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Abstract

Native American Nations have been subjected to colonialism for centuries the impact of which led to further traumatic events and disparities. Although recent scholarship has investigated possible relationships between traumas experienced in education and issues such as depression, substance use, poor academic achievement, and suicide, there remained a need for qualitative studies exploring the phenomenon from the voice of the experiencer. The purpose of this study was to investigate the phenomenon of cultural identity silencing of Native American identity in education. Eight young adult self-identified Native American/Alaskan college students between the ages of 18-25 who experienced cultural identity silencing in education were interviewed using Seidman's three-part model. Each participant took part in three individual 60- 90 minute long Skype interviews each at least a week apart. The following questions were investigated in this study: *How is cultural identity silencing of Native American/Alaskan Native identity experienced by young adult Native American/Alaskan Natives in education? What is the psychological meaning of cultural identity silencing of Native American identity?* A descriptive phenomenological psychological methodology using Giorgian analysis and researcher epoché was then used to create descriptions of the essential structure of cultural identity silencing phenomenon as it was reconstructed by the participants. Seven essential constituents were described by participants that form the structural description of the phenomenon. These results contribute to a greater understanding and consciousness of the lived experiences of American Indians in education.

Key words: Native American/Alaskan Native, education, cultural identity silencing, colonialism, descriptive phenomenology

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The old philosophical question “if a tree falls in a forest and no one is around, does it make a sound?” asks if existence requires perception. When asked this question, most people will reply with a confident “yes”. Their previous subjective experiences of witnessing objects fall included sound as the tree interacted with other trees and the ground during its decent. The sound then becomes internalized as knowledge in the forms of memory, perception, and bias. This form of “subjective idealism” is internalized knowledge used to interpret similar phenomenon that have not been directly witnessed, such as the imagined falling tree in a forest (Berkley, 2014). Ask a meta-physicist the same question and their answer may, however, be quite different. Instead their response might be that the falling tree would not make a sound because there were no ears to come into contact with the sound waves produced by the tree. This response came from an objective scientific approach to describe the phenomenon while the physicist’s previous subjective experiences were bracketed out. According to this example of objective description of the phenomenon, there needed to be a witness capable of hearing to consciously process the sound effects of the event; therefore, no ear to witness equated to no sound. Ultimately it was a combination of the first-hand subjective description (perception) and a bracketed investigative approach (senses) which provided clues as to the essence of sound within the context of a falling tree. By contrast, if the existence of phenomenon required a witness, what does this mean for psychological and social phenomenon such as cultural identity?

This study sought to understand the unique psychological phenomenon of *cultural identity silencing*. It is important to note that the when referencing the phenomenon

cultural identity silencing is italicized, in contrast to when referring to the construct. The act of cultural identity silencing, is quite complex and like the phenomenon of sound in the paragraph above, is dependent upon a relationship between the action/actor and the perceiver of this action. Silencing occurs when the existence of lived experiences is denied by another. Although actions of silencing had been interpreted through the lens of counseling, psychology, and education theories, there remained a need to investigate *cultural identity silencing* as a lived experience from a phenomenological psychological approach, particularly for understudied marginalized populations. In the case of this study, Native American young adult college students. Silencing can create unsafe spaces for American Indian students experiencing K-12 and college education (Grande, 2004; Leonardo & Porter, 2010; Liem, 2007; Noel, 2002).

As stated, the purpose of this study was to investigate and describe the phenomenon of *cultural identity silencing* as psychologically experienced by Native American young adult college students. In this study cultural identity silencing was defined as an action that dismissed or omitted the existence of Native American cultural identity including history, language, and ceremonies. In conjunction with previous studies, the demographic terms “American Indian” and “Native American” were used interchangeably throughout this work for the purpose of acknowledging the multiple cultures that exist, and not to silence the participants’, as well as the readers’, experience who identified with one term over the other (Knowles, 2012). Alaskan Native was also included in the description of experiences from a participant who identified with an Alaskan Nation. It was also important to note that the terms “Indigenous” or “First Nations” were used sparingly since this study was focused on Nations located within the

United States and those demographic terms are used more predominantly outside of the continental US. The only area where these terms were used was within chapter two when referencing previous research conducted outside of the continental US. Furthermore, "Nation" was used to describe the Native American Nations with which the participants identified instead of "Tribal Nation". The researcher became aware during recruitment that "tribal" was a derogatory reference to Nation government, and since the specific Nation names were omitted in the results "Nation" was the term used.

This chapter first presents *cultural identity silencing* as a phenomenon existing within Native American/Alaskan Native communities, followed by the research problem framed within a historical context. Then the application of critical theory and researcher experience is described, concluding with the study's statement of purpose and methodology.

Cultural Identity Silencing

Like a series of yearbooks, personal narratives contain generations of history created with images as well as memories of shared historical events, family/cultural traditions, triumphs, and hardships. These reconstructed narratives describing lived experiences become the foundation of collective as well as individual cultural identity (Landson-Billings, 1998; McCarty, Romero, & Zepeda, 2006**)**. Imagine being a student living through school, pressured to replace these narratives of identity with false images from a yearbook, denying any authentic narratives of cultural history that remain. Aspects of cultural identity became lost among the assimilated context which education had created. This is an experience that Native American students and students of color face in education leaving them to negotiate the borderlands of identity and existence with

the dominant culture (Burk, 2007; Grande, 2000; 2004; Jacobs, 2015; Knowles, 2012**)**. This left individuals and communities struggling to negotiate institutions that were necessary for success, while enduring the repercussions of cultural loss. Ultimately, there was a need for academic scholarship that described the lived phenomenon of *cultural identity silencing* of American Indian identity in education and brought awareness to the harm experienced.

Historical Context

Cultural identity silencing has been an integral part of the Native American/Alaskan Native educational experience in the United States since before missionaries built the first Indian boarding schools in the late 19th century (Bombay, Matheson, & Anisan, 2014; Brayboy, 2005; Brayboy & McCarty, 2015; Dussias, 2001; Grande, 2004; ManKiller & Wallis, 2000; Quijada Cerecer, 2013). The intention of educating American Indian communities has been to eradicate the cultural identity of students and replace it with dominant culture one of whiteness ideology. During the boarding school era from 1860-1978 children were taken from their homes and placed in residential schools located off the tribal territory. Once there, students were instructed to abstain from anything that represented their Indigenous heritage including appearance, language, practices, and beliefs.

This practice of cultural genocide continued throughout the decades following the boarding school era though easily disregarded, as policies were put in place to draw attention away from the oppression that was taking place (Grande, 2004). Policies such as the federal Indian Self-Determination Assistance Act of 1975 gave power to the federal government office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to directly fund

federally-recognized tribally-operated schools. Following the Self-Determination Act, the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 gave parents the right to deny their child's placement in residential schools located off the reservation and choose instead to have their children taught at a day school. Unlike residential schools, day schools were located on the reservations where students could continue to live with their families, but the intention of education as a tool of cultural genocide remained.

Currently there are 183 schools overseen by the Bureau of Indian Education within Bureau of Indian Affairs that include supports to preserve AI/NA cultures such as native language classes, AI/NA counselors, and tribal government oversight. Native American youth and adolescents can receive education in public, BIA, and private schools located both on and off Nation land. In fact, at the time of a recent study 60% of American Indians lived in urban areas (Kulis, Wagman, Tso, & Brown, 2013). K-12 and higher education remained centered, however, on assimilating into dominant White culture and ideology (Knowles, 2012; Price & Mencke, 2013; Quijada, 2013; Wilcox, 2015). Today educational disparities continue as the graduation rate of Native American students remains the lowest compared to White, Black, and Hispanic students (National Center of Education Statistics [NCES], U.S. Department of Education, 2017). Ultimately, colonialism is an aspect of education and Native American/American Indian students are tasked to navigate and succeed within the very institutions that had been agents of cultural genocide and trauma (Brave Heart, Chase, Elkins, & Altschul, 2011; Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998; Dionne & Nixon, 2014; Whitbeck, Adams, Hoyt, & Chen, 2004).

Critical Theory in Education

Critical theory originated from critical legal studies, and examined the effects and perpetuation of institutional oppression on communities of color (Duncan, 2005; Landson-Billings, 1998). According to critical theory, power imbalances created by institutional systems and grounded in aspects of cultural identity are then used by dominant culture to oppress any identity that is "other" (Landson-Billings, 1998; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). Critical theory as a theoretical framework accepts personal narratives as truth, and values research that uses in-depth interviews from people who have personally experienced phenomena related to oppression (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). Even with increased critical theory research examining an individual's experience of acculturation, micro-aggressions, and assimilation, there remained a need, however, to explore the lived subjective experiencing of *cultural identity silencing* of Native American cultural identity in education.

