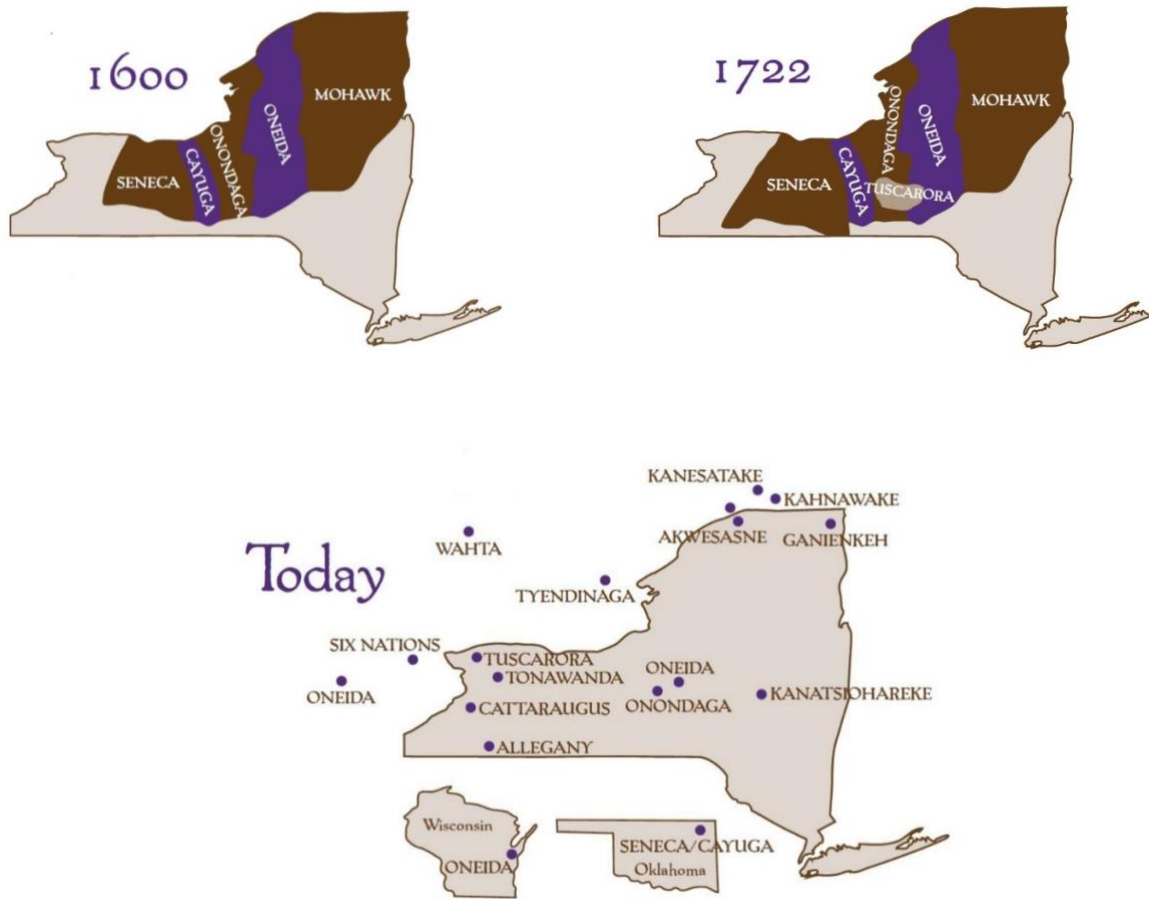


Figure 1.0. Map of Haudenosaunee Nations 1600- Present Day.
 Source: *Haudenosaunee Guide for Educators* (2009). National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI).

As lands were being taken by settler society, New York State and private actors, built private universities and colleges on traditional Haudenosaunee lands on both sides of the colonial border.

Many private institutions of higher education were founded and constructed throughout upstate and Western New York on Haudenosaunee lands. On traditional Seneca lands, Houghton College sprang up in 1833, along with Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) (1829), followed by the University of Rochester (1850) and Niagara University (1856) was built six miles from the Tuscarora Nation. In Cayuga territory, Elmira College was founded in 1855 and Cornell University in 1865. On traditional Mohawk territory, St. Lawrence University (1856) was constructed along with Clarkson University (1896). In 1870 Syracuse University would be established in Syracuse, New York, a mere four miles from the Central Fire of the Haudenosaunee, the Onondaga Nation. Many other universities and colleges include D'Youville College (1908), Nazareth University (1924), Medaille College (1937), Hilbert College (1957), Villa Maria College (1961), Siena College (1937), Utica College (1946), and Le Moyne College (1946).

Public, State Universities of New York (SUNY) were created in 1948. The SUNY system, also known as, “the largest comprehensive university system in the country” (SUNY, 2019) was constructed, adding 29 state-run institutions of higher education all on traditional Haudenosaunee lands.

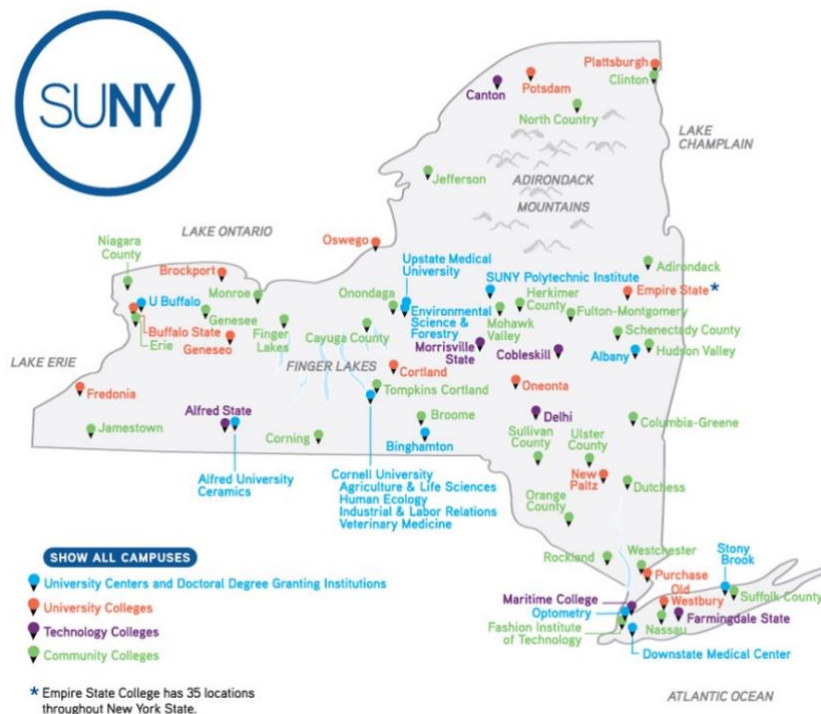


Figure 2.0. Map of SUNY Campuses in New York State

Source: *Map of SUNY Campuses*

By comparison, here is a map of many SUNY campuses, public colleges or universities that now occupy traditional Haudenosaunee lands. Many Haudenosaunee now attend these institutions.

Haudenosaunee Experiences in Higher Education

Waterman (2004) wrote that she wanted to understand how Haudenosaunee students “do” college (p. 4). In Waterman’s (2007) work, *A Complex Path to Haudenosaunee Degree*

Completion, Waterman interviewed 12 Haudenosaunee students about their experiences in higher education. Many students were encouraged to at least *try* college by their parents, family and community members. Waterman (2007) writes, that often students were encouraged to apply to college, “with a vague notion that education would allow them to help their people” (p. 28). Many Haudenosaunee students attended community college on their journeys to finishing a bachelor’s degree. The participants of the study averaged 8 years to graduate from college.

Students often experienced academic, financial, or personal barriers to completion but often overcame those barriers by receiving support from their family, home communities, and their culture. Often the students employed “assimilation resistive strategies” (Waterman, 2007, p, 30) in their college experiences which helped them to persevere. They were also challenged with a “dual curriculum”, which means that while they were learning in college, they were also learning about their Native identities and learning languages at home. In this study, Waterman (2007) wrote that “only the men received effective mentoring from faculty and staff” (p. 32). In addition, many colleges and universities were situated close to traditional Haudenosaunee territories which made it possible to attend college or work as a professional and return to their home communities.

In her findings from a larger study, *Home-going as a Strategy for Success among Haudenosaunee College and University Students*, Waterman (2012) asserts that, like many students of color, Haudenosaunee students “find strength in their families and communities” (p. 194). Fifty-four (54) Haudenosaunee students were interviewed in this phenomenological study, purposefully sampled as “degree completers”. Out of those 54 students, Waterman (2012) writes, “35 participants lived on campus in residential settings, and it was possible for 26 of them to go home on the weekend. This article is based on 19 of the 26 who went home often (every

weekend or every month)” (p. 198). In probing why those students went home “often” or as frequently as “every weekend” or “every month” Waterman found that those students went home because they “had a responsibility” (p. 200) to do so in accordance with their culture; which included attendance to funerals, which is a 10 days ceremony in Haudenosaunee culture, or out of responsibility to teach or learn their languages within their communities (p. 200).

Waterman (2012) claims that Native students will return home, to succeed in college. These Haudenosaunee students return home to “where they perceive their greatest support to be” (p. 201). Native students need to be supported in their efforts to return home throughout their college journeys, not dissuaded from going back home, as many higher education practitioners might suggest. Waterman (2012) concludes by stating that Haudenosaunee students experience college through an “indigenous lens” (p. 204) and that colleges and universities must continue to support Native students’ through that traditional worldview.

The Haudenosaunee context in higher education is important to understand considering that the students interviewed in this study are all Haudenosaunee. The socially constructed way that Haudenosaunee men have internalized their definitions of “masculinity” is also important—especially within the context of their lived Indigenous identities. The next section is about the social and cultural construction of Indigenous masculinities.

Indigenous Masculinities

R. W. Connell (2005), a professor at the University of Sydney, was the first to use the term, “masculinities”. Masculinity becomes pluralized in order to locate many ways of practicing “the masculine” as socially and culturally constructed, within a hierarchy, based in gender, race, class, ethnicity, and ability. Kimmel, Hearn, and Connell (2004) suggest that masculinities are constructed in relation to femininities through power relationships, in a gender order that reflect

inequalities as institutionalized within society as male domination. Gender order creates inequalities by enacting and perpetuating power relationships, men over women, and some men over “other” men. Patriarchy stems from this gender order in various forms such as hegemony, heteronormativity, misogyny, sexism, and hyper-masculinity (Connell, 2005; Kimmel, Hearn, & Connell, 2004)

Dancy and Hotchkins (2015) write that we must dislodge masculinity as a “state of being” and recognize it as a “state of doing”. Essentially, according to Judith Butler (1990), since gender is socially constructed and we “do gender,” because it is performative (Butler, 1990) as opposed to simply being; power relationships stem from these socially and culturally constructed states of internalized “doing”. In essence, once we deconstruct that which has been so engrained in us to do; we will be able to reveal gender inequalities as it pertains to masculinity.

Indigenous ideals, like the ideals of many people of color, were replaced by the “imperialist capitalist white supremacist patriarchy”, a term coined by bell hooks. In an interview with George Yancy, hooks references this very term which hooks uses to deconstruct the “nature of domination”, as interlocking systems of power and oppression (Yancy & hooks, 2015).

Innes (2015) writes that Indigenous men were then placed within that hierarchy of power; that for Indigenous men, the assimilation process meant “Indigenous ideals of masculinity had to be replaced to conform that upheld the White supremacist heteronormative patriarchy” (p. 51). Further, Innes (2015) writes that “Indigenous men, like all men, benefit from male privilege” but “not all men receive the same level of benefits” (p. 51). There is a fear that exists within colonial society of non-white, “minority masculinities” that is linked to violence which is stereotyped and internalized in settler society.

Heteropatriarchal Masculinity

Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill (2013) describe heteropatriarchy as “social systems in which heterosexuality and patriarchy are perceived as normal and natural, and in which other configurations are perceived as abnormal, aberrant, and abhorrent” (p. 13). Since heteropatriarchy is so engrained and normalized within collective social consciousness of settler society most do not often recognize that heteropatriarchy contributes to dispossession of Indigenous lands within the settler colonial project.

Native feminists reexamine feminism through a decolonizing lens suggesting that “men” and “women” are gender categories brought by settler colonialism and that “Native men are not the root cause of Native women’s problems” (p. 18) but rather that forced heteropatriarchal gender roles within Native communities are the root cause that places women as “second class citizens” (p. 18). Native feminists resist settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy, not through performance of feminism, but as participants of Indigenous nation-building (Trask, 1996). Indigenous nations require the participation from all Indigenous community members. However, Indigenous community members may feel a sense of unwelcome in their traditional communities because of their gender identity or sexuality.

Finley (2011) argues that heteropatriarchy has been engrained in Native communities so deeply that “traditional teachings” are often plagued with colonial, heteropatriarchal thought and that because of this longstanding colonization process, discussing Native sexuality, gender relationships, are not only taboo in Native communities, but are essentially the “extension of internalized colonialism” (p. 34). Considering Native communities’ internalization of colonialism, Aboriginal/ Native, two-spirit, or those identifying as Two Spirit, lesbian, gay, trans, queer, intersex (2SLGBTQI) often move to spaces of belonging that may not be in their traditional communities.

Gilley's (2006) suggests that Two-Spirit men cope with alienation from traditional territories and overcoming substance abuse and homophobia are a part of Two-Spirited peoples' efforts to mending the hoop, or mending relationship within Indigenous communities. Passante (2012) reported that many experienced discrimination from both LGBTQ2S communities *as well* as their aboriginal communities, prompting them to leave home or "leave the circle" of their traditional territories in order to establish new homes while struggling to remain connected to their traditions, Indigenous and Two-Spirit identities (p. 172). Harris (2015) writes that LGBTQ2S migration between traditional territories increased for reasons which may vary based on work, opportunities that had arisen, feeling discomfort of not being accepted in their home territories, to be with an LGBTQ2S person/ partner, to be open about their identity, "to escape a previous life" to "seek shelter," or for reasons related to drug and alcohol abuse (p. 101).

As Haudenosaunee men, including those in this study, continue to challenge – and to be challenged by – heteropatriarchal masculinity that is engrained so deeply within our everyday lives and within traditional teachings. In a Haudenosaunee context, Tadodaho, Leon Shenandoah (geha') said, "The Creator is not a he or a she. It's just the Creator. Sometimes I say He, but Creator's not either. The Creator is both and neither" (Wall, 2001, p. 43). Shenandoah (2001) reminds us that gendered representations of our Creator may be more complex than represented, typically by straight, cis Haudenosaunee men. Haudenosaunee communities must continue to examine Longhouse traditions for solutions to, and perpetrators of, heteropatriarchal masculinity.

Complementarity

Complementarity describes gendered roots of Indigenous peoples prior to colonization. Complementarity can be defined as the ways that Indigenous gender roles, masculine and feminine, work together to create the *whole being*; whereby men, women, and Two-Spirited

people work across genders and sexualities to carry on responsibilities in relation with one another within the household, community, and nations.

Souza (1997) describes these gendered responsibilities as our “labor roles” which are not defined as “public or private” that is often the case in a male dominated Western framework which strictly assigns women to the household and men to the community; but rather as “loosely organized social units” committing to shared relationship and responsibility (p. 200). Sneider (2015) notes, “complementarity does not enforce strict binaries but, rather, recognizes specifically delineated gender based communal responsibilities; as long as individuals contribute to the community, their sex in relation to, or as classified by their gender is ultimately irrelevant.” (pp. 63-64)

In decolonizing gender, Native communities may create stark division between gender roles, often in attempt to re-learn traditional gender roles, which Anderson (2000) recognizes this as a good indicator of “the *need* for balance, reciprocity, and complementarity” (p. 50). While gender is based upon relations and performativity within any given set of cultures or societies (Butler, 1990) masculinity, femininity and gendered relationships are constantly shifting given a cultural or historical context.

Hill (2017) defines delineated gendered responsibilities of women within the Great Law of Peace which run hand-in-hand with the gendered responsibilities of men, since the time of Creation. Haudenosaunee women are, in Hill’s (2017) words, “cultivators of the soil, leaders of the families, and the holders of future generations” (p. 16). Hill (2017) explains the “clearing” role of women as connected with the Great Law of Peace in recognizing maternal lineage as determining Haudenosaunee identity; through feminine guidance of Grandmother the Moon.

Janice Hill (Boyden, et. al., 2014) discusses our gendered roles and responsibilities of Haudenosaunee as complexly situated within the context of colonial society today,

In my community, the transition to the twentieth century, and the twenty first century hasn't been as easy for men, I think, as it has for women. Our community is like a circle and everything inside the circle is the responsibility of the women (so the social aspect of being is the responsibility of the women) and everything outside of the circle (so politics and war and dealing with foreign nations and anything like that) is the responsibility of the men. (p. 72)

Hill (2014) follows this up by stating that since we are no longer at war, we do not hunt and fish as much as we used to, and in dealing with outside governments, that platform has changed dramatically. These responsibilities have left the men. Where do Indigenous men find themselves in these conversations? When will they be able to carry on their responsibilities?

Many scholars (Allen, 1992; Venables, 2010; Williams, 2018) claim that Gaiwiyoh shifted gendered relationships among the Haudenosaunee from a matriarchal to patriarchal centered relationships. Slater and Yarbrough (2012) write that Handsome Lake realigned traditional values to “surrounding patriarchal values” by condemning abortion, divorce, “mischievous” old women, and placing men as the head of the household whereby “constraining traditional female spheres of authority” in order to align more closely with Quaker/ Christian values (p. 38). Women were displaced from traditional duties in the clearings and in the fields as matrons in the Longhouse and reduced to more domesticated roles within the nuclear family. Men would be forced onto small plots of land with significantly less power in the woods, as hunters and diplomats, and would be encouraged to become farmers, heads of their households, and laborers (Calloway, 2016; Simpson, 2014).

Porter (1999a) explains that “with the loss of warfare, diplomacy, and a large land base upon which to conduct hunting forays, the men we left virtually unemployed” (p. 136). The loss of land was a great disturbance to the family structure of the Haudenosaunee. Haudenosaunee men in higher education may struggle with their own traditional gendered responsibilities as it pertains to their role within their communities and experiences in higher education.

In/Visibility

Brayboy (2004) clearly describes Native students as “actors within higher education institutions,” whom are both visible and invisible, “their visibility and invisibility simultaneously create and are created by processes of marginalization, exclusion, assimilation, and oppression” (p. 128). Native students are “Othered” through their own invisibility on campus, not noticed, seen or acknowledged – erased from existence – fulfilling the settler myth that real Native peoples don’t exist. But Native students are also othered as visible, but as the stereotypical or romanticized versions of themselves. Yet it is through that stereotypical representation that renders Indigenous peoples invisible once again (Tengan, 2008). In this precarious state of (in)visibility, Indigenous men and Indigenous masculinities have been displaced by settler heteronormative masculinity (Sutherland, 2015).

Indigenous men embody many masculinities but for many men, Hokowhitu (2012) asserts, stereotypes and colonial ideologies have negatively affected Maori masculinity, like many Indigenous masculinities. Hokowhitu (2012) reminds us that Indigenous masculinities is a historical construction. Dominant media often portrays Native men as the “blood thirsty warrior”, “noble savage”, or as the “drunken absentee” (Boyden et. al., 2014). It is important to recognize that while Indigenous male violence exists within Indigenous communities (Innes, 2015), not all Indigenous men fall within these categories. Boyden et al (2014) explains that

these “stereotypes were instrumental to somebody else’s agenda” (p. 180) but that many, including Native peoples, have internalized this fear of Indigenous men that is perpetuated through colonial subjugation of white mainstream media.

Boyden et al (2014) writes, “The way to confront that and to defeat it and to recover something meaningful for Natives is to put the image of the Native male into its proper context, which is in the family” (p. 181). Sutherland (2015) writes, “Histories of erasure have greatly influenced the identities of Indigenous men, but identities have also been recuperated through Indigenous interventions that make visible alternative histories and models of identity” (p. 126). Haudenosaunee men in higher education must recognize their own internalization of these stereotypes in order to overcome them.

Lack of Research

In 2006 Bryan Brayboy delivered a paper stipulating that research on Indigenous men in higher education is “severely lacking” and that “the qualitative data is not hopeful.” Not only are studies virtually non-existent, Indigenous men are also “severely underrepresented in all levels of postsecondary education” (Brayboy, 2006, p. 15). Now nearly 16 years later, there has only been a few studies conducted specifically on Indigenous men in higher education within the United States, Turtle Island (Salvador, 2015; Still, 2019; Poolaw, 2018).

In his early paper, Brayboy’s (2006) cited several issues regarding the experiences of Native men in higher education including lack of finances or being “low income”, underprepared through the K-12 education, viewed through a deficit-based frameworks or forced to “integrate” into the cultural, social aspects of education. Indigenous men in college lack of role models, experience cultural incongruences, as life at home and life in higher education are vastly different. Indigenous men tend to value cooperation and community-centered approaches,

whereas individualism and competition are more valued in higher education which contributes to feelings of not belonging. Identity and race play important factors, citing discrepancies between Native students who identify as more “traditional” or “bi-cultural” regarding performance. Indigenous men may actually perform better when they are able to include strategies like substituting classroom time for office hours, utilizing Indigenous scholars to compliment school work, or collaborating together as opposed to working individually. Lastly, health concerns are a part to the issues faced by Indigenous men in higher education. Brayboy (2006) concluded that more studies about Native men in higher education are needed.

Poolaw (2018) explored the experiences of several Native male graduate students in higher education and describes three major findings. First, that non-Native institutions of higher education reinforce historical notions of Western colonial patriarchy, whereby continuously perpetuating the notion that higher education was created for white males and do not meet the needs of Native students in higher education. Second, limited research on Native male graduates continues to perpetuate Native male graduates as overlooked or (in)visible in higher education and at the graduate level. Third, Native males told stories of empowerment that they’d received from their own communities but, as Poolaw (2018) writes, “In regard to their traditional roles as Indigenous males, the majority of them demonstrated patriarchal masculinity traits and behaviors that do not follow along with traditional Indigenous roles of maleness” (p. 210). Indigenous males are continuously influenced by colonial society and exhibit patriarchal traits such as dominance, control, hierarchical competition, and subservice which hampered their ability to succeed as graduates in higher education.

Poolaw (2018) suggests that scholars, community members, higher education practitioners continue to address structural inequalities which continue to exclude Native

peoples. Native males need more mentors in higher education, gay Indigenous men were supported by their partners whereas straight Native men did not report the same support from their partners. Indigenous fathers did not mention their children as much as Native mothers have previously. Indigenous males reported a strong connection to their grandmothers. Overall, more research needs to be conducted in this area to better understand the experiences of Native males in undergraduate and graduate school.

Still (2019) interviewed 22 Native men who attended undergraduate colleges and universities about their experiences. All the men were from 25 different Tribal/ Indigenous Nations, aged 18-64 years old. Still (2019) conducted five sharing circles with Native men at five colleges and universities. Using Indigenous Storywork (Archibald, 2008) methodology, he analyzed and described their stories about perception of Native identity, masculinity, and support systems of Native men in higher education.

Through this storied process, Still (2019) identified “Tsisdu” or the Trickster, a character within Indigenous stories, not good or bad by Western conception Judeo-Christian “good versus evil” (p. 145), but rather, as Still puts it, the Native concern of “balance and harmony”, through lessons and nature of stories, and even the tragic element of stories. Through an Indigenous methodology, Still (2019) posits that the trickster revealed itself within each of the participants’ stories, including how Native men viewed their identities with non-Native people on campus. Participants often described how they “acted differently” (p. 145) around non-Native people on campus to feel accepted, within a culture of *diversity and inclusion* on campus. The trickster also shows itself in ways that the larger campus community or whitestream society views as a stereotypical or tokenized view of Native peoples, which was experiences by participants in Still’s study. Still (2019) described how the trickster “failed Native men in their journeys” (p.

149) through a lack of inclusivity on campus which alienated Native men, through lack of or difficulty in engagement between Native and non-Native students and failed to serve entire populations on their campuses. Still reiterated that the Trickster fooled Native men, the storytellers, into believing that their campuses were inclusive to Native students.

Still (2019) identified several recommendations for institutions of higher education. Student affairs graduate programs should put more focus on incorporating Native curriculum and research into their coursework. Institutions of higher education need to focus on building relationships with Native populations on campus. Institutions of higher education should avoid generalizing Native students on campus. Higher education administrators should incorporate trainings to their campus community to understand the tribal diversity of Native peoples, to create diverse and inclusive practices. Campuses should create spaces of belonging for Native students on campus, for Native students to freely speak about their experiences.

Still (2019) describes the identifying and defining of masculinity as a difficult one, from various tribal perspectives, that this information is still emerging from the literature. Still (2019) writes, “Masculinity amongst college men is still in flux. However, there has been a strong entrenched influence of toxic masculinity on men, and Native men are not exempt from these influences” (p. 160). Still describes that there is a need to bring the roles of Native men and Native women into balance and that colonialism “took hold in Indigenous communities, not only took the toll of dismantling and disrupting Indigenous masculinity but also threw the traditional balance between the roles of Native men and women into chaos and confusion” (p. 160).

Through this, Still (2019) recognizes the importance of brotherhood that emerged from the stories, the importance for Native men to ask for help, and to express their emotions within a supportive community where they feel a sense of belonging. In turn this helps Native men

navigate these experiences together and challenge hegemonic and toxic masculinity. Still (2019) makes recommendations on the importance of establishing chapters of Historic Native American fraternities (HNAF's) and to continue to expand research on Native men in higher education.

Overlapping/ Intersecting Identities

Haudenosaunee men, like all people, have complex social/ cultural identities that overlap and intersect which gives shape to their lived experiences. In higher education, Dancy and Hotchkins (2015) found that “manhood is a complex web of multiple identities” (p. 3) built on self-expectations, relationships, and responsibilities to others. He writes that a limitation in many studies about higher education is seeing higher education institutions as “a world” and not a “world nested within worlds” and that men of color have been influenced by worlds, communities, and experiences outside of higher education.

Originally coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) intersectionality describes how the experiences of women of color are overlooked and made invisible solely based on their racialized and gendered identities within a system of oppression and marginalization (Davis, 2008). Black women experience both racial discrimination and gender discrimination, that the law “seems to forget that Black women are both Black and female, and thus subject to discrimination on the basis of both race, gender, and often a combination of the two” (Coaston, 2019). Violence against women of color often goes overlooked by the law since as a biased white, male-dominated system. Crenshaw (1989) describes that the American legal and socioeconomic systems were created by structures of white supremacy and sexism, and therefore have a lasting impact on the lives of women of color.

Men of color, specifically Black men, exhibit means to cope with the “realities of their existence,” *Cool Pose* (Majors & Billson, 1992) describes that “the same elements that bring him

piece to mind, are the same elements that ultimately cause him problems” (p. 37). The positive qualities of being a man of color such as dignity, respect, control, self-esteem, and social competence (p.37) are the same aspects of “playing it cool” that lead, ultimately, and paradoxically, to social, lawful, and intimacy issues that compromise relationships and well-being. The aspects of masculinity are socially and culturally constructed entities of being a man in an unjust, racist, discriminatory, and threatening world.

Being cool means to be protected and as a “conditioned strength” and *playing it cool*—often never gets shut off— even in situations that does not demand it. In the face of police officers and authorities of the law, Black men “play it cool” in order to survive, but in turn, are reluctant to be open up emotionally to people who deeply care for them, family, mothers, fathers, spouses, children, etc. This brings about the complexities of understanding masculinity, as constructed in, and understood by men of color, as being both— a source of strength and a shortfall. In these examples, masculinity is defined in deeply problematic ways that includes the patriarchal aspects of “being a man” but also goes hand-in-hand with aspects of survival, strength, and power captured by *coolness*.

Intergenerational Trauma

Intergenerational trauma has contributed to the struggles of Native men. I offer an excerpt from Arthur C. Parker (1916),

Whether he can express his thoughts in words or not, whether the turmoil in his heart finds voice or not, the American Indian who has suffered the oppression that is worse than death feels that civilization has (1) made him a man without a country; (2) usurped his responsibility; (3) demeaned his manhood; (4) destroyed his ideals; (5) broken faith with him; (6) humiliated his spirit; and, (7) refused to listen to his petitions” (p. 256).

Native men have experienced a level of shame in their identity, unsurpassed by many historically marginalized populations.

“It dates back to residential boarding schools” one of Sky’s (2015) participants said, “that’s where our culture took a nosedive” (p. 278). Sky (2015) interviewed former Native gang members, exiting the criminal justice system in Canada. One of Sky’s participants described residential boarding schools as contributing to the trauma experienced by Native men, “The sexual, emotional, mental, physical abuse, all passed down to all these men, makes them feel weak. And the only way that they can make themselves feel strong again is to dominate” (p. 278). The participant later said that Native men never lost their identity, but rather that they are uncovering it. He stresses that Native men need to work together to uncover it, but that intergenerational trauma has a hold on many Native men. “My Dad is a violent person” a participant said, “so I’m a violent person. But there’s a reason he’s a violent person, there’s a reason for everything that we are” (p. 279).

As Haudenosaunee men look up to their mentors and role models, they are also plagued with a history of complete disempowerment, shame, and ridicule. While traditional notions of men as protectors and providers may be highly valued within Indigenous communities, men are also troubled by their own colonial subjugation passed down from generation to generation which contribute to higher levels of abuse, neglect, and violence.

Mentors, Fathers, and Role Models

Anderson, Innes, and Smith (2012) reveal that many elders “stress the importance of” Native men being active members of the family, communities, and nations. They “shared memories of how significant their own fathers had been as role models, teachers, and mentors”

(p. 278). As Native men continue to need mentors to provide support and direction, often their male mentors display problematic behaviors as well.

bell hooks (2004) writes that “males in our nation do very little parenting. Yet we hear so much about the importance of having a man in the house” (p. 101). The “protectors and providers” that we hear so much about are depictions of unconditional love, a love that children and spouses so strongly need, but that do not accurately portray the truth of the troubling lives of men. Men, and often white men, are often the fathers that are “controlling, abusive, incestuous, violent, alcoholics, workaholics or rage-oholics” (hooks, 2004, p. 102). hooks (2004) criticizes the scholars who “buy into the myth” that simply having a father in the home would make things better. Children need more than that, hooks reminds us, they need healthy caregivers, protectors, and providers that will love the family not abandon the family, and instill trust. Indigenous men, like Black men, must “let go of the patriarchy’s hold in his consciousness” (p. 110).

Dancy and Hotchkins (2015) describes the connection between manhood and influence of fathers’ mothers’/ women engagement in raising men, as boys in a social justice perspective in considering “interlocking systems of oppression” (p. 3). Fathers’ influences are based around controlling women and competing against other men. But mother’s engagement was based on transcending the patriarchal forms of relationships. This is then reflective of men’s role models and mentors in higher education as often “rigidly defining mentors” as men, but overlooks the mentorship, *and need for mentorship* of women— for men of color as students in higher education.

Kahn, Brett, and Holmes, (2011) claims that men struggle in higher education for several reasons but simply putting more men as “role models” into the university does not adequately address the issues that men face in higher education. Men in higher education experience

traditional masculinity issues such as: engaging in violence, objectifying relationships, homophobia, maintaining dominance. Men who operate within this masculinity are less likely to engage in “feminine” behaviors of academics and may lean more towards that of violence, being the “playboy,” and objectifying relationships in college and university.

According to Kahn, Brett and Holmes (2011) men who engage in discussion and academics that prompt them to be “more introspective” and “challenging of the self,” are less likely employ a “distancing façade” enabling them to disengage with what they perceive as “feminine behaviors” (p. 77). In discussions about masculinity issues, they will be less likely to engage in masculinities that are harmful to them and others. For example, a man may have created an “externalized behavior” that would be congruent with objectification or sexism as a defense mechanism for men who are “uncomfortable with exploring the self” (p. 77). In a higher education setting, where students are encouraged to explore the self, many men may reject traditional notions of masculinity for another masculinity that would be more open to self-exploration, deepened understanding of their sexual identities, expressing emotion, and cooperating with others (Kahn, Brett & Holmes, 2011).

Indigenous men lack the ability to succeed in higher education because of a lack of role models (Brayboy, 2017). Brayboy et. al. (2017) writes that Native male mentors, especially male Elders, are important for Native men in higher education, because they foster ways that Native men understand their masculinity in higher education, as Native male mentors and Elders reinforce stronger ties to communities through Indigenous teachings. Further, Brayboy et. al (2017) writes, “These teachings determine how masculinities are defined, redefined, and decolonized as well as the processes that construct the role of men and boys within Indigenous nations, communities, and families” (p. 10).

Decolonizing Patriarchy

Patriarchy is a political-social system perpetuated in society, insisting that males are inherently dominating and superior to everything and everyone (hooks, 2010). Patriarchy is learned by all people, of all races and genders, and most often overlooked or dismissed by men who do not “see” their own internalized dominance and privilege.

In, *The Will to Change*, hooks (2004) makes a compelling argument, describing what she calls the “deeper inner misery of men” (p. 4) which states that men need to continue to strive to understand the fear, power, and struggle of men, masculinities and love. This system of patriarchy has also denied men the ability to access full emotional well-being through violence, compulsive sexuality, warfare, heteronormativity, and the absence of love. hooks (2004) argues that the “crisis of facing men is not the crisis of masculinity, it is the crisis of patriarchal masculinity” (p. 32) which subjugates men as well as everyone else within a patriarchal society.

Male despair, whether gay or straight, is attached to their emotional pain, numbness, and rage – which as a driving force towards hegemonic masculinity, severely hampers male ability to love and to accept love from those who claim to love them. However, hooks (2004) claims, “To know love, men must be able to let go the will to dominate” (p. xvii). hooks (2004) reminds us that females want love from males, and males want love from males, whether as friends, daughters, sons, family members, romantic partners, gay or straight, but men must find the will to change within a system of patriarchy that denies them that freedom. Men must become emotionally aware of the grip of patriarchy on their lives; a journey of healing that hooks (2004) writes, “does not take place in isolation” (p. 188).

Anderson, Innes and Swift (2012) write, “The connection between providing and feeling part of a family was essential to Indigenous men of the past” (p. 273). According to Antone

(2015) Indigenous anger and violence instilled by the colonial world has destroyed our families and communities, we need to “rebuild a sense of [Indigenous] manhood that works with women to create a world free of violence” (p. 41).

Hosgä:’eñgehda’ (“He carries a burden/ responsibility”)/ Warrior)

Haudenosaunee men have a history of thriving in many skilled trades and professions, while most specifically developed reputations as skilled iron workers and tradesmen (Simpson, 2014; Weitzman, 2014; Curtis, 2005). Haudenosaunee men are well known globally for lacrosse (dehontsigwaes/ Tewaaron), a medicine game given to the Haudenosaunee from the Creator that is played to heal the sick, to lift the minds of the people, for enjoyment of the community, and to give thanks to the Creator (Downey, 2018). Haudenosaunee men are hunters, artists, singers, dancers, speakers, reciters of ceremonies, skilled storytellers, and political leaders within the Longhouse (Anderson, 2016; Francis & Vansickle, 2018; Hill, 2017; Sheehan, 2010). Haudenosaunee men are lawyers, historians, teachers, professors, and entrepreneurs, uncles, parents, and brothers (Cronk, 1988; Roberts, 2017; Simpson, 2014).

Like “Our Elder Brother the Sun” in the Haudenosaunee Creation story whom is described as “the Great Warrior” and a mentor to men, he is described this way using the Haudenosaunee word “Hosgä:’eñgehda’go:nah” (Onondaga) or “Rotskenhrakéthe kowa” (Mohawk) (Horn-Miller, 2010). This word is also used to refer to “young men” as having specific responsibilities to protect their communities (Anderson, Innes & Swift, 2012; Horn-Miller, 2010). While some may describe men as “warriors”, Tadodaho Leon Shenandoah (geha) said “there was no word for ‘warrior’ in our language” (Shenandoah & Wall, 2001, p. 56) in which he refers to the word that we use to describe protectors, “Hosgä:’eñgehda’”. The Mohawk translation, “Rotskenhrakéthe” or “warrior” according to Horn-Miller (2010) could be literally

translated to “he is carrying the burden of peace” (p. 110). While “protectors” is often referred to as “men”, it is often also applied as a “mixed gender group”, “Hodisgä:’eñgehda” in Onondaga language or “Rotiskenhakéthe” in Mohawk language. Men and women are protectors in Haudenosaunee communities. Tom Porter, a Mohawk Elder said that this word could mean, “They carry the bones of our ancestors” (Anderson, Innes & Swift, 2012). In this study, I use the word Hosgä:’eñgehda’ in order to describe Haudenosaunee men as “protectors” or through a more literal translation as “he carries a burden/ responsibility” in reference to the Great Law of Peace. Perhaps men carry the burden of peace.

Following their traditions and historical context, many Haudenosaunee men in higher education are lacrosse players. They may look up to their fathers uncles, and cousins— all role models, who have been iron workers or tradesmen for their entire lives. Haudenosaunee men express themselves in ways that, while, may be influenced by traditional Indigenous teachings, they also are influenced by the colonial world (Antone, 2015). Perhaps Haudenosaunee men reflect the teachings of Sapling and Flint in Haudenosaunee Creation, of a good mind *and* of a troubled mind (Lee, 2013). Haudenosaunee men carry a heavy burden of peace.

Summary

In this chapter, I provided a literature review that examined key teachings on Haudenosaunee worldview before and after settler invasion. I explained a brief history of Native peoples in higher education, while also highlighting some key Haudenosaunee context. I then provided Native and Haudenosaunee student enrollment and achievement in higher education today. Lastly, I offered theories about Indigenous masculinities within a Haudenosaunee context. While I wrote this chapter, I thought considerably about all who came before me and for the

knowledge that they have produced as it pertains to this study. It was my intention to write this chapter in a way that spoke to Indigenous survival and resiliency on Turtle Island.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

In the previous section I showed ways that Haudenosaunee might view the world around us through traditional Indigenous teachings. I described ways that the United States attempted to destroy Indigenous lifeways through Western education and overtly racist and patriarchal colonization practices that threaten Indigenous peoples. I provided ways in which Native peoples have persevered in higher education and theories about Indigenous masculinities. In this chapter I discuss my research questions, my positionality, the methodology of this study, and the gathering of research participants. I provide brief overviews of the pilot study and the main study, with short reflections about both. I discuss the process of finding codes and themes out of the interview data in order to generate composite counter-narratives out of the data provided. I provide detail about making this research relevant and accessible to my community.

Research Questions

In this study, I ask an overarching question: How do Haudenosaunee men understand Indigenous masculinities? What are the experiences of Haudenosaunee men in higher education? How do perceptions of masculinity affect Haudenosaunee men in higher education?

Exploratory/ Preliminary questions

What were the **life experiences** that led you to higher education?

What are some ways in which you **accessed** higher education?

What were some **challenges** on your journey in higher education?

How did you **overcome those challenges**?

Where did you find **support**?

How do you **understand** Haudenosaunee masculinity?

Researcher Positionality

Researcher positionality refers to my “positioning” with regard to those whom I am studying. In this case, I am a Haudenosaunee Mohawk man working on a PhD in the academy, and I am studying the experiences of Haudenosaunee men in higher education.