Critical theory framework includes several branches that extend into different areas all of which examine the power imbalances and harm created by social and political institutions on communities of color (Duncan, 2005). Critical race theory is one of those branches (Duncam, 2005; Landson-Billings, 1998). According to critical race theory scholarship, educational institutions within the United States perpetuate systemic oppression by suppressing cultural beliefs, practices, languages, and histories that counter dominant White American culture (Duncan, 2005; Ladson Billings, 1998; Leonardo, 2004). Under critical race theory, these "dangerous memories" of "difficult knowledge" are vulnerable to silencing in classroom discussions, history textbooks, and schooling experiences where success equates to conformity to dominant culture (Suárez-Orozco et

al., 2015; Zembylas, 2014; Zembylas & Bekerman, 2008). Additionally, critical race theory conceptualizes silencing as a harmful experience that takes place in classrooms, school hallways, and spaces where aspects of students' experience and identity are discounted, punished, or ignored (Gubkin, 2015).

Just like yearbooks with memories replaced by false images, silencing is a tool to halt discourse about experiences of oppression in order to uphold the portrayal of K-12 and higher education as a journey of positive growth, cultural inclusiveness, and acceptance. According to critical race theory scholars, once these silenced phenomena are voiced and acknowledged as truths, these facades are dismantled in order to create opportunity for movement towards acts of healing and consciousness rather than continued complacency (Dutro & Bien, 2014; Friere, 1997; Gubkin, 2015; Liem, 2007). Critical theory, however, neglects to address the experiences that are unique to the colonialism affecting Native Americans. Grande (2004) state that, "…where critical scholars ground their vision in Western conceptions of democracy and justice that presume a 'liberated self', Indigenous scholars ground their vision in conceptions of sovereignty that presume a profound connection to place and land" (p. 115). In response, there has been an expansion of critical theory to include tribal critical scholarship, but there remains a continued need for scholarship that explores the current lived experiences as described by Native Americans (Brayboy, 2005; Grande, 2004; Maxwell, 2014).

Tribal Critical Theory

Tribal critical theory addresses the endemic nature of colonialism by acknowledging the counter-narrative of American Indians (Brayboy, 2005). Accordingly, tribal critical theory emphasizes the multiple aspects that contribute to

Native American identity that differentiate it from other marginalized communities. These unique aspects of American Indian identity include political sovereignty, language, land, and historical traditions (Brayboy, 2005; Grande, 2000, 2004). Under tribal critical theory, personal narratives of oppression due to colonialism and imperialist education, like those of American Indians who experienced the boarding school era, are conceptualized as dangerous within education because they are testaments of "traumatic knowledge" that schooling is an imperialist institution that denies Native American cultural identity and promotes Whiteness (Grande, 2004; Knowles, 2012; Leonardo & Porter, 2010; Zembylas, 2014; Zembylas & Bekerman, 2008). Brayboy and McCarty (2015) added "schools served as homogenizing institutions by focusing on creating a model (United States) citizen and enforcing a staunch commitment to individualism at the expense of Native language(s) and identity" (p. 5).

Furthermore, tribal critical theory conceptualizes knowledge into three different dimensions: cultural knowledge, knowledge of survival, and academic knowledge (Brayboy, 2005). This spectrum of knowledge includes experiences outside of the conventional educational setting, and acknowledges the importance of counter-cultures. The blending of cultural knowledge with academic knowledge, along with cultural identity salience has been found to best support resilience (Marker, 2009). For this study, tribal critical theory offered perspective from Indigenous experiences while highlighting dimensions of the Native American educational experience that acknowledged the existence of the *cultural identity silencing* phenomenon. It was not used as a framework to deconstruct personal experiences into previously constructed categories. Using the personal narratives of participants in this study to create theory to prove/disprove causes,

conditions, and outcomes would have been an interpretation that disregarded the authentic psychological experience of *cultural identity silencing.*

Research Topic

Native Americans have a history of experiencing acts of harm within education through cultural genocide (Bombay et al., 2014; Brave Heart et al., 2011; Duran, Duran, & Brave Heart, 1998; Grande, 2004**)**, microaggressions **(**Jones & Galliher, 2015; Lee, 2009; Quijada Cerecer, 2013; Sanchez, 2003**)**, and language denial (Lee, 2009; McCarty et al., 2006). Today much of the focus on American Indian communities has become a "victim-based" perspective. Native Americans are illustrated as causing their own suffering tasked with the sole responsibility to heal (Grande, 2004; Maxwell, 2014; Quijada Cerecer, 2013). Continuing to uphold harmful perceptions of Native Americans as helpless victims or resilient warriors of a bygone era upholds the very cycle which contributes to current health and educational disparities (Grande, 2000; Grande, 2004; Kirmayer, Gone, & Moses, 2014). This harmful duality also created space for scholars and practitioners to deviate from engaging in witnessing the experiences of Native Americans to instead continue to engage in acts of complacency and unconsciousness.

Often what leads to action to help oppressed peoples is interest convergence. Interest convergence occurs when the issues of inequality converge with the predominant interests of society because the issues start to impinge on privileges of dominant culture (Bell, 1980). For example, increasing the quality of education in Black communities becomes an interest when high performing schools with predominately White students risk losing funding when their district loses its accreditation, or when funding received for students "at risk" can be channeled to programs that serve high performing White

students (Vaught, 2008). Though interest convergence has led to actions to address inequality, they do so without impacting the dominant social institutions and systems that perpetuate oppression (Bell, 1980). As a result, research that focuses on experiences of colonialism as the epicenter of issues affecting Native American communities and counter the dominant narrative as education "saving the Indian" are dismissed by educational institutions (Andrews, 2002; Grande, 2000, 2004; Kirmayer et al., 2014; Liem, 2007).

Though previous research has brought awareness to issues affecting the lives of American Indians, they also run the risk of being used to pathologize communities rather than contribute towards understanding the experienced phenomena (Grande, 2000, 2004; Kirmayer et al., 2014**)**. This use of research to pathologize instead of empathize is a form of interest convergence in which the cultural oppression of Native Americans is only acknowledged and supported because it places the causes and conditions of suffering on American Indians. As such, interest convergence comes at a cost for Native Americans who often have to endure years of invisibility until the existence of their lived experience becomes significant enough to impact dominant society. Therefore, it is imperative that scholars as well as practitioners engage in work that intends to transcend static hypothesis, diagnosis, and academic theory into a richer understanding of how Native American/Alaskan Natives experience *cultural identity silencing* in education (Denham, 2008; Kirmayer et al., 2014; Maxwell, 2014).

Empirical research as the method of interpretations of experiences and proving/disproving hypothesis have become the dominant standard of scholarship, whereas research exploring the underlying essence of experience through in-depth first

person interviews is valued as less (Giorgi, 2008b, 2009, 2012; Merriam, 2009)**.** Research focused too narrowly can unknowingly, both in function and use, support the continuance of assimilation and cultural identity silencing of Native American students rather than advocate for institutional change (Brayboy 2005; Grande, 2004; Kirmayer et al., 2014; Quijada Cerecer, 2013).

Research questions

This study investigated the phenomenological psychological experience of *cultural identity silencing* of Native American/Alaskan Native identity by addressing the following questions: *How is cultural identity silencing of Native American/Alaskan Native identity experienced by young adult Native American/Alaskan Natives in education? What is the psychological meaning of cultural identity silencing of Native American identity?* The intentions of these questions were to capture the structural description of *cultural identity silencing* as experienced through the first reconstruction of the phenomenon by the participant, *not* their interpretation of their experiences. Reconstruction offered a description of the conscious experiencing of the phenomenon whereas interpretation jumps to broad meaning which involves perceived phenomenon outside of specific context related to *cultural identity silencing* (Giorgi, 2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2012). This study was an action towards challenging the dualistic idealism of Native American identity, and lifting the veil of unconsciousness that clouds educational institutions.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the phenomenon of *cultural identity silencing* of Native American/Alaskan Native identity in education. This study focused

on Native American/Alaskan Native young adult college students ages18-25 who provided in-depth first person subjective descriptions of their lived experiences of *cultural identity silencing* of their Native American/Alaskan Native identity in education. The phenomenological basis of the research topic was best addressed by a qualitative methodology using Seidman's three part interview model as a framework to build researcher-participant relationships necessary to capture the first person reconstruction of the phenomenon, and descriptive phenomenological analysis using Giorgian's framework to find the essential constituents which create the psychological experiencing of the phenomenon (Giorgi, 2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2012; Seidman, 2013). This phenomenological psychological framework created space for the authentic voice of participants to describe the psychological essence of *cultural identity silencing* as they reconstructed their experience for the first time rather than dismissing their experience through researcher interpretation, bias, overgeneralization, or individual pathology of the participant (Bevan, 2014; Giorgi**,** 2008a, 2009, 2012; Seidman, 2013).

As a researcher, descriptive phenomenology using phenomenological psychological analysis required a commitment to continuously practice reflexivity to bracket out personal bias from the participants experience (Chan, Fung, & Chien, 2013; Giorgi, 2012, 2008, 2006). The bracketing process used in this study is described in greater detail in chapter three. It is important to note that the intention of this study was *not* to describe the participant experiencing the phenomenon, but the meaning description of *cultural identity silencing* as it was lived through the participant's reconstruction (Giorgi, 2009). Therefore, this study was committed to holding space for the

phenomenon of *cultural identity silencing* of Native American/Alaskan Native identity to be described and witnessed.

Descriptive Phenomenology

Although critical theories have contributed research that have increased awareness to the individual lived experiences of education, there is a dominant discourse within academia towards research that is empirical, generalizable, and hermeneutic. As previously noted, research work using critical theory has led to increased interest, theory development, and exposure of individual narratives deconstructing phenomenon into categories such as oppression, colonialism, education, and discourse which dismantles the psychological essence of the phenomena. According to Giorgi (2009) "a phenomenon is anything that can present itself into consciousness, and is considered to be just that: something presented to consciousness" (p. 10). The investigation of the psychological essence of phenomena provides a structural understanding of how that phenomenon is lived (Giorgi, 2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2012).

Descriptive phenomenology is a research paradigm that originates from the Husserlian school of phenomenology and seeks to describe the experience of "lifeworld" in "natural attitude" (Bevan, 2014). Lifeworld is "consciousness of the world, including objects of experience within it, and is always set against a horizon that provides context" (Bevan, 2014, p. 137). In this study colonialism existed in the context of a presence, a naturally occurring condition that was part of the lifeworld of Native American's, *not* as a definition or description of *cultural identity silencing*. Natural attitude explained by Giorgi (2009) is "the attitude of everyday life, the attitude that one displays in the everyday world, where most things are simply taken for granted" (p. 87). Descriptive

phenomenology was used to describe *cultural identity silencing* within the context of the participants lifeworld in the absence of hypothesis and theory, in order to understand its psychological essence. To continue to create scholarship that fails to describe the subjective experiences of the phenomenon perpetuates silencing and disregards the meanings of how the phenomenon continues to affect the lives of Native Americans.

Researcher Experience

To fail to describe my own personal interests which led to this study would be an action of denying my own biases that could cloud the analysis. The following narrative is a biased post-reflective interpretation of my experience of *cultural identity silencing*, and its purpose is to inform the reader of my experiences so that they could be discriminated from the descriptions created from the analysis. Firstly, I am not Native American nor do I have any known generational ties to any Native American community. I am an outsider, a biracial woman in her late 20s whose first memory of acceptance of my cultural identity came from a grandfather-like figure who lived on Nation territory and worked with the Native American Nation near my hometown. I was often denied my bi-racial identity and struggled to be accepted by peers as well as educators. Acceptance by an outsider whom also introduced me to a culture that too had experienced *cultural identity silencing* provided a source of strength and validation to navigate the borderlands of my identity. As I went through school, maintaining my cultural identity became more difficult. It led to negotiating my "Blackness" and to question my cultural history. I experienced pressure to put on a "White mask" in order to make everyone else in the room comfortable. My experience brought with it feelings of isolation, powerlessness, cultural

shaming, and divide as different aspects of my bi-racial identity often challenged the pre-conceived assumptions of those around.

Similarly, Native American/Alaskan Native identities are often misunderstood and compartmentalized as an ethnic identity while their political identity was ignored and only supported when issues affecting their communities fit into the constructed boxes of substance abuse, alcoholism, suicide risk, or low educational expectations, and invisible when issues stemmed from lack of understanding of their unique experiences. As a counselor educator, I am now in a position of privilege, power, and responsibility to contribute meaningful work with critical consciousness and empathy. Therefore, this study investigated the subjective experiencing of the *cultural identity silencing* of Native American/Alaskan Native identity in K-12 and higher education in order to contribute towards changing the counseling and educational fields to better understand and support Native American students.

Significance

As counselors, it is important to understand the phenomenological experiencing of *cultural identity silencing* of Native American/Alaskan Native cultural identity within education in order to consciously address the possible psychological harm (Denham, 2008; Price & Mencke, 2013; Walkley & Cox 2013; Wilcox, 2015). Compounding this issue is the need to address personal biases that keep counselors and educators from understanding the effects of colonialism. To consciously address the impact of colonialism counselors must be willing to critically witness and create space for the authentic truths and knowledge of Native American/Alaskan Native students to be heard. Overall, this investigation into *cultural identity silencing* of young adult Native

American/Alaskan Natives in education may contribute to the progression towards more critically conscious counseling practices.

Organization of the Dissertation

Over the course of nine months eight participants were interviewed and their data analyzed to create a descriptive phenomenological structure of the psychological experience of *cultural identity silencing* of Native American identity in education. The following four chapters describe each aspect of the dissertation process and the resulting descriptive structure. Chapter two first explores the construct of *cultural identity silencing* and need to explore its phenomenological underpinning. It then follows with describing the established critical theories that align with the *cultural identity silencing* construct specific to Native Americans. The rest of the chapter describes relevant literature specific to Native American/Alaskan Native identity, education, mental health, and healing that helped form the research question and methodology.

Chapter three describes the descriptive phenomenological psychological methodology and the intention of using this unique form of qualitative analysis. The use of epoché and imaginative variation were foundational to the analysis in keeping the resulting codes and summaries as close to the participants' description as possible while uncovering the essential constituents that formed the resulting structural description. Ethical considerations, trustworthiness, and limitations are also described.

Chapter four presents the structural description of the phenomenon *cultural identity silencing* and describes the seven essential constituents that are the foundation to the psychological experience. The seven essential constituents were present across participant narratives and interview sets.

Chapter five explores implications, recommendations, and conclusions. Limitations and participant reflections on their interview experience are included. Lastly, chapter five includes discussion of implications to school counseling practice and need for phenomenological studies in counseling and educational fields.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this study cultural identity silencing construct was theorized as the forced omission and dismissal of cultural identity. It had yet to be investigated as a phenomenon. In this way it both existed and was nonexistent, a construct described through its issues of cultural loss and oppression, but yet to be explained by the experiencer/participant.

> If a culture develops an educational system that supports its own norms, values, and worldview, then it follows that the imposition of another structure on a culture by a different culture would serve only to disintegrate the receiving culture. Forced compliance and internalization of a dominant cultural ideology by a member of a culture, other than the dominant, undermines not only that individual's cultural identity, but also her [*sic*] personal identity (Knowles, 2012, p. 888).

The above quote is an illustration of the construct of cultural identity silencing that occurs within education. In the absence of description of lived experiences, social institutions such as education continue to act in ways that harm individuals and communities of color without recourse, rather than liberate and protect (Knowles, 2012). Furthermore, bodies of research exploring the relationship and dynamics between cultural identity and education exist, but only describe the existence of elements of what could be silencing. Therefore, this study investigated the *cultural identity silencing* as a phenomenon within the contexts of Native American/Alaskan Native identity and education to provide a description of an experienced reality that had yet to be fully understood.

Cultural Identity Silencing

As stated in beginning of this chapter, there was no defined construct of cultural identity silencing. The intention of the term was to capture the composition of previous work that spoke to experiences of disregard, omission, and dismissal of the cultural elements of self. Why use the language of cultural identity silencing if it was not even clearly defined in the literature? For one, culture fit the specifics needed in this study, to identify experiences of silencing that in education. Additionally, theories about silencing such as assimilation and critical race theory all included culture as the object of self that was being dismissed, but stated it as static fact instead of a phenomenon that had multiple experiences.

When the term "cultural identity silencing" was searched in scholarly databases, articles generated pertaining to microaggressions, assimilation, self-silencing, silencing, etc. All defined small concrete aspects about the interaction between self and cultural background with other, but failed to describe it as a holistic, transitory phenomenon. Although small concrete units of experience help scaffold the information to be more easily understood, it missed the true psychological essence of what the experienced phenomenon was like. Also, in interpreting the phenomenon as static and disregarding its transitory nature dismissed any current causes and conditions that differed from that specific interpretation.