I have thought considerably about the implications of being Indigenous while also doing research which places me among mostly non-Native, white people, who quite often come from more privileged upbringings. I feel pressure to conduct myself in a way that is true to I am as Mohawk working within the academy. I also deeply consider ways in which I need to check my male privilege during the research process. All of this can be confusing and complicated, but it is also very rewarding. In *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Smith (2012) writes,

A growing number of these researchers define themselves as Indigenous, although their training has been primarily within the Western academy and specific disciplinary methodologies. Many Indigenous researchers have struggled individually to engage with the disconnections that are apparent between the demands of research, on one side, and the realities they encounter amongst their own and other indigenous communities, with whom they share lifelong relationships, on the other side. (p. 5)

These tensions grow out of “ethical, cultural, political and personal issues” that may present themselves as difficulties for Indigenous researchers. I often think about prestige at the university and colleges and how I might be perceived, especially within my own Haudenosaunee communities.

Patricia Hill Collins (1991) makes a compelling case by describing Black women scholars as have an “outsiders within” status where Black women are *both* as outsiders and insiders as scholars in colleges and universities which have historically excluded Black women and Black feminist thought and contributions to their respective fields. Hill Collins (1999) writes

that Black women may be “between groups of unequal power” (p. 85). Their contributions may not be taken seriously by white, male-dominated institutions who have historically excluded Black women and Black feminist thought. Hill Collins (1986) describes this tension as one that people of color can learn from,

Black women are not the only outsiders within sociology. As an extreme case of outsiders moving into a community that historically excluded them, Black women's experiences highlight the tension experienced by any group of less powerful outsiders encountering the paradigmatic thought of a more powerful insider community. In this sense, a variety of individuals can learn from Black women's experiences as outsiders within: Black men, working class individuals, white women, other people of color, religious and sexual minorities, and all individuals who, while from social strata that provided them with the benefits of white male insiderism, have never felt comfortable with its taken-for-granted assumptions. (p. s28)

This means that at times when a researcher is within their community or field, they feel pressure that is as an “outsider,” or an “insider” given their background, expertise, or time spent (or not) within various communities. Insider/ outsider researchers are researchers who belong to communities who are conducting research as “insiders” and also belong to an outsider group.

I can relate to what Hill Collins describes as an “outsiders within”, as I conduct research about our own communities and ourselves. Ladson-Billings and Donner (2005) state that scholars of color, including Indigenous scholars, are positioned in a way that pits them against themselves. They become part of the dominant Western model of knowing but are also still a part of their Indigenous communities. Growing up in both within US settler society as well as in within my own Native communities, I always received messages about who I *am* as a Native

person, as well as messages about what men *do*, specifically what Native men do. Growing up I felt like I was an insider *and* outsider to my own Native communities.

I am enrolled Mohawk, Wolf Clan, I grew up on the Onondaga Nation and I spent my later childhood years in a predominantly white town that bordered the Tuscarora Nation. I spent much of my time in non-Native settler communities on the borders of those Native communities in New York State including Youngstown, Lewiston, Niagara Falls, Buffalo, Syracuse, and parts of Ontario, Canada. Yet, while having an identity that was shaped by Haudenosaunee worldview, I grew up hearing gendered messages that Haudenosaunee men were good lacrosse players and good iron workers. I never really heard that Native men were “educated” or “smart” necessarily, in fact quite the opposite. But I did often hear that Native men use our game of lacrosse in order to earn athletic scholarships to “go to college” and attend institutions of higher education.

About 20 years ago, I had internalized the idea that the *only* way I would make it to college, was through an athletic scholarship. It was the only way that many of my role models were able to get into colleges and universities as Native males, so that is what I learned. They also taught me that if I did not do well in college, I could just be an iron worker or work in the trades, like the rest of my family. I was influenced to think this way. I wanted to attend Syracuse University on an athletic scholarship like my Dad and like many of my family members. After college, maybe I would become an iron worker, like my Dad, and like so many of my male role models. This became my dream, like many Haudenosaunee boys and young men.

As I remember this very real goal of mine, it makes me laugh to think that I would never actually receive an athletic scholarship despite putting so much effort into lacrosse. Eventually I would actually, to my surprise, attend Syracuse University, not as an undergraduate student like I dreamt that I would do, but as a graduate student. I would not access my dream through sports

but rather through academics. This is why I am so interested in the life-experiences of Native boys and young men in college . . . I wondered: Perhaps Native boys and men are much, much more than what has been said about us.

Growing up I went to many schools K-12, both on and off the Rez. Later in my teens, I attended predominately white schools that bordered the Rez. In those schools I learned that “being educated” was a mark of hard work and being labelled as “smart”. But I was not a high performing student. I also learned that I was different. I was not white like most of my peers at these predominately white schools. My parents told me that I had to go to college, so I had internalized the idea that I would play lacrosse and gain an athletic scholarship like my dad did and like many members of my family did. While I focused on athletics, my grades became so bad that, even if I did have a slim chance of getting recruited for lacrosse, my low grades would prevent any opportunity to attend a 4-year college.

I attended three different community colleges for the first three years of my college experience, all of which I left for academic reasons or stressors outside of college. Eventually I graduated with my associate’s degree and I was provisionally accepted to a nearby state college. I balanced single parenthood, three jobs, full time classes. I could not handle all of the responsibilities and something had to give. Again, I failed most of my classes at the four-year college and was placed on academic probation. It seemed that I was starting over again but with different responsibilities. I had to find a way to support my family while attending classes.

Still enrolled in the state college as a non-traditional student and single parent, I was able to secure family housing— which provided my son’s and my immediate living needs while I took classes. It was expensive but I did what I felt that I had to do for my family. We had a small circle of friends who supported us, but we would often need to walk places because I did not

have a vehicle for some time due to financial constraints. After a year and I half I obtained a used vehicle and I held different part-time position on and off campus.

I remember feeling quite lonely, often. I really did not have any peers, family, or friends that went to school with me. Some of my friends went to the university nearby, but they always seemed so far away. Eventually I would come to deeply admire books and journaling. I was embarrassed that I liked to journal so much because I did not view writing as a particular male or “masculine” activity. I did not know any other guys who did this, so I felt like a bit of an outsider. I hid my passion of writing from most people. I would write at night when I was alone and when my son was asleep. I wrote because it felt good and because it made me feel like I wasn’t alone.

My fallback plan was always iron work. If I dropped out, I could be an iron worker. If I graduated and I did not know what to do, I could be an iron worker. Since iron work is viewed as such a highly regarded profession in my community, I told myself that I would go to college, I would graduate, and I would be an iron worker like my dad and my Grandpa. I respect those who put their lives on the line for their families.

One semester I met an English professor, Dr. Lorna Perez. She taught ethnic and minority literature which, in a place that constantly reminded me that I was different, her course reminded me of home. One day in her office hours she asked me: “What do you want to do when you graduate?” I told her that I would probably go into iron work. She smiled and responded, “That’s a good profession, lots of our families go into the trades. Have you ever thought about graduate school?” I had never actually thought about that as a possibility until she mentioned it that day. She said, “You can do that, you know?!” Right then, unexpectedly, Dr. Perez made me believe

that I was capable of going to graduate school (but now that I think about it, she might have actually said, “Hugh, you’re going to grad school. No questions asked.” Ha).

Eventually at that state college, I earned a bachelor’s degree and a master’s degree. My undergraduate journey only represents my personal college experience. It often seems like another life that I lived, with my oldest son by my side— he being my true inspiration throughout that experience. Now, both of my children inspire me as I journey to earning a Ph.D. at Syracuse University.

An Indigenous Research Paradigm

Wilson (2001) writes that an Indigenous epistemology should work hand in hand with an Indigenous methodology and that researchers need to move beyond an Indigenous research perspective and toward an *Indigenous research paradigm*. He writes that a “paradigm” is essentially a label for a set of beliefs that go together that guides someone’s actions. A “research paradigm” means, “a set of beliefs about the world and about gaining knowledge that go together that guide your actions as to how you’re going to go about doing the research” (p. 175). In this sense, Wilson (2001) lists four “aspects” that, combined, could make up different paradigms.

Four main aspects used in a “paradigm” include first, an ontology, which means belief in the nature of reality. In other words, a person’s way of being and what they believe is real in the world is an ontology. Second, an epistemology is what a person thinks about that reality. Third a research methodology is the use of a way of thinking (an epistemology) to gain more insight into one’s reality. Lastly, an axiology is a set of ethics or morals. The research that one is conducting must benefit the world in some way. Overall, these four aspects: *ontology, epistemology, methodology, and axiology*, according to Wilson, make up a “research paradigm”.

Indigenous research paradigms, according to Wilson (2001) are fundamentally different than other Western research paradigms such as positivism, post positivism, critical theory, and constructivism. These Western paradigms build on the belief that knowledge is an individual entity and that, as an individual, the researcher, in search of knowledge, can gain knowledge. An Indigenous methodology means to talk about “relational accountability” (p. 177) we must answer to all of our relations. Instead of asking questions of validity, reliability, or making judgments; an Indigenous methodology prompts researchers to fulfill those relationships around us. This means that knowledge cannot be owned by an individual and knowledge cannot be extracted. In an Indigenous research paradigm knowledge is always relational, it is shared amongst all of creation, human and non-human, not just with research subjects as individuals, but through relationships. Knowledge is shared within the earth, animals, and plants. Knowledge is always relational. Wilson (2001) uses the example of a chair that can only be described in the Cree language as “someplace where you sit” (p. 177). Native peoples speak of things as having a relationship with them.

In an Indigenous Research Paradigm, we develop methods that are appropriate for the study, to fulfill our obligations to all of our relations and that fit within Indigenous ways of knowing. Some methods are more appropriate than others and fit within an Indigenous research paradigm to honor our relations. While researchers operate within an Indigenous research paradigm, Wilson writes that it is important for Indigenous peoples to trust their intuition, an intuition that should be internalized in order to be true to Indigenous understanding.

I am reminded of words from Linda Smith (2012) who describes ways in which Western academic institutions have colonized Indigenous peoples. She echoes the sentiments of Native peoples who often describe “research” as one of the dirtiest words in the English language as a

result of its long and dark history of settler colonial violence onto Indigenous communities— but we are also reminded of our survival. Smith (2012) eloquently writes,

To acquiesce is to lose ourselves entirely and implicitly agree with all that has been said about us. To resist is to retrench in the margins, retrieve ‘what we were and remake ourselves’. The past, our stories local and global, the present, our communities, cultures, languages, and social practices – all may be spaces of marginalization, but they have also become spaces of resistance and hope (p. 4).

My hope is that this research utilizes an Indigenous research paradigm that challenges old assumptions about us and sustains our story of resistance and resiliency.

While this study operates from an Indigenous research paradigm to honor Native cultures, worldviews, epistemologies, ontologies, and cosmologies I found that I was most notably influenced by Jo-ann Archibald’s *Indigenous Storywork* (2008). Through Indigenous Storywork, our ways and our universe, becomes the central focus about how this study should be conducted.

Indigenous Storywork

Jo-ann Archibald (2008) provides ways in which to engage and to learn within the story-research process from an Indigenous perspective. This work would truly not be complete without Indigenous Storywork at the forefront, as a way to conduct the research from an Indigenous research ethic, an ethic that is true to Indigenous peoples. Archibald (2008) describes her interviews with Elders, community members, and knowledge holders that I can relate to on many levels.

While I journeyed through this research process, at times I felt rushed. My Gram and other family or community members would tell me to stop trying to crunch my study down into

such a rigid timeframe. They told me to stop trying to compete with my peers and to stop worrying and just to work at my own pace. This process helped me to understand the research, to understand myself, and to understand the men whose stories I would eventually hear and begin to understand.

Archibald (2008) describes the complexities of time, perception, positionality, and attention to cultural protocol between participants and the researcher. She also talks about and the learning process itself. She sat down with an Indigenous community member to have discussion about oral traditions. While she sat down with him, and as an insider to that group, she described the setting to which she would conduct the interview. Archibald (2008) writes,

Our teacher-learner relationship was based on respect for Musqueam and Stó:lō cultural ways. Because I am an insider of the culture, I observed a cultural learning protocol: once he, as the Elder, had determined where we should meet, I ensured that there was sharing of food and tea and created unhurried time and talking space so that we could get to topic of discussion at the “right” moment. It would have been disrespectful to ask questions immediately. (p. 49)

She arranged tea and food so that they could create “unhurried time” (p. 49), a concept about respect, culturally engrained in many Indigenous communities. By emphasizing this approach, Archibald conducts interviews with Indigenous peoples as to be culturally appropriate which garners measures and expectations of that community, especially when discussing the traditional teachings that she wanted to know about. Archibald also displays her knowledge as an “insider” to that community, which emphasizes the importance of trust when interviewing. I want to also highlight that learning about traditional teachings takes a long time, this is often a shared cultural belief amongst many Native peoples. Creating “unhurried time” is crucial to building community

and garnering respect and reciprocity during the research process but also during regular everyday interactions. It is holistic and should always be adhered to everyday.

Archibald (2008) let her research participant take the role of “teacher” and she, as the researcher took the role of “learner” which is appropriate within Indigenous communities, especially while working with Elders as researchers in the Western academy. Archibald displays her positionality further in the interaction with the “teacher” when she reveals what he says to her:

Another way that I can help you to get to know these things, it won't be just like us talking now, it'll take time, I can go just so far and maybe we can carry on some other time . . . because this is the teaching that we got that we can't hurry everything . . . Well I think knowing you this long, I know your parents now, where you're from, I'm willing to help you. I trust you and I know you're our kind. (p. 49)

Archibald discusses a “cultural bond” that she and the knowledge holder have with one another, a relationship built in trust, in knowing family, and in being a part of a community. Archibald (2008) writes, “His decision to help me by becoming my teacher, and our subsequent talks, made me realize that, as a learner, I too have responsibilities” (p. 50). This research will be conducted to honor those learner responsibilities, to have been to have the ability to walk away for a while and to reflect, to give power to the teacher, and to “take time” and listen about what the conversations tell us. I think that this approach is culturally appropriate amongst my participants, Haudenosaunee students in higher education. I will take time to reflect after the interview, in order to make sense of the information shared.

Native peoples in our communities may also not want to be recorded at all or may want to discuss matters a little at a time, which is a common traditional protocol for many Indigenous peoples. Archibald (2008) describes oral memory as a part of the research process as well,

I stopped taping and interviewing him and followed, for a while, the research-as-chat approach. I then switched to a traditional approach to learning from Tsimilano, learning pieces at a time and not hurrying the learning, as he had first directed me to do. I watched him speak many times and at many different gatherings. We shared many private talks. What he taught me is in my oral memory and an important part of my heart knowledge and my spiritual being.

Archibald speaks to “not hurrying the learning” and switching, from “interviewing” to talking which coincides with traditional protocol as “oral memory”. Archibald gives respect though oral traditions, utilizing memory and spoken word which truly emphasizes an Indigenous way of knowing and approaching the research.

Time, trust, protocol, researcher positionality, and learner responsibilities to knowledge are also so critically important to the research process with Indigenous communities. It reminds me of my Gram and her instructions to me, not to rush and to understand that the “good things take a really long time.” As I move forward, I aim to carry my teachings about our own protocol at the forefront of my mind. As my cousin said to me once, “Let things come in Creator’s time.” As I navigate this process now, I think about time, about space, about external pressures, about my own learning process but mostly about ways that I can do the research that is appropriate for my community— which makes me reflect on how Haudenosaunee might think about time. Instead of looking at pauses and changes to the project as setbacks, I view them as a vital part of the research process, as a necessity, and careful engagement of ethic and responsibility. I am

reminded that Haudenosaunee time is not only about right now, but for the future generations. I pause and think about my children and all of their children after them. How will they navigate their own experiences in education?

Critical Race Composite Counternarrative

Smith (1999) writes that Indigenous peoples tell stories about “countering the dominant society’s image of indigenous peoples, their lifestyles and belief systems” (p. 151). I have chosen to intentionally align Indigenous methodologies with a Critical Race Composite Counternarrative approach (Ladson-Billings, 1996; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) in order to protect the identities of participants, to engage a Native audience, and to bring clarity to complex issues related to colonization, gender, race, and class issues. Many Indigenous scholars describe Indigenous storytelling as counterstory to dominant settler colonial narratives (Brayboy, 2005; Brayboy & Chin, 2018; Smith, 1999). Referencing Indigenous counterstory and ways in which universities practice settler colonialism, Brayboy and Chin (2018) write the following,

Stories guide us. They teach. Whether historical or fictional, stories from people who have been pushed out, or whose stories are suppressed play a vital role in uncovering the larger story of power. They show how race and colonization are ubiquitous but hide behind common sense to make them look like they’re nowhere. So you tell me, why don’t universities talk about where they come from? (p. 59)

To find my voice in this project, it was important to me that I write in a way that best fits my own style of writing, a form of writing that I feel best conveys the experiences of my participants and brings visibility to Indigenous Counternarrative Methodology.

Early in the research I was worried about the readers being able to identify participants in this study. Despite assigning participants pseudonyms, other community members may be able to

identify participants through various characteristics and descriptors. Waterman (2004) explained that a common issue in conducting research using Native students as participants is that many come from small communities and Indigenous nations and that participants may be easily identifiable, possibly “through their major” (p. 47) or other descriptors which poses a dilemma that many Indigenous scholars face. Characteristics like age, clan, employment, nation-status or other descriptors may also contribute to this problem. In order ensure that participants are not so easily identifiable, I have compiled data and am retelling participant stories through “composite characters” which is a combination of several participants within one representation or a *character*. This is a creative, short story, nonfiction approach in order to best represent the experiences while protecting their identities as current or former Haudenosaunee students in higher education.

Composite Characters

A common approach in Critical Race Methodology is use of *composite characters* (Dawn, 2018; Delgado, 1995a, 1995b, 1996; Doharty et. al., 2020; Harper, 2009; Martinez, 2014; Solórzano & Bernal, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; 2002). Due to the sensitive nature of the participants’ identities, I use composite characters to obscure participant identities and to act as counter stories to dominant, stereotypical or “master narratives”. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) explain that composite characters are used as parts of composite stories and narratives that “draw on various forms of data to recount racialized, sexualized, and classed experiences of people of color” many of which are characters “placed in social, historical or political situations to discuss issues or racism, sexism, classism and other forms of subordination” (p. 33).

I have changed all of the names of people, places, Indigenous nations, and institutions that they have mentioned in their stories and experiences. What I call the “primary composite

characters” were created by combining participants with similar experiences and identities including sex, gender, age, race, and other events in their stories. For example, “Teyo” is a fictional character from the data, is a composite character who stems out of the non-fictional lived experiences of several participants, mostly males, who have studied race and gender issues in classes, struggled with completing coursework on-time, traveled home for support (e.g., “home-going”), and found mentorship in faculty of color at a predominantly white institution. Teyo’s professor, a female Xicana professor who gives Teyo direction during his undergraduate class, is a combination of participants who have also described female Xicana mentors during their undergraduate years.

Stock Stories

Stock stories are often used in Critical Race Methodology (Donnor, 2016; Han, 2008; Ladson-Bilings, 1998; Vellenas & Deyhyle, 1999). Stock stories rely on “majoritarian stories” or “master narratives” which rely heavily on deficit-based theorizing common stereotypes of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) write,

Standard, majoritarian methodology relies on stock stereotypes that covertly and overtly link people of color, women of color, and poverty with “bad,” while emphasizing that White, middle- to upper-class people embody all that is “good.” (p. 29).

I use secondary characters like “Chad” or “Dr. Pratt” to represent anecdotal, majoritarian or “master narratives”, similar to a stock story (Martinez, 2014; Vaught & Castagno, 2008) that may perpetuate stereotypical or deficit-based narratives around Native peoples, women, and 2SLGBTQI people. Vaught and Castagno (2008) write that “anecdotes as representative of a larger system of race power and privilege – an individual centered analysis of structural phenomenon (p. 106). These characters are real people that participants often discussed who may

have challenged Native students, dismissed them, or made feel invisible or unheard. These characters created barriers for participants by perpetuating myth, stereotypes, racism, sexist or homophobic behavior.

“Fictionalized” Scenes and their Relevance

Martinez (2014) writes that composite counter-storytelling “differs from fictional storytelling” because it “critically examin[es] theoretical concepts and humaniz[es] empirical data while also deriving material for counterstory’s discourse, setting, and characters from sources” (p. 37). While Characters are depicted through “fictionalized” scenes, I use direct quotes from interviews to create those scenes and those conversations between characters. I also use a format known as “captured conversation” (Caulley, 2008) which “enhances action and characterization. It is a most effective technique for involving readers, making them feel as though they are right there” (p. 435). This project is not necessarily a traditional higher education dissertation, nor is it one that takes a specific academic tone, but rather one that intersects and captures race, class, gender, and issues of colonization within the academy and larger settler society. Through this approach, I am able to capture the essence of themes that arose during analysis of these individual interviews and focus groups.

In order to engage my audience, I intentionally do not take on an academic tone, but rather colloquial or “everyday” language used in Haudenosaunee communities and for accessibility purposes. I decided to use common words, phrases, anecdotes, and ways of speaking that are prevalent among Haudenosaunee as well as other Native peoples through “captured conversations”. Waterman (2004; 2010) uses accessible language in her work which I feel makes the work understandable to Haudenosaunee community members as well as higher education practitioners.

To build the context of each “scene” I’ve used description of objects, art, description of sounds or music to represent larger historical issues of assimilation, cultural genocide, or erasure but also to describe change, survival and adaptation. I do this to convey that Native students often find themselves situated within spaces that do not reflect their own backgrounds or ways of knowing. For example, I use the description of a violin in the background of some scenes to represent assimilation but also to question avenues of survival through adaptation. I use description of art that some have shown me students work and interests during and post-college and which also represents Native identity and participants’ work to “decolonize” spaces long known to be settler-colonial spaces such as at colleges and in museums.

A Pilot Study

In order to bring the reader through my journey in crafting this dissertation, I first begin with the pilot study. In 2016, after I passed my comprehensive exams, I submitted an application to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct interviews with students about their experiences and ways that they understand issues of masculinity. After revisions it was approved. In what I would eventually call my “pilot study” I examined three main concepts: *How do/did Native Haudenosaunee students persevere in their higher education? What does masculinity and Native masculinity mean to Native students in higher education? Have Native Haudenosaunee students in higher education, or as graduates from higher education, practiced [Indigenous] resurgence through their labor? If so, how?*

Pilot Study Recruitment

The Pilot study was approved to be conducted from March 24th 2016 to March 23, 2017 (16-025). The study was called *Indigenous Experiences in Higher Education: Resiliency, Masculinity, and Resurgence*. My ultimate goal was to broadly explore my interests in Native

student experiences and issues of masculinity. I recruited participants through email, phone, text, and social media solicitation using purposeful sampling (Yin, 2011) and snowball sampling (Woodley & Lockard, 2016). My goal was to identify and interview 25 Native students, 5 Native staff, and 5 Native faculty.

Pilot Study Participants

I interviewed a total of 23 former and current Native students in higher education. Thirteen (13) identified as females and ten (10) identified as males. Nine (9) students were undergraduate students enrolled at the time of the interviews. Five (5) were graduate students enrolled in master's, doctoral, or law school at the time of the interviews. Three (3) were not enrolled at the time of the interviews and did not graduate with bachelor's degrees. Ten (10) were not enrolled at the time of the interviews and graduated with bachelor's degrees. All students were Indigenous, 18 identified as Haudenosaunee, one identified as Hualapai, one identified as Diné (Navajo), one identified as Potawatomi, one identified as Zuni Pueblo and one identified as Zuni Pueblo.

Interviews

The pilot study interviews took a more conversational tone, where participants shared their experiences with me and I was sure to listen closely to their stories, as a learner. I asked questions through semi-structured questions (see in Appendices: Interview Guide – Pilot Study), which were more conversation-based with participants, in order to broadly explore Indigenous student experiences and their understanding of gender issues in their experiences.

After listening to participants share their stories, I created space for them, ensuring that I did not rush participants. I let moments of extended silence take over the room. When I felt it was appropriate, I shared some of my experiences in relationship with theirs. It is important to point

out that during this pilot study, I followed social and cultural protocol that I am personally familiar with as a member of these Native communities. Conversations took on serious or humorous tones, all of which are acceptable among Native community members and actually helpful in extending a sense of comfort to participants. Take for instance this situation with “Elizabeth”.

Elizabeth: My name is Elizabeth, and I come from [Haudenosaunee Nation 1]

[Elizabeth laughs]

Hugh: I just spilled coffee on myself.

Elizabeth: Yeah. That was hilarious.

Early in this research, I struggled to write in a way which *somehow* captured both an “academically acceptable” study while also my Native identity and background that reflected my home and my community. I will cover this in upcoming sections.

The open-ended, semi-structured interviews often naturally flowed into broad discussions about participant experiences as Native students in higher education, in which we primarily focused on intersecting issues of Native identity and college experiences including in/visibility race, age, identity, colonization, and gender. Participants discussed their role models or mentors, “giving back” to their communities, the importance of Native peer support, family, culture, spirituality and “defining” traditional gender roles versus colonized influence. It seemed that participants were particularly interested in engaging with issues of gender including Native men and Indigenous masculinities. In part, I brought the conversations there intentionally, but once we were on the topic, I noted that participants pointed out that Native men and “definitions” or “meanings” of Indigenous masculinities was a sorely needed area of discussion but that it was also an area of confusion, not only for participants, but for their communities as well. Indigenous

masculinities could mean so many things within the context of Native student experiences in higher education.

I used a thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clark, 2006) and critical thematic analysis (Lawless & Chen, 2019) which I discuss more in the “main study” below. I listened to the interviews over and over. While I transcribed the interviews, I wrote fieldnotes in several notebooks and in my “notes” on my phone. I primarily used both open and closed coding (Lawless & Chen, 2019; Owen, 1984) to examine specific areas of information. It is important to note that I did not diagram anything for the pilot study, which in retrospect would have been helpful. After coding interviews, I found several areas of importance in their stories which often intersected with their identities including race, gender, age, and class issues.

Pilot Study Closing Thoughts

Overall, I wanted to understand how the experiences of Native students in higher education intersect with gender and specifically masculinity. Some areas of conversation brought more clarity while many other conversations raised more questions, the initial interviews helped me to understand the meaning of co-constructed knowledge (Charmaz, 2014) which I will represent in the following chapters. I closed this study on March 23rd, 2017.

The pilot study helped me to gain a deeper insight into Native/ Indigenous experiences in higher education, gender issues, persistence in higher education and post-college life to examine ways that they give back, or plan to give back to their communities in order to strengthen or empower their Indigenous communities, which I originally had understood as “Indigenous resurgence” (Alfred, 2009; Simpson, 2008). But since then, I have developed a more complicated understanding of the experiences of Indigenous students as situated within various

settler colonial environments both on campus and at home, as well as places of community support.

My first overall reflection of the project had been that Native students have complicated experiences that are heavily informed by the settler colonial context of higher education. I was able to identify ways that, within colleges and universities, racism or patriarchy creates a hostile environment on college or university campuses in predominantly white colleges or university campuses.

Hostile environments included many different scenarios. Some student shared aspects about their culture or Native identity that they felt was relevant in classes often filled with non-Native peers, but in some cases they felt dismissed or were even laughed at by non-Native peers. Native male students reported being teased for having long hair. A non-traditional Native student was treated differently for being pregnant by her professor and peers. For example, “Lily” described this in a focus group discussion:

Lily: Um, well just walking. Because I would, I don't know where I would park. Or I'd get dropped off. [Her husband] would drop me off and I would just walk to class. Like, walking across the quad and all the students- they're like 19, 18 years old and I'm like 30, older.

Hugh: Mhm.

Lily: And um, but they would think I was their age and they would stare, and they would stare at your stomach immediately and it was just like, uh, this is a baby like calm down [joking tone]

[Lily and Marsha Laughed]

Lily: But, there was an instance in one of my classes, it was an Earth science class, like with a lecture. And I had to sit- they had tables in the back, I had to sit there because the desks wouldn't close over my stomach, like it would be at an angle and I couldn't take notes. So I had to sit in the back and, I guess the trend now is to like, you sign up for classes with like friends or something and you sit in a group and you save seats for them. I didn't have that. And so like, I would always have to make sure, it would stress me out to make sure to get there early because none of those turds would like save me a seat.

Hugh: Mmm.

Lily: Like they know there's a pregnant woman there but they're taking up all the back seats so I had to like get there early. And then there was this instance where I didn't get there early and there was no spots left. I was like "crap" so I tried to sit in the regular, like one of the seats with a fold out and it just- it just wasn't working. And so I took one of the wooden chairs that was on the stage and I was kinda like, about to go up the stairs and I'm heavily pregnant, like I'm bigger.

Hugh: This is in front of everybody?

Lily: This is in front of everyone. And no one, this Black girl got up and she was like, "Are you gonna go up the stairs with that chair?" I was like, "Yeah, I can't fit in the desk." And she was like, "Here, I'll help you." And she helped me like carry it in, and I was like, "Oh thank you." And then I sat where there was like a space and the kid was like, "Oh sorry." And I don't know why he even said sorry like what that was about. Like, sorry like you're in the way? Or sorry like, you didn't help? Like, I don't know what that was about. I just ignored him because I was pissed. But like, that was an interesting experience. And then there was the one, I wanna say white girl, I- I say white

girl but it's like, I don't look Native, you know what I mean? [33:03]. So someone can mistake me for that. But I'm pretty sure she's white. And she had made a comment to her friend, she was like, "Oh I feel bad for that kid." I don't know if she was talking about me and my baby? Or if she was talking about someone in passing and I'm just assuming she's talking about me and just feeling insecure because everyone is staring at me anyway-

Hugh: Mhm.

Lily: But like if she was talking about me, that was really ridiculous, she knew nothing about like, my situation whatsoever. You know? But-

Several Native female students were treated unfairly by male professors. Often students struggled other Native peers and staff on campus with not having a maternal clan, often a marker of traditional Native belonging and citizenship of a nation. It became clear to me that gender, and cultural aspects of gender, played an important role in the participants' college experiences on campus.

Participants expressed the importance of protecting their culture and communities against settler colonialism in their personal lives as well as their lives as students in colleges and universities. I noted that this may also have to do with what it means to be a protector/ warrior, but within the context of Haudenosaunee community. Some had expressed that "protection" can mean masculinity in the Western sense, but for Indigenous and Haudenosaunee, the concept transcends into the responsibilities of Indigenous women and the role of femininity as well.

Many Students discussed the importance of Native community support from either home or from their campus communities. While some could not go home for support during their college years, they often depended on faculty/ staff of color for support or other Native peers on

campus. Participants created Indigenous peer spaces to discuss issues on campus, in classrooms, or issues that arose with non-Native people who often did not understand their Indigenous perspectives. Take for instance “Jean” who discussed another Native student as being a really integral part of her experiences in college:

Jean: [Laughs]. Um. I guess—um, I met [person] at the end of my junior year and um [laughs]. Well, I guess he kind of broke my heart so, that was really hard for me because I kind of saw him as someone who really—sorry I’m gonna cry. Um, who really showed me like, um, the- the good things of um, like a relationship and the good things of Native culture. I guess that was really, really hard for me because I kinda felt closest at first um, to him, versus anyone else. I could really talk about— I feel like he really understood what I was going through, and really understood how I was trying to understand my Native identity and how he was the only friend I had who was Native, at the time, and the only friend I ever had, really. Cuz all my friends are white [laughs].

To Jean, her partner, was an integral part of her experiences. She described how much he meant to her and ways that they identified with one another.

Jean: He kinda felt like, I mean he was this amazing lacrosse player and like this amazing human, and he still felt like he wasn’t good enough. And, I think that was really hard for me because I felt like I wasn’t good enough. And I just didn’t understand how he—how the way I saw him and the way he saw himself— are so different. And, um. I guess we would just – we would fight about stupid things like, at the bars and about girls, and we could never figure it out enough for it to be what I wanted. And then we just kinda like stopped talking completely and we were just never friends after that.

The relationship that they had, while complex, was important enough for her to describe as one of the most integral parts of her college experiences. They build community with one another that aided in understanding their Native identities. As I listened to her talk more about Jacob, I couldn't help but to think about the feeling she describes as "not feeling good enough" as a Native lacrosse player at a prominent university.

Many Native students expressed Native humor during the conversations, expressing that humor created community and helped them through their journeys in college or the university. They also said that it made the stress of college and certain topics "lighter" so that they could cope with throughout their journeys in higher education.

Many participants struggled with the word "masculinity" and the phrase "Indigenous masculinities." For example, I would often ask, "What does masculinity mean to you?" Or I would also ask, "What does Indigenous masculinities mean to you?" It was common to get responses like:

Carl: *To be honest, I don't really know.*

Rhonda: *Okay... That's a tough one...*

Jean: *Oh, that's very hard. Um. [pause].*

In most cases, I would have to ask probing questions like the following:

Hugh: *How do you think your – when you think about men, and being a Native man, how do you think that is nuanced for you, given being Indigenous and a man?*

Most participants described traditional roles and responsibilities associated with men and masculinities within their communities including iron work, lacrosse, or the military. Many would refer to their fathers, male mentors, or other men in their communities. While this was a

fruitful conversation, it often led to more questions, which was important during the interview process. Take for instance, the responses below:

Carl: *Oh, yeah, I think so, at least from my time in [Indigenous Nation]. They had defined roles like the guy works and the mom usually works as well. I mean, it's also interesting in the way I grew up.*

Several participants pointed out that we do not speak or identify gender that is so “boxed” in. They express that even the term “masculinity” is a weird term, that is used by settler society, and one that is not often used by Native students. This could answer why so many had taken issue with the term or could not answer immediately. Several participants reference their fathers, or male mentors when speaking on Indigenous masculinity. In this, they often identify ways that male mentors were helpful for them throughout their higher education experiences. For instance, take Carmen when I asked her about Indigenous masculinities.

Carmen: *Growing up, um, my Dad was there sporadically. But I also had father figures, right? Different father figures. You know, I had my older brother, I had a stepdad, and I had my Dad- all different men.*

What caught my attention were the comments from Native female participants *about* Native men in their lives, at times subtle comments, towards the end of interviews. I often thought about these comments over and over during the research process without overtly delving into them. These examples including the following:

Hugh: *Are you proud of your brother?*

Natalie: *“I didn't think this would be so hard to talk about.”*

Lily: *Growing up, my Dad to my Mom, and it wasn't playful. Like I didn't see it as that, I didn't get the feeling it was that... He would make fun of her like, “Oh she's caking her face on”*

or “Oh, women and their hair.” He still makes comments to me about that... And even though it’s like light and playful and like, not as dark as physical abuse, it’s still like, annoying.

Instead of participants pointing out “subtle ways”, like the “Subtle Cues” section above, participants explicitly name issues of patriarchy, abuse, and problematic behavior from males in their communities. This section problematizes traditional masculinity and names problems of patriarchy within their communities. Of those who went into detail about Indigenous masculinity, many pointed to characteristics of traditional Indigenous male masculinity within their communities and began to problematize this concept, leading often to discomfort in their voices, a sense of anger or frustration with Native men. Take for instance what Natalie says about Native men in her home community:

Natalie: *I haven’t had any positive Native men in my life. (Hugh: No positive Native men in your life?). I don’t think so... a lot of them are losers. They don’t have a GED, they just sit around the Rez collecting their \$400 from the [Tribe/Nation] half of them can’t pass a drug test, they don’t- they’re not positive role models for their community.*

I noticed that Native students reported struggling with patriarchal issues on and off campus where their diversity of identities based in their genders, lack of maternal clans, sexual orientations, pregnancy, and sports they chose to play affected their everyday lives on and off campus. Some students expressed concern over being treated unfairly by male faculty because they were pregnant. Take an instance shared by Lily in a focus group:

Lily: *I came here to do aerospace engineering and I started it, and the engineering advisor, I told him it was like, I was really pregnant, and I was missing class, and it was like one of those classes that if you miss a class, you’re like, you’re behind [snaps fingers] like that. I was like crap! So, I had to see him in his office hours, and I was like, “it’s too early to make any big*

announcement but I'm pregnant and that's why I've been missing classes because I get sick from time to time, I'm still in the first trimester." And then he was like, "Okay." He's like, "Well..." And I don't know if he really knew my situation, but he had made the comment that he's like, "You probably don't want to hear this but a lot of women have miscarriages and I wouldn't blame you if you did." [Pause] And to me, my gut instinct was, he's telling me to have an abortion. But he's telling in a way that if I were to report it, he'd be like, "women do have miscarriages, I never said abortion" but it was- It was one of those instances where I was like, "No! You're telling me..." You know what I mean?

Students struggled with feelings of not belonging at home because they do not have maternal clans. Native female lacrosse players struggled in college students because they were bullied by members of their community back home for being Native female lacrosse players. Jessica expressed this concern:

Jessica: Only included up to a certain point and then it was you know, "You don't have a clan," "Your mother's non-Native," "You play lacrosse" you know those things kinda counted against me and so I was good, good, good, all the way up until there...And then on the flip side of that on my lacrosse team... being... being on a lacrosse team specifically not, you know not any other sport, being lacrosse specifically, umm, I was the only Native for a little while because you know, Native women don't typically play lacrosse.

Native students reported instances where sexist or homophobia from their peers also made them question their sense of belonging at the university. While Saro did not feel supported as much at the college or university among his conservative-minded peers, he also struggled with being fully accepted because of his sexuality within Indigenous community as well:

Hugh: *Well, have you experienced that a lot of Native people are open to discussing sexuality or not really?*

Saro: *Only if it's heteronormative. Anything beyond that is really hard. Again, that was always – every now and then I was at the student lounge – I wasn't too much in there after fourth year, but when I was around, it was still common to always hear, you know, "that's so gay" kind of comments thrown around. And me personally, it doesn't bother me, but I can see how it kind of promotes toxic expectations and stereotypes.*

Similar to "traditional Indigenous masculinity" several participants reference iron work, lacrosse or the military being prominent within their Indigenous communities. While they may be proud to name community members who are iron workers or lacrosse players, several participants questioned how Indigenous men may learn a type of settler, hegemonic or white masculinity from these places. Take for instance Bree:

Bree: *Oh, what I wanted to add is that I think – and mind you, me and my husband get along real good, but there has been, because of his experiences – you know, he was in the military for eight years, and then he went and got his degree from BU. My husband has developed these certain manners and certain ways of talking to people and being more forward and in a way it kind of annoys me.*

Many conversations with Native students about masculinity, often flowed into the meaning of Indigenous feminisms and how traditional Haudenosaunee culture was defined by maternal/ matrilineal systems of governance. Like "masculinity" students also took issue with the use of the word "femininity" as it was very rigid. Conversations about Indigenous feminism would eventually lead into deeper, rich, conversations about the presence of patriarchal issues within Indigenous communities.

Some participants identified ways in which women tend to act “masculine” in the Western sense but described that this is quite normal for Indigenous women to act within their own Indigenous community context, given that they are from a matrilineal/ matriarchal society. This is tied with Hodisgä’eñ:gehda’ as described above. An example is provided below:

Bree: Yeah, yeah, because it’s not like – I feel like the women are confident in our community, but I don’t feel like they exude masculinity. They exude what women – something about their womanhood, but confidence that’s distinctly feminine. I don’t really want to say feminine because then we go back to that whole [inaudible]. But something that’s distinctly woman, you know, a confidence that’s—

While most did not talk about 2SLGBTQI few did. Among Haudenosaunee participants, they often struggled with this concept. Often participants would be reluctant to respond to questions about Two Spirit people, while some participants attempted to describe the meaning of Two-Spirit identify from their perspective or that they only recently learned about it in college. While most participants did not know, or couldn’t really describe much about Two-Spirit people, most participants described their support for Indigenous Nations who do have this concept within their Indigenous traditions and worldview.