Furthermore, this research was not grounded theory meant to create a new construct that did not speak to the lived realities of the participants, but intentionally phenomenological in order to describe the transitory nature of the phenomenon for better understanding of how it could exist within the lifeworld of Native American/Alaskan

Native students. The intention of the first paragraph of this chapter using the quote from Knowles (2012) about colonialism impinging on another culture was to set a framework to then describe how the phenomenon of *cultural identity silencing* shared similarities with Native American/Alaskan Native identity, both were composed of several cultures, languages, experiences, etc. Also, to have a static and well defined phenomenon leaves little room for the participant's unique experience that may counter the construct. There would be no epoché stance entering into this study. Epoché is the bracketing or suspension of previous knowledge or presumptions (Giorgi, 2009). In this work the terms bracketing and epoché will be used interchangeably. Lastly, if *cultural identity silencing* were an empirically validated phenomenon with its psychological essence clearly described, it follows that the purpose of a phenomenological investigation would be unnecessary. Overall, an important task of this work was to challenge the empirical chain of certainty and open an academic space for realities that can transform how practitioners perceive and understand *cultural identity silencing*.

Descriptive phenomenological studies require an intentional approach to reviewing previous literature about the phenomenon. In order to maintain an epoché and reductionist stance in which I bracketed previous knowledge, there needed to be caution when reading previous literature not to contaminate the mind with additional pre-established biases other than the ones that already existed (Giorgi, 2008b, 2009; 2012). As such, the intention of the following literature review was to inform the reader of the context in which the resulting constituents fit within. In other words, the literature review was specific to my previous knowledge which led to the research questions: "*How is cultural identity silencing of Native American/Alaskan Native identity experienced by*

young adult Native American/Alaskan Natives in education? What is the psychological meaning of cultural identity silencing of Native American identity?"

The review describes the educational and psychological attitude in which I found myself, that was used throughout the interviewing and phenomenological psychological analysis. In this study there was no hypothesis, only questions to ask, text to analyze, and phenomenon to describe. Therefore, this chapter reviews relevant literature on the following topics to provide context on my psychological approach/natural attitude to the research: critical race theory, historical context of education, Native American/Alaskan Native identity, mental health issues facing communities, and healing.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) is an educational construct that examines how present educational systems interact with and participate in the oppression of communities of color (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Grounded in critical legal studies, critical race theory scholarship explores the many layers of oppression students experience in America's educational systems through the counter-narratives of lived experience. Counter-narratives are experiences and discourse that challenge/counter the dominant cultural framework, in this case educational and classroom experiences (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). "Dangerous memories" such as the perceived discrimination and reminders of cultural loss, are counter-narratives that challenge the dominant White American cultural experience (Zembylas & Beckerman, 2008).

It is theorized by critical race scholars, that students who openly talk about dangerous memories are met with silencing and disregard for their experience (Applebaum, 2003; Grande, 2000; Zembylas & Beckerman, 2008). Accordingly, a denial

of dangerous memories is a denial of identity, collective history, and cultural knowledge which can create a “toxic rain” in classrooms and other educational spaces (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015). Meaning that the spaces become climates where students are emotionally harmed, and prevented from discussing their experiences of trauma (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015). Furthermore, classrooms and educational institutions carry the assumption of being safe spaces where differences are celebrated and students can authentically exist. When critically examined, however, educational spaces such as classrooms become spaces of acceptance and security only for those who identify or assimilate with the dominant culture (Applebaum, 2003; Leonardo & Porter, 2010).

Any counter-narrative that exposes the adverse impacts of colonialism threatens the power of the educational institution (Applebaum, 2003). From this conceptualization, experiences of cultural loss and trauma, such as the boarding school era, are viewed as dangerous because they challenge the dominant imperialist paradigm that education was meant to help Native American/Alaskan Native communities. In addition to counter-narratives that challenge the notion of classrooms as safe spaces, critical theorists have also explored how education can also diminish the emotional experiences of students of color including American Indians (Leonardo & Zembylas, 2013). Ultimately, experiences that expose the harm caused by colonialist education threaten the idealized fantasy of society.

Silencing of dangerous discourse adds a layer onto what possibly is experienced in the classroom by Native American/Alaskan Native students, an experience that discounts cultural history as false narrative, and emotional experiences as illegitimate (Zembylas & Beckerman, 2008). Critical theory also includes the ways in which

dominant culture uses land to displace communities of color (Paperson, 2014). Termed "ghetto colonialism", Black space is reframed by White society as in need of re-settlement to "save" the land through gentrification. Native American/Alaskan Native scholars have reframed this concept as "imperial geographies" where sovereign territory is often portrayed as desolate and in need of rescuing that can only be achieved by force (Paperson, 2014).

In addition to federal educational laws, Native American/Alaskan Natives faced relocation acts, such as the Dawes Act that displaced families and dismantled Native Nations. For example, the most recent executive orders approving the Keystone pipeline, drilling in Alaska, and slashing of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase monuments reaffirms the colonialist idea that sovereign Nation land becomes "empty land" when the federal government determines it can be of better use for development. Since tribal sovereignty depends upon established territory, ghetto colonialism becomes an act towards eliminating Native American/Alaskan Native identity (Brayboy & McCarty, 2015; Grande, 2004; Jacobs, 2015). Though critical race theory exposed the racist oppressive intentions of education, its focus needed to expand to include experiences of colonial imperialism faced by Native American/Alaskan Native s including their political identity.

Tribal Critical Theory

Tribal Critical theory is an educational theory that focuses on colonialist education and the Native American/Alaskan Native student experience (Brayboy, 2005). The nine tenets of Tribal Critical theory framework include:

1. Colonization is endemic to society.

2. U.S. policies toward Indigenous peoples are rooted in imperialism, White supremacy, and a desire for material gain.

3. Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space that accounts for both the political and racialized natures of our identities.

4. Indigenous peoples have a desire to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification.

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. (Brayboy, 2005, p. 429)

When exploring the current disparities affecting Native American/Alaskan Native communities, the use of the tribal critical theory framework honors the counter-narratives of individuals while advocating towards positive change in addressing oppression. Research using tribal critical theory challenges researchers to explore issues directly affecting tribal communities rather than solely contributing to academic scholarship. For the purposes of this study, tribal critical theory was defined as previous knowledge that

supported my approach to critically examine the unique lived experiences of young adult Native American/Alaskan Native from a phenomenological perspective that acknowledged their narratives as authentic portrayals of their political as well as cultural identity.

Red pedagogy. Further interest in the effects of colonialist educational systems has also led scholars to explore pedagogical frameworks that can be utilized to help Native American/Alaskan Native communities restore their culture and resist acts of oppression (Hartmann & Gone, 2014; Kirmayer et al., 2014; McInnes, 2017; Tippeconnic & Tippeconnic, 2012; Waldram, 2014). "Red pedagogy" is a pedagogical framework that addresses trauma and harmful effects of oppression while understanding that liberation from colonialism moves beyond democratic social justice to include sovereignty (Grande 2004). Nation sovereignty is what differentiates Native American/Alaskan Native experiences from the oppression experienced by other communities of color in the United States (Brayboy, 2005; Brayboy & McCarty, 2015; Grande, 2000, 2004).

Red pedagogy includes the acknowledgement that Native Nations have rights to create their own educational process and culture, including their native language and history. Educators using red pedagogy engage in critically witnessing the existence of Native American/Alaskan Native experiences of trauma and history (Gubkin, 2015). Furthermore, it challenges educators as well as scholars to engage in critical Indigenous consciousness, "an awareness of the historical and broad oppressive conditions that have influenced current realities of Indigenous people's lives. This awareness leads to acknowledging, respecting, and embracing one's role in contributing to and transforming

their communities and families" (Lee, 2009, p. 318). In this way Red pedagogy is a theoretical construct that exposes the current imperialist structure of K-12 and higher education. It provides a framework for approaching research in Native American/Alaskan Native communities with conscious intent and openness to witness experienced phenomenon such as *cultural identity silencing*.

Microaggressions

Racial microaggressions are defined as insults/slights both consciously and unconsciously expressed, that are derogatory or negative toward another's cultural identity (Wing Sue et al., 2007). "Microaggressions" are categorized into microinsults, microassaults, and microinvalidations. "Microassaults" are defined as "explicit racial derogation characterized primarily by a verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions" (p. 278). Accompanying microassaults are "microinsults" which are "behavioral/verbal remarks or comments that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person's racial identity or heritage" (p. 278). For example, an educator consistently mispronouncing the name of a student is a very common microinsult that dismisses the student's cultural identity (Kohli & Solórzano, 2012). Lastly, "microinvalidations" are often "unconscious acts that include verbal comments or behaviors that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of color" (p. 278).