Participants discussed the presence of “Dega’nigohadeñ:nyo’s” or “Mind Changers” also known as alcohol or drugs, during their college and university journeys. They describe use of Mind Changers and its effect on them during college in the “party scene” which eventually led them to exit college or struggle to get work done. Many participants described overcoming grief as an important teaching that they brought from their communities in order to clear their minds, understand, and to reflect. Some students described grief as related to Haudenosaunee teachings in the Great Law of Peace and others simply referenced it in their journeys during funerals or

overcoming traumatic events. They may have also related this to understanding their identity during college and university experiences.

Participants described the importance of relying on traditional teachings in order to overcome the hostile climate of higher education as a settler institution. They often talked with Elders, community members, and read books about their culture throughout their educational journeys. Overwhelmingly, students described the importance of giving back to their home communities during or after college. Several participants expressed the need to “give back” in order to positively impact their community back home. This takes many shapes within the recounting of their stories and future goals.

Throughout this research there were many forms of silence that I felt needed to be considered, unpacked, and interpreted based on variety of topics. I did my best to convey these silences as meaningful as possible within the stories of the participants. I struggled with this pilot study data. What should I do next? There was so much information. Many questions arose for me and disappeared to the back of my mind, only to arise again. It was as if I was in a fog for many years. I believe that I went through my own short mourning process while I tried to process and re-process the data, which felt confusing, and caused me to feel like I was moving nowhere, as if I were stuck and direction-less.

Early on, during my own development as a researcher and having many different professional positions at colleges and universities and in Haudenosaunee communities, I knew that I would use these interviews and this data in my dissertation. I made it clear to my participants that I would use this data, but I just did not know how I would go about making sense of the data or how I would apply the data, back then. I was afraid of what this might mean for me, as someone who comes from a matrilineal/ matriarchal community. I began to doubt my

skillset and my positioning. Over the course of the next three years, I struggled with finding voice in the work and owning my positionality in this work on Indigenous masculinity. I started to question the meaning of the phrase “Indigenous community” as only being at home, but rather in the university as well. In time, I was able to identify several of the areas of Indigenous masculinity noted above, as complexly situated, interwoven, and overlapping throughout the experiences of Indigenous students in higher education.

A Brief Overview of the Study

After my pilot study interviews concluded, I eventually realized that I wanted to narrow my study to Haudenosaunee men and masculinities in higher education. I wanted to focus on perceptions of patriarchy as experienced by Haudenosaunee male participants. I felt that while the pilot study offered such rich information, I did not know how to cushion the study within a centralized purpose. I felt that my focus was very broad. The conversations also prompted me to strive to understand Indigenous masculinities within the context of higher education, but more specific to the experiences of Haudenosaunee men and how they thought about patriarchal issues that I had examined in the pilot study. I made the appropriate amendments to the study. I would call the initial interviews from *Indigenous Experiences in Higher Education: Resiliency, Masculinity, and Resurgence* (16-025) a “pilot study” but still use the data to provide direction in the new study and later for the study analysis.

Eventually I adjusted my study in several ways. I changed the title to: *Experiences of Haudenosaunee Men in Higher Education*. Prior to it expiring, the IRB office approved the amendments listed above on January 31st 2020. The study was approved for March 5, 2020-March 4, 2021. In the next section I describe the changes that I made between the pilot study and the main study.

Participants

I used a combination of purposeful sampling (Yin, 2011) and snowball sampling (Woodley & Lockard, 2016) to recruit participants. I recruited participants who identified as Haudenosaunee men. I also ensured that all participants graduated from their respective undergraduate college or university through solicited participant advertisement. Instead of interviewing Native students in higher education broadly, I decided only to interview Haudenosaunee men about their experience. In order to avoid participant confusion, I provided questions that were easier to understand and more accessible. For example, I asked them to tell me how they “understand masculinity” within the context of their experiences as opposed to asking them to “define masculinity” which proved to be confusing during my pilot study interviews. The demographic information of the main study: *The Experiences of Haudenosaunee Men in Higher Education* is listed below in Tables 2.1-2.9 with brief descriptors beneath each table.

Table 1.1. Total Participants in Study

Total Number of Haudenosaunee Men Interviewed	Number of Participants
Current and former students interviewed	13

Table 2.1. This table represents the total number of participants in the pilot study.

Table 1.2. Undergraduate and Post Graduate Enrollment Status

Educational Enrollment Status	Participants
Participants not currently enrolled, highest level of degree attainment: bachelor’s degree	5
Participants currently enrolled in master’s, doctoral, or law school, highest level of degree attainment: bachelor’s degree	3

Participants with highest level of degree attainment: master's, doctoral, or law degree	5
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Table 2.2. This table represents participants the enrollment status of all participants at the time of the interviews.

Table 1.3 Educational Attainment

Highest Level of Educational Attainment Achieved	Participants
Graduated from High School	13
Graduated from 2-year undergraduate institution	2
Graduated from 4-year undergraduate institution	13
Graduated from a master's/ doctoral/ law degree program	6

Table 2.3. This table represents the highest level of education that each participant has earned, including secondary education (high school), post-secondary (undergraduate) to post-graduate (graduate school) at the time of the interviews.

Table 1.4. Ages of participants

Age Range	Participants
20-25	3
26-30	2
31-35	4
36-40	0
40-45	2
45-50	1

50+	1
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Table 2.4. This table represents each participants age range in 5-year increments, at the time of the interview.

Table 1.5. Indigenous Nation Representation

Indigenous Nations	Participants
Haudenosaunee	13
Mohawk	9
Oneida	0
Onondaga	1
Cayuga	1
Seneca	1
Tuscarora	1
Total Participants	13

Table 2.5. This table represents the Indigenous Nation membership/ citizenship of each participant.

Table 1.6 Undergraduate Program/ Major Area

Program/ Major Area	Participants
Architecture	1
Biochemistry	1
Computer Science	1
Education	1
Engineering	1
Kinesiology	1

Law/ Pre-Law	2
Linguistics	1
Philosophy	1
Political Science	2
Public Health	1
Sociology	1

Table 2.6. This table represents which programs/ majors each participants was currently enrolled and/ or the program/ major that they earned a degree in. *Some participants double-majored, which is reflected in the table.

Table 1.7 Current or Former Student-Athletes

Students Who Identified as Current or Former Student-Athletes	
Name of Sport	Participants
Lacrosse	3
Wrestling	1
Total Student-Athletes	4

Table 2.7. This table represents participant current or former student-athlete status.

Interviews

I sent out the following interview guide to each participant one to two days prior to the interview, in order to provide sufficient time for each participant to prepare responses to the questions. I did this because some participants had asked for the questions in advance to prepare (See “interview guide” in the appendix). I sent them the interview questions to participants in advance because I felt it was a good opportunity to build trust with my participants. Interviews

for the main study took place between March 5, 2020- April 15, 2020. First round interviews were conducted for approximately one hour about their higher education experiences and thoughts on gender issues. I gave them more or less time, given the amount to which the participants wanted to engage with the questions. I did not rush interviews, rather I strived to create “unhurried time” where participants felt comfortable, taking as little or as much time as they needed (Archibald, 2008). Participants were given the option of participating in a second one-hour interview after the first interview, most of whom did participate in second round follow-up interviews. All participants were audio recorded. Since the data was collected during the COVID-19 pandemic, all interviews took place over the phone or over zoom.

I asked participants if I could take notes during the interviews, they all consented. I kept the notepad next to my computer out of view of the participants in order not to distract them from telling their stories. In every interview I jotted down quick notes to keep track of moments, utterances, laughter, silences, or descriptions that I felt were important to the data. After every interview, I wrote a post-interview synthesis which proved to be helpful in order to describe each participant and I would eventually work towards the creation of several composite characters out of these interviews.

Data Analysis

In this section, I provide a brief description of how I analyzed the interviews for both the pilot study and the main study. In the pilot study I interviewed 23 participants and listened to and transcribed over 35 hours of interviews. In the main study I interviewed 13 participants and listened to and transcribed over 25 hours of interviews. Overall, I interviewed 36 participants in total.

I relied on my field notes to recall discussions more vividly and over time I read through

and connected some areas of discussion with relevant theories in the field. I listened to interviews over and over again to get a grasp of participant thoughts and feelings on topics, while paying especially close attention to their tone of voice, silences, pauses in discussion or laughter, tracking possible feelings of anxiety, apprehension, and the use of humor. Memo writing (Charmaz, 2014) helped during the entire research process, including post-interviews and throughout the analytic process. I wrote memos on the physical transcripts, in my phone, and on yellow and white notepads.

Finding Codes and Themes. Using a CRT framework (Lawless & Chen, 2019; Yosso & Garcia, 2007) proved to be beneficial for the construction of codes and themes of the interviews. At first, I used a thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clark, 2006). During the process, I noticed a tension in identifying “themes” versus identifying “power” relationships. I ensure this study focused on power, I decided to add a “critical” approach by using a critical thematic analysis (Lawless & Chen, 2019; Yosso & Garcia, 2007). Braun and Clark (2006) describe a six-step framework towards thematic analysis (a) familiarizes yourself with the data, (b) generate initial codes, (c) search for themes, (d) review themes, I define and name themes; (f) produce the report (p. 87). I listened to the interviews over and over. I transcribed the interviews, and I wrote fieldnotes in several notebooks and in my “notes” on my phone. I primarily used both open and closed coding (Charmaz, 2014; Lawless & Chen, 2019; Owen, 1984) to examine specific areas of information, at first primarily interested in “open” coding which, according to (Charmaz, 2014) helped me to “remain open to all possible theoretical directions suggested by [my] interpretation of the data” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 102).

Emphasizing Owen’s (1984) critical analysis approach, helped me in identifying power relationships in order to “discover the way participants use discourse to interpret their

relationships” (p. 274). Owen (1984) uses three criteria for analyzing such discourse: (a) recurrence; (b) repetition; and (c) forcefulness.” During open coding, Lawless and Chen (2019) write, that it is important to pay close attention to when participants reveal “discursive patterns that are salient or meaningful” which emerge as themes, while in closed coding it is important to pay attention to “what those emerged themes are doing” (p. 7). For example, “Jean” whose Haudenosaunee friend “Jacob” a student athlete on the men’s lacrosse team at Bigtown University, described his feelings to her about “not feeling good enough” and that he relied on her to express his feelings made me think about how he created community to grapple with his identity and perceptions as a Haudenosaunee man. Many Haudenosaunee men developed community with their Native peers to unpack some salient issues they were experiencing. This helped to zero in on areas of significance for further analysis and detail to enrich the data.

In addition to breaking down the codes into deeper, more nuanced specifics, I also broadened out to identify larger themes during a second cycle coding process. I used broad words like “defining” and “stereotypes” to identify larger themes supported by small codes and subcodes (Saldaña, 2016). Eventually I used the larger themes to construct stock stories and composite characters (Love, 2004; Yosso & Garcia, 2007).

Generating Stock Stories and Composite Characters. Counter-storytelling has a long tradition within Indigenous communities (Smith, 1999; 2012). Smith (1999) writes that Indigenous peoples tell stories about “countering the dominant society’s image of indigenous peoples, their lifestyles and belief systems” (p. 151). As I searched for ways to distribute findings of this project, I could not help but to think about ways that storytelling is so important in my own community. I constantly asked myself: How will I distribute the findings from this data?

Using the open and closed coding, subcodes and themes that have emerged from the data

which I had located within the interviews, I was able to create composite stories. The composite story that was generated allowed me to create composite characters (Samuels-Wortley, 2021; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). I do this in order to best convey the data in this research as a way to construct meaning and practicality (Anyon, et. al., 2018; Love, 2004; Yosso & Garcia, 2007). For example, the theme of “defining masculinity” is represented by a composite character like “Teyo” who represents several participants who struggled with the meaning of “masculinity” within Indigenous communities. Another composite character “Dr. Garcia” represents the theme of “faculty mentorship” that Indigenous students received from BIPOC on predominantly white campuses. The interactions they have with one another represent the secondary coding that was put in place to examine the power relationships between Teyo and Dr. Garcia on that university campus within the context of whiteness, a fictitious, yet very real environment that many students described.

For clarity in the construction of composite characters, I was influenced by the work of Cook (2013) who provides a small model, emphasizing the fluid, creative, and critical components of creation of composite characters. Cook (2013) explains,

I created a storyline of the composite counterstory that would embed themes gleaned from the transcripts, field notes, and other data. Blending aspects of various participants into composite characters included taking aspects of body language, phrasing, and personal backgrounds... each character distinct gestures, speech patterns, and personality quirks based on my blending of participants in the study. (pp. 189-190)

Like Cook (2013), I used the data that I collected in order to generate the appropriate storylines to eventually present the counterstory. I focus on aspects of each participant including Indigenous nation, identity, experiences at the college/ university, personal experiences leading

up to their post-secondary experiences and personalities.

I have depicted secondary characters like “Chad” and “Dr. Pratt” to represent the barriers, microaggressions, or conflicts that many of the participants described within various hostile settings at the university. I have also constructed secondary characters like “Dr. Garcia” to represent helpful guidance that composite characters might have received at their institution. While these stories are depicted by fictitious secondary characters, they represent actual experiences by Indigenous students (Martinez, 2014). In order to “counter” the dominant master narratives told and perpetuated *about* Indigenous students, I have structured composite counternarratives. The counternarratives are represented in following composite characters through their journeys, their discussions, and their changing environments inside/ outside of the academy. Through creation of composite and secondary characters, I found that this is one of the most accessible ways to convey meaning out of complex social interactions expressed by participants.

Throughout this research process, I have battled with my own perceptions of what would be “acceptable” for this project, from both a community and academic approach. However, my community understands stories and they often relate to the importance of speaking knowledge to power in a way that challenges dominant settler colonial perspectives. While my community members may not call them “counter-stories” I will continue in Haudenosaunee tradition of telling stories in order to speak knowledge to power (Waterman, 2007; 2012; 2019; Whitlow et. al., 2019).

For the remainder of this chapter and the following two chapters, I demonstrate a Critical Race Composite Counternarrative methods approach intersected through an Indigenous Research Paradigm. I echo the words of Solórzano and Yosso (2002) by asking the reader to “suspend

judgment, listen for the story's points, test them against her or his own version of reality (however conceived), and use the counterstory as a pedagogical case study" (p. 156). And so next I will tell a story about Haudenosaunee masculinity in higher education.

Summary

In this chapter I discussed my research questions, my positionality, the methodology of this study, and the gathering of research participants. I provided brief overviews of the pilot study and the main study, with short reflections about both. I discussed the process of finding codes and themes out of the interview data in order to generate composite counter-narratives and composite characters out of the data provided. I provided details about making this research relevant, engaging, and accessible to my community.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS, PART I

The Composite Characters and Contexts

In the previous chapter, I discussed the methodology, using an Indigenous Research Paradigm, Indigenous Storywork, and CRT Composite Counter-Narrative. I also offered a general overview of the pilot and the main study. In this chapter, I provide a description of the composite characters, secondary characters, and the context of the settings at the “Big Town University” as well as on Indigenous Nation territories as depicted by participants. Below I describe in more detail the characters and context.

Composite Characters

To provide clarity to the reader, I describe the characters of this story and the general themes and codes that those characters were constructed from. I describe participants from the Pilot Study and the Main study in this chapter and the context that they operate, which are significant in the two subsequent chapters of this dissertation. In this chapter, I describe how I constructed composite characters. For example, to create composite characters, I used 3-4 participants to eventually become a composite character. “Teyo” was predominantly constructed from Haudenosaunee men, who were first generation college students, and relied on Indigenous community for support, and often feels dismissed for expressing a Haudenosaunee worldview by settler campus community, etc. The following character descriptions emerged from the data.

Teyo Jacobs

“Teyo” (Mohawk) is a quiet, first-generation history student and senior year at Big Town University. Throughout his higher education journey, he struggled with finding a sense of belonging at the university. He struggles with people at the university who dismiss his Indigenous-based projects, his writing, and his ideas. He feels that non-Native people do not

understand Indigenous peoples and they do not understand his approach. The following set of stories follows Teyo's journey finding information to help him write his capstone project about Indigenous men and masculinity in higher education, a project suggested by his mentor, Dr. Garcia.

Teyo represents eight participants in the study who identified as first-generation college students. He represents the perspectives of nine participants who described feeling underprepared or experiencing a lack of support. Teyo represents six of the participants who expressed feeling a sense of campus hostility through dismissal of their cultural worldview and academic merit by campus actors. Teyo comprises seven participants said that they experienced feelings of in/visibility. Six of the participants expressed non-Native mentorship and five students who grappled with the meaning of intersectionality. Seven of the participants described higher education as a form of settler colonialism. Common themes included: *Lack of Support/ Underprepared, Campus Hostility: Dismiss Indigenous Worldview, Non-Native Mentorship, First Generation College Student, Feelings of In/ Visibility, Higher Education as Settler Colonialism, Intersectionality.*

Zack Francis

“Zack” (Seneca) entered BTU as a lacrosse player. Zack is Teyo's cousin. School and sports always seemed to come naturally to him. He describes identifying with a “traditional” Indigenous masculinity that “opened doors” for him as a Native male lacrosse player. He described hunting, fishing, and providing for his family and “giving back” to the youth through lacrosse. He is reluctant to discuss Indigenous masculinity with Teyo but also expresses moments of vulnerability. While Zack is supportive of Teyo's project, he is also reluctant to

engage in deep conversation about how he feels about the topic. Zack often places being an athlete before being a student.

Zack is comprised of the six of the participants who identified as student athletes, five of whom identified as lacrosse players and one identified as a wrestler. Zack represents seven of the participants who struggled to or were reluctant to define Indigenous masculinity. Of the 13 participants, five indicated the importance of a sense of brotherhood. Six participants described issues with alcohol and/ or drug abuse. Five participants described their sense of community as student athletes. Five of the participants who comprised Zack described learning to be vulnerable as a strength to succeed in college. Common themes included: *Reluctance to Define Indigenous Masculinity, Brotherhood, Pathway: Lacrosse/ Student Athlete, Alcohol/ Substance Abuse, Student Athlete Community, Describing Vulnerability.*

Nathan Benedict

“Nathan” (Onondaga) is a pre-med student and becoming an MD. Nathan describes his story primarily beginning in high school, as a high school student who was bullied by other Native students in school. Nathan discussed taking an academic route to college which rivaled his perception of Haudenosaunee men taking an athletic route through lacrosse. Nathan overcame bullying from peers, only to find a sense of belonging at the Big Town University where eventually he met his future wife. Nathan also describes challenges along the way, pertaining to racist and prejudiced behavior towards him in-person and online. The community that he built for himself at BTU helped him to overcome challenges, as well as his ability to open up emotionally and process his feelings. He expresses the responsibility to give back to his community with his degree.

Nathan embodies six participants who identify as taking an academically driven pathway to college (not through sports), which throughout their journeys, ten students later identified as growing to become academically driven while attending college. Ten students expressed grappling with their Indigenous identity throughout college. 13 Participants described experiencing support from Native student programs while at college/ university. Nathan comprises six participants who described experiencing racial microaggressions on their respective campuses. Ten students described learning about their Indigenous culture as a form of support for them during their college experiences which includes spending time with Elders, learning their languages, learning songs, dances, and attending traditional ceremonies. Eight students described experiencing the perception of “Two-Worlds” or a sense of cultural dissonance while attending college. Lastly, Nathan’s character also represents five students who expressed the importance of having multi-cultural opportunities on campus, which helped them to grow and feel supported while attending college. Common themes included: *Academically driven, Grappled with Indigenous Identity, Native Student Program Support, Campus Hostility: Racial Microaggressions, Culture as Persistence: Elders and Language, Cultural Dissonance: Two Worlds Perception, Multi-cultural Opportunities as Strength.*

Saro Abrams

“Saro” (Mohawk) is from the “Canadian side” of the settler colonial border. Saro is a deep thinker and often likes to debate complex ideas. As law student, Saro persisted at university by remembering what his uncles taught them about “work ethic” on the iron and most of all, about their mistakes. Saro describes his mentors as meaningful and complex, primarily by describing the work ethic taught to him by his Elders and men in his community. He adds to the conversation about Haudenosaunee men by exploring politics, archetypes, history, and today’s

interpretation of the meaning of Haudenosaunee men within the context of various factors. Saro also points Teyo into the direction of talking with his former teacher, Nick.

Saro is comprised of four participants who attended college/ university in Canada, three of whom attended CESEP (Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel) or a general/ vocational college education, prior to attending university. These four participants describe many differences that they knew, between Canadian and US higher education systems. Saro is comprised of 9 participants who expressed support from their peers and six who expressed support from their partners while at university. All 13 participants described having meaningful mentors and/ or role models to look up to during college. Eight of the participants described the importance of Haudenosaunee culture by naming “Haudenosaunee diplomacy” as a strategy to navigate issues, handle confrontation, represent their culture, and to use their voice. 11 Participant described using a “warrior mentality” to overcome barriers during college. Lastly, Saro embodies eight participants who described the need to “confront the archetype” or to confront commonly held or internalized stereotypes, myths, and beliefs about Haudenosaunee men in order to persist in college. Common themes included: *Settler Borders/ Differences Between US and Canadian Experiences, Peer/ Partner Support, Mentors/ Role Models, Culture as Persistence: Diplomacy/ Handling Confrontations, Culture as Persistence: Warrior Mentality, Culture as Persistence: Confronting the Archetype.*

Nick Cook

“Nick” (Mohawk) is an engineer. He describes mentors at home and their teachings. He also identifies as gay and/ or Two Spirit Indigenous person who struggled through college, trying to identify his feeling of “not belonging” in the academy and even back home on his Rez due to his sexuality. Nick values his communities, all of them, and aims to include everyone the best he

can. In his journey through higher education, he describes time where he went for help to counseling offices, to further develop his identity and unpack past traumas. Nick mentions Dr. Williams in his discussions with Teyo. Nick discusses his feelings about mentorship, race, and patriarchy, which are complicated.

Nick embodies two participants in the study who identify as Two Spirit people, queer, or gay and men who described their educational experiences. Nick represents two students who described struggling with their sexuality during college. Eight students described traditional Indigenous gender roles (complementarity). Nick represents five participants who described mental health concerns during college. Four students commonly asked for help during college. The same participant described how men may be reluctant to ask for help due to masculinity issues for many men. Most men in the study did not describe asking for help. Seven participants described the presence of inter/generational trauma that affects them, their families, and communities. 11 participants described the importance of decolonizing patriarchy in their communities, which includes addressing issues of misogyny, sexism, gender-based/ domestic violence. Six participants experienced stereotypes as a barrier for Indigenous men. Common themes included: *Grappling with Identity: Sexuality, Complementarity, Asking for Help as Strength, Mental Health, Inter-generational Trauma, Decolonizing Patriarchy, Addressing Stereotypes.*

Dr. Williams

“Dr. Williams” (Mohawk) is a professor of history in Canada. He contacts Teyo to talk about Indigenous masculinities and his experiences as a non-traditional college students and veteran. Dr. Williams talks in-depth about the importance of learning about his own personal independence to navigate university life. Dr. Williams emphasizes the need to provide for his

family and give back to community as a way to continue to build Indigenous nations. Dr. Williams, being of a different generation than other students who Teyo has spoken to, grapples with the idea of hegemonic (toxic) masculinity and how today’s socio-political landscape has shifted.

Dr. Williams embodies three participants who now identify as professors. Dr. Williams represents three non-traditional college students, two of who, were either older than 24 when they attended university or younger than 17 when they attended university. Two participants joined the military prior to attending colleges and university. Eight participants expressed the feeling of independence as strength and a learned motivator while attending college. Five students described the importance of providing for their families as a central value of Haudenosaunee masculinity. Nine participants described tension with other men based in hegemonic masculinity as a hinderance to their learning, including overly-dominant, heteronormative, hyper-competitive, egocentric, hypersexuality as a barrier to their success. Lastly, Dr. Williams represents 12 participants who expressed the importance of giving back to their community as a form of Indigenous nation building. Common Themes included: *Pathway: Military Veteran, Hegemonic Masculinity, Independence as Strength, Providing for Family, Hegemonic Masculinity, Indigenous Nation Building/ Giving Back.*

Composite Characters as Constructed from Emergent Themes

Teyo						
Lack of Support/ Underprepared	Campus Hostility: Dismiss	Non-Native Mentorship	First Generation College	Feelings of In/Visibility	Higher Education as Settler	Intersectionality

	Indigenous Worldview		Student		Colonialism	
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Zack

Reluctance to Define Indigenous Masculinities	Brotherhood	Pathway: Lacrosse/ Student Athlete	Alcohol/ Substance Abuse	Spirituality	Student Athlete Community	Describing Vulnerability
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Nathan

Pathway: Academically Driven	Grappled with Indigenous Identity	Native Student Program Support	Campus Hostility: Racial Microaggressions	Culture as Persistence: Elders and Language	Cultural Dissonance: Two Worlds Perception	Multi- cultural Opportunities as Strength
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Saro

Settler Borders/ Differences Between US and Canadian	Peer / Partner Support	Mentors/ Role Models	Culture as Persistence: Diplomacy/ Handling	Culture as Persistence: Warrior Mentality	Culture as Persistence: Confronting the Archetype
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Experiences			Confrontation		
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Nick						
Grappling with Identity: Sexuality	Complementarity	Asking for Help as Strength	Mental Health	Inter-generational Trauma	Decolonizing Patriarchy	Addressing Stereotypes

Dr. Williams				
Pathway: Military Veteran	Providing for Family	Hegemonic Masculinity	Independence as Strength	Indigenous Nation building/ Giving Back

Table 3.1. This table represents the composite characters as constructed from emergent themes in the data.

The Context: Big Town University (BTU) and A Haudenosaunee Community

The beautiful rolling hills can be seen for miles and miles. The leaves flutter in the soft winds, as the trees gently sway. The clouds race between the hills and above the valleys, casting fleeting shadows on the hilltops. At sunset, darkness falls in the ridges and valleys as the light fades over the tops of the trees while the sky is filled with a multitude of colors ranging from yellows, reds, violets, and a deep blues. On those beautiful days when the sky meets the land, we are reminded that Haudenosaunee lands are indeed a gift from the Creator. And for this we are thankful.

Big Town University (BTU)

The first context, Big Town University (BTU) (pseudonym), sits on top of a hill, above the “City of Big Town” on stolen Haudenosaunee lands. BTU is a semi-prestigious university and predominantly white institution located in Upstate New York. Since the university is built on a hill, it is situated physically “higher than” many economically disparaged communities. Students may see the modest “bustle” of small, rust-belt city-life on the outskirts of the campus. Beyond the small city limits, there are large rolling hills: green in the summer, multicolored in the fall and spring, and grays and white in the winter which color the landscape. Those colors act as the backdrop to the university. While the beauty of those Indigenous lands and hills persist to today, the image of BTU on those hills remains a dangerous symbol of settler colonial power and dominance, situated above Indigenous, Black, and Brown communities.

In the center of the quad on campus, sits a large bronze statue of a Native “warrior” or “Chief” who holds a large bow and aims an arrow toward the sky. Although this statue depicts a Native person, specifically a Haudenosaunee man, the statue also misrepresents Native peoples through a Settler lens— it was crafted by a white artist, voted on and supported by the predominantly white student body of the time. This statue represents the legacy of a problematic “Native mascot”, a mascot who was finally removed in the 1970’s by campus leaders after years of activism by Native students and their allies. The statue also represents the campus’s commitment to “represent” Native peoples, which ultimately becomes rendered both *visible* and *invisible* to Non-Native people on campus. Native campus community members recall that the crafter used a local Haudenosaunee chief to pose as a model for its rendering to recall the history of the mascot and its removal. Many Native students of the past supported the statue’s construction and placement, an attempt to represent Indigenous livelihood and survival, yet it

simultaneously subjects its viewer to a narrowly defined settler lens and a narrative which relegates Native peoples to the past—in a dramatic, stereotypical, and settler manner.

While the statue is a prominent fixture in the quad, most students mindlessly walk around this statue, often not noticing the struggle for racial equity on campus. The statue, being a prominent fixture on campus, is to many non-Native people, *not* more prominent than many of the historic buildings, even some famous buildings, built in the 1800-1900's. Many of the newer buildings are typically just outside of the quad. Students often remark on the “Hogwarts vibe” at this semi-prestigious campus. Yet, to the eyes of many of the students of Black, Indigenous and students of color on campus, there is nothing more prominent than white students in the late spring and early fall semesters, playing frisbee, tanning, or socializing on the quad.

Many of the characters' interactions and stories are situated within the hallways, offices, and the library of this semi-prestigious university. Students remark upon Western definitions of wealth which surrounds them on a regular basis. To many of their non-Native white peers, staff, and faculty, they are just another face in the crowd, just another student, and maybe even invisible. But to some, these students disrupt notions of wealth and prestige at BTU by bringing their Indigenous identities with them to campus. Their laughter can be heard in echoing in the quiet library among the stacks, their true discussions behind closed doors of their favorite faculty of color, and their grief they remember, almost etched into the old carpets, expensive doorknobs, haunted hallways, and elitist statues on campus. They wonder if the prestigious buildings, the expensive objects, and colonized lands on campus remember them and their big Indigenous laughter.

In Chapter Five, it is on this BTU campus, in those predominantly white spaces, on the lands of their people, that the context of the following stories takes place, as depicted through the

lens of Teyo and his friends. These Native students regularly hear racially charged remarks from their campus community, either from employees, telling Native students to “smoke your peace pipe out in the hallway” or comments from white peers, calling Native students names like, “Indian giver”. While on campus, Teyo and his friends have heard their white peers tell them that they “had no idea that there was a Rez” or Indigenous Nation nearby, and at times no knowledge that Native territories *even existed at all*. The following stories are told by Native students within the hostile context of Big Town University; of the lands of their people.

Summary

In this chapter, I provided descriptions of the composite characters as derived from the data. I also provided the contexts in which they are situated. In the next chapter, I provide a storied re-construction and re-telling of Haudenosaunee men in higher education. Throughout the chapter, characters grapple with real, lived, college and university experiences in an often-hostile climate on campus at Big Town University. This chapter reveals how Indigenous students are challenged with misrepresentation, campus invisibility, gendered/ racialized microaggressions, and dismissive actions by campus actors. I also provide ways that Native students overcome these hardships through loving support from peers, faculty, and their own Indigenous identities, cultures and community.

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS, PART II

In this chapter, I provide the data collected from the interviews conducted, as represented in story form by the composite characters, created to highlight common theme areas within a storied context of the study. The characters do not represent any individual participant, rather they represent common themes that have emerged from the study. The story follows the main composite character named “Teyo”.

Teyo

It was a fall night; the sun was setting on the BTU campus. Sometimes Teyo would sit on the large winding steps and watch as the sun set over the City of Big town. Sitting on the steps had often had a strange way of reminding him about his past and his present experiences being an Indigenous man in college. He watched as people walked by and a cool night wind blew past the warm steps, still heated from the sun’s rays. He turned to walk to class, a few hundred feet from where he sat on those steps. As he rose to his feet, he took another glance at the setting sun and felt thankful for being there on campus, but his fleeting feeling would soon be met with a strong sense of ignorance on campus from his peers and some faculty.

Lack of Support/ Underprepared

Multicolored leaves fluttered in the wind on this brisk fall semester day. Teyo’s footsteps made loud thuds on the sidewalk as he ran through the quad. Splashes of water soaked the bottom of his jeans with every step. Eventually he finally made it to a large building with tall wooden and gold-colored doors. He opened the heavy door and ran down a flight of stairs. His shoes made awkwardly loud squeaks against the hard floor, all the way down the hallway, just in time for his meeting with Dr. Pratt.

Teyo knocked on Dr. Pratt's door. He was surprised at the neatness of Dr. Pratt's room. Teyo had only been in his office once before, but Dr. Pratt probably didn't recall. His office was very clean looking, as if everything was made to be neat and tidy. But it was plain-looking, not much was on the walls of his room. The look of the room seemed to convey a neat, picturesque take on American life, a scene that sharply prompted an unsettled feeling deep inside Teyo's stomach. Teyo quickly shrugged the feeling, remembering that it looked probably looked this neat because Dr. Pratt's spent many of his years in the military. Teyo peered into the room and lightly knocked on Dr. Pratt's door. Dr. Pratt briefly looked up from his computer.

“Uh, uh ‘Tay-oh’? Dr. Pratt asked; his eyes still fixed on his computer.

“Uh, it- it's Teyo, like ‘Day-oh’, sir. The ‘T’ is pronounced like a ‘D’, Teyo politely corrected. Dr. Pratt briefly looked at Teyo then back to his computer screen.

“Oh, I see.” Dr. Pratt said, making no eye contact with Teyo as he rushed to type something out quickly. “Teyo— [Dr. Pratt clears his throat] “I'm going to cut to the chase here, I don't have too much time. Your project proposal is- is... it needs improvement. Your writing is, not correct in format or style and...” Dr. Pratt paused briefly, inhaling as he picked up a piece of paper. “...The way you wrote this, it's— I'm not sure your writing is up to it yet.” He put the paper down on the table. Teyo looked and it was a paper copy of Teyo's proposal. He handed the proposal back to Teyo.

“Oh! Um, really?!” Teyo asked, feeling surprised because he was proud of his proposal. He had worked hard to impress Dr. Pratt with his new work and his ideas that he felt were important. Teyo sat still, his eyes were darting back and forth nervously, unsure about what to say next. Teyo tried to recall if he did something wrong to make Dr. Pratt respond this way. Like

a broken record, Teyo's mind raced. He kept asking himself if he had done something to make Dr. Pratt upset.

Teyo's mind flashed back to his friend telling him, "Once you get to [college] you're on your own... you'll have to fight your way through the whole system." Teyo snapped out of it and looked back at Dr. Pratt. Dr. Pratt had a reputation of being old school and of being a sort of devil's advocate professor. As Dr. Pratt skimmed through his email quickly. He pulled up an email that he had sent Teyo some time ago and said,

"I sent you some articles. Did you *even read them?*" Dr. Pratt asked, somewhat callously.

"Yes, I- I read them." Teyo responded. "I just- I'm trying to connect the papers that you sent with my community and— [Teyo sighed] I can't really see *myself* in those readings." Teyo's responses were prompt, as if he felt rushed to defend himself.

Dr. Pratt squinted his eyebrows and a smile crept over his face, "Well, this *is* the university. Every student feels that way to a certain extent." Dr. Pratt scoffed. "Not only does this proposal not speak to larger societal issues, but your writing is not up to par. I don't think that you're ready for this Capstone just yet." Teyo stopped breathing for a moment while he looked at Dr. Pratt. "With *this* content of your Capstone Proposal and quite truthfully your low performance in my classes before, you may want to take time to consider another capstone project" Dr. Pratt said. "I'm just worried, and I want what is best for you." Teyo sat on the edge of his seat as he listened to Dr. Pratt. "I'm worried that you're not ready for the writing. What I'm saying here is that maybe there is a different topic, possibly a different path?"

Again, Teyo retreated into himself. He couldn't believe what was happening. Why was Dr. Pratt smiling and acting like Teyo's friend while telling him that he can't graduate the same

way that everyone else does? Why was Teyo being offered a “different path”? Again, he snapped out of his endless stream of self-questioning.

Teyo cleared his throat. “I- I don’t know. I- I need to do this capstone and I—”

“You’ve been here for quite a while, right? Five, maybe six years?” Dr. Pratt interrupted.

“Fi- Five years, professor.” Teyo sighed and looked down to the floor. Why was Dr. Pratt asking him how long he’d been there? Was it too long? Teyo stopped himself from his endless stream of consciousness.

Campus Hostility: Dismissing Indigenous Worldviews

“Look!” Dr. Pratt continued. “I know that you like to use your culture to speak to some of these issues but, there are so many *good*, foundational scholars that you need to draw from first!”

Teyo looked down to the floor with a disappointed look. “Look, I *loved your ideas*, they were interesting... But those ideas were not really backed up with much in the way of historical accuracy, legal, or empirical evidence. They were more just- sorta, uh, *stories*... they need evidence from a scholarly perspective.” Dr. Pratt stood over Teyo, his desk in between them.

“You need to do a lot of work on your writing and the content of your project, before you delve into this project.” Dr. Pratt stated firmly. “I just don’t know about some of these Indigenous-based approaches that you’re describing.”

“Sir, I- I was planning on using this for my graduate school application to another, another—” Teyo stopped speaking because he noticed Dr. Pratt was not even paying attention. Dr. Pratt started packing up his computer and searching for his keys. He briefly looked up to Teyo.

“Look, I have to run. I have another meeting to attend that I am already late to.” Teyo began standing up. He grabbed his bag and slung it over his shoulder.

As Teyo slowly walked back down the sidewalk through the quad, he felt an overwhelming feeling of disappointment in himself. This sort made Teyo feel like he did not belong at the university and that his ideas, his writing, his culture, and his worldview simply did not matter. He also thoughts of Dr. Pratt's words: How could he not accept his own community members' stories as sound empirical evidence? Is everything that is "sound" and "empirical" *only* from a Western perspective? Teyo felt confused for a long time, as if Dr. Pratt was only pretending to be a support of him. Teyo began to think that his ideas were inferior.

A strange feeling came over Teyo. He felt confused. What had Teyo done wrong? Why was Dr. Pratt speaking to Teyo as if he just didn't matter? Teyo felt that his interaction was even sort of unbelievable, so he kept it to himself for a very long time. He even sunk into distrust towards Dr. Pratt and professors like him. Teyo wondered: *Was it because I am Native?* Teyo couldn't help but to think that it was more than just a "squabble over theoretical stuff" but instead, he had completely dismissed his Indigenous worldview, perspective, and an Indigenous-based approach. Teyo's experiences were often riddled with harmful stereotypes and overtly racist derogatory terms being thrown around casually from peers referring to Indigenous peoples as "R*dskins" or casual use of the term "Indian Giver" but this form of hostility felt more subtle.

Non-Native Mentorship

During his time at the university, Teyo realized that some professors sincerely and authentically supported him through the years, especially ones from racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic backgrounds like his own— like Dr. Garcia. Through her mentorship he learned to be more coachable as a student and to examine those very power relationships in various communities inside and outside the ivory tower. He learned to listen to advice from his professors, staff, and peers. Dr. Garcia was one particular professor who had a "very powerful

impact on him”, ever since first being introduced to college. It was as if he could start a sentence and she could finish it. It was like, she made students “be seen” as individuals.

One winter day in October, Teyo went to visit Dr. Garcia in her office. Teyo peaked into her office and she motioned for him to come in. After some small talk, Teyo told her about his interaction with Dr. Pratt.

Teyo sighed and apprehensively said, “Dr. Pratt told me that... that I needed to ‘work on my writing’ and that he *seemed weird* about me wanting to go to graduate school. He didn’t really respond when I told him that I wanted to go to graduate school.” Teyo’s shoulders lowered slightly and his eyes fixated on the ground as he walked back to the wooden chair to sit down. Dr. Garcia always had a way of getting the truth out of him. “I asked him about being my capstone advisor, but he didn’t really say anything. He seemed busy.” Teyo took a sip of his coffee as his eyes darted everywhere. It dawned on him that he was acting awkwardly and he was trying to avoid eye-contact with Dr. Garcia. As he sat with his back hunched and shoulders low, Dr. Garcia picked up on his tone and body language.

“Are you serious?!” Dr. Garcia said bluntly. Quickly her eyes narrowed, as if unsurprised. She stiffened her chin and shook her head. Her arms still crossed, she glanced out the window.

Teyo nodded his head. “I think I need to find an advisor for my Capstone but I can’t seem to find one.”

Dr. Garcia looked back over to him, crinkled her nose and leaned forward in her chair. “Is that so?” Dr. Garcia asked. There was fire behind her eyes. Clearly, she was still concerned with Dr. Pratt’s response to Teyo.

“Yeah...” Teyo squeaked quietly. He glanced down to the table.

Dr. Garcia sat there, still. She raised her eyebrows and a smirk came over her face, Teyo sat there still looking at the table. Dr. Garcia placed her elbows on the table and folded her hands. She inhaled deeply and exhaled, still looking at Teyo. She waited for Teyo to say anything but he sat there quietly.

“Teyo!” Dr. Garcia exclaimed impatiently, waiting for him to ask.

Teyo looked up from the table.

“TEYO!” Dr. Garcia cleared her throat. She dipped her chin and raised her eyebrows even more, staring directly at Teyo. Again, she very obviously cleared her throat, “Ah-hem!”

“Oh?!...” Teyo was processing her cues. “OHH! Do *you* want to be my Capstone Advisor?!”

Dr. Garcia laughed and then paused as she adjusted her facial expression to a more serious look. “I suppose I can take on another student.” Dr. Garcia half smirked. Teyo beamed with excitement, smiling excitedly.

“Why didn’t I come to you before?” Teyo asked.

“Boy, I’m not sure!” Dr. Garcia fired back. She tilted her head and widened her eyes.

[They both laughed]

“Well, how about the topic?” Dr. Garcia shot back. Dr. Garcia always has a way of getting right to the point.

Teyo looked down, stuttering. He was so nervous because he recalled his other advisor’s response. “Um, I think maybe, something about- about racism?” he said, unsure of himself. Teyo felt a bit shaken, even scared about not graduating, but if anyone, it was Dr. Garcia who helped him out of his fear.

“C’mon.” Dr. Garcia responded, “That sounds like an important topic. What about something that intersects *multiple* parts of your identity, not just race?”

Teyo was trying to follow along, “Multiple parts of my identity?” Teyo asked, still processing.

“Tell me more... Tell me about your identity as an Indigenous man at this intuition.” She re-prompted him.

Dr. Garcia put her hands, palms facing upwards, and she looked around the room, “... tell me, maybe this place.” She looked around for emphasis.

Teyo looked at her with his eyebrows furrowed. He searched for what she meant.

“Like, you mean, here at this sch- ah, this university?” He asked.

First Generation College Student

“Well, I mean, I’m the first one in my family to go to college!” Teyo said aloud.

“Hmm, I didn’t know that.” Dr. Garcia responded. “Me too! When I was your age.” She said. Teyo smiled. “Tell me more.” Dr. Garcia said.

Teyo responded, “My great-grandparents never went, my grandparents never went, my parents never went, my great-aunt who was my guardian never went. But I really wanted to travel beyond just having your high school diploma, and I wanted to see what else is out there, what other option presented itself, as well as the constant talk around going to college and getting that degree and constantly pushing the bar further for indigenous people.” Like many of his peers, Teyo was considered to be a first-generation college student, his parents had never attended college or university before him.

“That’s amazing, I’m glad you mentioned that!” Dr. Garcia said. “What more?” she asked.

Feelings of In/Visibility

“Well...” Teyo paused for a moment. He cleared his throat, “I guess the main challenge being here is like, how do you do I keep going, if I’m the only Native male in the school? So, there just isn’t a lot of other people asking the questions that I am asking or looking at the world through an experience like mine.” Teyo stumbled over his words a bit, but Dr. Garcia understood.

“So, you feel like you’re the only one here?” Dr. Garcia asked.

Teyo looked down toward the desk. “I feel alone, completely. This is very isolating feeling. There aren’t many brown kids and not only am I the only Indigenous man here, but I’m the only Native American person here.” Teyo said confidently. He looked up at Dr. Garcia, “Like, the institution doesn’t really see me.”

“Mmmm...” Dr. Garcia said, nodding her head.

“The only person I saw that was like me, was only here my first year... then he was gone.... I remember he looked at me quickly and said, ‘Onkwehonwe’ and kept it moving” Teyo laughed. That means “Native person” in our language.

Dr. Garcia laughed. “That’s cool” she said. “I remember [Todd] he was a cool guy... he was really funny.” She laughed again and she nodded her head, following along with Teyo. Teyo really liked that he felt heard by Dr. Garcia.

“Yeah” Teyo said, “there [is] no support services, there was no Indigenous student center, there was no acknowledgment, there was no courses, no Native studies, nothing. So, I go here, as just an individual, just another person going to university.” Teyo said. “Or unless it’s some stereotypical bs comment from someone.”

“Does it feel like you don’t feel seen unless it’s a stereotypical thing about you?” Dr. Garcia asked.

“Yes!” Teyo responded. “I don’t really see many young men in my community are pursuing higher education either... and this makes sense... it’s just so isolating here.”

Higher Education as Settler Colonialism

“And here is the messed up thing.... I mean, just as far as, like, all the things that I can recall learning as a student [here], it is very Eurocentric, it was very westernized in the sense of it prioritizes the western thought of science, the whole methodology of science and upholding – I mean, I can see this so much more now, but when you’re growing up in that, you don’t – you’re not taught to question anything when you’re in high school. But it just was in the past couple years I’ve just had to really kind of sit with that and reflect on how power dynamics are played within the university setting and how sometimes our thoughts and our cultural perspectives aren’t valued as much.” Teyo said passionately. “Like. And outside of my school here, we just have us as Native students who are still trying to figure out our own indigeneity, we’re trying to reclaim our culture, we’re trying to navigate this institution that is based upon white supremacy and white privilege and how we’re not given that same, I guess, we’re not offered the same skill sets, like, off the gate as far as our non-Native peers.” His voice trailed off. Silence filled the room momentarily.

Dr. Garcia nodded, following along. “Go ahead Teyo, feel free to tell me about your truth here” she said.

After a moment, Teyo responded, “And then there were actual struggles where it’s like, you know, we had these [seminar] classes, and they tried really, really hard to be multicultural and blah blah blah, and I’m like, where the fuck’s the Native stuff? You know what I mean?”

There was this one book I remember that [inaudible] the speaker called cosmopolitanism, and the whole argument there was like, oh, everyone in this modern, neoliberal world needs to recognize themselves as members of the global society. And I'm like, fuck no, I'm not about that... I talked to the teacher, it was difficult because it was like they were talking to me like I didn't get the concept. And it's like, no, I got the concept. I just am rejecting it on the basis of my own experiences as an indigenous person. But I didn't know how to say that..." Teyo's became silent. Dr. Garcia nodded listening to him. Teyo sighed and said, "I- I don't know. My community would say, 'oh, you go to the white man's school, you're going to get assimilated, you're going to become a white man.' But in *my* experience and in the experiences of other people that I've come across..." Teyo paused and he continued. "and they're not just Haudenosaunee, they're from other indigenous Nations – they're actually learning a lot about themselves in this institution. And it's so ironic that this is happening, where they're learning about how colonialism messed things up so badly. And to me, that is very important for our people to learn those things. And if they're going to go back to their communities, I think that obviously there's going to have to be this kind of negotiation about how you introduce these new ideas back into your community in a way that's not going to get you marginalized... youn know?" Teyo asked. Dr. Garcia nodded and thought for a moment.

Intersectionality

"That's it." Dr. Garcia spoke up, "What about something that is about race but also about gender and colonization, too? Do you know what I mean? She clears her throat and pushes hair back from her face. "When we are talking about identity broadly, yes, gender, race, and socioeconomic status all play a huge factor." Dr. Garcia's hands motion as if she is balancing

multiple objects. “What does intersectionality have to do with your experiences?” she asks in a soft, inviting voice.

Teyo remembered some of Dr. Garcia’s classes on intersectionality.

I taught some this morning and I found this quote, Teyo. Hang on.” Dr. Garcia moved her computer mouse to wake her computer. She pulled a quote from a recent class she taught.

“Alright” she said and she cleared her throat. “From the interview with Kimberlé Crenshaw” (Coaston, 2019) the Black woman who coined the term “Intersectionality”. Dr. Garcia read aloud,

An African American man is going to experience the world differently than an African American woman... Somebody who is LGBT is going to experience the world differently than somebody who’s straight. Somebody who’s LGBT and African American is going to experience the world differently than somebody who’s LGBT and Latina. (Coaston, 2019, “How the right started worrying and learned to fear intersectionality”, para. 3)

Dr. Garcia stops readings and looks up to Teyo. Teyo nodded his heads, processing the quote that Dr. Garcia read.

She paused momentarily and said, “Hmm what about masculinity?” she asked.

Teyo nodded briefly and squinted his eyes. He had only really grappled with issues of race and racism during his undergraduate years. He awkwardly sat processing her inquiry.

Dr. Garcia responded to her own question, “Well, maybe we can start here” she said, noticing the challenge that she laid down for Teyo based on his facial cues. Dr. Garcia then asked, “Teyo, how do you *define* Indigenous masculinity?” She smiled. He quickly glanced down and back to Dr. Garcia.

“I-I don’t know...” He paused, “That’s a really good question” he muttered as his confused looking eyes drifted to the window. Teyo was surprised by the question and he did not even know what masculinity even meant. Truthfully, Teyo felt that it was one of the most confusing questions he had ever heard... but he didn’t want to admit that. “I will look into these...” Teyo said nervously, trying to shirk the question.

“Masculinity...” Teyo said briefly. He paused. He looked over to her again and said, “I don’t think that’s how we would say it.” Teyo sat there with his eyebrows furrowed. Dr. Garcia smirked and responded.

“Then tell me how your community would say it” she said, somewhat proudly.

As he walked out of Dr. Garcia’s office that day, he briefly noticed the hallway that he knew so well for the past five years. He always felt really supported by Dr. Garcia and her thoughts about anything that he does. The air felt humid to Teyo. There was a thickness to the halls. It’s warm on the third floor, he thought to himself, as he walked down the hallway leading out of Dr. Garcia’s office. The sunlight beamed in the tall windows that were clustered together in the hall, which illuminates the floor. The rug seemed aged, red and tan colors give the floor a seemingly pink-ish undertone from a distance. It felt neatly maintained and old. Her words, “*How would your community say it?*” echoed in his mind as he walked down the hallway, as he stared at the floor.

As Teyo passed the windows, he noticed the old black paint that seemed cracked under the windowsills. The frames of the windows were lined with red paint, which contrasted the white walls. The hallways seemed to evoke a musty smell that can somehow be described as pleasant to Teyo, like the smell of old books and memories that he had of the space. The walk down the hallway was a familiar walk to him, yet he often felt an endearing and yet ghostly

presence. The bright colored wooden doors are heavy and stand in defiance under the glass windows above each office door. Everything seems expensive, even the bronze doorknobs that are scratched and worn to the touch, and slippery when turned. There is a warmth in the space, a space one may call home despite the haunted halls that recall memories of his struggle as a college student.

Zack

Teyo and Zack had a two-and-a-half-hour drive ahead of them. It was a frigid winter morning during the spring semester in Haudenosaunee territory (some might know it as “Upstate New York”). During the semester Teyo and his cousin Zack often went back home to be around their family on the weekends. They found that being surrounded by the support his family and community helped him to complete assignments and to clear his mind. It was at home that they felt the most grounded and supported while in college. They often went back home to attend ceremonies and community events like lacrosse games or to spend time with their Grandparents, Grandma, or to visit with their Aunties and Uncles who often came over to their Gramma’s and Grampa’s house. They also missed their friends back home too.

They walked up to the car and Teyo opened the driver-side car door. Even though Teyo tried to open the door carefully, snow still fell into the car. The snow had piled up overnight and it looked like vast blanket that covered the Earth. It seemed as if there was nothing awake this early morning and it was still. The moonlit streets were barely visible under a cloak of darkness. Under the streetlamps, the snow sparkled as small flurries of snow continued to fall from the dark blue sky. Other than minor gusts of wind that carried small amounts of snow towards the woods, the snow was still and beautiful. Teyo and Zack’s long shadows were cast into the background of what seemed like a real-life painting, and in this painting, the dark contrasted the

light in such a way that brought a semblance of balance to their surroundings. The streetlamps lit up the ground where they were standing. The cold air bit their faces and hands.

“Oh, wait!” Zack stated sharply. “Let me just grab my equipment!” Zack yelled. Teyo crinkled his nose.

“Ah... not that stank, sweaty bag of lacrosse stuff!” Teyo pleaded. Zack already had the bag on the ground. He lunged and threw the bag into the backseat.

“Just don’t breathe in through your nose... it’s okay.” Zack joked. Teyo sighed and rolled his eyes.

“It’s the only time I can get it washed before practices ramp up!” Zack said. Teyo shook his head and turned the key to the car. The engine started up. Teyo put the car in reverse and began backing out.

“Hey! Are you going to even going to warm it up?” Zack asked.

“What? And give your gross pads a chance to un-thaw and stink up my car too?” Teyo shot back.

“Oh... good point!” Zack said. He laughed loudly again. Teyo just shook his head and drove on. He turned on some Johnny Cash song and they drove into the dark morning.

As Teyo drove, Zack sat still, looking out the window, as the Upstate New York scenery passed by their view. They passed the hills of Big Town and valleys in-between. The open fields contrasted the large, wooded areas. They passed large swamp lands filled with water and some of which was iced over or covered with snow entirely. The crooked trees usually covered in swamp, rose up distinctly from the wetlands. The sun began to rise in the distance, as the sky lit up in various reds, purples, and blues. Both of them sat in silence as they passed countless farms with small white houses with wrap around porches.

Reluctance to Define Indigenous Masculinities

“Hey I was wondering if you could help me with my project” Teyo asked, breaking the silence. Zack turned to him.

“You and that project... mas-culin-ity...?” Zack joked, pretending to not know how to say ‘masculinity’.

“But seriously, what’s that even mean?” Zack asked in a teasing manner.

“Well, I was hoping to ask you that question.” Teyo responded with a confident smile.

Teyo continued driving and asked further, “I want to ask you what you think about masculinity... especially like Haudenosaunee masculinity.”

“Hm.” Zack responded with a half laugh. “Okay...” Zack said apprehensively. Teyo knew that Zack probably really didn’t want to talk about it.

“Well, I know what it means to be *me* in college.” Zack responded, emphasizing himself. Again, Zack seemed a bit apprehensive.

“Oh yeah!” Teyo said. “Alright then, yeah! Let’s hear it!” Teyo said excitedly, trying to play it cool. But he couldn’t help but to smile ear to ear, anticipating Zack’s responses and excited to hear. Teyo got serious. “What has your experience been like?” Teyo prompted. “I really am trying to understand Haudenosaunee men to, like Dr. Garcia said, “understand this place... err, I mean, like BTU, you know?” Zack nodded his head. Teyo inhaled deeply then exhaled. “So basically, I want to understand how Haudenosaunee people understand masculinity... I also want to know how they understand it here, at um, BTU.” Zack sat in silence for a moment.

“So...” Zack replied, confused. “You want to understand um, like... men?”

“Yeah, kinda.” Teyo responded

“So, I guess like one of the challenges was like, what does it mean to be indigenous, and what does it mean to be a man? What does my identity mean? What does that look like? What am I supposed to be doing right now? What are the instructions that my parents didn’t present to me? They kind of left that all out of raising me. Like, yeah, what do you mean?” Zack asked, growing frustrated in his tone.

“OK, so masculinity meaning how you understand being a man, and did that have anything to do with your culture, and did either of those have anything to do with your higher education experiences? I mean, I guess you said that your Haudenosaunee masculinity – I mean, you’re a lacrosse player.” Teyo said.

“Lemme give it a shot then... mas-cu-lin-ity” Zack mouthed sarcastically. Teyo smiled and nodded his head.

“Give it a shot.” Teyo responded.

“Yeah, I think that’s the only correlation I can kind of put together.” Zack said. “Yeah. I think the term “Haudenosaunee masculinity” is just kind of an ironic subject because it’s not really masculinity, it’s insecurity.” Zack remarked.

“Can you describe that?” Teyo asked.

“I think there’s a sense of providing that is always part of the reason why Haudenosaunee men go to university. Providing for their family, for their community, the responsibility that we used to have in our communities. Largely we see that in ironworking. My father was an ironworker, his father was an ironworker, his father was one of the first ironworkers in [Mohawk community 1]. And they all went to provide for their families.” Zack said. He paused for a moment, deep in thought and continued, “I mean, I feel like because, one, there’s not a lot of male – father figures for Haudenosaunee men, at least from my experiences just growing up on a

reservation. A lot of people grow up with no fathers, and so there's just kind of this sense of just being tough and kind of being this – not showing emotions kind of, just being a Haudenosaunee male, I think. It's just there's this repression.” Zack explained.

“Would you say that all of what you're describing, how does that have to do with higher education?” Teyo asked. He took a sip of his coffee.

“I think it's seen as not really, from my experiences, not really because Haudenosaunee masculinity, it doesn't-. Haudenosaunee males tend to look at higher education as kind of a not masculine thing, but I think there's – it's seen as almost like you're going to school and you're doing - what?” Zack paused.

“Yeah, I'm following you. This is really important stuff.” Teyo responded.

“I think it's seen as almost like, it's just if you're not playing a sport out of college, then you're just kind of like a nerd. It's almost just like you're feminine because you're not just staying, you're going to college. And I think education as a whole to a Haudenosaunee male is kind of just looked over because it's seen as kind of just something that's not – you shouldn't be doing – from my experience.” Zack said. His voice sort of trailed off.

“Wow... so we shouldn't be doing it, almost?” Teyo asked.

“Yeah.. it's weird.” Zack said.

“How would you describe suppressive?” Teyo asked.

“Suppressive in just emotions and suppressive in – yeah, just showing emotions. That's what I see Haudenosaunee men as.” Zack said.

“How might you relate to this description that you've provided?” Teyo asked.

“Because that's what I was taught to be, even though it's not – that's just – I'm trying to think.” Zack paused for a moment.

“Take your time. It’s how you were taught to be, but then you said, but also – what?”

Teyo said.

“It’s what we were taught to be, but it’s also just a perception of being a man in Haudenosaunee environments.” Zack responded.

“Wow- That’s a good answer.” Teyo said.

Brotherhood

“I think it’s – and because you grew up with no male figures, and you see how other males act or guide you to, then that is how you have to be.” Zack said. He then emphasized, “My brother is what you would call a masculine Haudenosaunee man.” Zack remarked.

“Your older brother?” Teyo asked.

“Yes.” Wishe responded.

“OK, so how would you describe the role that Haudenosaunee men have had on your life?” Teyo asked.

“I think just – sorry. The role they played, there’s two parts. They taught me how to carry myself to some extent and how to kind of navigate with being a male, but it also taught me what not to be in a sense because it’s kind of like you grew up learning a certain way um [inaudible]. Yeah, just taught me how to carry myself but not how to be. I don’t know, it’s really confusing.” Zack said. He continued, “I see that in my friends, too. They’re my brothers.”

“So your friends were your support group?” Teyo asked.

Zack responded quickly, “I found support in I think – luckily when I went to college I had 40 teammates that were already just predetermined friends just through association. And so, that made me feel more supported in my transition. I think that if I did not have that, it would have been very hard.” Zack said.”

“Can you describe to me more about how you came to BTU?” Teyo asked.

Pathway: Lacrosse/ Student Athlete

“Well, I’m a lacrosse player...” he paused. “...and like, I’m an athlete, but also I am a student.” Teyo nodded again, trying to encourage Zack to speak more. Zack took a big gulp of his Gatorade. Zack gazed over the dashboard and into the distance while he spoke.

Zack continued, “Well, I always wanted to go to BTU, and they have a big tradition of having Native players there, particularly from [home]. It’s just a few miles down the road, so, I wanted to get there.” Zack said. Teyo nodded his head as he drove. Teyo also noted how he said, ‘Native players’ and not ‘Native students.’

“And when I was first getting to high school, the only way that I could see other Native men accessing college was through sports scholarships, primarily being lacrosse, lacrosse being such an essential part of our culture and our identity. These kids who grew up with it, that became their life and their main focus, and they became especially talented at it, and would receive scholarships right out of high school.” Zack took a breath. He scratched his head and continued on. “Education wasn’t my favorite part in the whole, in high school, so I took a year post-graduate school in [Johnson Town] prep school. The school was just one year, [high school] postgraduate, uh, all male and it was mostly for jocks who didn’t take their studies seriously. Yeah. So, I pursued higher education to play lacrosse at the collegiate level. And at that time, that was really the only factor I had that led me to decide on attending college. That was really just playing lacrosse.” Teyo continued nodding his head to show Zack that he understood and was paying attention. The snow hit the windows hard as they continued driving.

Zack continued, “And when I got [here], you know, I had just some family members that were [here] before me, and they didn’t graduate. I didn’t want to be like that. I wanted to, I

wanted to keep playing lacrosse, so that was my ultimate passion.” Zack paused briefly. Teyo broke the silence.

“Mhm. I know that’s right.” Teyo said. Zack continued somewhat bashfully.

“But, in the back of my head, uh, the role models that I had, my parents, that I knew worked hard. I didn’t want to let them down. Particularly my mother. And so that really drove me to succeed and make better choices, and uh, at Big Town. I know everyone loves their parents, and nobody wants to let them down, and I just really felt that- *that* was the driving force, making sure to have good grades, and play lacrosse as well.” Zack stopped talking and a song by ACDC came on quietly in the background. Teyo noticed that for once, Zack was actually being open to him, which made Teyo feel good.

“So you used lacrosse as kind of, like a ticket?” Teyo asked, as if he didn’t already know, but he wanted Zack to explain more about it.

“[Lacrosse] was a tool to get to the next level, and to travel and to get an education” Zack responded.

“Mhm. What’s it like for you, playing lacrosse as an athlete and being a student?” Teyo asked.

“It’s almost two different obstacles... One is being a college student, which is tough enough as it is. And then, having the athlete side, and then being a Native.” Zack’s eyes lowered. He scratched the back of his neck and continued, “So, encompassed all three of those, that’s pretty tough, because it is hard enough to get to college, hard enough being a Native in college, and having our background education was not always stressed. Um, having cultural, traditional values was always important to all of us, but I also knew education was important as well. I always knew I wanted to go, get an education. I always knew I wanted to come back to the

Nation to help in some degree. So, I wasn't worried about leaving home, because I knew I would always return home, and I knew going to education was a way to network myself." Zack took another drink of his Gatorade. He continued... "And then eventually, I realized that it was just also to better my life and to allow me to excel as a person."

Teyo noted his last comment. He realized that what Zack was saying, was that while lacrosse was the main motivator and focus, and often times Zack put lacrosse before being a student, Zack also realized that after he was finished, that college made him excel, not just as a lacrosse player but as a student and a person generally.

Alcohol/ Substance Abuse

Zack continued, "But, having to deal with social issues, being a Native, and then being on the lacrosse team, and the lacrosse teams are generally known as partiers, like— this weird-feeling dynamic of Natives, lacrosse, and partying." Zack tapped with his finger on his leg when he said each of these words. Teyo wondered why he tapped his finger like that. Zack seemed to say these three words as if they were synonymous, or as if he heard the phrase "Natives-lacrosse-partying" in combination before. Regardless, Teyo nodded to show Zack that he was listening. Teyon noted that Zack may have been pointing to this comparison as a stereotype without saying it, but nonetheless, Teyo continued listening.

Zack continued, "throughout my first two and a half years, I struggled with coping through alcohol, and going into – is that an experience that's—"

Teyo said, "Yeah."

"OK." Zack continued, "And I think coming from the background I was in, I didn't drink, or I grew up in a household that didn't – it shunned me to drink. And so, when I first went to college, it introduced me to that, and I used that as kind of a coping. And I think that entire

transition of kind of suppressing my struggles with coping with school and using that as a way to kind of just make it go away, it's like there's something to look forward to during the weekends because I am getting through this during the week, and it's tough to kind of grasp sometimes.

“Can you talk a little more about Natives, lacrosse, and partying? – like you said?” Teyo asked Zack with a cautious tone in his voice. A silence momentarily filled the car. Teyo cleared his throat. Zack also cleared his throat.

“I went through a hard time” Zack said, as he looked down at the floor again. While Teyo drove he nodded and briefly, trying to acknowledge Zack's words. Inside, Teyo felt surprised at how much Zack, *of all people*, was opening up about this. It was almost like he wanted to talk about it, but often didn't for whatever reason. Teyo wondered if Zack was ever really given a space to discuss this stuff.

“Not just alcohol” Zack said, “I've had issues with alcohol *and* drug abuse as well. Again, I feel it was like both for the same reason, the fact that I can do it and then handle it.” Zack admitted. Teyo noted that this seemed to be a sensitive topic. Zack cleared his throat again and continued. “So I was on a team where they just ply you with alcohol, and you get absolutely hammered. They shaved my head, they paraded me around the quad, all those things that – happened to me. Woke up with quite the – you know, all those things.... he paused and looked at Teyo, “Well, this was that moment where I realized I had a community of some sort, and that community was really quite important. So, I have to say that that sporting thing, and I don't know how that – but I have to say it because that is a part of the experience.” Zack said. He paused and then said, “When I think about it now, it's a scary life...” His voice trailed off. Teyo knew that this seemed to be a strange feeling for Zack to talk about, while in one hand, he created a community of some sort and has memories of being hazed, but in most ways, it seemed

to be also painful for Zack to talk about. Teyo thought about this for a moment, confused about the dynamic.

“Mhm” Teyo said. He paused, giving space for discussion.

“...And I think coming from the background I was in, I didn’t drink, or I grew up in a household that didn’t – it shunned me to drink...” Zack said. “And so, when I first went to college, it introduced me to that, and I used that as kind of a coping. And I think that entire transition of kind of suppressing my struggles with coping with school and using that as a way to kind of just make it go away, it’s like there’s something to look forward to during the weekends because I am getting through this during the week, and it’s tough to kind of grasp sometimes.” Again, his voice trailed off.

“So—” Teyo cautiously interjected, breaking another brief silence. “What did you end up doing to change that?” Teyo asked, changing the direction of the discussion.

Zack thought about the question. Teyo noted his silence.

Spirituality

Zack continued, “I think I was able to develop a sense of just calmness and almost just a more grateful approach to every day. I don’t know, I just – my experiences in college geared me toward just being thankful for every day and not wanting to just suppress days or not just kind of rush through days and kind of just take them for granted. I think just my experiences allowed me to just take a step back and just appreciate little things. I think that’s one of my strengths is just being able to find the good in everything now, even if there’s a tough situation where I kind of get upset or where it’s like, that’s kind of shitty, yeah. There’s this sense of it could always be worse. And I think that’s something that I learned.”

“Mmm.” Teyo said. “When you went to college, you’d just take a step back and give thanks for every day... that’s awesome and totally based in our ways, right?”

“Yeah!” Zack said, and he continued on. “And for me, the times when I truly experience it is when I go to longhouse. When I go to longhouse, I don’t feel any negatives. I don’t feel any positives. I just feel at peace. I feel comfortable in who we are. And the way longhouse is set up, I sit with the other men, so when I sit with them, I just feel at peace, I feel a calm, I truly do. And I’d gotten away from longhouse because I had moved away for a little while, and I’d gone back for the first time this year, and I forgot what it was like. But I felt this peace, just sitting there and realizing that that’s a part of my experience, that’s a part of who I am, it’s a part of my culture.”

“So you really found an ability to ground yourself...” Teyo’s voiced trailed off it sounds like.

“Yeah and I also found support in religious and spiritual student programs. There was specifically a program called values and vocation, where I was part of a cohort of students who examined – we looked at different spiritual traditions.”

“Mmmm I see, very cool.” Teyo muttered.

“Yeah... pretty cool.” Zack said.

Student Athlete Community

“Who were your mentors?” Teyo asked... He clarified. “Did you have any mentors going through college, either in the college/university or outside?” Zack paused for a moment to think. He inhaled deeply and exhaled thinking about the question.

“My coach” Zack said. “Coach Tom, you know, as big as, one of the biggest lacrosse names there is, especially tied in with [Big Town], he was very loose, very calm, a guy you could go in and chit-chat with. Didn’t have to be about lacrosse, could be about school, could be about

family. And so there is a certain few Elders that I looked up to and, kind of, grounded me.” Teyo nodded his head again, thinking about his response.

“Can you tell me more about that?” Teyo asked in order to get more specific about the coach/ player dynamic.

“Yeah, I think I would say that my lacrosse coach...” Zack paused briefly to think about his response and continued, “When I was going through these issues, I would be able to go into his office at any time or just text him at any time, and it was kind of just, it was a person that I could turn to and someone that would help me and that I could talk to at any moment about anything. Is that more in line with that?” Zack responded. He became silent again, staring out the front windshield.

“Yeah, yeah. No, it’s something – it answers the next question in helping you to overcome the challenge, right, because you had somebody there who was supportive for you. So, yeah, that’s helpful.” Teyo responded as he reached down to take a sip of his coffee next to him. “Nobody else at the school err university?” Teyo asked. “Like any other supports at college?”

“Not really. I think more my mentors were just my elders around here. That’s who I looked up to.” Zack remarked.

“In like, our community? Teyo asked, trying to clarify.

“Yeah, [our] community.” Zack noted. He continued, “I [look] up to – my family was always there no matter what I was doing” Zack paused again briefly, considering his response. Teyo didn’t mind the silence, as it seemed that he was being very genuine in his responses about this topic area. Zack continued, “And it truly is, because, I said, looking back at my role models, I had my parents and the support system I had a home. Everyone was like pushing for me, in a positive way to get to the next level, and I needed to block out the distractions and, all right, do

my homework for two or three hours and then everything else will take care of itself. Without the education I would just be back home doing I don't know what. So, I didn't want to... I had a little bit of fear of that, but also motivation in a positive way that everyone's supporting me."

"A little bit of fear in what?" Teyo asked. He scratched his head.

"Um, not succeeding." Zack clarified. Zack briefly looked out the passenger window. He looked back at Zack, scratched the back of his neck and continued talking. "Being at college at Big Town" Zack said, while taking a brief moment to think about his words, "You know it's *BTU*, home school, or whatever. The lacrosse program and all its traditions, and now lacrosse becomes really mainstreamed, where you get into social media out there, publications, and interviews, and the school newspaper. So, you can almost get wrapped up in the aura of being an *BTU* lacrosse player. It's not hard, not easy to explain, but you get distracted, where everything is all about you, like, they want you to be accepting of that role, and being a kind of person that I was raised, everyone supports everyone. Family, your brothers, your sisters, Mom, Dad, your grandmother. Respect and all aspects in your family. I needed to come back to that and not think about what I needed to do as a person, for myself, but, help my mom in her garden, or shovel my grandma's driveway, or you know go back to the roots of what it is to be a person and not a college athlete. So, you need that to distract yourself. And then, kind of re-energize your batteries whether it's just a home cooked meal, um, just talking to mom or dad, or just hanging out with your brothers, going fishing, whatever. Before going back, and getting back into college mode. So..." Zack paused momentarily. Teyo nodded his head again. He wanted Zack to go further about this topic.

"So, in your college life, um, who were some important people? Either mentors, people who supported you, um, even peers. Was there anybody in particular, and it doesn't need to

mean just at the university, but anywhere, um, was there anyone who supported you most?” Teyo asked.

“I found support in I think – luckily when I went to college I had 40 teammates that were already just predetermined friends just through association. And so, that made me feel more supported in my transition. I think that if I did not have that, it would have been very hard.” Zack paused again. He continued on talking further about the challenges he’s had so far. “Um, the hardest hurdle for me was really trying to be the best lacrosse player that I could be.” Zack said, which seemed to support Teyo’s silent thoughts. Zack continued, “I guess, yeah, just that I’ve always – I look at those early years of lacrosse and how that bridges – really was my foundation for a lot of how I approached everything in life as far as achieving goals and giving me something to work for. And it was also culturally significant because lacrosse and our culture is so connected together. But those were a lot of the formative things that taught me a lot. I think that’s some of the things in my story that I think really emphasized myself, but then also I think lacrosse and then also the role of the women in my life, my mom especially. She was right there taking me to all those lacrosse things right after work, on the weekends. Anywhere I needed to go, she took me there.” Teyo nodded his head again to show Zack he was listening.

Zack continued, “I think you hit on something really good there, because there’s a lot of things that we can hold value on in our culture, and it’s, oh, like, so-and-so’s a really ace lacrosse player, or, oh, man, so-and-so, like, they really seem like sing stowa really good. Man, they’re such a good speaker, stuff like that. But aside from that, what are they valuable – what’s the value I guess outside from those cultural aspects? And I feel like the value in being someone who’s open minded, having Haudenosaunee men who are open minded, willing to listen, they’re very nurturing.” Zack paused.

“Ahem” Teyo cleared his throat. “Um, do you think that Native men have changed from what we used to be from back in the day to what we are now?” Teyo asked.

“Uh. I don’t know. You’d have to ask my Dad. I don’t know how the older guys were back in the day, you know? Cuz I know a lotta guys my age now, they- they’re trying to do that. And then there’s some guys who just aren’t leaving the Rez at all. So, you have to ask me that in 20 years” Zack said. Teyo felt surprised by his answer, since it really didn’t go in-depth with defining Indigenous or Haudenosaunee masculinity.

Vulnerability

“You’re not going to ask me if I cry at all are you?” Zack asked jokingly.

“Well, I dunno. Is that something that you want to talk about?” Teyo said, smiling. Zack laughed aloud.

Teyo smiled and shrugged.

“Well, given the relationship with my grandfathers and my dad, I would describe myself as a very sensitive person that was somewhat emotional at times, that I was taught that isn’t what a man is. You don’t show emotion, you don’t cry. If you do cry, you cry alone and nobody sees it. You always have to project strength, you always have to project lack of fear, very kind of – part of it was what helped me fit into the military because there’s a lot of that kind of culture in there, too. You don’t show weakness, you don’t show fear, you don’t show that you’re having emotions or that you feel emotions. You wait until you’re in private.” Zack said. “I’m not saying that’s right, but that’s how it is.”

Teyo noted that Zack was saying. “What challenge men on a regular basis?” Teyo asked.

“Substance abuse.” Zack said.

“Anything else?” Teyo replied.

“Emotional illiteracy.” Zack said.

“What do you mean by that?” Teyo asked.

Zack inhaled deeply and responded, “An unwillingness to be honest with themselves and vulnerable.” He paused for a moment and continued, “Having an understanding of other people and understanding other people’s emotions, I think is a huge challenge Haudenosaunee males face on a regular basis, especially when they have confrontations about emotional events or just emotional things. I think the challenge they face is they don’t know how to grasp emotional events, and so it’s either suppressed or just pushed away.”

Teyo nodded his head and responded, “Yeah. Let me see, I’m just – hold on one second.

All right. So, how do Haudenosaunee men overcome those challenges?”

Zack responded, “With their fists. No.” Zack laughed. “I think though aggression or through just not overcoming them, I think, the challenges I described. I think they just push them to the side or use aggression to solve challenges.” Zack said, thoughtfully. Teyo noted the humor used during the interaction. They drove onto the rez.

Teyo said, “Look at that corny Indian with the headdress... home sweet home.” Zack smiled and shook his head. A sign showed itself in the distance which read: “Indian Trading Post”, a prominent store in their community that sells tax-free cigarettes and gas, among a strange combination of discount goods including lamps, free weights, vapes, and China-made t-shirts with the store’s emblem on the shirts which centers on a Native person wearing a Sioux headdress. It was a strange sight, since the Haudenosaunee do not wear headdresses, the men wear a *gustoweh*, a Haudenosaunee “feather hat” that looks nothing like a Sioux headdress.

“When are they gonna change that goddamn guy with the Sioux headdress up there?”

Teyo asked aloud to Zack. It was more of a statement than a question.

“Hey- hey! Don’t talk about my job that way!” Zack said as he let out a chuckle. Teyo smiled and shook his head. In his mind, Teyo was happy that he could joke with Zack after a conversation that felt so deep, even for the both of them.

Their Haudenosaunee Nation territory borders a white, blue-collared, working-class town in rural areas. This dynamic is much like many Haudenosaunee communities who also border white towns like this one. Differences between communities often become apparent where racial tensions and cultural misunderstandings often arise, especially when Native people fight for sovereignty and equity. The snow floated down, flickering back brief glimpses of sunlight. The snow reflected rays of sunlight back into Teyo and Zack’s eyes, which felt blinding at times as they pulled onto the Rez back home. While they drove passed the gas station, Teyo quickly glanced one more time at the sign with the Native man wearing the Sioux headdress. He briefly thought about the “Chief” in the middle of the quad at Big Town University.

Saro and Nathan

Nathan and Saro’s voices went in and out of reception. It was the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and they wanted to talk in-person but felt it safer to talk over phone; also they could not cross the US/ Canadian border even if they wanted to. Nathan was on the “Canadian” side of the settler US/ Canadian border and Saro was on the “US side”, the same as Teyo. They had a long conversation about the idea of perception and community in higher education. While Teyo was scribbling on his notepad about the differences experienced between the US side and Canadian sides of the border, Teyo noted that Haudenosaunee men had diverse experiences,

specifically related to how Native men access higher education and perceptions of being or not being lacrosse players in higher education.

Pathway: Academically Driven

Nathan's voice sounded scratchy and disrupted by static and some outages as Teyo and Saro listened in.

"I could see Native men accessing college was through sports scholarships, primarily being lacrosse, lacrosse being such an essential part of our culture and our identity" Nathan said. He continued, "These kids who grew up with it, that became their life and their main focus, and they became especially talented at it, and would receive scholarships right out of high school. And I know the big one being John Tarbell (pseudonym), Jim Staats (Pseudonym), and Jake Smith (pseudonym) because they're two, three, and five years older than me. Or is it – no, it's three, five, and six years older than me, I believe. Right when I was starting to look at colleges and consider colleges, that's what I noticed. Those were the only Native men that I had seen attend who got into colleges. And although I don't play lacrosse, I figured I'd pave my own way through academics, considering what I knew what I wanted to be."

"So, this is how you perceived how Native men largely accessed college right?" Teyo asked.

"Yeah!" Nathan replied.

"Do you feel that you've accessed college in a way that's common for Haudenosaunee men?" Teyo asked Nathan.

"Absolutely not." Nathan said. "Well, maybe not because what felt uncommon to me, being academics and whatnot, when I actually got to BigTown University, the other Native men that I seen there in our community were actually there for academics as well. And it was only I

want to say two or three who were actually there on lacrosse scholarships. That could also just be because Sharp Pines University is a big attractor for Native men to access college via lacrosse. So, my initial thought was, yes, this is unique, but when I actually get into college and I see the other men being there for STEM, art, writing, history, things like that, it certainly changed my perspective a little bit. But at the same time, when I look at the statistics, it would seem that many do go there just for lacrosse and other sports as well.”