In one study that investigated Native American/Alaskan Native young adult's experiences with microaggressions 90% of participants had experienced at least one racial microaggression, with 88.2% experiencing daily microaggressions (Jones &

Galilher, 2015). For example, Quijada Cerecer (2013) found that Native American/Alaskan Native youth who demonstrate activism were not viewed as legitimate by their teachers. Recent scholarship has also exposed the harmful effects when microaggressions are experienced by students in K-12 education, including depressive symptoms (Priest, Perry, Ferdinard, Paradies, & Kelaher, 2014), feelings of invisibility and cultural inferiority (Kohli & Solórzano, 2012), and other emotional consequences that cause harm (Wang, Leu, & Shoda, 2011). Ultimately, microaggressions are aspects of Native American/Alaskan Native educational experiences and reminders of cultural loss.

False images. False images and cultural stereotypes have been explored in several studies as a prevalent microaggression experienced by Native American/Alaskan Native (Clark, Spanierman, Reed, Soble, & Cabana, 2011; Jacobs, 2015; Sanchez, 2003). False images include both "positive stereotypes" as well as obvious derogatory presentations of Native American/Alaskan Native that blend phenotypical features and cultural traditions such as mascots. One study examined expressions of microaggressions on weblogs focused on reactions to racialized mascots (Clark et al., 2011). The study found seven themes of microaggressive attacks towards Native American/Alaskan Native that appeared within the online posts: (a) advocating sociopolitical dominance; (b) alleging oversensitivity; (c) waging stereotype attacks; (d) denying racism; (e) employing the logics of elimination and replacement; (f) expressing adoration; and (g) conveying grief. These false images are reinforced in the classroom internalized by Native American/Alaskan Native students through history books that romanticize images of Native American/Alaskan Native as victims, environmental warriors, or a dying culture

(Martinez, 2014; Sanchez, 2003). Although educators might try to repair the harm, their efforts can fall short when empathy is displaced in exchange for sympathy and complacency.

False Empathy

Warren and Hotchkins (2014) define "false empathy" as:

> An individual's tendency to think, believe, and act as if he or she possess more empathy than what can be personally confirmed or validated by: (a) the beneficiaries of the empathetic response, or (b) positive outcomes resulting from the individual's application of empathy in social relationships. (p.3)

Accordingly, false empathy can look like educators who place their needs and points of view, such as cultural values, above the needs of students which can lead to discourse that silences the counter-narratives of students (Warren & Hotchkins, 2014). Similar to dangerous discourse and classrooms as unsafe space expressed in this review, scholarship on how false empathy is experienced remains mostly theoretical and centered within educational critical theory scholarship rather than mental health. The intentions of false empathy are not to understand the lived experiences of another, but to illuminate the power of the falsely generous to quiet the suffering through assimilation (Freire, 1997; Lovern, 2012; Warren & Hotchkins, 2014).

Similar to microaggressions, the harm experienced by the student can remain invisible to others, dismissed as irrelevant. Therefore, while exploring the phenomenon of silencing Native American/Alaskan Native cultural identity in education, I approached participants with an understanding that my acknowledgement of their experiences of *cultural identity silencing* may be the first time it was witnessed by an outsider, and

honor their trust with due diligence not to cloud their experience with my own biased interpretations. All in all, there was a need in academic scholarship to witness the narratives of Native American/Alaskan Native consciousness as they experienced harmful acts of colonialism, and use this new understanding to take action towards healing acts of consciousness in education.

Native American/Alaskan Native Identity

The United States has woven colonialism within the very core of Native American/Alaskan Native cultures and identities. In accordance to federal education laws, there were additional laws that defined what it legally meant to be Native American/Alaskan Native in order to be recognized by the federal government. Nation sovereignty gave some power to Native American/Alaskan Native Nations to define Native American/Alaskan Native identity through establishment of their own legal criteria to become a Nation member (Garroutte, 2001). Unfortunately, the federal and tribal laws do not always align and can legally place someone in identity limbo. This limbo or state of "borderland" identity can affect individuals in a number of ways (Grande, 2004; Jacobs, 2015). For example, land allotments using the Dawes rolls in the 1940s were given to people who fit under the criteria defined by the federal guidelines of blood quantum. Blood quantum, "certified degree of Indian blood (CDIB)", is the degree of Native American ancestry, a criterion used in federal and Tribal Nation citizenship of Native American/Alaskan Native racial identity with one quarter ancestry being the most predominant minimum criteria (Garroutte, 2001). Those who fail to legally qualify as "real" Native American/Alaskan Native may be denied the rights to live on the Nation land along with federal health benefits (Garroutte, 2001).

Additionally Native American/Alaskan Native Nations can be stripped of their federal sovereignty if they do not meet the quota for Nation citizens as well as native language speakers. Although there have been identity development models created such as Markstrom's model (2011) which examined Native American/Alaskan Native identity formation in three stages of contextual influence local, national, and global, federal and tribal laws remain the main determinant of who is recognized as Native American/Alaskan Native. In fact, Native American/Alaskan Native identity is often negotiated within education as seen by a study examining the types of social contracts Native American/Alaskan Native college students engaged in with faculty to establish their identity (Burk, 2007). This study suggested that the conflict within educational systems between White and Native American/Alaskan Native culture leads to a negotiation of Native American/Alaskan Native identity within schools. Unfortunately many of the legal actions meant to preserve the Native American/Alaskan Native cultures have instead led to their minimization and invisibility having both political and psychological implications Therefore, identity sets the stage for the fulfillment of the imperialist mission to eradicate sovereign Nations and cultures.

Nation and federal policies about Native American/Alaskan Native identity based on blood quantum also have implications in research. Often research exploring issues faced by tribal communities used participants who identified as Native American/Alaskan Native and were members of a Nation. Though it was important to ensure that the population of a study truly identified with the cultural group, it also demonstrated the ways in which the colonialist definition of Native American/Alaskan Native identity limited whose experiences were valid, and could potentially omit valuable experiences

that described phenomenon related oppression (Jacobs, 2015). Blood quantum is an act of expropriation of Native American/Alaskan Native identity used to further support the elimination of Tribal Nations and disregard experiences that counter the dominant narrative (Jacobs, 2015; Schmidt, 2011). Currently, two thirds of tribal Nations include blood quantum as a criteria for tribal membership meaning that research requiring tribal membership could exclude a vast number of individuals who identify as Native American/Alaskan Native and have experienced colonialist oppression (Garroutte, 2001). This left a need for more scholarship that defied this colonialist agenda by acknowledging the range of experiences and identities that were within the paradigm of Native American/Alaskan Native identity.

Multiple Heritage Identity

As stated by Knowles (2012), "it is important for the reader to understand that there is no singular Indian "way of being". Native American views, culture, religion, and opinions are as diverse as one might find on any other continent" (p. 888). Recently, there have been social and political acts to reclaim Native American identity conceptualizing "Indianness" as interpersonally developed and including a diverse range of experiences (Jacobs, 2015; Wexler, 2014). Pan-Indian identity is a term used in recent academic scholarship to describe individuals who have a range of Native American heritages that fit outside of the romanticized as well as political criteria of American Indian identity (Jacobs, 2015; Lamsam, 2014). It includes individuals who identify with multiple Native Nations, have a percentage of native identity that is below tribal or federal criteria, or live in urban areas away from sovereign territories (Jacobs, 2015). By continuing to reject "Pan-Indian", multiple heritage identities, Indigenous cultural

knowledge and experiences are vulnerable for disregard and cultural essentialism (McCarty et al., 2006).

Unfortunately, this exclusion also contributes to the perceived extinction of Native American/Alaskan Native Nations and culture rather than their existence, resistance, resilience, and progress (Grande, 2004; Knowles, 2012). It is important to note, however, that in the course of the study it was brought to my attention that the term "Pan-Indian" had been used to define a universal and stereotypical Native American identity that disregarded the unique identities of Native Nations. Upon becoming aware of the negative implications and meaning of the academic term, it was replaced with multiple heritages in the recruitment material which was the true intention of using "Pan-Indian". Therefore, this study included individuals who self-identify as Native American/Alaskan Native.

Historical Context of American Indians and K-12 Education

The formal education of Native American/Alaskan Native arose from an imperialist colonial foundation intended to assimilate students into the American culture (Grande, 2004; Knowles, 2012). Colonialism is when one nation/political power establishes itself within the territory of another nation and subsequently creates institutions that further the expansion of their imperialist political power while exploiting and eliminating the other nation (Freire, 1997; Grande, 2004). In this way missionary schools served to "Christianize", off-reservation boarding schools served to "indoctrinate", while on-reservation schools "civilized", and public schools served to "assimilate" (Noel, 2002). As such, the history of education contains intentional acts to

remove aspects of Native American/Alaskan Native culture including language, land, religion, etc.