“Mhm, interesting” Teyo responded.

“Yeah, and And although I don’t play lacrosse, I figured I’d pave my own way through academics, considering what I knew what I wanted to be.” Nathan responded. “I was genuinely surprised by how many others did the same as me; not necessarily the student athlete/ lacrosse player route.” Nathan said.

Pathway: Difference Between US and Canadian Experiences

Saro interrupted both Teyo and Nathan.

“It’s so weird. Like- like, there is more than one way to succeed in college. I- I am not sure that I grew up seeing Native lacrosse players as the *only way*” Saro said, awkwardly. He continued, “Sure. So, I mean, I can’t speak for everybody. I can kind of speak to what I’ve seen. So, even I’m from [a Mohawk community in Canada], I didn’t really see how the young men in that community were pursuing higher education. I kind of heard through conversations with family. But I did go to school in [Mohawk community], and there was a lot of students from [Mohawk community] that were there that I went to high school with. And a lot of them – there was a lot of support for those students at the high school level to pursue higher education. There was the Haudenosaunee scholarship at [Bigtown], and that was really advertised to the Mohawk students that I went to high school with. In fact, I kind of looked into it, too, but I never chose to

go that path. But I do have a friend that did decide to go to [Bigtown], and he accessed that program. And from what he's told me is that it's a very important program for Haudenosaunee students. Tuition in Canada compared to the United States is drastically different. And so, having that ability to go to a pretty big school down in the United States is an opportunity that he didn't want to pass up." Saro said. "Oh and also lots of students from [Canadian Province] also go to CESEP, it's called."

"Huh?" Teyo responded. "What's that?"

"You've got grade 9, 10, 11, 12, freshman, what do you call it, sophomore, junior, senior. But in Canadian Province 1, you only go up to grade 11, and then high school's over. And then we have this intermediary experience between high school and university that is in English, called college, but of course, it's called CESEP. I'm in a French province, by the way..." his voice trailed off and he cut back in, "[CESEP is] an intermediary step, and it was quite a good one, too, because you have to choose your courses. You can choose a major in college. And the courses do resemble those at least structurally that you would experience at university. So, after I graduated high school, I went to a college, a local college in High City." Saro said.

"Mhm" Teyo said, and continued. "What are some other motivating factors for you?"

"Like my father's a lawyer, and that was a big motivating factor for me..." He paused momentarily.

"So there was really no lacrosse as an influence for you?" Nathan asked, sort of in disbelief.

"I don't see that here too much in Canada. First of all, there's no scholarships for lacrosse, so – like, I played lacrosse at Harding (pseudonym) for a bit, and it's a club team, so basically you don't even get a – it's not free. You have to pay to play. And there was no – I saw

Indigenous students at other universities that I played against in Canada, in Ontario, but they were very much like Harding was. It's a club kind of team structure or organization, and so I would think that participating in that was very important for myself playing lacrosse." Saro explained. He paused again. Teyo spoke up.

"It doesn't really sound the same because there's the scholarship money really isn't there, you're saying, for Canadian – like in Canadian university, there's really no – it's not like the NCAA, right?" Teyo asked, in clarification.

"No, definitely not. And I think it speaks to the differences in tuition fees, drastically different." Saro said.

"Wow!" Nathan stated, again in disbelief.

"Yeah that kinda blows my mind too... I did not know that." Teyo explained.

They spoke further about their diverse experiences as Haudenosaunee men in higher education. These three men were often surprised to hear about the differences and celebrated their similarities in their experiences, simply given the US border. They also described similar ways that they interacted with US/ Canadian border customs agents who often rejected their "red cards," "Indian Act cards," or Indigenous Nation identification which they often used to assert their treaty rights. Teyo, Saro, and Nathan described using these cards to cross "the border" instead of using US or Canadian identification to assert their Native identities and Haudenosaunee citizenship. This all became integral to their experiences in higher education when they went back to their home communities, from college.

They also began speaking about ways to succeed that felt comforting, or complicated, and their support systems overall. Nathan described in-depth moments that he remembered that helped him to succeed at Big Town University as a STEM student.

Peers/ Partner Support

“Oh, man. Well, I guess I can recall one moment from each year that I was there. Freshman year, I remember sitting in the Native community dorm room. We were all finishing studying for our finals, and we stayed up ’til, oh, I don’t know, maybe four in the morning just binge watching “Star Wars,” of all things, because one of our friends hadn’t seen it. So, we made him watch it. But, again, it goes back to that, like, coming together after a struggle, studying, pulling all-nighters, writing final papers, final projects, all this stuff, and just sitting down together and enjoying a peaceful moment and just laughing together and even crying together. Going to sleep, there was a big relief about that. Just being there with those friends was excellent. And then let’s see here, sophomore year, I remember I had a project that I put off until the last possible minute, and it was I want to say a 20-page project in chemistry. And I remember when I finished, I passed out on a bench in one of the public dorms, and the Native students took pictures of me and said, this is why you don’t work until the last minute or whatever.” Nathan laughed recalling this memory. Teyo couldn’t help but to smile because it reminded him of his experiences with his peer-group. Nathan continued.

“And it became a great joke, and it just kind of reminded me, like, yeah, I did this to myself, but at least we got through it and we all had a good laugh about it. Junior year is when everybody started to specialize into their course material. And I remember becoming really good friends with a fellow premed student. I remember just chugging through the course material for organic chemistry, which is like the bane of every premed student. Because we had each other, we were just able to really stick through it despite it being so difficult. We heavily leaned on each other. It was good having somebody else there to struggle with. And then senior year, it just has to be graduation. I mean, there’s no other moment that compares to that feeling. Ironically,

too, though, I do want to mention that I got to walk across the stage with my wife at that point, and she was pregnant with our first child. So, going across the stage with my wife, who was pregnant, and just graduating and going through that mental difficulty and being at the finish line saying, yeah, we did it, was just – I remember everybody just crying. It was a feeling that’s indescribable.”

Native Student Program Support

Teyo noted Nathan’s ability to speak freely about his ability to express his emotions as a part of his experiences. Nathan Continued describing other ways he found support,

“I found support with the indigenous or Native [university] community. There was a student lounge for indigenous students, there were different activities that were planned, and it was very important for me as an undergraduate student getting to meet indigenous students from all over Canada, getting to meet some students from [Mohawk community 3] that came up, even from the American side. And they had the community that was on the campus. That was important. And the sense of community was usually a result of funding from the university for those types of activities. So, like, the university hired some kind of liaison or support staff for university students, and to this day, those resources are still available to students.”

Both Saro and Teyo said, “Mhm” at the same time. Nathan continued, “I had become involved with the Native student program there, so that was a really big anchor for me. I don’t know how my experience would have been if I didn’t have that.” He said quickly, affirming his initial assertion of feeling supported by Indigenous student programs at the university. Teyo noted what they were saying and circled many times on his writing pad.

Teyo also wanted to steer Nathan towards talking about other challenges he faced.

“I- I know you kind of spoke to some of this issue before, but can you describe – well, the question is, what were some challenges for you during college, and how did these events affect you as a person— was there any in your mind that stuck out, like real big-time challenges?” Teyo stumbled over his words a bit, but wanted to know more. Saro silently listened on the other end.

Campus Hostility: Racial Microaggressions

“I’m trying to avoid the obvious of the difficulty of the course material because everybody knows the difficulty of the course material.” Nathan cleared his throat and continued, “But I do remember coming across people that were prejudiced in a way. Their faces and names kind of escape me, but I just remember being shocked at the time, like, wow, you know, everybody has this freedom of identity and freedom of self, and here are these people who want to crush that, who don’t want that. And it started around the time of, oh, junior year, late junior year, when President Trump’s campaign started, is when I started to really notice that persona come about. But I’m not sure if it came about as a result of that or just me maturing and being more aware of what these people look like and what these people say around me through my course material.”

“Pfff...” Saro made a noise on the other end of the phone.

“So, was it social media or was it in person? Was it other fellow undergraduate students? Who did the prejudice come from?” Teyo asked.

“All of the above. I experienced it on social media. I was called racial names on social media. I remember the first time that happened. That hurt pretty bad. On campus, I remember sitting in one of the cafeterias, the dorm cafeterias and enjoying the lunch and just listening to

students around me speak. And the awful things that they said when they thought nobody was listening was truly bothersome.” Nathan explained.

“What were some of the things that they said?” Saro asked eagerly.

“Well, at the time, the big controversy was the Redskin name for the NFL, Washington Redskins. And they said, well, how can these people who aren’t even American think that they have a right to change something so American? Something that is – and obviously they had no clue that I was Native, and I was alone at the time. Just being Native American myself and hearing being called, like, the most un-American thing ever is – while also using a racial slur was just, it hurt, to say the least. I didn’t know what to say. I was taken aback, and I was by myself. And I actually never opened up about that to anyone before.” Nathan said.

“Well, thank you for sharing.” Saro responded.

“Uh huh. Yeah, nia:wen!” Teyo said, echoing Saro’s thoughts. “So, how did you overcome some of these, it sounds like racial microaggressions? How did you overcome this?” Teyo asked.

“I just had to realize that these people weren’t describing me. They didn’t know me. And they had prejudices, which is just that, prejudices, which means to judge before you know them. And so, I had to learn that, and I had a bit of experience before that in high school dealing with aggressions, overt and micro...” He paused for a moment as he took a drink of water.

Teyo felt excited about this conversation because in so many ways he could relate to what they were talking about. Then, Nathan spoke up about other issues that were related to being Indigenous in his community and the idea of going away to college.

Grappled with Indigenous Identity

Nathan cleared his throat and spoke up, “So... When you go to college, you lose your kind of Native card to some extent. You become kind of colonized or white. And so, it’s kind of, the perception of being an educated male from your community is- from your community, you’re kind of like an outsider...” his voice trailed off for a moment and he continued, “And some of this comes out of my own research because I think I was trying to find out more about who I am, driven through my academics. And in some ways, you know, because I – while I was raised and am defiantly Indian – I mean, I’ve always known that I’m Native. There’s been never a doubt in my mind. I’ve also known and struggled with the fact that I’m a light-skinned Native, too. But I’ve also been able over the course of my academic career and even my undergraduate career been able to use the privilege that my light skin brings to articulate indigenous needs, goals, desires, and complaints.” Nathan said in response, agreeing with Saro.

“Uh huh.” Saro’s voice could be heard on the other line.

“But there are still things I’m lacking or feel like I need to continue further in my journey, which is to really reconnect with the longhouse, with my identity. I still feel strangely not Onondaga enough a lot of the time. So, I’m trying to figure all these things out. And so, when you’re talking about challenges, honestly, they kind of never end.”

“It’s like, both too... Saro said. “Um, like, both as in felt at home and at the university.”

Teyo asked if he could elaborate.

“It’s like, we don’t just automatically know a ton about our Indigenous identity when we get to college... for me, I had a couple other professors, too, that were nice and challenging and actually engaged with me. But it kind of sucked because at the time, I wasn’t really able to engage back with them because I was still stuck on the – I was still fixated on developing who I

was as a Native person before I could meet them with where they were at in their research.” Saro said. Both Teyo and Nathan reponded, “mhm.”

Saro continued, “I was having so much difficulty articulating my own identity or coming up with my own identity that I wasn’t able to get my shit together to meet them in their relatively advanced and engaged theory and discussion. There was like this one Marxist professor I really liked, my computer science professor who did a lot of philosophy, and it was nice to engage with them, and they respected me and everything, gave a lot of encouragement, but it was difficult.” He said. Teyo felt so connected to their stories about struggling with their Indigenous identity and being at college.

Teyo probed further and asked him about Haudenosaunee culture and work that he had done to maintain his own Indigenous identity while in the university. Both Nathan and Saro spoke at length about ways that they engaged in their identity at college.

Culture for Persistence: Elders and Language

“So, I had a little bit of practice leading up to that, but then I got into my course material of Native American studies, and that really allowed me – in college, Native American studies. And that really allowed me to be proud of who I am, be proud of my culture, be proud of myself, especially for achieving something, and to realize that what these people think, that’s just it. That’s just their thought. They don’t know anything about me. They don’t know what I had to go through, and to just be stronger than what they had to say. And although what they did say hurt, because words actually do hurt, it had no true bearing on who I am or what I could become.” Nathan explained. He became silent.

Saro cleared said “Mhm” in agreement. Teyo noted that it seemed like culture was a really important aspect to their college experiences, specifically Elders and language. Just when

Teyo was writing that, Saro spoke up, “I’m one of those people that can stand up and verify, like, the more you know about your culture, the more you know about the teachings and the language, even if you’re not fluent—I’m not—the more time and energy you dedicate to putting together a sense of yourself as a man in the context of that culture, the stronger you’ll be and the better you’ll be for your partner, your kids, and your ancestors. It’s a struggle worth fighting. It’s a battle worth fighting, because to just go along with what’s expected of us, there’s too many pathways that are harmful, that take us out of relevancy as a good person for our Nation and our community. And so, we have to really be conscious in putting effort into thinking of ourselves in that cultural context.” Teyo circled the word language and wrote: *not fluent... but dedicated*.

Nathan continued, “I think that they perceive me in a good sense, like I’m out there pursuing higher education while always coming back for our ceremonies and keeping working on my language, working on learning more about the culture, visiting with the elders. So, I think my community perceives me in a good light and understanding that attending college isn’t like you’re losing this Native forever. It’s more in the sense of, they’re out there, they’re learning, but they’re going to come back, so I think it’s breaking that mold and getting the older demographic to understand just what I said, like college isn’t a finality. People are going to come back, and they’re still going to have their traditional values. They’re just going to have an added sense of, understanding of the western world...” His voice trailed off.

The moment felt quite beautifully described, Teyo let the silence of the moment take over the phone call.

Cultural Dissonance: “Two Worlds” Perception

“But also, I mean the transition between my own culture and the culture of higher education was difficult for me, too, in some ways.” Nathan said.

“How so?” Teyo asked.

“Oh, man. It was kind of tough, just the culture shock in general, going from my high school, which maybe has, like, 700 students in total, to a university setting where it was like 10,000 or how many people on campus with so many different subgroups and subcultures and, you know, academic diversity and cultural diversity there. It really took me a couple months to kind of really get my footing” Nathan said.

“Oh I see, so size of the university was difficult?” Teyo asked.

“Yeah, but it was more complex. So, I took a lot of classes on, like, colonialism, indigeneity, gender, and discourse in genders, discourse in power, and all these other sorts of things that are, like, the light started going off in my head of, like, oh, well, Native issues are inherently attached to these other sorts of really white ideas.” Nathan said, briefly pausing, “Well, ideas that I had thought were really white. And they are still kind of white, but it’s like, not as much as I thought.”

“Hmm what do you mean, not really white?” Teyo asked.

Nathan continued, “I think it’s just like what spurred the change was I would just say it’s happened a lot in the western world with the different social movements. And then it’s trickled into our indigenous communities of, you know, like I said, because we walk in two worlds, we’re getting exposed to these social movements and this new ideology of men don’t have to put themselves in this box of masculinity. They can take on these other roles” Nathan said, seemingly unsure of himself.

Saro jumped into the conversation, “It’s just that we don’t live in two worlds like people say, but we live in one world— we just experience cultural difference. How I perceive it is, you know, I think education is important in the sense that we can’t escape the western world. You

know, like, it's impossible. We're surrounded by it each and every day, so I think having that basic understanding that we should have of the western philosophies is important while staying true to our own traditional philosophies... So, you have to understand their philosophies to get a better understanding of what you can do moving forward."

Nathan piped into the conversation quickly, "Education means different things, I think. Again, these are big questions to unpack. I think in today's modern world, education has become necessary. But at the same point, I worry by becoming so educated in a western sense, we run the risk of losing our own self-identity as a distinctive people and culture in some ways. But in some ways, education also means engaging the curiosities... But I'm always doing it through kind of an indigenous and a Haudenosaunee lens. But I also have seen the kind of negative side or the darker side of this, too, that in some cases, the more educated we become, the bigger the risk we run of alienating ourselves from our own communities and from our own families." Nathan said, clearly relating "Two Worlds" perception with a broader struggle around maintaining Indigenous identity.

Multicultural Opportunities as Strength

"And for me..." Saro interrupted. "I was always much more I think just for school-wise, I was never in a schooling situation where my peers were mostly Indigenous since grade six. But ever since then, I've always been exposed to a non-indigenous majority and being the minority and being very visibly minority to the point that I was like, I'm OK seeing that I'm just part of a bigger picture. I don't see myself as being the only picture." Saro said, emphasizing that he wasn't the only picture."

"And do you think that your perception of college-educated Haudenosaunee men is like that?" Teyo asked.

“Yeah.” Saro responded quickly. “I think the fact that you go and get college educated, and then you start to understand western society in a better sense, and therefore moving forward you have different experiences than you would had you not had more exposure and experience to that” Saro paused briefly. “And at my school, there were also unique programs called dialogue programs. And I was a participant in a couple of them” Saro said.

“And those dialogue programs were pretty cool?” Teyo asked.

“Yeah! We talked about all kinds of stuff and even incorporated culture with spirituality. One time a classmate asked me: *‘Can you give me the days of the week and the months of the year in your language, and I will compare them to Ukrainian?’* ‘OK, whatever.’ I said. So, I put Monday through Sunday on one side of the paper, and then I put the words in Mohawk on another, and I folded it up, put it in his mailbox, and felt very proud that I did something to help a colleague. But then I realized a moment later that I’d have, for instance, Wednesday on one side and *soséhneh* on the other side. But Wednesday doesn’t mean *soséhneh*, and *soséhneh* doesn’t mean Wednesday. What am I doing here? So, snuck back in his mailbox, took them out, and sort of said, can we just have a conversation? And talked a little bit about the religious connotations of the days of the week in one way of understanding, talk about the denominal, or sorry, ordinal way of looking at another way of understanding the Mohawk words for days of the week. And it made such a bloody rich conversation, you know what I mean?”

“Wow that’s cool” Teyo and Nathan said, almost simultaneously.

They continued talking and eventually brought conversation to where Haudenosaunee men find mentorship and role models.

Mentorship/ Role Models

“When you think about your journey in higher education, I mean, what did that have to do with Haudenosaunee masculinity? Or vice versa, maybe the way that you understand Haudenosaunee masculinity, did that have something to do with the way that you understand your journey in higher education?” Teyo asked. The question felt awkward, but he listened in.

“Sure!...” Saro said. “I think there’s a sense of providing that is always part of the reason why Haudenosaunee men go to university. Providing for their family, for their community, the responsibility that we used to have in our communities. Largely we see that in ironworking. When he was younger, my father was an ironworker, his father was an ironworker, his father was one of the first ironworkers in [Canadian side Mohawk community]. And they all went to provide for their families. And that was something that has always been instilled in me, the sense of you have to provide for your family. And I don’t have the guts to be an ironworker, but university has been kind of really good for me to be able to provide for my family in the only way that I can. And once I become a professor and get a job at a university, I’ll be able to have that stability in my life to provide my family, which has always been there, like that sense of obligation has always been there in my life.” Saro explained.

“Ah, I see. So it’s like, providing.” Teyo responded.

“Yeah, I agree, I like that.” Nathan said. He continued on, “Like, I feel like I’m pretty fortunate too. My dad was always a really good role model. Always working, took care of us, took care of my mom, [he] wasn’t always home because he was an ironworker, too. And especially like I had a lot of respect for him especially because he came from an alcoholic, abusive home-life and managed to just completely decide he wasn’t going to do that. So, to me, the ability to sort of like reflect on your past and environment and decide, like, oh, that’s not good, almost independently, right, with no guidance, no help, just decided that’s not what I’m

going to continue on. It was really important. So, a good role model like that. Troy Johnson (pseudonym) too, elementary school, middle school, high school. He was just a really smart Indian guy, really nice.

There was some silence, Saro wasn't responding.

"Oh!" Nathan said, "I actually wanted to say something else too..."

"Go ahead." Teyo responded.

"So I was talking with my cousin and he was interested in food studies... well I remember him saying something to me about this topic of role models, too. When he was growing up, he was raised by his mom. She is the oldest of her siblings, and she's kind of like, her and his grandma being like the main cooks of the family, and just really envisioning that and like the role that she has within the family of being nurturing..." He swallowed quickly, "My cousin wanted to take food studies because of the dynamics of food, the power of food, bringing together of family with food. So, that was a big connector of the nurturing aspect for Haudenosaunee men, and for him, as far as, like, feeding someone, cooking for someone is probably one of the most intense things of love that you can do for another person... that's what he told me, and I'll always remember that."

"Mhm. I gotcha. That makes for a good balance— mentors or role models are Dads and Moms, both, too" Teyo said. "And grandmothers, grampas or totas as we say, and our uncles... they really illustrated what our responsibilities are, ya know?" Nathan said.

They could hear the phone shoot back some feedback from the other end. It was Saro.

"So, I'm just walking around real quick. I'm going to grab some water." He said. "But I-I wanna say something here too!" Saro said. Teyo laughed

"All good man." Teyo said.

Culture as Persistence: Diplomacy/ Handling Confrontation

“My- my father eventually became a defense lawyer, actually, in [Canadian side Mohawk community]. And at the time, I thought that was really what I wanted to do as well. And so, my choice to do an undergraduate degree in this legal studies program was kind of a precursor to thinking I was going to law school afterward. But that never really panned out. I started being more interested in kind of like social and political theory stuff and political science. And when I got to university and my desire to go to law school was kind of minimized, or at least I wasn’t that interested as I kind of continued in my undergraduate studies. But my intention of thinking I was going to become a lawyer and stuff was, you know, fighting for Native or aboriginal rights, fighting for the rights of indigenous clients or Native clients. That type of thinking was what really led me to choose the path and university when I did.”

“So it sounds like, in order to fight for aboriginal rights, he needed to go to the university” Teyo responded.

“Yeah... yeah! So, it’s like he had to and therefore... I looked up to that.”

“Right. Okay, thank you. And that’s a common – a lot of people will say ironwork, their dad’s in ironwork, and their dad’s dad, that kind of stuff. How would you – again going back to I guess the broad general description – what’s a common way to describe a Haudenosaunee man?”

Teyo asked. Again, he felt awkward with that question.” Saro explained.

“Even in the past, we kind of did this.” Nathan said. He cleared his throat.

“Mhm, yeah!” Saro said.

“What do you mean, that past?” Teyo asked.

“Well, for me, I always thought of our people being known as really, really smart.

They’re the best at what they do. So, I was like, yeah, I can do that. Motivation. It was like, you

know, the oration. And I like reading old speeches and things like that because it's like, they're really smart, logical, and also willing and able to handle confrontation in a way that ultimately indicates that they prefer not to have confrontation, but they can deal with it if they have to."

"Oh so, like Haudenosaunee men as orators, historically? And today?" Teyo asked.

"Yeah. I get exactly what you're saying." Nathan said.

"It's like a desire for peace, but the means to enforce it, too, like on an intellectual level, right?" Saro said. He continued, "I don't remember the exact speech, but I was actually reading some of Paul Williams' book, the *Kainerekowa* put out. And he talks about a specific thing where the British or the whatever, this colonial government told one of our speakers, hey, we need answer right now. And the speaker responded, like, hey, we don't ever give you a hard time when you say that you need to go back to your leaders and talk to them. Why are you putting that on us? You know what I mean? Like, the ability to not only articulate – to identify and articulate difference and handle it. I think that's really important."

"That's a good point. I'm quoting you on that one. That's a good one. How would you describe a typical Haudenosaunee man?" Teyo asked.

"That's a good question. Like nowadays or back then or what? Those are different." Saro asked

"Oh, they're different?" Teyo replied.

"I think so." Saro said. He continued, "I think it was a little bit different – it's like when you place them in contrast, I think nowadays, the difference is not so much that a lot of Haudenosaunee men have lost sense of what makes them different than white guys. And at some point – but I'm not saying it's all lost nowadays, but it feels like white masculinity is high conflict and a lot of our guys nowadays are high conflict. Before that, it wasn't high conflict. It

was about trying to defuse conflict. But like I said before, the ability to withstand confrontation, to stand your ground, right.”

“So, it sounds like we as Native people have kind of adopted some of the traits of what makes a white man a white man, and we’ll practice that and become that a little bit in the sense that it has to do with conflict. So, in other words, what you valued in our past in how you said that we’re willing and able to handle confrontations, it sounds like now we’re less able to because of the—” Nathan said.

“Well, because there’s less difference.” Saro interjected.

“Yeah, because of the influence from white culture.” Teyo reiterated in agreement.

“Yeah, I think so.” Saro said.

“So, that’s how you would describe a typical Haudenosaunee man, or how would you describe a typical Haudenosaunee man?” Teyo asked again.

“Oh, Okay. I think one thing I can say is most of us have had or do have a chip on our shoulder about being Native, like having something to prove. There’s a lot of desire to continue exerting yourself as a Haudenosaunee man, but it’s not so clear if there’s a shared – what we share between us. Does that make sense? So, if we all recognize the value of the label “Haudenosaunee man,” but it’s like, I don’t know, fuckin’, what do you think? We’ve never had that conversation, right?” Saro said, clearly excited about the conversation. He continued on.

Culture as Persistence: “Warrior Mentality”

“Well, this might be a little off topic” Saro’s voice broke again, faded, and came back. “But in terms of how I understood Haudenosaunee masculinity and the warrior mentality and traveling into the realm of higher education with that mindset of this is how men are supposed to be, I think in higher education, what I experienced in my collegiate career was that it kind of

broke a lot of things, and I met a lot of people who I thought were masculine, but also they kind of embraced both sides of the spectrum. So, I think that's kind of how I want to really address this, how did that masculinity have to do with higher education." Saro explained. Teyo spoke up.

"Can you explain this, maybe a bit more?" Teyo asked.

"Sure, sure I can." Saro said excitedly, "I've realized through my studies that making broader-stroke things – but in my head when I think of-- so, I mean, like, the archetype of who a Haudenosaunee man is, in my mind, is someone who plays lacrosse, an ironworker, usually a tough guy, machismo-type character. But I know that speaks to only a handful of actual people. And I've come to realize that's an identity that's just kind of constructed. But the typical Haudenosaunee man, if we can make generalities, I would say that's someone who is there for their family, provides for their family, and is very hopefully rooted in their culture and their sense of identity, and finds a lot of inspiration from that in the way that they approach fatherhood, being a spouse, whether it's with a woman or with a man. I think that drawing inspiration from your culture to shape your relationships is something that you can kind of see within Haudenosaunee men." Nathan explained.

Saro quickly jumped in and described the meaning of a "warrior" from his perspective. "... It's about the concept of Rotiskenhakéthe a word that's sometimes used for "warrior." And of course, you've seen the red flag that Louis Hall did in the 1970s to represent the society, the Rotiskenhakéthe. And that imagery has been co-opted in some ways. Many sporting events, when they were happening, you'd see sometimes a Louis Hall flag in the background, maybe, or at whatever event, many protests, and so on. And it's sometimes easy to say, oh, there's the warrior flag. But [my friend] is like, you know, Rotiskenhakéthe doesn't mean "warrior." Right? I mean, if you translate it, you'll come something close to "those who carry the bones,"

but the meaning of the phrase is something a bit more germane to what was being communicated, was that “the bearers of the burdens of peace.” That’s what that phrase meant. Rotiskenhakéthe, the bearers of the burdens of peace. I got the sense over the last couple of decades that some people, some men are attempting to reconcile themselves to that image or to even that word Rotiskenhakéthe. I have several friends on [social media] who will put that in their bio description or whatever you want to call it, Rotiskenhakéthe, much in the same way some prairie First Nations women will say ‘I’m a water carrier’ or something. It’s sort of signaling to others the role they play in the community. I wonder about the way in which men sort of take on board the image or the concept of Rotiskenhakéthe. And it’s not just an idea. Back during the Oka crisis, you were either on the barricades with a gun in your hand or you weren’t. And the difference between those two groups was known and repeated and mentioned and cited – where were you that summer? I was on the barricades with a gun. Where were you? I was at home. The difference was significant to some. There’s no barricades to stand on now, but there’s more than enough things going on in society for which that imagery might have some sort of relevance.”

“Hmm... I see. Yeah, I’ve read a little bit about the Oka crisis and the “Warrior” Flag or the “Warrior Society” as it’s sometimes referred. Do you relate to this description that you’ve provided?” Teyo asked.

Saro spoke up again, “Yeah, I- I think so. Well, this might be a little off topic, but in terms of how I understood Haudenosaunee masculinity and the warrior mentality and traveling into the realm of higher education with that mindset of this is how men are supposed to be, I think in higher education, what I experienced in my collegiate career was that it kind of broke a lot of things for me...” Saro paused and seemed lost in thought for a moment. “My family, one

side, my dad's family, they're pretty militant. They're a radical warrior society crowd, and so there's always this kind of responsibility, you know, to contribute to the struggle." Saro said proudly and he added, "I think all Native people to an extent do carry a chip on your shoulder. I would include myself in that..."

Nathan added, "So, I think, and this is something I wrote down earlier. I wrote, to protect my family from the harmful impacts of colonization through education and practice. So, that kind of goes back to the forest concept of western education being the forest. The forest was a dangerous place. Western education can be a dangerous place for indigenous people, indigenous minds. You've got to know what the terrain is like, and you've got to know what practices are going to help protect your family or your community. So, for me, my family doesn't just mean my children, my romantic partner. It also means her family, and it also means my clan family. So, yeah, those are all things that I think someone's got to know what's in the forest. Someone's got to know kind of how to navigate that space in a way that will help our people..."

Culture as Persistence: "Confronting the Archetype"

"All right. What are some things that challenge Haudenosaunee men on a regular basis?" Teyo asked.

"I think really confronting that archetype that I kind of described, that being a really defining idea of what manhood means." Saro said eloquently.

"Mmm" Teyo said.

"Ahh yeah!" Nathan said in response.

"I think that that could be a challenge for a lot of people, for a lot of men." Saro said, he continued, "I know it's been a huge role in my life feeling like I'm not Mohawk enough, I don't do certain things, I haven't had certain experiences, therefore I'm not Mohawk, or I'm like – I

don't have those experiences to be like, yeah, this is what really grounds me in my identity. I think that's an obstacle. I mean, I could sit and speak to probably financial obstacles that really prevent Haudenosaunee men from going to school. They immediately tie into – like provide immediately – some of our men are very young when they become fathers, right, and so wanting to provide a good life for their family might mean going into the trades right away for a job that pays really well. Ironworking is still a path that's there for Haudenosaunee men, and I feel like those are likely things that shape your decisions in life....” Saro paused for a moment and continued, “I think honestly, I can only speak to my own experience, and for me it was realizing that that identity is a constructed identity. It's a colonial understanding or definition of what it means to be a Haudenosaunee man. And for me, coming to that realization was a big part in me realizing that I can be Haudenosaunee in different ways that didn't mean that – which meant that I didn't have to follow that path. And for me, that was like, honestly, going to school and being exposed to a lot of different types of education and texts and conversations with people, and just a lot of self-learning and exploration really led me to understand that archetype is—” Saro said.

“Made up?” Teyo asked.

“It doesn't have to be what it is.” Saro said. The phone call filled with meaningful silence.

“What- what do you think is valuable about Haudenosaunee men?” Teyo asked, breaking the silence.

“I think” Saro paused to take a drink of water. “I think that if we go back to our understandings of what our roles were in our community, I think we can really draw inspiration from their role as protectors, as knowledge holders, as providers. I think that's what's really powerful about who we are as Haudenosaunee men. I think that at that general level, that

provides different opportunities for men to play with and figure out how they will provide for their families, for example. I think that the power of our men is in our ability to be providers and protectors. And that's not dismissing the role of Haudenosaunee women and their role. But if we're only speaking to Haudenosaunee men, then – because I have a friend that's two-spirited, and he's Haudenosaunee, and he's been a really great friend and mentor to me. And he's not an ironworker, he's not a lacrosse player, but he's just been a really good friend to me, a really good relation to me. And that ability to speak about challenges, about changes going on in our lives is really what I feel like the strength is in our men.” Saro said.

“He was your teacher and a community member?” Teyo asked.

“Yeah.” Saro said.

“Maybe you can give me his information and I could contact him to ask some questions?” Teyo asked.

“Sure!” Saro responded.

As they ended the call that day, Teyo realized that they had broken some important ground. They shared a space, over the phone, that felt important. Teyo wondered if he could hold another meeting like this later on with more Haudenosaunee men. Teyo noted what they had talked about shifted quite a bit from college-experiences. Their talks covered many aspects including border politics that inform perceptions, role models/ mentors, identity as socially constructed, archetypes of Haudenosaunee men, history, and settler colonial influences.

Nick

Teyo and Nick spoke in-depth about responsibilities to community and relationship across different communities, both at home and in higher education. Nick was open and honest, despite not knowing Teyo all that much, which made Teyo feel supported in his project as well.

In their conversation, Nick began to talk about the importance of role models and their influence on him, and even their complicated stories. As they spoke, Teyo realized that Nick wasn't putting words to a "struggle" that he had at BTU. Teyo tried asking different ways that he felt was appropriate without being extractive, until Nick finally seemed to feel comfortable with Teyo, to engaged with the specific issue.

"I mean, it's extremely important." Nick explained, "As role models, as people who step up and coach minor league lacrosse or Little League, as facilitators of community gatherings. I think of every positive community event back home. Usually there are men involved who are organizing it. Hosting the socials, organizing the singing groups, organizing different powwows and events, children's powwows, hosting ceremonies, recruiting other young men to learn those ceremonies, as teachers, elected council leadership who make sure language learning and traditional events are a priority, education." He paused and continued, "So, yeah, it's definitely important to be a role model, to carry on different things." Nick stated.

"You're describing a lot of the responsibilities of Haudenosaunee men. Right?" Teyo asked. Teyo scribbled down the word "responsibilities" in his notebook.

"Yeah, definitely." Nick responded.

"Okay. Moving more toward education, how might your community perceive Haudenosaunee men who are college educated?" Teyo asked.

"Well, like I said, they already have a certain amount of privilege because they're men, and you're expected to be a leader or to take on certain things. But then once you get a college degree, it's like a whole other level, a whole other layer of the privilege. But I think along with that comes responsibility, like if you have those skills and abilities, you should have to do more as well." Nick said. Teyo questioned the use of the word "privilege" and noted it in his notebook.

“What else?” Teyo asked politely. He scratched his head.

“Well, there was a struggle that I experienced while I was at BTU.” Nick said again, circling back to the issue. “But I overcame, eventually” Nick said.

Grappling with Identity: Sexuality

“I’m glad that you brought all of this up because the next section we’ll go deeper into it.” Teyo said, he scratched his head again and drank his coffee quickly. “But that is important for us to know moving forward. How do you think that – how did you overcome these challenges?” Teyo asked.

“Well...” Nick paused for a moment and continued, “There was always a mindset within me to kind of – and I think this is where your research will take in a lot is the expectation that I would find another Indigenous woman and have children and have the family unit. Ever since I was younger, I kind of made that a goal, and even in high school I was planning about having kids and what that would be like. And then university – at my other university – Sunnydale, very few to no prospective Indigenous women, so I just never gave too much thought about it. And then at BigTown with even less because within my first year and second year again was more focused on the engineer program.” Nick paused again. Teyo nodded his head.

“Well.. Nick continued, “So, I had the mindset of there’s one side of me that wanted to explore and another side of me that’s trying to find a solid relationship. And then when a summer program occurred down in BigTown, that was when I kind of fell in love with an indigenous person. And that kind of set my idea like maybe the two can actually be the same and it opened me to the idea of being more in touch with my own sexuality and not seeing a same-sex partner as just experimentation but more as long-term aspects. From then, my identity kind of grew where I was trying to find more peers to try to connect to, and that kind of made the indigenous

group kind of nonexistent for me because I wasn't aware of anybody that was same-sex oriented" Nick said. He continued, "So, you know, if I can kind of like give you the what I think a general experience of Haudenosaunee men in university is that grappling with this identity that a lot of us have and hold and have seen in our lives through that older generation, and maybe perpetuating it again in their own lives or kind of challenging it and understanding it can be problematic all the time. And I think that I can't speak for everybody, but I can only speak to a couple conversations I've had with some Mohawk friends of mine. And this new generation seems to be a lot more open to even the existence of two-spirited, gay people. That was a big no-no for a really long time in our communities."

Complementarity

"Right, there are sort of these, expectations...?" Teyo asked.

"Yes. Like, gender roles or sorta expectations." Nick stated. The sentiment seemed to help him open up, his eyes flashed. On an aside, Nick was also a bit of a history buff as well. He then described a historical view of the family unit and of gendered relations within the Haudenosaunee.

"See, everything was outside. All the way up to contact, the longhouse served as the primary residence form." Nick said excitedly. He continued, "I talked about this in the history, that you had a residency house, several of them, and then surrounded by palisade become the village. And then this is traditionally speaking where I would talk about the roles of men and women is that the women are in charge of the longhouse, yes, and then they have say as to what happens inside the village, yes. But then the men are always told that they travel, so they go into the woods. Now, I always questioned, well, what about the space in between?" Nick asked in a compelling manner. Teyo nodded his head.

“Yeah, that’s interesting to me.” Teyo said.

“And all the historical records always indicate that the space between the woods and the village was always the food, the fields.” Nick noted. “So, to me, that reinforces the idea that men are in charge of everything from the woods onward, women are in charge of the longhouse to the village, but the field is where the two work together. And when they work together, that’s where life is born.” Teyo nodded his head and Nick continued, “There’s where our food is created, that’s where everything sustains us. So, this idea of traditionally speaking, women, yes, took care of the household, but not in the late 1800s European mentality that the women are only in the house. But no, they do take care of the family. They are the family anchor. They are in charge of children. They are in charge of what is being cooked. They have a social order in the house, and the men take care of everything outside of the village. They are the ones that maintain a relationship to other villages. So, there’s this interplay of, well, men to the traveling unless they bring the whole village with them. And then women take care of everything that happens in the village, and then together they work the fields, and then together life is created. So, you can go into whatever practical approach you want to do with how men and women come together and make life. So, that’s my version of the traditional roles.” Nick stated confidently.

Nick described his feelings about being in the dangerous “woods” of higher education, where he created a lens for himself, to look through in order to persist in higher education, “I guess I look to the traditional roles of Haudenosaunee men. So, back in the day, you know, when we had our societies and the land was not colonized, the realm of Haudenosaunee men was the forest. So, the forest represents a lot of different things, I think, to our people. It represents not being able to see very far. It represents kind of a space of danger. But it represents – it’s a necessity. The men needed to be in the forest to look out for enemies or go hunting. So, it was

kind of like a necessary space that we would have to know how to navigate. I think western higher education is very similar. It shares a lot of those characteristics of the forest. It's confusing, it could be dangerous, but it's a necessary space that some of our community members need to know how to navigate. So, I think higher education is very similar to the forest in that way."

Nick continued, "Now, I wouldn't say it's defined biologically because 1722, there's a Jesuit priest who comes to Mohawk Valley, and he realizes that in the longhouse there are several men dressed as women and acting as women." Nick stated. Teyo's eyes widened.

"Really?" Teyo asked. "You're educating me now. Teyo said. Nick nodded and continued.

"And [the Jesuit Priest] could not understand this. And when he asked them, why are you doing this? They said, it's part of our religion. If we want to do this, we do this. So, roles were defined, but it doesn't necessarily mean biologically defined. So, if the men wanted to do that, then so be it. So, that's from the LGBTQ side that there is a blending of gender roles, not necessarily defined by biological sex, because in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and questioning community, there is a difference between a person's biological sex, which is nature, and then their gender identity, and then their sexuality, and then their expression."

"Wow, I had no idea." Teyo responded.

"Yeah! Well, it connects to my story in higher education. So, I was at BTU..." Nick continued talking. Teyo continued listening in and he was still intrigued with his thoughts on historical gender roles of the Haudenosaunee. Nick continued on.

"And I tried, and I just realized I wasn't fitting into the heteronormative model." Nick stated. He continued, And so I figured, well, sexuality, I just started experimenting with same-

sex opportunities at Big Town, tried different online approaches, made a few connections, and never saw it as anything being fulfilling to the point of having a truly romantic relationship. But from there it kind of – I had the mindset of there’s one side of me that wanted to explore and another side of me that’s trying to find a solid relationship.” While Nick spoke, Teyo nodded to show him that he was listening.

“That was hard because I think a lot of it was, I was having a kind of identity crisis, and not fitting what I thought was the expectation-wise, and so I did have to seek mental support, both professionally that BigTown offered as well as finding other mentors within the school faculty and staff to have conversations with, just to bridge my own understanding.” Nick stated. Teyo listened in and heard the sincerity in his voice.

Asking for help as strength

“So, I think that kind of set the idea of, like, okay, now I have to confront this as being maybe I’m getting some support from my friends, so it’s nothing to be ashamed of.” Nick stated confidently. He continued speaking, “Other friends, I know that I don’t necessarily have anymore because of their own views. And so, it kind of set me – kind of automatically broke the ice of saying, okay, there are going to be certain people, if I express my identity, I will not lose. Therefore, I can more freely express it. And for others, they might not fully accept it, but I can move on without them, kind of have differing of opinions. So, I think that’s what made me more apt. And so, the person that I was roommates with and was friends with, he understood, and he kind of became my lifeline of saying, okay, he’s there, he supports me. He said, oh, I had no idea. Like, we’ve had conversations where it was a very heteronormative discussion, and then he’s like, you didn’t make it sound like you were interested in the same sex. I said, yeah, I purposely did that. I didn’t want to go into that detail because I was living kind of that double

life. But with him, he became my foil, where he was able to – a friend who accepted me for who I was. And he became a person I just met to a best friend within a matter of days. By the end of the program, it was like, yes, you’re now my best friend for life.” He paused for a moment and continued on.

“It sounds like you had a lot of help.” Teyo said. Nick said, “mhm, yeah” and continued. “I mean, we as a people want to prove that we are capable and we don’t need any help, we can do it on ourselves. But it is OK to accept help was another thing that I had to learn, because I didn’t have that before.”

“Why do you think people don’t like to ask for help?” Teyo asked.

“I don’t know. Maybe it goes back to this idea of masculinity, where if you accepted help, you would be viewed as weak or unfit for whatever it was if you had to accept help, that you had to be all-knowing and all-doing. And so, escaping that mindset was something, and, yeah, I learned to genuinely – I don’t know this, I can’t do this, can you help me, was what I had to learn” Nick said with certainty in his voice.

Teyo responded, “Mmmm, yes.”

Mental Health

“And mentally, I had to reach out to quite a few professionals in mental health to just have a better understanding of what feelings I’m dealing with identity and things. And I remember distinctly going through BigTown’s mental support group, or emergency mental support... help. And the person I talked to, the first one I talked to, she identified as Hispanic heritage, and I had a very strong connection, and she had a very strong empathetic conversation with me. And saying that, you know, coming from her culture, the expectations and what it means for masculinity and how she’s here to help. That first initial discussion with a professional

and having that professional conversation really helped me. And then every time I did follow-up, it was always a non-Indigenous, older professional. They meant well, but definitely was not having the same connection as it would with the first one I had.” Nick nodded his head and took a drink of water. “And so, having those new social paths, having BigTown’s professionalism in a professional crisis, people help, and then talking to my undergrad chair, who also identifies as part of the LGBTQ community and having conversations with him and kind of all showed that, okay, I can deal with this, and I can grow.” Nick said.

Teyo noted the beauty in his words, and in his experiences, which offered a full, rich look at pushing Teyo to broaden his own thinking about masculinity within the Haudenosaunee context in higher education. Nick and he discussed more about his home life as well. Nick began telling Teyo about one of the classes that he took, which examine forms of trauma.

Inter/ Generational Trauma

“It just feels so weird to talk about. It’s just the idea of being a male, again, is you kind of become closed off sometimes to certain traumas” Nick said to Teyo. “I took a class with a teacher I thought was really cool. He was also one of our community members. He gave me really good feedback on our papers. And it just felt really intimate. I didn’t just feel like a student of his. I feel like part of my – as I’m grieving, or one of the things of trauma is, you’re trying to re-create or you’re trying to map out your story, what happened. So, his class was definitely very influential on me taking back an ability – he gave me tools to look at my story, really. You know, like, what was I going through, why was I feeling what I was feeling. And just there was a lot of validation as well in taking his class.”

Teyo listened to Nick’s story and began taking notes about the importance of addressing trauma in it’s many forms for Indigenous men. Nick continued talking about the context of

higher education, “because of the colonial context that we live in and how people are functioning in academic contexts with the face of a stable, solid understanding of who they are, but in reality there’s all kinds of turmoils. There’s intergenerational traumas, there’s experience traumas, there’s unprocessed kind of guilt and hatreds and all kinds of things and harms that have gone on. And I think that the unfortunate thing in the first phase of this whole kind of movement has been that that hasn’t been put up front. It hasn’t been done – these discussions haven’t been happening in a context that’s supported by culture or by even basic safety nets for people when they have experienced trauma, and they have reactions and they have issues that come up that are not related to ideas, but that are more visceral and cause them to say and do things and react to people in a certain way.” Nick said. Teyo was deeply listening to his thoughts on trauma.

Decolonizing Patriarchy

“And that fourth year was very – I remember very long conversations with myself and also with my mother, family members, and just trying to come to grips with what that meant because I was having a hard time struggling with it.” Nick noted. “My mother was – at first she just wanted to know if there was any trauma from my past, coming from the medical profession thinking. And I said, no, it was just everything from me. So, she quickly, she just went into crisis, risk-assessment mode first, and then grew into an, OK, yeah, of course, whatever you need support-wise. So, in her professional world, she saw my expression now as being a risk because she did notice a big difference in me that year of me not being myself, not being able to fully express myself and not fully explain why I was doing or avoiding certain things. So, later on we had that discussion. Everything was on key. And I definitely got yelled at by one of my Totas for, “How come you didn’t tell me? I had to hear from someone else.” Nick laughed aloud, thinking of his Tota’s (Grandmother’s) comment.

Teyo laughed, and asked another question, “Well, have you experienced that a lot of Native people are open to discussing sexuality or not really?” Teyo asked.

“Only if it’s heteronormative.” Nick said. His smile faded. “Anything beyond that is really hard. Again, that was always – every now and then I was at the student lounge – I wasn’t too much in there after fourth year, but when I was around, it was still common to always hear, you know, “that’s so gay” kind of comments thrown around. And me personally, it doesn’t bother me, but I can see how it kind of promotes toxic expectations and stereotypes.” Nick said. Teyo noted his thoughts on his notepad for his project. Nick continued talking

“And so, it’s where other than my friend who – he’s Indigenous but he’s mixed, so from his perspective he’s always been on the outside of a lot of the mainstream Indigenous identity. So, I think we both kind of saw something in each other of saying, you know, here, I come from a full Indigenous identity, but there’s another identity of me that I’m not fully aware of. And he was able to help me as a foil kind of like break it down and be that conversation. We both kind of saw parallel growth in each other. It’s where I helped him on things, and he’s helped me on things, and so eventually to the point where he became my best man at my wedding. So, fourth year was kind of like the growing period, and then by fifth year was when I was actually very open to the idea of having a solid relationship.” Nick stated. Clearly this friendship and allyship seemed important to him in his personal life, Teyo thought. Nick talked about the importance of strong friendships, both in friendships and in a partner.

“Social-wise, it was definitely having that friendship, that strong friendship of saying, here’s somebody who knew nothing about me who would now accept me who I was, and then being able to be comfortable and have to grow a relationship to the point that now we’re married. I think all having those aspects. And definitely having a relationship with someone from your

own home community who technically you had never had any real connection with at all prior to. We both ended up finding each other at Big Town. We were both thinking that we're going to have to settle for a same-sex relationship with someone from an outside, non-Indigenous community, and then we both realized we'll end up with a person from home." Nick said.

In wrapping up the conversation, Teyo asked one more thing.

"What do you think is the biggest issue that Haudenosaunee men experience as it pertains to masculinity and higher education?" Teyo asked.

Addressing Stereotypes

"I think Haudenosaunee masculinity right now suffers from an issue of stereotyping, stereotyping what a Haudenosaunee male identity is expected versus the options that are available. One case in point would be I ended up taking horseback riding my last year at Big Town, and it was something that I would never have done, but [Jon] definitely always had an affinity for horses. So, something that put me outside of my comfort zone and gave me experiences that was open to, whereas if I didn't have that idea, then as a Haudenosaunee male, why would I ever do horseback riding, right? I want to do something more manly. So, it was this concept of, like, okay, well, moving beyond what that would mean. And I think another thing would be taking indigenous studies at BigTown where there was other indigenous males in the room, they wanted to get mad and angry at something that was discussed, and I basically said, "Why? It's a discussion. We're here to kind of..." – I wasn't offended by anything, and I didn't feel a need to have to openly start discrediting something that was just discussed, just because it didn't align with my expectations. I'm open to it, but for others, they had a very hard time, and they wanted to try to disprove and defend an honor that I felt wasn't even theirs to begin with, but okay." Nick rolled his eyes, took a drink of water and continued.

“So, it was like this really strong wanting to be almost anti-establishment approach for some people. And they kind of blew off classes very easily because of that. And for me, I was always much more I think just for school-wise, I was never in a schooling situation where my peers were mostly Indigenous since grade six. But ever since then, I’ve always been exposed to a non-Indigenous majority and being the minority and being very visibly minority to the point that I was like, I’m OK seeing that I’m just part of a bigger picture.”

“Mhm” Teyo responded.

“I don’t see myself as being the only picture.” Nick expressed. “And I think in the masculine sense, that’s where, well, I have to be this way, and I have to be ultra-this, and where now with some of my friends, we joke about these born-again Indian types, where some of them where you could tell that they did not have much of a culture growing up. I didn’t until much later in life, toward middle and high school. And then for some they struggle and say, well, I learned this in ceremonies, so everybody has to follow this, and they become very militant about it, whereas I’m much more open-minded, the point that I have no problem having some very interesting debates and discussions with people about culture and Indigenous identity.” Nick said. Teyo nodded his head.

Saro and Nathan had talked for some time that night about their higher education experiences to help Teyo with his Capstone Project. So much of their conversation stuck in Teyo’s mind, especially about the differences between US and Canadian border politics. This is something that Teyo hadn’t really considered until he spoke with them. Saro had given Teyo’s contact information to his former professor, Dr. Williams was a professor at a university in Canada. Dr. Williams contacted Teyo to talk over Zoom about his project.

Dr. Williams

Teyo was excited to get the perspective of Haudenosaunee men who was a professor at the university. He had only really talked to current undergraduate students and former students who had already graduated. Teyo also became interested in the perspective from Canada, since his laast conversation with Saro really began to open his eyes to the experiences of Haudenosaunee men in Canada. Although, Dr. William’s perspective was one from both sides of the border, he ended up attending university in the states and teaching and living in Canada. Teyo felts his perspective was quite limited, given that he really understood his own experiences in the states. Teyo had only really known of Dr. Williams through social media, but they had many mutual friends in common, so he was excited to talk with him. After some period of small talk, Teyo asked about Dr. Williams’ pathway to the university, his thoughts on Indigenous masculinities, and the cultural nuances of Indigenous worldview around this project. Dr. Williams talked in length about his experiences going to the university, classes he took and some of his struggles as a university professor.

Pathway: Military Veteran

“So.” Teyo said, pausing after some time of talking with Dr. Williams. “What made you become interested in attending university?” Teyo asked.

“Well” Dr. Williams cleared his throat, “I actually didn’t go directly to the university.” Dr. Williams said. “In actuality, my guidance counselors would quite often tell me that I shouldn’t do that, I should go to either the community college or join the military because I was in need of discipline and structure and being told what to do for the rest of my life.” Teyo felt surprised by Dr. Williams’ answer.

“Oh wow, that’s interesting.” Teyo said, awkwardly.

“I bounced around different community colleges, but I didn’t feel ready to go to the university. My grades were subpar and I really just, knew that I should do something else, so I chose the military...” Dr. Williams paused, taking a drink of coffee and he continued, “the Marines.”

“Oh so, you were a Marine?” Teyo asked, repeating Dr. Williams’ words.

“Yeah, I lived in the United States where I was joined the military and went to college, but then later, I became a professor in Canada.” Dr. Williams said.

“So, tell me more about that.” Teyo asked.

They talked in depth about Dr. Williams’ pathway to college, starting in community colleges and then joining the military. They talked about his influences growing up that helped Dr. Williams cope with military life. Teyo noted his words down.

“Even within those dynamics in my relationships with my grandfathers and my dad, I would describe myself back then as a very sensitive person that was somewhat emotional at times, that I was taught that isn’t what a man is. You don’t show emotion, you don’t cry. If you do cry, you cry alone and nobody sees it. You always have to project strength, you always have to project lack of fear, very kind of – part of it was what helped me fit into the military because there’s a lot of that kind of culture in there, too. You don’t show weakness, you don’t show fear, you don’t show that you’re having emotions or that you feel emotions. You wait until you’re in private.” Dr. Williams said. Teyo became interested in this projection of manhood that he hadn’t heard until now. Teyo took vigorous notes of their conversation. He kept circling the word, “university pathway” on his notepad.

“Can you tell me more about what motivated you to go to the university?” Teyo asked.

“Sure!” Dr. Williams responded. He cleared his throat and continued, “I’d say the kind of intellectual motivation came from when I was in the Marine Corps. When I was in the Marine Corps, I was in the infantry, and what was going on while I was in, it was these kind of like covert wars and covert operations in Central America. And so, the only experience I had with any kind of live wartime situation was very brief, going down to Honduras and supporting some actions that were taking place down there. But it really affected me, you know, even when we were down there just a week in the jungle down there. It affected me because I saw, like, a war happening, and both sides on the war were both Natives, you know, so there was little brown people with guns fighting other brown people. And everybody looked Indian to me at the time, you know. And here I was, I was Native in this occupying force. And it didn’t compute in my head at the time, you know. It’s like, well, what’s going on here? I don’t understand it. There are supposed to be good guys and bad guys, yet everybody’s a Native. And I just had – I started getting all these questions about what’s happening, what’s going on with the Marine Corps, why are we here, all those kind of questions. And then I remember on the way back from Honduras on the ship, you know, we have quite a trip. I’d say a good five days on ship headed back up north. And I look in my notebooks at the time. I was always a writer, so I was writing, like, a journal and notes, questioning that, like what’s going on here?” Dr. Williams kept asking questions, as if he were in real-time experiencing what he had remembered. Teyo was impressed with his line of questioning, especially around occupying Indigenous lands, and could sense Dr. Williams’ sense of cognitive dissonance. Teyo also noticed that Dr. Williams found space to write back then, while in the military and Teyo wanted to know more about that.

“Can you tell me more about writing in your journals? Seems a little different, since you were a tough military guy, to also be writing in journals... right?” Teyo asked, clearly interested in the idea of masculinity.

“Well...” Dr. Williams responded, “I- I think because I’ve finally begun to embrace who I always have been in terms of being just community driven and gentle in nature, studious and quiet. And I also acknowledge that, you know, my grandfathers and my dad were operating in places of their own brokenness and from their own military experiences and buying into kind of what masculine identity was all about in the ’50s, ’60s, and ’70s by being good providers...” Dr. Williams paused. He took a sip of coffee.

“Interesting. So it’s more about you addressing a sense of brokenness in generations before?” Teyo asked, cautious of where he was guiding the conversation. Dr. Williams spoke more on his legacy in his family of being military men. He circled back to providing for family.

Providing for Family

Dr. Williams continued, “I’d say a small to fair number, but not all, because part of that is my tenaciousness that also makes me a good researcher, I learned about myself in the military on some incredibly heavy packed road marches where I wanted to give up, and I learned to simply keep putting one foot in front of the other and keep going forward. And so, I learned a lot about my own self-resiliency in the service on road marches.”

“Like, our previous generations, right?” Teyo asked. “Can you talk about that more and maybe the influence they had on you?” Teyo asked Dr. Williams.

Dr. Williams responded, “In terms of the role that they’ve had, I would say that the Elders like my great grandfather and then other Elders, my great-great uncle, they had big roles in my life, teaching me a lot about --I would say the masculine side of stuff because like, being a

hard worker, all of that; work and all of that, as well as all the elders I worked with learning about our ceremonies and our language and our culture.”

“Essentially what I’m trying to get it is- is- is like, where did you learn masculinity from?” Teyo asked, again, stumbling over his words. But to Teyo’s surprise, Dr. Williams responded immediately with clarity.

“Ah, see, that’s an easier question, where did you learn masculinity from—” he repeated the question and continued, “It’s just, you know, like from the men you’re surrounded with. So, you learn your masculinity from that. Like, you want to be able to split wood, you want to be – and our community’s Haudenosaunee communities. You know, you want to be an iron worker. You want to be that guy who’s strong, taking care of his family. You want to be all that. But then in the same sense, you start to realize, wow, all these men I’ve never seen them be emotional, though, either. So, maybe I need to embrace that same kind of mentality of you don’t cry, you don’t show this emotion.” Dr. Williams explained.

Hegemonic Masculinity

“Ohh okay. Gotcha.” Teyo said, as he took notes.

Dr. Williams continued, “I still see people in our communities that are like that, that are kind of masculine almost to the point of toxicity with bravery, with demonstrations of no fear, and this, that, and the other thing, and self-medicating in some cases...” Teyo wrote more notes as he spoke. “But!...” Dr. Williams said, pausing in thought... “like the more realistic description of not the tough ironworking type description, like, which I said I feel like is a construction. But the other definition, more drawing inspiration from your culture, I do really relate to that definition.” Dr. William said, to clarify. He took another sip of coffee and continued, “My dad is, he’s going to be 77, and he had me really late compared to the rest of my siblings, and very – so

he grew up in this age in [Mohawk community 1] and in New York City. He followed his parents around to different places where his dad was doing ironworking. And this is – the stories he describes are, holy shit. No wonder my dad and my parents are the way they are. His is a very rough, rugged exterior. And my older brothers had a very different experience than I did and my sister, very much – he raised my older brothers the way he was somewhat raised. And keep in mind my dad’s dad, so my grandfather, fell on the job and died when my dad was, like, nine years old. So, he was kind of raised by his uncles and was very – and he went to ironworking right out of high school. And he had a very rough, rugged, super-hetero, patriarchal perceptions on things. I can remember in high school wanting to grow my hair long, and he was like, why do you want to do that? That’s for women. Us Mohawk men have short hair. We have mohawks, right? And these are the kind of things I heard growing up, and so when I’m describing archetypes of hegemonic Mohawk masculinity, I see my dad.” Dr. Williams said.

“Wow this is so helpful, thank you!” Teyo said. “So...” Teyo paused, he made another note. “What um... What are the things that challenge Haudenosaunee men on a regular basis?” Teyo asked.

Dr. William responded, “Probably that chip they all carry depending on the weight. I don’t know – well, because of our culture, we’re not supposed to feel emasculated in a matrilineal society. But I wonder how many men feel emasculated because there are more and more women in leadership positions and running businesses, which personally I’m proud of. It’s really good to know that the other day they, because of the shutdown that’s going on and everything, somebody put out a list of all the businesses in [Mohawk community 1], and more of them than not were owned and operated by women. I think that’s not limited to – I guess I should put it this way. I know that that’s the general population of – part what contributes to general

toxic masculinity is a feeling of emasculation. I don't know how much of that exists in [Mohawk community 1] or other Haudenosaunee communities. I think it wouldn't be as toxic because of our culture." Dr. Williams said.

Teyo noted that Dr. Williams answer seemed complicated. Teyo wrote a note, "*toxic masculinity*" he wrote.

Dr. Williams continued, "And I certainly felt that, and I still suffer from that in my competitiveness, but I realize now that it doesn't make me worth less or worth more. For me now, competitiveness is just competitiveness. It's nothing more than that, whereas before, my competitiveness was reliant on that, that if I didn't do it, and if I didn't win, I wasn't the best, and if I wasn't the best, I was worthless."

"Hmm..." Teyo said in response. Teyo wrote another note, "*competitiveness*"

Dr. Williams and Teyo talked more about the issues of toxic masculinity that Haudenosaunee men experience and internalize. They began talking about experiences in colleges and universities, as it pertained to this toxic or hegemonic masculinity. Dr. Williams talked about his experience in the classroom with a faculty member who tried teaching them a lesson about "emasculation."

Dr. Williams said, "And those that were teaching it were predominantly not Indigenous, and like I discovered, like I was saying, my friend and I used to kind of mess with them. We'd tell them, you know, oh, Louise Erdrich's talking about the emasculation of male identity in one of her books. We had no idea what the hell we were talking about, but that person went out and then proceeded to profess it like this was actually what the story meant. And that kind of duplicity and dishonesty bothered me, and that's part of the reason I wanted to – and it goes back to that seventh-grade teacher saying that he had a Ph.D. and he knew more about my people than

I did. Because I did have the knowledge that had been passed on from community members and my grandfather – my grandfathers. And in fact, I still maintain to this day that I still believe almost the exact same core knowledge I've held since seventh grade and through undergraduate, through even beginning of graduate school, the only thing that's grown deeper is the amount of materials I've read. My positions haven't changed all that much.”

Teyo realized immediately that Dr. Williams still took issue with learning about interpretations of hegemonic masculinity as defined from people outside of our Haudenosaunee community. Teyo also noticed that Dr. Williams references his male Elders. “And how about on your college experiences? What helped you in college... or university?” Teyo asked.

Independence as Strength

“Well...” Dr. Williams paused, “So, to me, the ability to sort of like reflect on your past and environment and decide, like, oh, that's not good, almost independently, right, with no guidance, no help, just decided that's not what I'm going to continue on. It was really important...” Dr. Williams said... he continued, “To a point. The college experience would have made me much more individual minded, and I was never that way to begin with... One is very individualistic, whereas coming from a Haudenosaunee culture of being collectively minded, they ran contrary. So, basically, I had not just an issue about my own identity but also my own profession, to the point where once I got done my profession academic-wise, I never went back to it. I'm in research.” He said.

Teyo nodded. This response seemed to make sense to Teyo considering that Dr. Williams had gone into depth about ideas of toxic masculinity. But Teyo was also curious if he meant independence to mean to cultivate a sense of self, as opposed to outright refusing help. Teyo asked, “Can you clarify the idea of working independently?”

Dr. Williams obliged, “Sure... So, I would have to point to the second year when I started living in an apartment, which an apartment, as one might think, what’s the difference? But the level of independence and the necessity of me to budget properly, all those other things, were really quite important. Living in a residence is kind of sheltered because the food was provided, all the shelter and whatever, right. There was very few expenses after that, but living independently – and that was a learning experience, I have to admit. Living a sheltered life with my parents and living a sheltered life in that first year, it was difficult to adjust in that second year.” Dr. Williams said, again, taking a sip of coffee.

Teyo noted this more positive idea of independence as a strength or sense of growth, maybe attached to just growing up. “So is this what you’re saying Haudenosaunee men do to overcome challenges?” Teyo asked.

“Let me say more on this...” Dr. Williams interrupted, “I don’t have a generalizable answer to that. My answer’s somewhat speculative. It’s the way I dealt with it is by finding meaning in one’s life that is both practical and morally relevant. Mine was getting educated and getting out of my community so that I can experience independence on the first part, and in the second part become a member of the academy in some way in the future. Different men will have different ways of addressing that, I suppose.”

“I see” Teyo responded. He made a note and wrote, “*Independence as strength*”

Dr. Williams continued, “Sometimes as we achieve success, there are times where it feels conflicted because it seems to remove us from community and to places where we really want to be within community and within family. And so, how do we navigate some of that. And it was one of my best friends from high school that’s non-Native that pointed out to me one day when I hit grad school finally, I made a conscious choice to pursue my career and my academics, my

profession to the exclusion of – end up having a family. And so, I think there’s, from my perspective, I mean, and every person and especially every Haudenosaunee male I’ve dealt with has a very different, unique trajectory, but in some ways we have a lot more in common in terms of the issues we face to get to where we’re trying to get to, both for our communities and in some ways for our professions.”

Teyo nodded, still writing. “So, it seems like a motivator or space for reflection...?” Teyo asked, speculatively.

“Mmmhm, that’s a good way to put it.” Dr. Williams responded.

“Can you talk more about other motivators for Haudenosaunee men?” Teyo asked.

Giving Back/ Indigenous Nation Building

Dr. Williams responded, “In terms of a really important one that stood out, that was significant, you know, having the Haudenosaunee flag hung alongside the other flags, constant discussions and education, I was able to have them hang our Haudenosaunee flag in our fieldhouse as well as in our ice arena, as well as in our practice center. It hangs alongside the United States and the Canadian flag. They’re same size; it hangs on the same level. So, for me, I think that created an environment of equality and equal opportunities, which really says a lot about Native students.”

Teyo continued taking notes.

“I just think it’s important to note the importance of focusing on Indigenous nationhood. This became particularly important to me during my undergraduate years... Our communities want us to contribute back to our community, to their family, to issues that are very important to [us]. And speaking with students, undergraduate students, when they talk about how they want to give back to their communities, it was very important to hear those stories, and I would argue

there's a reason for continuing funding for university by band councils or tribes in the United States. I think that there's a sense of obligation to return home within university students, within indigenous students that attend university. There's a sense of responsibility to give back." Dr. Williams said.

Teyo felt his eyes grow as Dr. Williams began talking about the importance of Indigenous nation building.

Teyo nodded his head and kept writing notes.

"But I also know that there's a [tendency] among Haudenosaunee men in particular that are a lot – it's more visible and prominent in Haudenosaunee women that they come out, they get the advanced degrees so they can go back home and service their communities. Some become teachers, some become nurses, some – there's a whole different thing for – things. And I think men do the same thing, but we also know in terms of the masculine identity of Haudenosaunee men, I'm sure there's data that shows what Haudenosaunee men trend toward as professions and careers." He paused, "It's a part of who we are. I've lived through the Oka issue and that I'm seeing in this city and across Canada the question instead is posed by this elder [names elder]: what can I do? What can I do? Not what I say, but what can I do to make this world a better place? Acknowledge that I'm in this world with other people. Some of them are Anishinaabe. Some of them are Cree. Some of them are Haudenosaunee or Rotinosonni. But what can I do? It's that strength of purpose, I think, to answer your question. I know [inaudible]. It's quite important."

Teyo nodded again, "It's a part of who we are..." he echoed.

Dr. Williams continued, "And even just within the community, I know that I'm supposed to help out the community. So, now that we're in emergency mode, I have no problem helping

out, being part of the essential services for the emergency operation center. So, this idea of, like, OK, you are willing to put yourself on the line for the greater whole or the greater good, however you want to go as [inaudible] kind of made it the opposite for the greater good. So, yeah, definitely seeing that there is an expectation of that, as well as being able to be that support..."

Teyo nodded his head and wrote, "Indigenous nation building/ giving back" on his notepad. "Can you tell me more about that?" Teyo asked.

"My responsibility as a Haudenosaunee man. Well, it's to be supportive of the Nation and the Confederacy, and I fulfill that by kind of just staying out of everybody's way. That and my father always said that, you know, wherever I go and whatever I do, people are going to judge all of our people based on my behavior and actions. So, I try to walk a good path."

"Mmm." Teyo hummed. "Our responsibilities..." his voice trailed off and Dr. Williams jumped in.

"Yeah. I mean, like, for me, I don't know, just I'm pretty good at this academic stuff, so it's like, what can I do with these skills that I have to appropriate resources for my community? So, it's like how do you take what the creator gave you more or less and use it to give back or use it to create or use it to – put it to use? What do I have, and how can I use it?" He asked, rhetorically.

"To give back to community?" Teyo answered.

"Yeah" Dr. Williams responded. "Ha! Yeah." He said again. Teyo and Dr. Williams spoke about so much that day. Overall, they talked about the military as a pathway to college or university. They talked about ways that hegemonic masculinity runs deeply within Haudenosaunee communities and within men in the community. They had discussed the

importance of providing for family and cultivating a sense of independence as a strength. Lastly, they discussed giving back as an Indigenous Nation Building strategy.

Teyo jumped off of his zoom call with Dr. Williams, finally feeling supported and feeling as though his perspective was supported in his interviews. “Now to put their words in this paper” Teyo said to himself. He knew that he had a long journey ahead of him, but that night Teyo wrote and wrote until the late hours of the night. This project taught Teyo more about himself than any other project he had done prior and for that, he was thankful.

In chapter five I shared data from participants through a re-construction of their stories through the creation of composite characters to understand the experiences of Haudenosaunee men in higher education and ways that they understand Indigenous masculinity. Many of the participants shared their thoughts on their college and university experiences along with Haudenosaunee worldviews, masculinity issues, and perspectives on Native identity that they grappled with during their journeys. In the next chapter, I draw from the data to summarize key findings, interpret results, and provide recommendations for higher education practitioners and further research.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION, RESULTS & CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I state the research problem and research questions. I summarize key findings, interpret the results, describe the limitations of this study, and provide recommendations for further research. I interpret the meaning of the results in relation to the research questions and existing literature. Finally, since she always asked me: “How’s your project going?” in this chapter I situate the conclusion of my research through a letter that I wrote to my grandmother, as she always was the primary support for this work. I hope to provide the conclusion in a clear, accessible format, for larger audience to understand.

A Statement of the Problem

Native student experiences are often marginalized and made invisible in education research and statistics, leaving their stories left untold. Native men in higher education experience among the lowest persistence and graduation rates in the United States (Condition of Education, 2020). Native men are also influenced by patriarchal/ colonial hegemony which forces them to move away from their traditional cultural teachings (Boyden, et al., 2014; Innes & Anderson, 2015). The experiences of Native men in higher education still need to be explored further (Reyes & Shotton, 2018; Poolaw, 2018; Salvador, 2015; Still, 2019).

Reyes and Shotton (2018) describe that enrollment rates of Native men (40%) are low in comparison with Native women (60%) (p. 7) which also reflects patterns in graduation rates of Native men (18%) and Native women (26%) (Musu-Guillette et. al., 2017). Although Native men may enroll, persist, and graduate at lower rates than Native women in higher education, Native men still earn higher wages than Native women overall (US Census, 2016). Since many Haudenosaunee come from matrilineal/ matriarchal roots, I wondered about ways that Native

men may both struggle to provide for family and to “fit” within a patriarchal system that runs counter to matrilineal/ matriarchal worldview.

I wanted to understand the ways that Haudenosaunee men may define Haudenosaunee masculinity and also how Native students define Indigenous masculinity in higher education. I also wanted to understand the experiences of Haudenosaunee men in higher education.

Waterman and Lindley’s (2013) study revealed the work that needs to be done around the experiences of Native men in higher education. Reyes and Shotton (2018) write, “Our understanding of the experiences of Indigenous males in particular remains incomplete” (p. 7).

Since this project comes from Tribal Critical Race Theory (Brayboy, 2005; 2006), I focused on areas related to honoring relationships, critically engaging in the work of decolonization, and addressing ways that settler colonialism was and still is present in the education system. I also felt it important to structure this theoretical analysis from foundational Haudenosaunee thought and worldview using the Haudenosaunee Creation Story (Hewitt, 1904; Mohawk, 2005) and a Grandmother’s Pedagogy (Tachine, 2017). I intentionally attempt to convey this information through an asset-based lens, as seeing Indigenous students as promise (HeavyRunner & Marshall 2003). I will now provide an analysis of the collected stories of Haudenosaunee men in the context of higher education.

The Research Questions

How do Haudenosaunee men understand Indigenous masculinities?

What are the experiences of Haudenosaunee men in higher education?

How do perceptions of masculinity affect Haudenosaunee men in higher education?

Discussion/ Analysis of Results

In this section I discuss research findings as couched within the research questions. I describe ways that Haudenosaunee men understand Indigenous masculinities. I highlight important aspects of the experiences of Haudenosaunee men in higher education. I describe ways that the experiences of Haudenosaunee men may be affected by the ways that they perceive Indigenous masculinity. In the section after that, I discuss the importance of perceptions, “reminders” (cultural strengths) and responsibilities to community play a significant role in the support of Haudenosaunee men in higher education.

How Haudenosaunee men understand Indigenous masculinities

Haudenosaunee men struggled to understand and define “masculinity.” All participants described feeling like masculinity is a complex topic, since it could mean many things. Indigenous masculinities for participants in this study, also meant caring and providing for family, giving back to community, and maintaining Indigenous nationhood— all which they described as rooted from their cultural traditions and teachings passed down to them. In most instances men would describe ideals aligned with an American masculinity (e.g., to work hard, be tough, be the breadwinner) and in some instances participants problematized American masculinity (fear of being vulnerable, individualistic, and multiple levels of racism). Indigenous masculinities meant talking about what Indigenous men “do”— their work, traditions, humor, interests, traditional roles, etc. Haudenosaunee men described the effects of colonialism and ways this has impacted them in complex and meaningful ways within their communities, especially as it pertains to stereotypes about Native men. Participants “defined” what Indigenous masculinity meant to them and they even rejected the need to define masculinity. In this section I provide several ways in which Indigenous students understand Indigenous masculinities.

“Zack” represented seven of the participants who were reluctant to define Indigenous masculinity, struggled with the meaning of “masculinity,” and/ or felt uneasy about defining masculinity. Participants who comprised Zack asked to reframe the question or defining by providing personal experiences with what their Elders and community members expected of them. Some participants refused to define gender by changing the topic. Participants described it based on what they “do” for example, Zack said, “Well, I am a lacrosse player” or based in what their fathers do as iron workers or construction workers. Zack said, “My father was an ironworker, his father was an ironworker, his father was one of the first ironworkers in [Mohawk community].”

Eventually, participants made the definition of Haudenosaunee masculinity broader, to incorporate what they do as teachers, engineers, professors, protectors, and providers. Participants relayed that there was a perception from their home communities as being a “nerd” or “feminine” if they go to college, which they felt was a false perception perpetuated by members of their homes and communities. Some men expressed struggling with not having father figures, in which case they may look elsewhere, to their older brothers, uncles, or grandfathers, but this was not a prominent issue.

Haudenosaunee men understood their idea of Indigenous masculinity through traditional roles and responsibilities. Eight participants in this study and represented by the composite character “Nick” mentioned the importance of traditional Indigenous gender roles as a decolonized concept. Description of traditional Indigenous gender roles relies heavily on a concept known to scholars as “complementarity” which describes social and cultural practices recognized as “a gender balancing system” (Sneider, 2015, p. 64) or gender-based roles and responsibilities that members of Indigenous communities perform to uphold and maintain social/

communal balance, to enact reciprocity, and to practice self-determination as Indigenous Nations. Sharpe (1995) argues that as much as gender is a social construction (Butler, 1990), gender is also a “cultural construction” (p. 73). Gendered responsibilities are practiced still today and may describe the relationships between Two-Spirit people, Indigenous men, and women; often to which to settlers, might seem outdated or unfit for contemporary practice (Sneider, 2015).

Participants described stereotypes that they felt did not accurately portray Indigenous men and masculinity, especially given their own experiences— which included stereotypes often expressed by non-Native outsiders *and* even stereotypes internalized and perpetuated by their own community members about Indigenous men. Within the context of higher education, a participant named “Nick” comprised the participants who described their feelings about attending higher education, perceived often hostile place, and making reference to “the forest” a space where, amid the dangers and mystery that traditionally Haudenosaunee men navigated to provide for their families and communities,

“So, the forest represents a lot of different things, I think, to our people. It represents not being able to see very far. It represents kind of a space of danger. But it represents – it’s a necessity... I think western higher education is very similar. It shares a lot of those characteristics of the forest. It’s confusing, it could be dangerous, but it’s a necessary space that some of our community members need to know how to navigate.”

This lens offers a strength-based understanding of how men perceive the often hostile climate of higher education to be, using the idea of complementarity and traditional teachings.

Haudenosaunee men mentioned these traditional gender roles as a way to enact their worldview

and understanding in order to “view” themselves as carrying out their responsibilities to community.

Experiences of Haudenosaunee men in higher education

Haudenosaunee men described their journeys to higher education, which I refer to as “pathways to college”. Haudenosaunee men experience various challenges as college including discrimination based on their race and Indigenous worldviews which I call “campus hostility”. I mention other challenges such as isolation/ alienation from campus, alcohol or drug abuse, and mental health issues. cultural reminders as strengths, and responsibilities to community were important aspects of the experiences of Haudenosaunee men in higher education.

Pathways to University/ College

Haudenosaunee men took many different pathways to college. Eight participants identified as first generation college students, where college was a completely new experience, not just for them but for their entire family. Four participants identified as non-traditional college aged students, three of whom attended college or university after age 22 and one who enrolled in college at the age of 16. I noted that participants described different pathways to college which I divided into three distinct categories: student athlete pathway, academically driven pathway, and military service/ veteran pathway.

“Zack” represents five participants who identify as student athletes, four of whom were lacrosse players upon their acceptance to college— only two of whom remained as lacrosse players for the duration of their college experiences. One participant was recruited as a wrestler and remained as student athlete for the duration of their experience in university. “Nathan” represents six participants who identified the importance of being academically driven upon their acceptance to college. All participants (student athletes alike) expressed that became more

academically focused throughout their college experiences which contributed to their persistence towards graduation in college. Dr. Williams represents two participants who entered college as veterans and as nontraditional college aged students. Three participants, who lived in Montreal, attended CESEP prior to their university experience, which is a mixture of academic and vocational education, which prepares students for employment in trades or further education at university. One participant attended prep school prior to entering a 4-year university and two students attended community college prior to enrolling in 4-year universities.

Challenges

Once Haudenosaunee men arrived on campus and became familiar with campus life, they experienced several challenges and overcame these challenges in specific ways. Haudenosaunee men navigated complicated relationships with peers, faculty, and staff campus, hostility and feelings of loneliness, issues alcohol, drug abuse, financial difficulties, and they struggled with their mental health. They found several ways to persist including finding community, developing a sense of independence, and grounded themselves in their own cultural values. The following sub-sections describe these challenges and ways that Haudenosaunee men overcame these challenges.

Nine Haudenosaunee men described being academically underprepared and having a lack of support. They often felt that they did not have many people to turn to in order to get meaningful help. One participant said,

There was no pathway, and there was no support system. There was no role model. There was nothing. It was something that you – the few people that I know that had attempted college didn't finish. They went to university, they did some courses, and this wasn't –

this is no comment at all on their own quality of their mind or their perseverance or nothing. It just wasn't a place that was very welcoming.

Teyo expressed the following,

I think we could do that. I just- uh, I think it's important to consider cultures outside of this Western-type culture... Like, my culture too, I'm Mohawk and we have some super cool traditions that I could bring in about this professor's culture, ya know?"