Furthermore, Native American/Alaskan Native political identity is often dismissed in K-12 as well as higher education even though it is comprised of many diverse sovereign Nations and cultures (Grande, 2004). K-12 education hosts quite a dynamic range of experiences for Native American/Alaskan Native students that extend from hopeful and promising, to discriminating and traumatic (Grande, 2004). These experiences can be as liberating as they can be oppressive and harmful, especially when examined under the lens of critical theory (Freire, 1997; Knowles, 2012; Lovern, 2012). Assimilation into the dominant culture is portrayed as the pathway towards liberation, and to resist assimilation leads to conceptualized pipelines to prison, poverty, and suffering (Grande, 2004; Freire, 1997). According to Grande (2004), the structures of the colonial consciousness include:

> (a) belief in progress as change and change as progress, (b) belief in the effective separateness of faith and reason (physical and spiritual worlds), (c) belief in the essential quality of the universe and of "reality" as impersonal, secular, material, mechanistic, and relativistic, (d) subscription to ontological individualism, (e) belief in human beings as separate from and superior to the rest of nature (p.69).

Colonial consciousness reinforces the dominant western ideals of independence, achievement through affecting their environment, secular humanism, and detachment from sources of cultural knowledge, and nature (Grande, 2004). Furthermore, "colonization of the lifeworld occurs when the colonizers interfere with the mechanisms needed to reproduce the lifeworld domains- culture, social integration, and socialization"

(Duran, Duran, & Braveheart, 1998, p. 62). Ultimately, colonialism uses education as a tool in the expansion of the dominant culture to disrupt the survival of Native American/Alaskan Native cultural identity.

In order for colonialist schooling to succeed, federal laws were enacted to reinforce the false narrative that Native American/Alaskan Native needed to be "saved" and continued the perpetual harm faced by students and communities (Brayboy & McCarty, 2015; Dussias, 2001). As a result, Native American/Alaskan Native education shifted towards integrating students into public schools after years of research exposed the harm enacted by boarding schools. Recent studies, however, support the narrative that public schools often continued the assimilation model by eradicating Native American/Alaskan Native cultures through assimilation (Burke, 2007; Freng, Freng, & Moore, 2007; Marker, 2009; Martinez, 2014; Roppolo & Crow, 2007; Quijada Cerecer, 2013). Although there are extensive research studies that explore the impact of residential boarding schools, it can mask the current issues of colonialism in K-12 and higher education by becoming a predominant focus. As stated by Marker (2009) "a single-minded focus on residential schools as the core problem for Indigenous education has cemented a conflated telling of the past in public consciousness" (p.772). Today the majority of Native American/Alaskan Native youth attend public schools exposing a need for exploration of current issues beyond boarding schools.

Achievement Gap

Currently Native American/Alaskan Native make up 2% of the population and have one of the lowest high school graduation rates with only 70% of students graduating from a public high school in 2014 as compared to 87% White, 89% Asian/ Pacific

Islander, 76% Hispanic, and 73% Black students ([NCES], U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Though Native American/Alaskan Native Nations are sovereign Nations, their K-12 education must still align with the state and federal government's guidelines. In the most recent national assessment of fourth and eighth grade reading proficiency, Native American/Alaskan Native students performed below their White, Hispanic, and Asian classmates with only 21% of fourth and 22% of eighth graders performing at or above proficiency. This gap was also present in fourth and eighth grade math proficiency where only 23% of fourth and 20% of eighth graders performed at or above proficiency as compared to 51% of fourth and 43% of eighth grade White counterparts National ([NCES], U.S. Department of Education, 2015). In 2013 92% of Native American/Alaskan Native aged 18-24 completed high school with reported drop-out rates of 16-24 year olds at 13% between 1990-2013 as compared to 5% White, 9% Black, and 12% of Hispanics ([NCES], U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

The achievement gap extends into higher education as well, where Native American/Alaskan Native students are faced with even more integration into dominant White culture (Burk, 2007). According to the 2016 Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups, 32% of Native American/Alaskan Native aged 18-24 were enrolled in college in 2013 compared to 42% of Whites, 34% Black, 34% Hispanic, and 62% Asian counterparts (Musu-Gillette, Robinson, McFarland, KewalRamani, & Wilkinson-Flicker, 2016). Recently, there has been research exploring protective factors that contribute to higher educational attainment and success.

Protective factors. In a phenomenological study conducted by Flynn and Sangganjanavanich (2015), family members of Native American/Alaskan Native

attending predominantly White colleges were interviewed about their perceptions of post-secondary educational achievement. Twelve participants who lived on national lands in the Midwest were interviewed for 30-72 minutes. Through thematic analysis, the researchers found 10 themes related to post-secondary achievement:

> (a) intentional strategies for postsecondary scholastic achievement, (b) family support for educational achievement in predominately White culture, (c) reflection on the benefits of postsecondary education, (d) perceptions of healing, (e) negative consequences of attending predominately White college, (f) antecedents to postsecondary dropout, (g) promotions of AI independence, (h) belief that assimilation will not affect traditional AI heritage, (i) achievement in predominately White culture creates a role model, and (j) perceptions of intentional and unintentional deculturation. (p. 220)

Participants shared similar perceptions of reflecting on the ways in which colonialism affects Native American/Alaskan Native identity such as assimilation, perceptions of intentional and unintentional acculturation, while reflecting on the benefits of college education as further movement towards Native American/Alaskan Native sovereignty.

Furthermore, a quantitative study conducted by Stiffman et al. (2007) explored protective factors that support Native American/Alaskan Native academic achievement and educational success based on data from the American Indian Multisector Help Inquiry on American Indian adolescents. They found that GPA was significantly positively correlated with personal, familial, and environmental strengths (Stiffman et al., 2007). Additionally, school strengths were negatively correlated with symptoms related to conduct disorder, substance abuse, and depression. In contrast, tribal strengths were

positively correlated to these mental health disorders, meaning that the more identified tribal strengths listed the more symptoms of conduct disorder, depression, and alcohol abuse were present (2007). These findings brought to focus the possible effects that are produced when strong cultural identity is faced with the pressure to assimilate to the dominant White cultural norms of education. Furthermore, these mixed results present the need to understand the fluidity of Native American/Alaskan Native culture and identity when researching the impacts of social and cultural factors on current mental health. Overall, academic achievement was only one aspect of how colonialism and cultural assimilation affects Native American/Alaskan Native experience of education.

Cultural Assimilation vs. Inclusion

Although there have been legal actions towards inclusion of Native American/Alaskan Native culture within K-12 education such as Nation controlled K-12 schools that have taken action towards cultural inclusion including language, much of the Native American/Alaskan Native student experience remains centered on assimilation in both public and federally operated schools (Andrews, 2002; Freng et al., 2007; Martinez, 2014; Noel, 2002; Quijada Cerecer, 2013). In accordance with Grande's (2004) definition of colonial consciousness, the cultural assimilation of Native American/Alaskan Native students is enacted through school policy and leadership that dismisses Indigenous knowledge systems, history, and identity (Martinez, 2014; Quijada Cerecer, 2013). Instead of cultural inclusion to promote protective factors that lead to academic achievement as well as moderate against negative mental health impacts, K-12 educational institutions create cultures that encourage cultural shaming while promoting Whiteness (Noel, 2002).

Assimilation demands are evident in the decrease of Nation languages which are a significant aspect of Native American/Alaskan Native identity and Nation sovereignty (Freng et al., 2007; Lee, 2009; McCarty et al., 2006). In a qualitative study of Native American/Alaskan Native young adults, participants reported perceived shame and embarrassment about using Nation languages as well as other aspects of their Native American/Alaskan Native identity in school along with feelings of cultural disregard by educators (Lee, 2009). Moreover, the prevalence of these experiences of assimilation has implications in Native American/Alaskan Native identity development and mental health (Lee, 2009; Sanchez, 2003).

Mental Health and Native Communities

Scholarship about mental health within Native American/Alaskan Native communities has been in existence for quite some time. Often mental health issues that are explored pertain specifically to issues that are historically entrenched such as substance abuse, depression, trauma, suicide, and depression (Elias, Mignone, Hall, Hart, & Sareen, 2012; Grande, 2004; Tucker, Wingate, O'Keefe, Hollingsworth, & Cole, 2016; Nicolai & Saus, 2013; Walls & Whitbeck, 2012a; Whitbeck, Walls, Johnson, Morrisseau, & McDougall, 2009). The historical and societal causes and conditions that have led to current mental health issues often, however, become lost (Kirmayer, Gone, & Moses, 2014).