In the retelling of his story, his comment about his culture was ignored by his classmate while trying to work on a project for class together.

Participants characterized by Teyo described interactions with professors and campus actors that offered little to no support. Teyo, who represented 11 participants described that he had an interaction with his professor, characterized by Dr. Pratt, a professor who not only denied his request to complete a final paper on the history of his community, but he questioned and even challenged Teyo's academic abilities.

Dr. Pratt: I sent you some articles. Did you *even read them?*"

Teyo: Yes, I- I read them... I just- I'm trying to connect the papers that you sent with my community and— [Teyo sighed] I can't really see *myself* in those readings.

Dr. Pratt: Well, this *is* the university. Every student feels that way to a certain extent... Not only does this proposal not speak to larger societal issues, but your writing is not up to par.

During their interaction, Teyo also explains to Dr. Pratt that he doesn't "see himself" in the readings and course content, to which Dr. Pratt is only half-listening. Five participants described not feeling supported by their professors who they depended on for support.

Participants described their campuses as “hostile” for two major reasons: experiencing racial microaggressions and feeling that their Indigenous worldviews were dismissed or ignored. Unfortunately, systemic racism emerged from the data as a significant barrier in their college experiences. 11 participants Haudenosaunee men described experiencing racism or racial microaggressions from their respective campus communities. Nathan, a composite of three Haudenosaunee men in STEM, described his experiences during the Trump presidency and the problematic racialized student comments made while he attended BTU. In this example, white students arguing to keep the Washington Redsk*ns name, who didn’t know he was Native. Nathan said,

But I do remember coming across people that were prejudiced in a way. Their faces and names kind of escape me... it started around the time of, oh, junior year, late junior year, when President Trump’s campaign started, is when I started to really notice that persona come about.

Perhaps stemming from a hostile campus climate, eight participants described a perception being on campus, feelings as though they were “living in two worlds” one “world” being the predominately white campus and another “world” being their own Indigenous identity. This tension is a sense of cultural and cognitive dissonance, a tension often exacerbated when they students felt alone, tokenized, or invisible.

Haudenosaunee men described difficulties with alcohol and drug abuse, financial challenges, and in some cases, homelessness. Participants struggled with their own mental health and at times had trouble asking for help. Feelings of invisibility seemed to be a persistent theme within their experiences which further contributed to loneliness or alienation. It is important to note that their challenges and barriers were *not* the whole story.

Culture and Community as Strengths

Haudenosaunee men relied on cultural teachings to overcome barriers. I found that Haudenosaunee men identified with and described masculinity as couched within their Indigenous worldviews like the Great Law of Peace, Gaiwiyoh, and other Haudenosaunee teachings (Porter, 2008; Williams, 2018). Most men often referred to Indigenous or Haudenosaunee definitions of masculinity, like iron work, lacrosse, or other rigid masculine traditional gender roles in their community. I also noted important descriptions as reminders to their worldview: Elder Brother the Sun, Grandfather Thunderers, and activities like hunting, fishing, and snowsnake. They were reminded by community members of their traditional roles and responsibilities within their communities (Sneider, 2015).

“Saro,” a composite character who represented four Haudenosaunee men, described Indigenous masculinity as rooted in cultural traditions. He provides an example:

Saro: I always thought of our people being known as really, really smart. They’re the best at what they do. So, I was like, yeah, I can do that. Motivation. It was like, you know, the oration. And I like reading old speeches and things like that because it’s like, they’re really smart, logical, and also willing and able to handle confrontation in a way that ultimately indicates that they prefer not to have confrontation, but they can deal with it if they have to.”

Teyo: Oh so, like Haudenosaunee men as orators, historically? And today?” Teyo asked.

Saro: Yeah. I get exactly what you’re saying.” Saro said.

Teyo: It’s like a desire for peace, but the means to enforce it, too, like on an intellectual level, right?”

The Settler Colonial Border US/ Canadian border that divides Haudenosaunee Nations may also define how Native students, in particular Native males, and how they practice their Indigenous masculinity in order to access and persist at the university. Several Mohawk males express that while on the US side, there are stories about success through their abilities as lacrosse players, but the Canadian side provides more opportunities for Indigenous peoples to prepare for professional leadership positions.

Participants described working towards what Hosgeñ'eghda' or Roskerekete means within our world today and the complexities trying to balance their lives in accordance with the Great Law of Peace and other teachings from their community (Anderson, Innes & Swift, 2012; Poolaw, 2018). As Haudenosaunee men grapple with their sense of responsibility to community; what often ran through my mind was the presence of cultural capital (Yosso, 2007). Participants mostly agreed that they felt supported at home, while few expressed that they did not feel supported at home. Participants described the importance of being held accountable by their community in various ways, some more clearly so than others.

Haudenosaunee men found community by building relationships with peer groups on campus, expressed the importance of having both Native and non-Native mentors. Participants described the importance of Indigenous student groups on campus which were profoundly important to their sense of belonging. All participants described they had role models to look up to, including family and Indigenous community members, but few men had cultivated mentor relationships on campus.

Haudenosaunee men described the importance of sovereignty and self-determination. Participants described the importance of giving back to their communities. Haudenosaunee men experience a sense of support and pride in going back home to their respective communities

while attending university. I also provide ways that Haudenosaunee men experienced perseverance through their culture. In the next several sub-sections I describe and analyze the aforementioned theme areas in more detail. Participants developed a sense of independence as strength

How perceptions of Indigenous masculinity effect Haudenosaunee men in higher education

Perceptions of masculinity deeply impact the ways that Haudenosaunee men experience higher education. Haudenosaunee men had a diverse range of experiences in higher education. Participants described accessing, attending, and finishing college or university in different ways. In salient moments during interviews, they described the importance of perception, reminders, and responsibilities to community. Haudenosaunee men described their “perceptions” as how they made meaning of their own experiences and how others may perceive Haudenosaunee men.

Haudenosaunee men felt alone, alienated, tokenized, or unfairly treated on campus, they often went back home to “reset” or to feel a sense of support (Brayboy, Solyom, & Costagno, 2015). In his experiences, Teyo described that, not only racism, but settler colonialism has shaped his experiences and perceptions,

It was during this panel discussion that I realized that my experience is shaped by colonialism, and that our people need additional strategies beyond civil rights strategies. Teyo also conveys that his critique of multiculturalism and the university to address systemic barriers which her terms “civil rights strategies” is not enough, that Indigenous peoples may often feel lost within a multicultural model.

Dr. Williams, when asked if masculinity had anything to do with his higher education experiences, he responded, “nothing.” I asked again and he responded,

I'll answer but you're not going to like the answer... What does Haudenosaunee masculinity have to do with higher education? Nothing. Nothing to do with it.

I asked participants if they could “describe a typical Haudenosaunee man” a question that grapples with perception of Haudenosaunee men and masculinity. I asked a follow-up question asking if they “identified with the description that they provided”. This set of questions also served as a strategy which I hoped would prompt Haudenosaunee men to dispel stereotypes of Haudenosaunee men within their communities. When prompted, several participants almost refused to answer or expressed that it was “difficult to answer” since the question was about addressing stereotypes. Saro, a character who represented eight participants who described grappling with stereotypes or “archetypes” of a Haudenosaunee man.

Yeah, okay, so, I mean, like, the archetype of who a Haudenosaunee man is, in my mind, is someone who plays lacrosse, an ironworker, usually a tough guy, machismo-type character. But I know that speaks to only a handful of actual people. And I've come to realize that's an identity that's just kind of constructed. But the typical Haudenosaunee man, if we can make generalities, I would say that's someone who is there for their family, provides for their family, and is very hopefully rooted in their culture and their sense of identity, and finds a lot of inspiration from that in the way that they approach fatherhood, being a spouse, whether it's with a woman or with a man. I think that drawing inspiration from your culture to shape your relationships is something that you can kind of see within Haudenosaunee men...

I sent a participant the interview protocol the night before the interview and he told me that he “wrote the question ahead of time” before the interview and expressed that it was “pretty painful

to write down” since it asked him to describe this trauma within his own identity. “Can you describe that? Why do you think it was painful?” I asked.

Because it shows me that a lot of men in our communities have not processed [they] have not grieved, have not processed their trauma and are looking for forms of validation through lacrosse, I think, and are looking for relief from their pain through substance abuse.

Nathan represented 10 students who grappled with their sense of identity when they were in college. A handful of participants also experienced bullying from classmates prior to attending university; bullying from Haudenosaunee boys who were lacrosse players.

Saro represents eight participants who confront what he described as “stereotypes of Haudenosaunee people”. Saro struggled with this question because he described feeling that he does not “fit” within how people might perceive Haudenosaunee men and masculinity.

Saro: That Haudenosaunee man has the knowledge of Haudenosaunee traditions, stories, ceremonial activities, and other things that are germane to the cultural or linguistic stereotypes of the Haudenosaunee people. Not every Haudenosaunee man has those, so I have to put that in there. A typical Haudenosaunee man, I’m not sure there’s more I can say to that... They [Haudenosaunee men] are working in the ironwork sector, if you will. They are working at stores that sell tobacco. They are playing golf a lot [laughs]. Those are just things. A lot of them aren’t, and more power to them. And surprise, surprise, we do a lot of what our fathers did.

Hugh: [Laughs]

Saro: Not a darn thing wrong with that. In answering this in the context of the general idea of your interview, which is higher education, it's tough for me to sort of look at that.

Participants described stereotypes that they felt did not accurately portray Indigenous men and masculinity, especially given their own experiences. In this, eight Haudenosaunee men felt that they had to confront the stereotypes that they had internalized in their own perception of themselves, which included narratives that were overtly racist and detrimental to their wellbeing including imagery of stoicism,

Stereotypes that non-Native people and even their own community members held about Indigenous men effected participants in this study, who felt the need to address the stereotypes that they grew knowing about themselves. Participants described stereotypes that they felt did not accurately portray Indigenous men and masculinity, especially given their own experiences. In this, eight Haudenosaunee men felt that they had to confront the stereotypes that they had internalized in their own perception of themselves, which included narratives that were overtly racist and detrimental to their wellbeing including imagery of stoicism. Stereotypes that non-Native people and even their own community members held about Indigenous men

Participants spoke to an “internalized patriarchy” in which many participants spoke to which included the enactment of rigid traditional gender roles, homophobia, or sexist humor used within various communities, either at the college/ university or at home (Jackson & Sundaram, 2020). For example, Nick situated Haudenosaunee history within his curriculum at BTU, he also remarked that gender roles, heteronormativity, and sexuality was something that he struggled with personally. While at BTU, he explained that he was not “fitting” in the heteronormative model:

Well, it connects to my story in higher education. So, I was at BTU... and I tried, and I just realized I wasn't fitting into the heteronormative model. And so I figured, well, sexuality, I just started experimenting with same-sex opportunities at Big Town, tried different online approaches, made a few connections, and never saw it as anything being fulfilling to the point of having a truly romantic relationship. But from there it kind of – I had the mindset of there's one side of me that wanted to explore and another side of me that's trying to find a solid relationship.”

Nine participants who talked about toxic male masculinity, characterized by Dr. Williams, described that toxic masculinity affected their college or university experiences, either from their campus community or their Native community, either from home or on campus broadly. Many of the participants also spoke to “challenging an archetype” or “challenging the perceptions” of Native men as a stereotype or commonly held misconception (Cariou, et al., 2015). I used this information to delve deeper into the many ways that colonization has affected Native communities, specifically examining settler patriarchy, racism, and campus hostility. Nathan described this,

I mean, like, the archetype of who a Haudenosaunee man is, in my mind, is someone who plays lacrosse, an ironworker, usually a tough guy, machismo-type character. But I know that speaks to only a handful of actual people. And I've come to realize that's an identity that's just kind of constructed. But the typical Haudenosaunee man, if we can make generalities, I would say that's someone who is there for their family, provides for their family, and is very hopefully rooted in their culture and their sense of identity, and finds a lot of inspiration from that in the way that they approach fatherhood, being a spouse, whether it's with a woman or with a man. I think that drawing inspiration from your

culture to shape your relationships is something that you can kind of see within
Haudenosaunee men...

Nathan described those healthy forms of masculinity aid in dealing with stressors on campus, even as it pertains to grappling with racial remarks from other students. In another example, Saro, a composite of three participants who lived in Canada, eloquently described ways in which the socially and culturally constructed archetype of Haudenosaunee men actually challenges men or creates a box for men, on a regular basis. Saro described this.

I think honestly, I can only speak to my own experience, and for me it was realizing that that identity is a constructed identity. It's a colonial understanding or definition of what it means to be a Haudenosaunee man. And for me, coming to that realization was a big part in me realizing that I can be Haudenosaunee in different ways that didn't mean that – which meant that I didn't have to follow that path. And for me, that was like, honestly, going to school and being exposed to a lot of different types of education and texts and conversations with people, and just a lot of self-learning and exploration really led me to understand that archetype is— [paused]

Teyo: Made up?

Saro: It doesn't have to be what it is. [silence]

Perceptions, Reminders, and Responsibilities to Community

After interviewing 13 Haudenosaunee men about their experiences in higher education, three large theme areas emerged from the data: *perceptions, reminders, and responsibilities to community*. Haudenosaunee men expressed perceptions of Indigenous masculinity that effected their higher education experiences (Poolaw, 2018; Still 2020). Haudenosaunee men described reminders including cultural strengths that they expressed helped them to overcome challenges at

college and university (Waterman, 2018). Haudenosaunee men expressed their responsibilities to their communities, not just at their universities, but at home in their respective Indigenous communities (Brayboy, 2014; 2021). Their commitment to community aligns with their values of “giving back” to their respective Indigenous nations through reciprocity, relationship, and respect (Waterman, 2007; 2019; 2021).

Perceptions

Poolaw (2018) and Still (2019) explore perceptions of Indigenous men in higher education, who struggle with feelings of isolation, racial microaggressions, mental health concerns, and navigating an Indigenous identity on university campuses. What emerged from Still’s data suggested a perception of Indigenous masculinity that Still urges researchers to explore further. In his interviews with 22 participants from 25 different Indigenous tribal nations Still (2019) connects the experiences that Indigenous men have with hostile campus environments which impacts their perceptions of self,

The invisibility of Native students can lead to many misconceptions, stereotyping, and other negative issues related to how Native students can view themselves and holds true with Native men. (p. 100).

Unfortunately, many of Still’s participants described the need to be “emotionless or stoic” in order to survive at their respective institutions. Poolaw (2018) explains that Indigenous men continue to struggle with their perceptions of masculinity—that assimilation to colonial ideologies reinforces behaviors such as over competitiveness, violence, need to abide by rigid gender classifications, and fear of being perceived as weak. In Poolaw’s (2018) words, “Indigenous men were and still are unknowingly perpetuating oppression of themselves and their people in their acceptance of colonial masculinities (p. 48).

When Indigenous men are rendered in/visible on university campuses, Indigenous men are perceived through the lens of inaccurate and harmful stereotypes or archetypes. Poolaw (2018) echoes McKegney (2011) about common stereotypes that harm Indigenous men—the noble savage, the bloodthirsty warrior, and the drunken absentee. These stereotypes are myths that perpetuated from a limited and privileged white settler gaze which flatten out the whole identity of Indigenous men. Poolaw (2018) writes,

Indigenous men bring harm to their communities and themselves when the power of these stereotypes is adopted in that these stereotypes restrict their identities and limit how Indigenous men view themselves. (p. 48)

In this study, Indigenous men grapple with perception of themselves, which describes much of their silence and discomfort about confronting “difficult topics” as one participant put it.

bell hooks (2004) uses the term “imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy” to describe the “interlocking political systems that are the foundation of our nation’s politics” (p. 17). hooks asserts that of all systems that we grow up in, the one we learn and embody most is the system of patriarchy. According to hooks (2004),

Patriarchy insists that males are inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females, and endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and to maintain that dominance through various forms of psychological terrorism or violence we learn that “Hegemonic masculinity” is the way in which stereotypical male roles are ideologized.

Perceptions of Haudenosaunee masculinity greatly limited Haudenosaunee men in their ability to see themselves as assets to communities. When prompted to describe how they perceive

Haudenosaunee men as assets, worthy, or to describe what is “valuable” about Haudenosaunee, most participants struggled to understand the question.

I offered several different versions of this question and participants still struggled to describe what they felt were “good” things about Haudenosaunee men... they struggled with “seeing” themselves as important assets to community. While I understand that men may have not been able to answer this question (perhaps they felt shy or did not want to boast) I still wonder if these responses point to a larger issue of perceiving Haudenosaunee men as being worthy. When asked later post-interview, if they had questions for me, nearly *a third* of the participants explained that they liked that question by relaying comments like, “I really appreciated that question” or “I never actually thought about that as important.”

Reminders

Several Haudenosaunee language teachers through the years have expressed to me that traditional Haudenosaunee teachings serve as “good reminders” regarding learning and reinforcing cultural values, practices and ceremonial teachings. “Reminders” within the context of learning Haudenosaunee language serve as a word that might imply how to *be* as oñgwehoñweh (an Indigenous person). In fact, I heard this phrase so often, that it I began to think about ways that our community members offer reminders everyday of “how to be.” Despite settler colonial whitewashing of curricula, state sanctioned violence, and subtle socio-cultural expectations to yield to white settler society’s rigid Euro-American expectations, Haudenosaunee communities continue to attend ceremonies, speak their languages, give thanks, dance, and strengthen Indigenous identity by learning and offering “good reminders” which strengthen Haudenosaunee identity... even while they are away at college. Several Haudenosaunee men

expressed ways that their Haudenosaunee cultures helped them to persist through challenges in college.

Waterman and Lindley (2013) write, “Not only do Native Americans rely on their cultural traditions as sources of strength, they are invested in the continuance of these traditions” (p. 147). In their combined qualitative studies on Northern Arapaho and Haudenosaunee women, Waterman and Lindley (2013) examine cultural strengths of Native women in college by using strengths-based lenses, offered by CRT lenses for people of color, such as the importance cultural capital (Yosso, 2005), Native capital (Ward, 2005) as conceptual framework to examine persistence, asset, and resiliency of Native women in higher education which identified, familial capital, community cultural wealth, Native capital, and nation building. In this approach, Waterman and Lindley indicate that through traditional roles, Native women value their families, cultures, communities, nations, and transmitting those values to their children and community as, not only important to their experiences, but “the glue... that binds the community” (p. 155).

I offer their Waterman and Lindley’s (2013) studies, not to in any way equate or compare the experiences of Indigenous men with Indigenous women, (because they are not the same) but to offer specific distinctions that shined through research on Haudenosaunee men that might indicate use of their own cultures as strengths to persevere in their educational journeys. Haudenosaunee men describe the use of traditional teachings, specific to Haudenosaunee communities. Examples that participants described in this study were written as “Culture as Perseverance: “Elders and Language,” “Haudenosaunee diplomacy,” “Warrior Mentality” or which some participants referred to as “Rotiskenhakéthe” (meaning “Warrior” or literally: “He carries a responsibility”). These areas of distinction deserve further research.

To offer an example, Saro, a participant who embodied the experiences of 11 participants described use of “Warrior Mentality.” At first, Saro reluctantly explained to Teyo that “Indigenous masculinity has nothing to do with higher education” and especially putting emphasis on “*nothing!*” he later, provided the following statement which seemed contradictory,

But in terms of how I understood Haudenosaunee masculinity and the warrior mentality and traveling into the realm of higher education with that mindset of this is how men are supposed to be, I think in higher education, what I experienced in my collegiate career was that it kind of broke a lot of things, and I met a lot of people who I thought were masculine, but also they kind of embraced both sides of the spectrum. So, I think that’s kind of how I want to really address this, how did that masculinity have to do with higher education.

Saro, representing 8 participants, also described use of Haudenosaunee diplomacy as a way to persevere. Nathan, who represents 10 participant responses, offers the importance of Elders and Language in the experiences of Haudenosaunee men. These examples showcase the need to accommodate Indigenous students with the ability to access, practice, write about and engage with their Indigenous identities while they grow as students and as Indigenous peoples.

Responsibilities to community

Almost two decades ago, in her seminal work on the experiences of Haudenosaunee students in higher education, Waterman (2007) explains that responsibilities to community are central to Haudenosaunee identity, “A person comes to define his/her identity within the context of family and community. I have a responsibility to my family and my community, but there is also a reciprocal responsibility to me” (p. 27). I echo this sentiment, as I have found this to be prevalent in this study, and within myself, as well. In this study, Haudenosaunee men express not

only commitment to their campus communities but unwavering commitment to their respective Haudenosaunee Nation communities.

Brayboy, et al. (2012) recognize the crucial role that sovereignty and Indigenous nation building play in the experiences of Native students in higher education. Indigenous students are not just racially situated within the institutions, they are situated politically as citizens and members of their Indigenous nations; and thus, institutions of higher education must take responsibility and commit time and resources to build relationships with those students as the students have done for the institutions in which they enroll.

A Haudenosaunee participant described their relationship with their community, which reflects an Indigenous nation building perspective of “giving back” as a crucial component, not just to their college experiences, but to their respect Indigenous nation. Zack said,

Ironworkers, had to leave home all the time, to go to work... being Native, part of that is just taking care of your family whether you're working, you're digging ditches, you're on the iron, you're a teacher, you're a lacrosse player, you're working to take care of your family and to raise your children to be young respectable people in the community...”

Scholars have described the importance of “giving back” for Native students (Guillory, 2008a; Guillory, 2008b; Waterman, 2007, 2012, 2019, 2021). Waterman (2019) describes higher education institutions may be working counter to Indigenous epistemologies of reciprocity and relationality; colleges and universities role in assimilation, individualism, competitiveness, and other Euro-American frameworks is often a place, Waterman suggests, that are in need of centering Indigenous worldviews that value relationship, respect, and responsibility to community. Waterman further elaborates on the importance of “giving back” among Indigenous and Haudenosaunee students as practice in reciprocity and Indigenous nation building

Reciprocity is often used interchangeably with giving back; however, the centrality and depth of meaning of giving back for Indigenous students may not be adequately conveyed to institutional administration and practitioners. It can mean giving back to an urban Indigenous community as well as one on a territory. Place, home, land, family, and community are key for the majority of Indigenous students. Institutions need to understand that in order to adequately support our students. (p. 74-75).

These key aspects of place, family, land, family, and community are areas of importance that need to be considered in the supporting of Indigenous students.

More recently, Brayboy (2021) reiterates this perspective by laying out a handful of what he refers to as lessons or points to consider: Most of our intuitions are not made for us. Brayboy (2021) notes, “The Haudenosaunee men educated in these institutions could not engage in any of the activities and realities that were important to the tribes.” (p. 105). Building and strengthening Indigenous nation sovereignty and capacity is important, but we must strive to have direct responsibility to our Indigenous nations and consider ways to continue to in that sense of stewardship. 3. Institutions of higher education must be place-specific and Brayboy writes, “success as a reminder, is defined by communities and nations” (p. 109). It is not enough that higher education institutions do land acknowledgments, they must commit to an ongoing relationship with the Indigenous nations of that place and responsibilities to the land in which those institutions are situated (have stolen). Lastly, Brayboy (2021) explains that once Indigenous peoples leave an institution, those institutions must not just “toss up its hands” and absolve itself of responsibilities to the Indigenous nation and Indigenous peoples present. In words that resonate, not just with me, but with countless Indigenous peoples, Baybay (2021) offers the following,

I am responsible to my ancestors and responsible for my descendants. My responsibilities to my ancestors are to continue their teachings and what they have started for us in whatever work we do. My responsibilities for my descendants are to serve as a steward who will do his best to create better, easier, more stable conditions for their success. I do not determine what their success looks like, or how they define it. (p. 100).

Brayboy, like many Indigenous scholars (Brayboy, Solyom, Castagno, 2014; Waterman, 2012; Waterman, Lowe, Shotton, 2018) assert the importance of Indigenous nationhood, relationship building, and Indigenous student commitment to their own Indigenous nations while enrolled at universities. Haudenosaunee men described their sense of responsibility to their respective Haudenosaunee communities and nations, which needs to be explored further.

Recommendations

Promote Indigenous visibility. So much of the experiences of Haudenosaunee men and Indigenous students broadly, has been about battling invisibility on college campuses. We must continue to hire a diverse group of faculty, staff, and administrators who Native students can identify with, who understand their experiences, and who “look like” them. This work even carries over, outside of higher education into the workplace (Smith, 2011). While institutions of higher education remain on the homelands of Indigenous peoples, Indigenous communities and students deserve to feel “seen” listened to, and that their worldviews, perspectives, cultures acknowledged respectfully by institutions of higher education. While university campuses continue to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion on campuses, and all too often Indigenous peoples are lost in the shuffle within a “multicultural model” of education. While it is important for universities to build relationships between diverse groups on campus, Indigenous peoples are

not a static, homogenous group of people of color. Indigenous peoples need their own space on university campuses.

Prioritize Indigenous Worldviews in Curricula. In this study, Haudenosaunee men and Native students were unable to “see themselves” in their studies, a persistent issue for Indigenous peoples, and for Haudenosaunee men of this study. Indigenous peoples and Indigenous knowledges have been instrumental in contributing or influencing some of the world’s most prominent forms of government, gender equity, and environmentally sustainable projects.

Institutions of higher education need to prioritize the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge into the curriculum, research, pedagogy, and praxis. This can be done by committing university resources towards building relationships with Indigenous communities, creating and filling Indigenous faculty/ staff positions, creating Native student support programs headed by local Indigenous community members, and supporting the nation-to-nation relationships with Indigenous peoples.

Support Indigenous Sovereignty and Indigenous Nation building. As institutions of higher education in the United States become more and more diverse, as actors within these institutions, we must actively work to address deficits, inequalities, educational pitfalls and disparities, injustice in education. It is the responsibility of higher education leadership, administrators, higher education practitioners, faculty, staff, and committed community leaders to commit to building or continuing relationships of reciprocity and respect towards the sovereignty of Indigenous Nations and peoples today. Leaders, faculty, and staff in higher education institutions must acknowledge and/ or continue to acknowledge Indigenous peoples, their homelands, communities, Indigenous languages and cultures, worldviews who are still today. So often higher education institutions and the education system as a whole have pushed Western/ Settler colonial curricula, measurements, and knowledge onto Indigenous communities. Indigenous communities

must also work in collaboration with universities to support Indigenous nation building (Brayboy, 2021; Brayboy et. al., 2014) and create positions of employment for Indigenous students coming back home from university, to ensure that Indigenous student contribute and “give back” to their nations and communities.

Continue to Research the Experiences of Black, Indigenous Men of Color. Indigenous men in particular, are often not attending higher education at all, are prematurely exiting higher education at alarming rates, and/ or are also severely overlooked in academic research (Poolaw, 2018). Often Native men only “become visible” when they fulfill negative stereotypes that settlers hold about them (Brayboy, 2004) or when they are idolized because of their athletic accolades (Downey, 2017). University campuses and Indigenous communities alike must establish safe spaces for Indigenous men open up, express themselves, build trusting and build loving communities to support dialogue.

Limitations

While I feel I took an important step to understand Haudenosaunee men in higher education, in many ways this research falls short. When examining strengths such as complementarity, roles and responsibilities based on gender, this description largely leaves out a non-binary perspective. Finley (2011) describes heteropatriarchy which has been engrained in Native communities so deeply that “traditional teachings” are often plagued with colonial, heteropatriarchal thought and that because of this longstanding colonization process, discussing Native sexuality, gender relationships, are not only taboo in Native communities, but are essentially the “extension of internalized colonialism” (p. 34). Traditional Indigenous gender roles act might be described as complementary based in cultural and social constructions of gender and might provide instruction for straight, heterosexual, cisgender Indigenous men, it is

important to consider that the cultural and social construction of gender as experienced by Two Spirit, trans, LGBTQ remains incomplete in higher education research.

Perceptions was not limited to issues of masculinity, the differences in educational experiences between Canada and the United States, revealed that this study is limited to the perspectives and perceptions to Indigenous students located primarily in the United States. Given the differences in experiences, further studies need to be conducted around Indigenous men and masculinities in higher education in Canada. This limitation also supports an important Critical Race Theory Tenet related to “Anti-essentialism” that Indigenous peoples, not even from one particular group (Haudenosaunee) are a homogenized group. Because of intersecting identities and interlocking systems of oppression, one particular group may have a diverse array of experiences, and this must be considered. This study did not even come close to covering the breadth of Haudenosaunee university experiences in Canada, as these experiences are surely much different from Haudenosaunee situated in the United States.

Several of the interviews were conducted over Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic which became challenging to deeply understand and connect to participants. At times, participants wanted to go in-depth about an idea, but due to connectivity issues, the participants were interrupted, and we had to wait to reconnect after a few minutes. By the time that we got back in touch, the idea or comment that they were considering was gone or they struggled to remember. This hindered our ability to connect in a more meaningful ways.

Examining this sample through a lens as a higher education practitioner in a Western institution has its limitations, while I tried my best to examine through an Indigenous-based theoretical lens, shifting away from a Western lens completely would have been beneficial and would have yielded results more helpful for Indigenous and Haudenosaunee communities. The

sheer lack of data both qualitatively and quantitatively on Indigenous men and masculinity in higher education is alarming and made this study particularly challenging. More research on Native men in higher education is required to make substantial progress to fully understand their experiences.

Conclusion: A Letter to My Gram

In honor of my Gramma Can, this section is dedicated to my witty, humorous, and unconditionally loving Gram, in her unwavering support of her family, her grandchildren, and her support for me during this journey. When it seemed that nobody was interested, my Gram was *always* there to listen and to give feedback. My Gram cleared the path for me, in realizing that I am much more than a statistic— that I am much more than what they might say about Native men. She makes me believe in myself.

Dear Gram

I know that throughout the years you've asked me several times: "*How's your project going?*" and I would respond, "*Ehh... It's going okay... not quite there yet*" or I would say that, "*I'm really tired*". You always told me to "*keep going*" and to "*not let them get me down.*" I know that you told me to tell you when it was finished, so I am writing this letter to tell you that I am now finished! I'm so excited to tell you this! At times you asked me to clarify different academic words that I've learned and to tell you in a way that you would understand. You would ask me: "*But how do we say it?*" I will use words that are understandable, so here it goes... in a way that *we* say it.

My study taught me that Haudenosaunee men often can't "see" themselves in their own overall education. They feel invisible. Haudenosaunee men told stories about the absence of our cultures, worldviews, and identities in higher education. They often struggled to "see"

themselves within their class projects, readings, assignments, and lectures. Mentors who looked like them and understood their perspectives were far and few between on college and university campuses, making them feel more alone. Professors often did not include Native cultures or worldviews which made Haudenosaunee men struggle to relate to class lessons. Many men felt silenced in classes from their classmates, professors, staff—and they often saw through superficial attempts by faculty and staff to “include Native voices” that sometimes felt forced or disingenuous. Many described feeling invisible on campus or lonely and left without much support.

Racism and ignorance from the campus community often caused Haudenosaunee men to perceive campus as a largely unwelcoming or even hostile. Haudenosaunee men often described feeling tokenized, stereotyped, mischaracterized or misunderstood by members of their campus community. At times, they described a sense of alienation from their non-Native peers because of “offhanded” racist or ignorant comments. Some men were apprehensive to talk about racism and some grew silent. Some men explained that it was not “racism” that they experienced but rather a general lack of understanding or ignorance from the entire campus— basically they didn’t want to have the conversation about racism. Other men specifically told me that campus ignorance is a direct result of systemic racism and to de-emphasize systemic racism is a problem that won’t help our cause.

Haudenosaunee men described that they experienced issues with their social life within a college or university where they felt lost, homesick, or alone—which many described led to alcohol and substance abuse. While navigating their social lives, many turned to partying on campus which led to problems with their physical health, mental and emotional wellbeing, academic and/ or athletic performance. Substance abuse also produced strain on their friendships

and relationships on campus and at home. Some said that they were “only trying to fit in” with their peer group. But in contrast, some men described feeling unfairly characterized as just “drunk Indians”, “lazy”, or “dangerous” by peers or even their own community members from home, which they felt perpetuated a stereotype.

Some became silent when speaking about the men that they look up to, or maybe men that they once looked up to, but maybe not anymore. Some of these memories were actually painful memories of mentors who they felt didn’t treat them well and are no longer a part of their lives. Some men talked about the pain that they experience by no longer having father-figures in their lives. Some men simply became silent and avoided the question altogether. Some men talked a lot about their identities and traumatic moments that they experienced and that they still feel the effects from. Some men are straight, some men are Two-Spirited, LGBTQ and they talked about how it isn’t easy balancing their identity with the sort of “traditional” gender roles of the community when they might identify as gay or queer. For some, their home communities felt hostile, and their college or university campus felt welcoming because of their sexual or gender identities. Some men talked about trying to change the way they think about the meaning of “being a man” that they learned from their fathers or uncles who learned from white men.

Gram, I know that probably sounds like a lot of real negative things. It is, I’m sorry about that. But I can tell you that is *not* the whole story. Sometimes the university people need to hear about a lot of the issues that our people face, so that they can try to help our people who attend colleges and universities. Or maybe, we need to learn about ourselves, so that we can advocate for our own people, too. So now, I will tell you about the real positive ways that we can help Haudenosaunee men.

All of the Haudenosaunee men that I interviewed graduated from college and went on to give back to their communities. I'm very proud of all of them, Gram. All of the Haudenosaunee men who I interviewed found support somewhere, whether by fostering relationships with peer groups, leaning on their home communities, or finding mentors. The idea of support to Haudenosaunee men is a complicated one. Some of them described having diverse mentors on campus or for student-athletes for example, their coaches and teammates served as their communities of support. Some men described they had no supports at all on campus but rather that their support was back home, in our own communities. Their families and communities stood behind them, like our people always do. This is something that I love about our people, Gram.

They talked about how they carry their culture with them, as lacrosse players, language learners, singers, and dancers. They talked about learning from iron workers, men generations before them, who take care of their families and how they want to do the same thing. Mentorship played an important role in support. Some men talked about their older cousins or siblings as mentors to them. Others described their uncles, fathers, and grandfathers as their mentors. Some men, like me, have many mentors or people we look up to, who guide us which may include many peers/ friends, staff and faculty, my dad, my mom, my aunties, and my cousins. Some men like me are lucky enough to have their grandparents by their side, thank you Gram.

It was often the form of support that they described, which informed their perceptions, experiences, and sense of responsibility during college/ university life. On some occasions, men struggled with describing supports that they have during their college/ university experiences because often didn't have any on campus. They would say things like, "I didn't know who was helpful during college". Once prompted to explore the idea of support more deeply, they

described moments where faculty or staff of color, specifically Native or Latinx mentors, would welcome them into their offices or “see” them at university functions and have meaningful conversations with Native men. Often, they described Native women and women of color who were their supports at the college or university, specifically they described “people who looked like them”, specifically describing Native and Chicana/ Latina women. The men who grew the most, were the ones who listened to the women in their lives.

They persisted and showed resiliency. Sometimes when they had to push through hard times, they often talked about toughing it out, advice given to them by their fathers, uncles, grandfathers. When they sought out supportive figures, they often sought out their grandmothers, mothers, and aunts. Their cousins, peers, professors, or staff at the university— all played a vital supportive role in the education of Haudenosaunee men. It was, after all, their communities who reminded men of their responsibilities to their people, to their communities, and ultimately, they were reminded of their responsibilities to all of Creation.

You said once said to me, Gram, “It takes time to get change, believe it or not.” I hope that over time, our communities will begin to address the trauma that we have, especially related to the hurt that systemic racism and white settler patriarchy has done to our own people and to ourselves. I hope that over time we can decolonize what it means to be a man, today. I hope that we can address the trauma that we have, so that we can provide for our communities like we were meant to as Hodisge:’eñgehda’; as men who carry responsibilities.

You always told me that you are proud of me, Gram. Well, I am proud of you, too. I’m proud of you for always working for your community, wherever that was. When you worked at Syracuse University as a custodian and the students wanted to interview you— it was because *you* meant *that* much to them, that they wanted to hear your voice. I’m proud that you just want

to make people happy through your craft of making pies. You might have a reputation of being “the best pie maker” at home but you’re the best pie-maker in the world, to me. I’m proud of all that you overcame throughout your life. I know that you overcame a lot of hurt and pain throughout the years, but that never stopped you from being your true, authentic self to us, always. I’m proud to call you my Gram. I love you.

Your Loving Grandson,

Hugh (“Hoots”)

Epilogue

Haudenosaunee men are more than what they perceive themselves to be...

They've internalized systemic racism and patriarchal hegemony to the point where they believe the myths, stereotypes and narrow definitions that are attributed to them, not just from white society but from within their own communities. Archetypes are created which limit how Haudenosaunee men see themselves. Their perceptions are informed by opportunities that were presented to those who they consider to be their role models including their fathers, their uncles, their grandfathers, and ancestors; but systemic racism and white settler patriarchy had shaped their perceptions of themselves too; and lack of opportunity determined for those the men before us what they could be... but more so, that which they could *not* be... that which they were *not allowed* to be. We are proud of our fathers and grandfathers and the men before them; we recognize their commitment, and their struggles; through their death defying work; they put their lives on the line for their families. In recognition of *those* proud Indigenous men, we must also advocate for their wellbeing and defiantly ask: Why were those the only things that were afforded to our fathers, uncles, and grandfathers for so long?

Why does Dad have to go away for so long? *I miss him.*

Why does my cousin have to risk his life to provide for his family? *He's not coming back home... is he?*

How come Grampa struggled in his relationship with my Gram? *I still love him. And I love her. And I miss them both deeply.*

This has been an extremely long road, and to come to a conclusion that myth, internalization of harmful tropes, and rigid definitions have informed everything we do for so long... and if we aren't that, we become upset and struggle to be just a handful of archetypes of

Haudenosaunee men... we don't even realize that we limit ourselves, box ourselves in, and live our entire lives as these static versions of ourselves... that we did *not* actually determine for us but that was *forced* upon us by the system of white settler patriarchy.

I know why my Gram was so important to this project, in fact it's her enduring love that is sprinkled throughout. I sobbed when I read my concluding letter to her before she passed away. I know now that this project was about putting together pieces that had been difficult for me to see at first. I imagine that my Grampa and my Gram are up there in the Skyworld, in their truth, separate but together as they often were... separate but together, as we all often are.

My Gram's greatest gift to me, was her time and how she teaches me simply to slow down, and *to stay*.

I know now. Nyaweñha.

APPENDICES

Informed Consent Document (Pilot Study)



1

Syracuse University IRB Approved

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY MAR 24 2016 MAR 23 2017

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
Cultural Foundations of Education

Indigenous Experiences in Higher Education: Resiliency, Masculinity, and Resurgence

My name is Hugh Burnam and I am a Ph.D. student at Syracuse University, School of Education, in the Cultural Foundations of Education program. I am inviting you to participate in a research study. Involvement in the study is voluntary, so you may choose to participate or not. This sheet will explain the study to you and please feel free to ask questions about the research if you have any. I will be happy to explain anything in detail if you wish.

I am interested in learning more about the experiences that Indigenous students have had regarding ability to overcome, achieve, and excel in higher education. I am also interested in ways that Indigenous peoples define masculinity and what Native students have done (or will do) after their higher education experience. You will be required to answer questions related to the following: Your experience as a student in higher education regarding hardships, alienation, home-going, culture, resilience, mentorship, and empowerment, relationships, traditional cultures, roles and responsibilities, masculinity, and work/ interests after college/ university. This will take one hour of your time.