Fortunately, there is research that examines mental health needs from a critical and emancipatory approach. For example, West, Williams, Suzkovich, Strangeman, and Novins (2012) conducted a qualitative study using a critically-informed methodology of *Community Story Framework* to examine the mental health needs of urban Native

American/Alaskan Native youth, families, and community. They conducted 16 focus groups with a total of 107 participants using an assessment guide based on three domains: (a) the mental health/positive development needs of urban American Indian youth in Chicago; (b) the available support systems, mental health services, and service utilization; and (c) potential cultural and historical parameters that might drive the development of innovative service approaches to meet community needs. Themes that arose from the data included: (a) political division within community and community organizations, (b) need for sense of belonging, (c) challenges in cultural connection between youth and adults, (d) stigma about mental health, (e) internalized oppression, and (f) fear of losing culture and tradition (West et al., 2012).

These themes include the effects of colonialism and challenge the colonialist constructed box of what mental health issues are affecting Native American/Alaskan Native communities while highlighting the need for scholarship that witnesses the voices of Native American/Alaskan Native experience. Unfortunately, the majority of scholarship on mental health needs in Native American/Alaskan Native communities' remained focused on community shortcomings of substance abuse, suicide, and cultural loss instead of the social institutions, such as education that have caused the issues.

Substance Abuse

Substance abuse is commonly portrayed in media, history, and politics as one of the leading issues needing to be addressed in Native American/Alaskan Native communities (Kirmayer et al., 2014; Quijada Cerecer, 2013). As a result, there has been much research exploring factors that lead to substance abuse as well as protective factors that may potentially moderate adolescents from choosing substances as a coping skill to

deal with the impacts of oppression and trauma (Boyd-Ball, Manson, Noonan, & Beals, 2006; Brockie, Dana-Sacco, Wallen, Wilcox, & Campbell, 2015;).

Boyd-Ball et al., (2006) conducted a quantitative study exploring the relationship between severe traumatic events and alcohol use in Native American/Alaskan Native adolescents and young adults. Their study included 432 Native American adolescents who were enrolled Nation citizens and lived near a reservation. The severe traumatic events were organized within five categories: (a) non-interpersonal trauma; (b) interpersonal trauma; (c) witnessed trauma; (d) hearing traumatic news about a close other; and (e) other trauma (Boyd-Ball et al., 2006). The sample included 42% high school drop-outs, and 29% reported to have attended a Native American boarding school. Also 21% had participated in traditional cultural beliefs with half indicating that they follow an "Indian way of life" (2006). The results of the study found that severe traumatic events increased the chance of alcohol use disorders. Unfortunately, the results were not statistically significant enough to indicate which factors directly impacted alcohol use and how.

Additionally, Brockie et al. (2015) conducted a quantitative study examining the relationship between the exposure to adverse childhood experiences and mental health outcomes. Adverse childhood experiences included emotional, physical, and sexual abuse; neglect; perceived discrimination; witness to intimate partner violence; and mental health outcomes of PTSD, depression, poly-drug use, and attempted suicide (2015). The sample included 288 participants aged 15-24 who were enrolled Nation members living on a reservation. They found that 78% of participants reported at least one adverse childhood experiences with 58.6% reporting at least two. Additionally, five out of the six

adverse childhood experiences were independently and significantly positively correlated with depression, poly-drug use, and suicide attempt. Also, four of the experiences (excluding emotional neglect and sexual abuse) had a significant positive correlation with PTSD symptoms. Overall, this study acknowledged the multiple experiences that contribute to the mental health issues currently impacting Native American/Alaskan Native adolescents and young adults.

Although these studies contribute to a better understanding of traumas that can lead to mental health issues, their quantitative methodology also highlights a barrier to bringing attention to their systemic causes. Quantitative studies of issues affecting Native American/Alaskan Natives supports a concentration on proving that the effects of colonialism only exist if empirically and statistically significant, while personal narratives of experiences are challenged. Fortunately there is scholarship that is utilizing culturally informed practice and qualitative methodology to explore the narratives of societal conditions that caused the mental health issues (Goodkind, Hess, Gorman, & Parker, 2012; Nicolai & Saus, 2013; Reinschmidt, Attakai, Kahn, Whitewater, & Teufel-Shone, 2016).

Trauma, Grief, and Loss

In addition to substance abuse and other mental health outcomes, trauma, grief, and loss also impact the cultural identity as well as educational experiences of Native Americans/Alaskan Natives. Though the experience of grief and loss during K-12 and higher education is not uncommon, Native American/Alaskan Native communities often experience multiple deaths in a short amount of time, along with the impacts of generations of cultural loss due to colonialism (Brockie et al., 2015; Dorgan, 2010; Elias

et al., 2012). In fact, many Native American/Alaskan Natives will experience multiple losses during their K-12 education (Nicolai & Saus, 2013). Accordingly, experiences of trauma and loss have been found to be risk factors for suicidal rumination and attempts (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998; Tucker et al., 2016; Walkley & Cox, 2013; Whitbeck et al., 2009). The following subsections will describe these studies exploring suicide and historical trauma experienced in Native American/Alaskan Native communities.

Suicide

Imagine being in a classroom trying to study for an exam knowing that a friend recently died from suicide. Suicide is the 8th leading cause of death of Native American/Alaskan Natives across age groups and the second leading cause among 10 to 34 year olds (Center for Disease Control, 2015), though the prevalence of suicide ranges between Nations (Dorgan, 2010; Tucker et al., 2016). Federal policies such as the Indian Health Care Improvement Act, No Child Left Behind, Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, and the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act all include provisions to address youth and adolescent suicide. There has been, however, no decline and the funding for many of the federal programs meant to help prevent suicide through counseling and educating Native American/Alaskan Native communities have has been severely limited (Dorgan, 2010). This lack of funding also severely limits social service providers working to serve the mental health needs of Native American/Alaskan Native communities, becoming an act that dismisses the narratives of colonialist harm (Dorgan, 2010).

Historical Trauma Theory

Accumulation of trauma and cultural loss impacts the experiences of Native American/Alaskan Native youth and adolescents who are also in the stages of developing their own ethnic identity. Recently the construct of "historical trauma" was created to encompass the history of Native American/Alaskan Native cultural loss, and bring attention to the possible impact of past colonialist atrocities on the present experiences of Native American/Alaskan Natives (Bombay et al., 2014; Brave Heart 2003; Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998; Brave Heart et al., 2011; Walls & Whitbeck, 2012b; Whitbeck et al., 2004; Whitbeck, et al., 2009; Wiechelt, Gryczynski, Johnson, & Caldwell, 2012). Historical trauma theory research includes correlations between colonialist educational actions, such as the boarding schools, to current mental health issues such as depression, substance abuse, and suicide (Brave Heart, 2003; Brockie et al., 2015; Mohatt, Thompson, Thai, & Tebes, 2014; Whitbeck et al., 2009; Wiechelt, Gryczynski, Johnson, & Caldwell, 2012). Historical trauma construct is an example of a shift in academic discourse to focus on experiences of cultural loss within education, and critically investigate the impact of experiences in education on the lives of American Indians.

HT Models. The historical trauma (HT) construct conceptualizes that current mental health disparities are a direct result of past colonialist events incurred by Native American/Alaskan Native Nations (Bombay et al, 2014; Brave Heart, 2003; Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998; Brave Heart et al., 2011; Elias et al., 2012; Whitbeck et al., 2009; Wiechelt et al., 2012). Since its conceptualization, historical trauma theory has been statistically correlated to depression, anxiety, educational disparities (Walls & Whitbeck, 2012a; Whitbeck et al., 2004; Whitbeck et al., 2009). Whitbeck et al. (2004) focused on

the development of two empirical measures of historical trauma: the *Historical Loss Scale* and *Historical Loss Associated Symptoms Scale*. Historical trauma was explored through current symptoms in communities due to reminders of past ethnic cleansing and current discrimination such as depression and anxiety.

In the first step of the development of the scales the items for the measures were created using a confirmatory factor analysis of themes from focus groups of elders from two Native Nations. The researchers were able to identify kinds of loss as well as emotions associated with historical trauma. Once the common feelings and losses associated with historical loss decided, the scales were reviewed by the elders and distributed to 143 adult caretakers aged 28-59. In addition to scale development, the results from the factor analysis also found that perceived historical loss was prevalent in current adult generations as well as a connection between perceived historical loss and emotional reactions including anxiety, depression, and anger (Whitbeck et al., 2004). Although the scales have become a popular empirical measures of historical trauma construct, the effect size and generalizability of historical loss symptoms across tribal cultures and ages remains unknown. The internal reliability for both scales, however, was high with the *Historical Loss Scale* Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .92 and the *Historical Loss Associated Symptoms Scale* Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .89 (2004).