Methods and data collection will require interviews to be conducted with Native peoples, post-higher education, current Native students, and Native faculty and staff. I will interview 25 Native students post-higher education, 25 current Native students in pursuing degrees in higher education, 5 Native faculty, and 5 Native staff. The fieldwork will be conducted over a time-span of 4 months: _____. The full project will be completed by _____. The first round of interviews will be conducted one-on-one for an hour. Participants will be given an optional second round of interviews that will take place as per agreement of the researcher and the participant for an additional hour.

The interviews will take place primarily on the Syracuse University campus, or any private location as agreed upon between the researcher and participant, which may include the participant's home, as per the participant's discretion and comfort level. During potential interviews in the participants' homes I will keep your study data as confidential as possible, with the exception of certain information that I must report for legal or ethical reasons such as situations of abuse, and/or intent to hurt yourself or others. As a researcher I am bound to notify someone/agency about that risk. Research will be conducted through three (3) possible mediums: audio, photography, and video. Participants will be given the option of choosing which medium they would like to participate.

- **Audio recordings:** Interviews that are to be audio recorded:
 - One-on-One (Individual) interviews— Participant's names and information discussed during the interviews will be kept confidential. This means that your name will not appear anywhere and your specific answers will not be linked to your name in any way.
 - Group Interviews (Focus Group)— Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in-group situations. Other participants in your group will know how you answer questions. While we will discourage anyone from sharing this information outside of the group, we cannot guarantee confidentiality by other group members. We will do our best to keep all of your personal information private and anonymous but absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

Participants will be recorded through voice-recording device. The voice recorder will be shut-off at any point during the interview, as per the participant's discretion. If participants find that they have shared information that they do not want in the study, they will have the opportunity to look through the transcribed (written) portion of the recording and exclude any information that they may see fit. The purpose of the voice-recording in small groups or with individuals is to help in the transcription (written) process to ensure accuracy. The recordings will be used to transcribe the written portion, then held for a period of 7 years, then destroyed. The recordings will be held only with the researcher under lock and key. Only the researcher will listen to the recordings.

- **Photography:** The purpose of photography is to visually gauge and add a more personalized aspect to the work that participants have created during college and/or after students' college experiences (e.g., artwork, photographs, built structures, physical spaces, activities, etc.). Participants may be photographed during or after single or group interviews. Participants' work may be photographed during or after single or group interviews. Participants will have the opportunity to choose which they feel most comfortable:

- 1.) to have photographs taken of themselves along with their work.
- 2.) to have photos only of themselves taken;
- 3) to have photos only of their work taken;
- 4) to have no photos taken

The degree to which photos will be taken will be the participant's choice. You do not have to agree to yourself of your work being photographed. If you agree to being photographed, then you want the researcher to stop taking pictures, please tell the researcher. Your status will not be affected or prejudiced if you request that the camera not be used. The digital picture file will be copied and will be stored on a secured server under lock and key. Photographs will be used for

Syracuse University IRB Approved

MAR 24 2016 MAR 23 2017

educational, training, and teaching purposes. Selected photos will be used in public spaces for presentations at conferences, classroom instruction, and published works. As a result, confidentiality and anonymity will not be ensured and participants' identities will be revealed in public spaces. The photo files will be destroyed after 7 years. If you consent to your interviews being photographed, please check the box below that reads: "I agree to being photographed" then check the box to the degree you wish to be photographed.

- **Video:** The purpose of video-recording interviews is to create a perspective of Indigenous experiences that audiences can see, hear, and understand that will be used for educational, training, and teaching purposes. After this project is completed, selected video interviews will be used in public spaces for presentations at conferences, classroom instruction, and published works. Confidentiality or anonymity cannot be ensured. The digital file or tape will not be copied and will be stored on a secured server and is subject to the same degree of confidentiality and security as your personal records. You do not have to agree to your interviews being video recorded. If you want the camera turned off, please tell the researcher. Your status will not be affected or prejudiced if you request that the camera is switched off. The video footage will be destroyed after 7 years. If you consent to your interviews being recorded, check the box below that reads: "I agree to be video recorded."

Small gifts, handmade Native crafts (jewelry, wallets, carved wooden memento) worth no more than \$10.00 will be awarded per interview to each participant. Gifts will be provided to participants at the beginning of the study. If the participants withdraw from the study at any point in time, they will be able to keep the gifts.

Participants benefit from this study by knowing that they have provided their lived experiences to enhance the knowledge of the field education. The benefit of this research is that you will help us to understand Indigenous students' experiences in higher education, masculinity, and important work that Indigenous students are doing post-college. This, in-turn, helps community members, education scholars, schools and higher education institutions to better understand Native experiences in higher education settings as well. Community members, educators, school leaders, and school administration may be able to better accommodate Indigenous students academically, given your participation in this research.

The risks to participants in this study are the sensitive issues of sharing sacred knowledge associated with their value systems. If participants choose to contribute through photographic and video mediums, their identities will not be confidential or anonymous, as they will be seen in public spaces in educational settings, presentations, conferences, and classrooms. Educators, policy makers, students, or whatever kind of audience that observes the research data may disagree fundamentally or take offense to the opinions of the participants, in which, because their identities may be known, this could potentially cause social or political unrest, which may lead to psychological, social or political risk for participants.

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MAR 24 2016 MAR 23 2017

The risks will be minimized by the participants' ability to choose what he or she wants to share, given the scope of this study. If the participants do not want to take part, they have the right to refuse to take part, without penalty. If the participant decides to take part and later no longer wish to continue, the participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without penalty. If the participants experience psychological risk, the participants may contact the researchers who will provide resources to the participants to address psychological harm.

If you choose to participate through audio and video mediums, your identity will not be confidential or anonymous. These risks will be minimized by the participants' ability to choose what he or she wants to share, given the scope of this study. If you do not want to take part, you have the right to refuse to take part, without penalty. If you decide to take part and later no longer wish to continue, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without penalty.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions, concerns, complaints about the research, contact:
 Hugh Burnam, Ph. D. Student, Cultural Foundations of Education, 230 Huntington Hall, Syracuse, NY 13244, (315) 443-4752, Email: hburnam@syr.edu
 Dr. Dalia Rodriguez, Ph. D., Interim Chair, Cultural Foundations of Education, 356 Huntington Hall, Syracuse, NY 13244, Phone: 315-443-9656, Email: darodrig@syr.edu
 If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you have questions, concerns, or complaints that you wish to address to someone other than the investigator, if you cannot reach the investigator, contact the Syracuse University Institutional Review Board at 315-443-3013.

All of my questions have been answered, I am 18 years of age or older, and I wish to participate in this research study. I have received a copy of this consent form.

Audio

- I agree to be audiotaped
 I do not agree to being audiotaped

Photography

- I agree to have photos taken of my work and of myself
 I agree to have photos taken only of myself
 I agree to have photos taken only of my work (e.g., artwork, photographs, built structures, physical spaces, activities)
 I do not agree to have photos taken

Video

- I agree to be video recorded
 I do not agree to be video recorded

Syracuse University IRB Approved

MAR 24 2016 MAR 23 2017

Informed Consent Document (Main Study)



Syracuse University IRB Approved

1

MAR 5 - 2020

MAR 4 - 2021

Experiences of Haudenosaunee Men in Higher Education

My name is Hugh Burnam and I am a Ph.D. candidate at Syracuse University, School of Education, in the Cultural Foundations of Education program. Dr. Dalia Rodriguez is the Principle Investigator. We are inviting you to participate in a research study. Involvement in the study is voluntary, so you may choose to participate or not. This sheet will explain the study to you and please feel free to ask questions about the research if you have any. I will be happy to explain anything in detail if you wish.

I am interested in learning more about the experiences that Haudenosaunee men have had regarding ability to overcome, achieve, and excel in higher education. I am also interested in ways that Haudenosaunee men understand masculinity. You will be required to answer questions related to your experiences as a student in higher education regarding hardships, alienation, home-going, culture, resilience, mentorship, and empowerment, relationships, traditional cultures, roles and responsibilities, and masculinity. This will take one hour of your time.

Methods and data collection will require interviews to be conducted with Native peoples, post-higher education, current Native students, and Native faculty and staff. We will interview 10 Haudenosaunee men in higher education. The fieldwork will be conducted over a time-span of 2 months: February 1st, 2020- March 31st, 2020. The full project will be completed by May 1st, 2020. The first round of interviews will be conducted one-on-one for an hour. Participants will be given an optional second round of interviews that will take place as per agreement of the researcher and the participant for an additional hour.

The interviews will take place primarily on the Syracuse University campus, or any private location as agreed upon between you and I, as per your discretion and comfort level. During interviews, I will keep your study data as confidential as possible, with the exception of certain information that I must report for legal or ethical reasons such as situations of abuse, and/or intent to hurt yourself or others. As a researcher I am bound to notify someone/agency about that risk.

One-on-one (individual) interviews and group interviews (focus group) interviews will be conducted through audio recordings. One-on-One (individual) interviews— Participant's names and information discussed during the interviews will be kept confidential. This means that your name will not appear anywhere and your specific answers will not be linked to your name in any way. Group Interviews (focus group)— confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in-group situations. Other participants in your group will know how you answer questions. While we will discourage anyone from sharing this information outside of the group, we cannot guarantee confidentiality by other group members. We will do our best to keep all of your personal information private and anonymous but absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

You will be recorded through voice-recording device. The voice recorder will be shut-off at any point during the interview, as per your discretion. If participants find that they

Consent form 1

MAR 5-2020 MAR 4-2021

have shared information that they do not want in the study, they will have the opportunity to look through the transcribed (written) portion of the recording and exclude any information that they may see fit. The purpose of the voice-recording in small groups or with individuals is to help in the transcription (written) process to ensure accuracy. The recordings will be used to transcribe the written portion, then held for a period of 7 years, then destroyed. The recordings will be held only with the researcher under lock and key. Only the researchers will listen to the recordings.

If you consent to be audio recorded, please check the box below that reads: "I agree to be audio recorded." If you do not consent to be audio recorded, please check that box that reads, "I do not agree to be audio recorded."

For long-distance interviews, some interviews will take place over phone, FaceTime, or Skype and will be voice-recorded. In the case of remote interviews, the researcher will conduct the interview in a private room, privacy protected in same manner than if they were present in-person. Small gifts, handmade Native crafts (jewelry, wallets, carved wooden memento) worth no more than \$10.00 will be awarded per interview to each participant. Gifts will be provided to participants at the beginning of the study. If the participants withdraw from the study at any point in time, they will be able to keep the gifts.

Participants benefit from this study by knowing that they have provided their lived experiences to enhance the knowledge of the field education. The benefit of this research is that you will help us to understand the experiences of Haudenosaunee men in higher education. This, in-turn, helps community members, education scholars, schools and higher education institutions to better understand Native experiences in higher education settings as well. Community members, educators, school leaders, and school administration may be able to better accommodate Indigenous students academically, given your participation in this research.

The risks to you in this study are the sensitive issues of sharing sacred knowledge associated with your value systems. If you choose to contribute through photographic and video mediums, their identities will not be confidential or anonymous, as they will be seen in public spaces in educational settings, presentations, conferences, and classrooms. Educators, policy makers, students, or whatever kind of audience that observes the research data may disagree fundamentally or take offense to your opinions, in which, because your identities may be known, this could potentially cause social or political unrest, which may lead to psychological, emotional social or political risk for participants.

The risks will be minimized by your ability to choose what you want to share, given the scope of this study. If you do not want to take part, you have the right to refuse to take part, without penalty. If you decide to take part and later no longer wish to continue, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without penalty. If you do not want to answer certain questions, you may decline certain questions. If you do not want to be recorded in any way, but still want to participate in the study, you may – in that

MAR 5-2020

MAR 4-2021

case; I will only take notes during the interview. If you do not want me to take notes, we may have a conversational interview with no recordings and no notes. If you feel like you are experiencing psychological risk, you may contact the researchers who will provide resources to you to address psychological harm.

Only two researchers will have access to the data stored at Syracuse University. Recording will be transferred from a voice recorder, or a camera with video and photo capabilities, all stored in a memory card. The memory card will be used to transfer recordings to the desktop. The memory card will be wiped of all data immediately after transfer of data. All recordings, audio, photo; video will be destroyed after 7 years.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions, concerns, complaints about the research, contact:
Hugh Burnam, Ph. D. Candidate, Cultural Foundations of Education, 230 Huntington Hall, Syracuse, NY 13244, (716) 258-1206, Email: hburnam@syr.edu.

Dr. Dalia Rodriguez, Ph. D., Interim Chair, Cultural Foundations of Education, 356 Huntington Hall, Syracuse, NY 13244, Phone: 315-443-9656, Email: darodrig@syr.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you have questions, concerns, or complaints that you wish to address to someone other than the investigator, if you cannot reach the investigator, contact the Syracuse University Institutional Review Board at 315-443-3013.

All of my questions have been answered

Yes
 No

I am 18 years of age or older

Yes
 No

I wish to participate in this research study

Yes
 No

Are you a current college student, or a college graduate?

Yes
 No

What is your highest level of educational attainment?

High School
 2 year/ Associates Degree
 4 year/ Bachelor's Degree
 Master's Degree/ Law Degree
 Doctoral degree/ Ph.D./ Ed.D

Consent form 1

I have received a copy of this consent form.

- Yes
- No

Audio

- I agree to be audio recorded
- I do not agree to being recorded

Signature of participant _____
Date

Printed name of participant

Signature of researcher _____
Date

Printed name of researcher

Syracuse University IRB Approved

MAR 5-2020

MAR 4-2021

MAR 5-2020 MAR 4-2021

[Oral Consent form to be read to participants for remote interviews]

Experiences of Haudenosaunee Men in Higher Education

My name is Hugh Burnam and I am a Ph.D. candidate at Syracuse University, School of Education, in the Cultural Foundations of Education program. Dr. Dalia Rodriguez is the Principle Investigator. We are inviting you to participate in a research study. Involvement in the study is voluntary, so you may choose to participate or not. I will explain the study to you by reading the oral consent form for remote interviews. Please feel free to ask questions about the research if you have any. I will be happy to explain anything in detail if you wish. I will ask you questions about your consent after reading this to you.

I am interested in learning more about the experiences that Haudenosaunee men have had regarding ability to overcome, achieve, and excel in higher education. I am also interested in ways that Haudenosaunee men understand masculinity. You will be required to answer questions related to your experiences as a student in higher education regarding hardships, alienation, home-going, culture, resilience, mentorship, and empowerment, relationships, traditional cultures, roles and responsibilities, and masculinity. This will take one hour of your time.

Methods and data collection will require interviews to be conducted with Native peoples, post-higher education, current Native students, and Native faculty and staff. We will interview 10 Haudenosaunee men in higher education. The fieldwork will be conducted over a time-span of 2 months: February 1st, 2020- March 31st, 2020. The full project will be completed by May 1st, 2020. The first round of interviews will be conducted one-on-one for an hour. Participants will be given an optional second round of interviews that will take place as per agreement of the researcher and the participant for an additional hour.

I will be interviewing you from a distance, in which case, I will be at the Syracuse University campus, or any private location as agreed upon between you and I, as per your discretion and comfort level. During interviews, I will keep your study data as confidential as possible, with the exception of certain information that I must report for legal or ethical reasons such as situations of abuse, and/or intent to hurt yourself or others. As a researcher I am bound to notify someone/agency about that risk.

Remote interviews will only be conducted as one-on-one (individual) interviews, not group interviews (focus group) interviews. Remote interviews will be conducted through Skype, FaceTime, or via phone. One-on-One (individual) interviews— Participant's names and information discussed during the interviews will be kept confidential. This means that your name will not appear anywhere and your specific answers will not be linked to your name in any way.

You will be recorded through voice-recording device. The voice recorder will be shut-off at any point during the interview, per your discretion. If participants find that they have

Consent form 2

MAR 5-2020

MAR 4-2021

shared information that they do not want in the study, they will have the opportunity to look through the transcribed (written) portion of the recording and exclude any information that they may see fit. The purpose of the voice-recording in small groups or with individuals is to help in the transcription (written) process to ensure accuracy. The recordings will be used to transcribe the written portion, then held for a period of 7 years, then destroyed. The recordings will be held only with the researcher under lock and key. Only the researchers will listen to the recordings.

For this remote interview, taking place over phone, FaceTime, or Skype, I am conducting the interview in a private room. Therefore, privacy is protected in a similar manner than if this interview will have taken place in-person. After I finish reading this consent form to you, I will ask: "Do you agree to be audio recorded?" If you do agree, you will say, "Yes." If you do not agree to be audio recorded, you will say, "No."

You will benefit from this study by knowing that you have provided your lived experiences to enhance the knowledge of the field education. The benefit of this research is that you will help us to understand the experiences of Haudenosaunee men in higher education. This, in-turn, helps community members, education scholars, schools and higher education institutions to better understand Native experiences in higher education settings as well. Community members, educators, school leaders, and school administration may be able to better accommodate Indigenous students academically, given your participation in this research.

The risks to you in this study are the sensitive issues of sharing sacred knowledge associated with your value systems. Whenever one works with the internet there is always the risk of compromising privacy, confidentiality and/or anonymity. Your confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology being used. It is important for you to understand that no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the internet by third parties. While you are participating remotely through Skype, FaceTime, or phone conversation, potential risks are that whenever interviews are conducted through the email or through the internet, there is always the risk of compromising privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality. Your confidentiality will be maintained to a degree, as permitted by the technology used in the study. We cannot promise confidentiality and privacy always has a risk of being breached through third party intrusion. Incentives will be sent to your email, in the form of a gift card worth no more than \$10.00.

The risks will be minimized by your ability to choose what you want to share, given the scope of this study. If you do not want to take part, you have the right to refuse to take part, without penalty. If you decide to take part and later no longer wish to continue, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without penalty. If you do not want to answer certain questions, you may decline certain questions. If you do not want to be recorded in any way, but still want to participate in the study, you may – in that case; I will only take notes during the interview. If you do not want me to take notes, we may have a conversational interview with no recordings and no notes. If you feel like you

Consent form 2

are experiencing psychological risk, you may contact the researchers who will provide resources to you to address psychological harm.

Only two researchers will have access to the data stored at Syracuse University. Recording will be transferred from a voice recorder are all stored in a memory card. The memory card will be used to transfer recordings to the desktop. The memory card will be wiped of all data immediately after transfer of data. All recordings, audio, photo; video will be destroyed after 7 years.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions, concerns, complaints about the research, contact:
Hugh Burnam, Ph. D. Candidate, Cultural Foundations of Education, 230 Huntington Hall, Syracuse, NY 13244, (716) 258-1206, Email: hburnam@syr.edu.

Dr. Dalia Rodriguez, Ph. D., Interim Chair, Cultural Foundations of Education, 356 Huntington Hall, Syracuse, NY 13244, Phone: 315-443-9656, Email: darodrig@syr.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you have questions, concerns, or complaints that you wish to address to someone other than the investigator, if you cannot reach the investigator, contact the Syracuse University Institutional Review Board at 315-443-3013.

Please answer the following questions about oral consent:

Do you have any questions for me about the study? Yes/ no?

Are you 18 years of age or older? Yes/ no?

Are you a current college student, or a college graduate? Yes/ no?

What is your highest level of educational attainment?

- High School
- 2 year/ Associates Degree
- 4 year/ Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree/ Law Degree
- Doctoral degree/ Ph.D./ Ed.D

Do you wish to participate in this research study? Yes/ no?

Audio

Do you agree to being audiotaped? Yes/ No? (Circle one, as per participant's oral consent)

Copy of Consent Script

How can I provide you with a copy of this consent script?

Syracuse University IRB Approved

Consent form 2

MAR 5-2020

MAR 4-2021

Electronic Solicitation

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR RESEARCH IN:

THE EXPERIENCES OF HAUDENOSAUNEE MEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION

We are looking for volunteers to take part in a study about the experiences of Haudenosaunee men in higher education.

As a participant in this study, you will be asked to partake in a focus group or an individual interview, lasting approximately 60 minutes, with an optional second interview for 60 minutes. Interviews will take place at Syracuse University, or other college/university and private setting as per agreed upon between the researchers and participants. Participants will be audio recorded or not recorded at all, per their discretion.

You must self-identify as a Native American, Haudenosaunee man (Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, or Tuscarora) and be a current college student (undergraduate student or graduate student) or a college graduate, having attained a 2-year associates degree, a 4-year bachelor's degree, or an advanced master's, law, or doctoral degrees. Participants must be over the age of 18.

In appreciation for your time, you will receive a small gift or gift card worth no more than \$10.00. Confidentiality will be pursued unless explicit consent is given for the release of research data for public purposes.

For more information about this study, or to volunteer for this study, please contact:

Hugh Burnam
Cultural Foundations of Education
at
(716) 258-1206
Email: hburnam@syr.edu

The study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Syracuse University

Interview Guide – Pilot Study

Indigenous Experiences in Higher Education: Resiliency, Masculinity, and Resurgence

- 1) Introduce yourself. Where Indigenous Nation/ Tribe are you from? What was life like before college/ university?
- 2) How did you access higher education? Did you access college in a way that was similar to people in your community?
- 3) Which challenges have you experienced in college/ university?
- 4) How did you overcome those challenges?
- 5) What do you want to do after college/ university? What did you do after college/ university?
- 6) How do you define Indigenous masculinity? How do men in your community understand masculinity? How do you understand Indigenous feminisms and Two-Spirit identity? What are some gendered issues in your community and/ or in higher education?

Interview Guide – The Experiences of Haudenosaunee Men in Higher Education

1. Opening questions. Give thanks.

- Tell me about yourself. Of which Haudenosaunee Nation are you a member? Where are you from? How old were you when you attended college/ university? How old are you now? Where did you attend college/ university? What was your major?

2. Tell me about what led you to higher education?

- What contributed to your decision to attend college?
- Describe ways that Haudenosaunee men will commonly access college in your experiences.
- Did you access college in a way that was common of Haudenosaunee men?

2. What were your experiences during college?

- Where did you find support in college?
- In recalling your experiences in college, please describe moments that were important to you. Why were these moments so important to you?
- What were some challenges for you during college? How did these events affect you as a person?
- How did you overcome these challenges?
- Can you describe a person who was supportive of you during your journey through higher education?
- Tell me about the strengths that you discovered or developed through college.

3. What does “Haudenosaunee masculinity” have to do with higher education?

- How would you describe a “typical” Haudenosaunee man?
 - How might you relate to this description that you’ve provided?

- How would you describe the role that Haudenosaunee men have had on your life?
 - What role did Haudenosaunee men have on your college experiences?
- What are some things that challenge Haudenosaunee men on a regular basis?
 - How do Haudenosaunee men overcome those challenges?
- What is valuable about Haudenosaunee men?
 - How do you experiences this sense of value?
- Describe your responsibilities as a Haudenosaunee man.
 - How did knowing these responsibilities affect your college experience?
 - How does knowing these responsibilities affect your community?
- How might your community perceive Haudenosaunee men who are college educated?
 - What does “education” mean to you?
 - How do you perceive college educated Haudenosaunee men?
 - How do you think that your community perceives you?
- What advice would you give Haudenosaunee men who attend college or university?

4. Closing Questions.

- Is there something that you might not have thought about before that occurred to you during this interview?
- Is there something else you think I should know to understand your story better?
- What are some questions that you have for me?
- Give thanks.

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Curriculum Vitae

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Education

Syracuse University

Ph.D., Cultural Foundation of Education (2023)

Advisor: Dr. Dalia Rodriguez

Chair: Dr. Alan Foley

Dissertation Title: *Haudenosaunee Men and Masculinity in Higher Education: Perceptions, Reminders, and Responsibilities to Community*

Buffalo State College

Master's Degree, Adult Education, (2011)

Chair: Dr. Susan Birden

Buffalo State College

Bachelor's Degree, Individualized Ethnic and Minority Studies, (2010)

Research and Teaching Interests

Indigenous/ Haudenosaunee education, social justice in education, higher education student experiences, language revitalization, environmental activism, Indigenous methodologies

Awards and Honors

- Candidate- Elect. *Professor of the Year*, Medaille University (Spring 2023; 2022)
- Recipient. *Summer Dissertation Fellowship*, The Graduate School at Syracuse University (Summer, 2019)
- Recipient. *Campus as a Laboratory of for Sustainability (CALs) Grant, Oral History of Environmental Activism, Divestment, and Higher Education* (Summer 2017-18)
- Recipient. *The Haudenosaunee Thought Project, Graduate Student Public Humanities Fellowship*, State of New York, Syracuse University (2017-18)
- Candidate-Elect. *Syracuse University 44 Stars of Excellence Gala Award Nomination*, The One University Award (2016)
- Recipient. *Syracuse City School District Recognition Award, SAT Prep Program*, Syracuse University, Say Yes to Education, Graduate Assistantship (2014).

Teaching Experience

Medaille University (Formerly “Medaille College”)

- INT 450: *Senior Capstone in Citizenship*, Interdisciplinary Studies (Fall 2021- Present)
- GEN 410: *Senior Capstone I: Colonization and Imperialism*, Interdisciplinary Studies (Present)
- INT 110: *Intro to Critical Thinking*, Interdisciplinary Studies (Fall 2021- Present)
- HON 220: *Justice and Democracy in America*. Honors Program (Spring 2022)
- GEN 220: *Social Justice Issues*, Interdisciplinary Studies (Spring 2022)
- HIS 220: *Cultural Interactions in Colonial North America*, Interdisciplinary Studies (Spring 2022)
- GEN 220: *Justice & Democracy*, Interdisciplinary Studies (Fall, 2019- Spring 2020)
- INT 105: *Learning in College*, Interdisciplinary Studies (Fall 2018- Fall 2019)

Syracuse University

- CFE 400/600: *Indigenous Knowledge, Learning, and Identity*, School of Education (Online course) (Summer 2015- Summer 2022)
- EDU 400/ HED 600: *Higher Education Activism and Divestment*, Higher Education Dept. (hybrid online course) (Summer 2018)

SUNY Oswego

- NAT 100: *Introduction to Native American Studies*, History Dept. (Fall 2016- Spring 2017)
- ANT 356: *Culture and History of the Iroquois*, Anthropology Dept. (Spring 2017)

SUNY Canton

- ENG 320: *Native American Auto/Biography*, English Department: (Online course) (Fall 2016-Spring 2017)

SUNY Cortland

- SOC 103: *Race, Gender, and Class Issues*, Foundations of Social Advocacy, Department of Education (Fall 2015, Fall 2016)

Lake Shore/ Silver Creek/ Gowanda High School

- *Haudenosaunee/ Iroquois Studies* at Lake Shore High School, Gowanda High School, and Silver Creek High School, The Seneca Nation of Indians Education Department (April 2017- January 2018)

Program and Supervisory Experience

Associate Dean for Grant-Funded Student Support Programs

Medaille University, (July 2019- September 2020)

- Provided administrative support for directors and staff of seven grant-funded student support programs, including: Student Support Services (TRiO), Upward Bound Math Science and Upward Bound Classic (TRiO), CCAMPIS (TRiO), Say Yes to Education,

Arthur O. Eve Higher Education Opportunity Program, and CJII Albion Prison Grant/
Sunshine Ladies

- Closely monitored federal, state, and private reporting deadlines, submit budget narratives, and monitored student data including student retention/ persistence rates and graduation rates
- Hired and supervised grant-funded student support directors on campus while building trusting and collaborative relationships with students and between program staff, administration, and faculty
- Served as board member for implementation of a Social Justice and Equity Studies master's degree program on campus
- Participated in Academic Council Meetings to collaborate, update, and to relay grant funded student support programming information to VP's, directors, and deans on campus
- Utilized the following databases on campus for student support: Banner, Hyperion, Student Access, and Web Financials
- Administered asset-based programming of all grant-funded student support programs campus-wide

Program Director, TRiO Student Support Services

Medaille University (March 2018-June 2019; July 2020-Present)

- Administered TRIO SSS Grant which served 200 yearly including students with documented dis/abilities, first-generation college students, and/ or economically disadvantaged students enrolled at Medaille University
- Created asset-based student programming collaboratively among various programs, departments and other outside higher education institutions
- Developed assessment measures to understand student recruitment, retention/ persistence, and graduation rates for federal and college-wide reporting including the Annual Performance Report (APR) and grant-renewal (2020-2025)
- Hired and supervised staff of 10: one Administrative Assistant, three full-time academic counselors, and six part-time student employees
- Monitored budget and reported program progress to the Director of Student Success and the Vice President of Academic Affairs at Medaille University

Interim Program Director, TRiO Upward Bound

Medaille University (Summer 2018)

- Developed and Implemented Summer Program for 60 recruited Youth in the City of Buffalo
- Interviewed and hired Upward Bound personnel including: one Director, one Assistant Director, and one Administrative Assistant
- Wrote Annual Performance Reports (APR) and Interim Reports for TRiO Student Support Services and Upward Bound for federal funding, per grant guidelines

Academic Consultant, Native Student Program, Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA)

Syracuse University (August, 2016- 2017)

- Monitored academic progress of 80+ Native Haudenosaunee Promise Scholarship students through inter-departmental collaboration, community engagement, academic

services, through the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) specifically focused on retention of Native students on campus

- Worked alongside Native students to create inclusive environment on campus through student meetings, media coverage, community projects
- Collaborated with the Office of Multicultural Affairs, students of color initiatives on campus, LGBTQ resource center, Stevenson Athletic Department, and student organizations

SAT Prep Coordinator/ Summer Success Academy, Say Yes to Education
Syracuse University (September 2013- May 2016)

- Designed, implemented, and coordinated *Saturdays at SU-SAT Prep* serving over 500 high school students from the City of Syracuse/ Central New York Area
- Interviewed, hired, and coordinated over 80 tutors, 10 instructors, 6 assistant coordinators (over 3 years)
- Collaborated with campus leaders at Syracuse University, Say Yes to Education, City of Syracuse and Onondaga Nation to create SAT Prep program and Summer Success Academy (various locations)

Consulting Project Experience

Shad Canada (September 2022- Present)

- Assisted with inclusive language of summer scholarship programming to recruit Indigenous high school students into STEM fields

Akron School District (Summer 2021- Present)

- Administer cultural sensitivity trainings to the school leadership, faculty, staff, and/ or community members
- Facilitate discussions about the experiences of Indigenous students in K-12 education
- Provide information to school leadership to implement Seneca/ Haudenosaunee awareness programs in collaboration with Native staff and community.

The Teaching Well (July 2021 – December 2022)

- Hold race-alike space for dialogue on racial healing through somatic practice
- Discuss Haudenosaunee education, colonization, history in New York State, Indigenous identity, and language revitalization best practice

Associations/ Committee Experience

Association Chair, *Native American Indigenous Education Association of New York (NAIEA)*
(Newly elected, 2022- Present)

Co-founder, *The Haudenosaunee Student Alliance* (2016-2019)

Select Journal Articles & Book Chapters

Objects of Coloniality: Locating past and shaky futures through Black ash baskets. [Working Title]. Routledge. (Forthcoming book chapter).

Beyond Silence: Duel Autoethnographic Examinations of Critical and Indigenous Pedagogies in Higher Education and Museum Spaces. Special Issue: Indigenous Pedagogy. Contingencies: A Journal of Global Pedagogy. (Forthcoming article, 2023).

Indigenous Men in Higher Education. Beyond the Asterisk 10-Year Anniversary: Understanding Native Students in Higher Education (Working title). Stylus Publishing. (Forthcoming chapter, 2023).

We don't need settler permission: Recalling the Haudenosaunee Thought Project (#htp) through digital Indigenous Autoethnography. Transmotion. (Publication forthcoming, 2023).

The Haudenosaunee Student Alliance: From Our Grandmothers' Tables. On Indian Ground. Information Age Publishing. (Publication forthcoming, 2022)

The Postdigital Settler Spectacle: An Educators' Dérive to Unveil a 'New Colonizer' During Covid-19. Postdigital Ecopedagogies. Springer Nature. (Published chapter, Summer 2022)

Towards Interspecies Thinking as a Collaborative Concept: Autoethnographies at the Intersection of Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Animal Studies, *Humanimalia: A Journal of Human/ Animal Interface Studies,* DePauw University, Greencastle, Indiana (Published article, Spring 2019)

Conference Papers and Presentations

CRT Culturally Responsive Teaching. Native American Indigenous Education Association NY (NAIEA/NY) Annual Meeting, 2022, Niagara Falls, NY, Co-presenter (July 2022).

Engaging and Enraging the Anthropocene: Indigenous and Allied Perspectives. Native American Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA) Annual Meeting 2019, Aotearoa/ New Zealand (Panel accepted, 2019)

Emergence and Emergency in Native North America, American Studies Association Annual Conference, "States of Emergence," Atlanta, Georgia (November, 2018)

Native Identity as Researcher/Researched: Finding Complexities and Empowerment through Reflexivity, Indigenous Knowledges, and Storytelling. American Indian Research Association Meeting 2018, "Research from Our Paradigm," Missoula, Montana (October, 2018)

Can Decolonization Exist in the Colonial Academy?: Adding Indigenous Spiritual Narratives to the Discourse, *International Review of Qualitative Research (IRQR),* Special Edition:

Indigenous Knowledge as a Mode of Inquiry, University of Illinois Urbana, Washington, unpublished manuscript, (June, 2016)

Gendered Wor(L)ds: A Mohawk Autoethnography, Conference on Iroquois Research, 71st Anniversary Conference, Albany NY (October, 2016)

Cultivating Reflexivity: Ethical, Political, and Methodological Challenges When Conducting Ethnographic Research with Marginalized Communities, American Educational Research Association (AERA) Annual Conference, Washington DC (April, 2016)

Collaborations Against Settler Colonialism: Excavating the Educational Sites and Possibilities of Decolonization, American Educational Research Association (AERA) Annual Conference, Washington DC (April, 2016)

Affirming Native Identity: Connecting Deficit Thinking and Lateral Violence, American Educational Research Association (AERA) Annual Conference, Washington DC (April, 2016)

Collaborations Against Settler Colonialism: Excavating the Educational Sites and Possibilities of Decolonization, The American Education Studies Association (AESA) Annual Conference, San Antonio, Texas (November, 2015)

Can Education do 'Decolonial' Work? Four Perspectives on Decolonization in Education Spaces, The American Educational Studies Association (AESA) Annual Conference, San Antonio, Texas (November, 2015)

Love, Peace, and Justice in Critical Race Dialogue: Possibilities and Dangers, The American Educational Studies Association (AESA) Annual Conference, San Antonio Texas (November, 2015)

A Haudenosaunee View on Social Justice in Education, Conflict, and Peace, 8th Annual Conference on Equity & Social Justice (ESJ), Buffalo New York (March, 2015)

Speaking from Relocated Identities: A Conversation in Peace, Collaboration, and Critical Hope in Race Pedagogy, Philosophy of Education Society 2015 Memphis: The Blues, Soul Music, Memphis Tennessee (March, 2015)

Invited Lectures and Events

Culturally Responsive Teaching and Professional Development, NAGSA Winter 2022, Las Vegas Nevada. (December 2022)

Keynote Speaker. *Decolonizing Cancel Culture*. Hosted by Desales University. (November 2021)

- Guest Presenter. *Haudenosaunee Student Counter-Narratives in High School and College*. Hosted by Lafayette High School, My Brother's Keeper Program. (April 2021)
- Co-Presenter. *More than a Game*. Cultural Sensitivity Training for the University of Michigan Lacrosse Team. Hosted by the University of Michigan Lacrosse. (January 2021)
- Guest Presenter. *Native Experiences in Education. Relations in Land, Belonging, and Identity*. Hosted by the Department of Educational Studies at Colgate University. (February, 2020)
- Guest Lecturer. *A Saltine Warrior, "Orangemen", and a Forgotten Promise: A Brief History of Syracuse University's Relationship with the Haudenosaunee*. Hosted by The Renee Crown Honors Program at Syracuse University. (October, 2019)
- Guest Presenter. *A Grandmother's Pedagogy: Learning about Haudenosaunee Student Experiences in Higher Education*. Hosted by the Native American Student Organization (NASO) at Buffalo State College, Spring Heritage Celebration. (April, 2019)
- Guest Lecturer. *A Grandmother's Pedagogy: Learning about Haudenosaunee Student Experiences in Higher Education*. Hosted by the Native American Studies Department at Colgate University. (February, 2019)
- Presenter. *A Haudenosaunee Thought Project: Navigating difficult conversations and understanding Indigenous self-worth*. "Public Presentation," Humanities of New York. Hosted by Syracuse University. (May 2018)
- Keynote Speaker. *The Condor & The Eagle Banquet: A Celebration of the Intersectionality of Latin/Hispanic and Indigenous Cultures*, Hosted by SUNY ESF, Environmental Science and Forestry (October, 2017)
- Keynote Speaker. *The 8th Annual Student Conference on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Social Justice: "Inspiration, Compassion and Our Shared Humanity,"* Hosted by SUNY Cortland (April, 2017)
- Invited Panelist. "Challenges and Stereotypes Faced by Native Students," Hosted by Onondaga Community College (OCC), (November, 2016)
- Presenter. "From the Original People: Social Justice Initiatives of Inclusion, Multiculturalism, and Equality as Acts of On-going Colonialism, Forced Assimilation, and Dominance," *Awareness to Action: Building a Culture of Inclusive Excellence*, Hosted by SUNY, Albany, NY (November, 2016)
- Invited Lecturer. *Indigenous Experiences in Higher Education: Resiliency, Masculinity, and Resurgence*, Hosted by Recreation and Leisure Studies, Ithaca College (November, 2016)

Presenter/ Co-founder. "The Haudenosaunee Student Alliance: A Call to Action in Higher Education," *Native American Indian Education Association of New York Annual Conference (NIEANY)*, Hosted by SUNY Oswego (September, 2016)

Presenter. "Walking in Two Worlds: Indigenous Students Challenge with Diversity in Higher Education," *CADE Summer Meeting, Diverse State of Mind: (re)Thinking Institutional Excellence and Education Diversity for Leadership in the 21st Century*, New York, NY (May, 2016)

Presenter. "The Haudenosaunee Student Alliance," *Gathering of Good Minds Conference*, Syracuse, NY, (May, 2016)

Co-Founder/ Facilitator. "The Haudenosaunee Student Alliance," *Indigenous Student Gathering: Empowering, Honoring, and Protecting Haudenosaunee and Indigenous students in Higher Education*, Hosted by Clarkson University, <https://haudenosauneestudentalliance.com/> (April, 2016)

Panelist and Workshop Coordinator. *7th Annual Youth Symposium "Reflecting on the Past to Build a Better Future,"* Hosted by Akwesasne Mohawk Tribe/ Nation and the Traveling College (March, 2016)

Presenter/ Candidate. "Indigenous Experiences in Higher Education: Resiliency, Masculinity, and Resurgence," *HSHP Dissertation Diversity Fellow Candidate*, Ithaca College (March, 2016)

Conference Coordinator and Moderator. "Revisiting Basic Call to Consciousness: Peace, Equity, and Friendship Conference" at the *World Indoor Lacrosse Championships 2015 (WILC 2015)*, Hosted by the Onondaga Nation, Haudenosaunee (September, 2015)