Congruent to the historical loss and historical loss associated symptoms scales, Mohatt et al. (2014), conceptualized HT as "a narrative representation, it connects histories of group-experienced traumatic events to present day experiences and contexts, including the contemporary health of a group or community" (p. 179). The "narrative model of how historical trauma impacts health" includes historical trauma narratives that

influence and are influenced by contemporary reminders of historical trauma including public and personal reminders whose salience then impacts the lived experience of the individual (Mohatt et al., 2014). Both models of historical trauma focus specifically on the effects of perceived cultural loss and how the salience of these reminders can impact present health and wellbeing. For the purposes of this study, historical trauma and historical loss symptoms are included during analysis as possible living constructs within the participant's lifeworld, not as a pre-existing construct that cultural identity silencing supports or denies.

Historical trauma and mental health have been conceptualized as directly linked constructs. In regards to the associations between past trauma and present disparities using a quantitative description, Wiechelt, Gryczynski, Johnson, and Caldwell (2012) examined the relationships between substance use, family cohesion, and historical trauma in urban Native American/Alaskan Natives using the *Historical Loss* and *Historical Loss Associated Symptoms Scale*. The sample included 120 adults ranging in ages from 18 to 81, who were members of either the Lumbee or Cherokee Nations and were participating in another research study looking at health promotion. The surveys were completed at basepoint of the health study. The participants reported thinking about historical loss at least weekly in the areas of: (a) loss of respect for elders by children and grandchildren; (b) loss of people due to early death; (c) loss of respect for traditional ways by children; and (c) losses from effects of alcoholism (Wiechelt et al., 2012). Additionally, the most commonly reported symptoms of historical loss were: (a) sadness/depression (39.2%); (b) anger (32.5%); (c) anxiety/nervousness (30.9%); (d) avoiding reminders of losses (28.3%); and (e) loss of sleep (25.8%). Researchers also found that, when controlling for

gender, tribe, age, and *Historical Loss Scale* scores, participants with higher historical loss symptoms also had higher odds of substance use within the past 30 days. Furthermore, when controlling those factors, reported historical loss symptoms were found to have a statistically significant negative relationship with family cohesion (Wiechelt et al., 2012).

In their quantitative study Whitbeck et al. (2009) focused on the prevalence of perceived historical loss as well its possible relationships with family factors, perceived discrimination, and proximal life events. They hypothesized: (a) growing up in cultural context of reminders of ethnic cleansing contribute to adolescent depression which then contributes to negative developmental outcomes such as school dropout, substance use, and suicide; (b) when controlling for family factors such as structure, finances, caretaker perceived historical loss, and perceived warmth and supportiveness, that adolescent historical loss would still have an association with depressive symptoms; (c) historical loss is an independent construct distinct from depressive symptoms. The sample included 459 North American Indigenous adolescents aged 11 to 13 and also included female caretakers. They found that adolescent perceived discrimination was positively significantly correlated with depressive symptoms ($b = .29$, $p < .001$). Additionally, the regression analysis showed that historical loss had a significant positive effect on depressive symptoms even when family life events were added to the model. Lastly, historical loss was found to be a latent and separate construct. Although the study's findings did not include effect sizes, it did demonstrate the presence of perceived historical loss in adolescents supporting the theory that historical trauma created by past

acts of colonialism can have an effect on younger generations who did not directly experience those events.

In a similar quantitative study, Elias et al. (2012) explored the relationship between residential (boarding) school system experiences with suicide and trauma. The data were collected during 2002-2003 and included a sample size of 2,953 adults made up of 611 residential and 2342 non-residential school attendees. This study was part of a larger nationwide study conducted in Canada and was the first to empirically demonstrate the intergenerational impact of boarding school experiences. Their analysis found that 48% of residential attendees reported abuse history at the schools with 26% reporting suicidal thoughts (Elias et al., 2012). In regards to the generational impact of the abuse, young adults aged 18 to 27 and adults aged 28 to 44 were more likely to have history of suicidal thoughts than the participants aged 45 and older. These results demonstrate a need to holistically understand the impact past traumatic events can have on current generations that did not directly witness the event in order to best support students who may be experiencing loss as well as thoughts of suicide.

Intergenerational. To further explore the possible intergenerational impact of traumatic events, Walls and Whitbeck (2012b) quantitatively explored the direct and indirect intergenerational transmission of trauma stemming from federal relocation policies that relocated Native Nations from their ancestral land to reservations. They hypothesized that past federal relocation experiences were directly associated with current problematic outcomes including substance abuse, depression, delinquency, and caretaker warmth. The sample included 507 youth aged 10 to 12 and their female caretakers and was part of a larger longitudinal study in the northern Midwest and

Canada. The findings indicated correlations between relocation and current substance abuse, depressive symptoms, and supportive parenting. For example, there were positive correlations with relocation to caretaker substance use and depressive symptoms. Depressive symptoms were positively associated with substance use and negatively associated with warm parenting. Furthermore, warm parenting was significantly negatively associated with youth depression and delinquency. Although their research found indirect associations between relocation and problematic outcomes in younger generations, it lacked effect sizes and in-depth description of how current generations are experiencing cultural loss.

In order to deepen the understanding of the intergenerational experience of colonialist trauma, Goodkind et al. (2012) conducted a qualitative ethnographic study of 12 Dine (Navajo) families consisting of 14 youth, 15 parents/guardians, and 8 grandparents. Two interviews were conducted exploring the participants' identity, mental health and well-being, coping strategies, and spiritual beliefs. In order to obtain the most authentic cultural narrative, the terms resilience, survival, and historical trauma were not used by any of the interviewers. The results of their thematic analysis found that most youth and parents did not believe that historically traumatic events were directly impacting their current life, but instead attributed issues to current experiences of cultural loss and violence. The participants also expressed a belief of leaving traumatic history in the past, transforming narratives of silence as an intergenerational way of coping. Lastly, the study showed that healing included traditional ways such as medicine men, which limits youth who have not been taught traditional beliefs or practices.

A more recent qualitative investigation conducted by Reinschmidt et al. (2016) explored the life narratives of historical trauma along with the resilience strategies of Native American/Alaskan Native elders using a community-based participatory research methodology. This approach included Native American/Alaskan Native communities from development of the interview questions to analysis creating a Stories of Resilience Model. The study was led by two university Native American/Alaskan Native researchers, and included a group of 15 elders who created the interview guide. The sample included 13 participants (six of whom were in the interview guide group) who were 55 years of age or older, self-identified as Native American /Alaskan Native, had received services from the Tucson Indian Center, and were willing enough to share their personal stories. The procedures included two face-to-face interviews. The first included 25 guiding questions and were one to two hours in length. The purpose of the second interview was to have participants review their interview transcripts to either approve or request revisions. Lastly, the transcripts were then analyzed using thematic and combined consensus analysis creating deconstructed narratives into codes and organized them into categories of historical trauma and resilience. Historical trauma included the themes of Indigenous concepts, sense of loss, and contemporary adversities, while resilience included themes of Indigenous concepts along with individual, family, and community resilience.

Similar to earlier historical trauma and loss research, the participants did not recognize the academic construct of historical trauma until it was explained, only then did they connect it to their own experiences of cultural loss, discrimination, and oppression centered on the boarding school experiences of their elders. They also connected current

issues such as substance abuse and death to their history of cultural loss. Additionally, the participants expressed concern for the younger generations' lack of cultural identity in aspects of traditional knowledge, language, and ignorance of the connections between historical context and present issues. Similar to Goodkind et al. (2012), the participants associated this lack of historical knowledge and cultural loss to the silence of elders who did not want to share their painful experiences, and the effects of cultural assimilation in schools. Furthermore, resilience was expressed in the categories of individual, family, and community resilience with American Indian identity present in all three. For example, "individual resilience was described as personal strength grounded in identity and spirituality" (Reinschmidt et al., p. 72). This individual resilience was expanded and associated with family, community, traditional knowledge, and history. Overall, the results of this community-based qualitative study described the complex transitory experience of historical loss as both existent and invisible in the lived experiences of younger generations of Native American /Alaskan Natives.

Cultural protective factors. When investigating phenomenon, it is important to also include protective factors that may impact the psychological experiencing of the phenomenon. Concerning cultural protective factors, Stiffman et al. (2007) conducted a quantitative study of 401 urban and reservation Native American youth and found that GPA was significantly positively correlated to personal (r=.13), familial (r=.19), and environmental strengths (neighborhood r=.15, school r=.24). They also found that the more reported school strengths, the fewer conduct disorder symptoms (r= -.16), alcohol abuse symptoms (r= -.15), and drug abuse symptoms (r= -.13). By contrast, tribal strengths were positively correlated to alcohol abuse (r= .15), depression (r=.10), and

conduct disorder (r=.12) which could explain why urban Native American youth were more likely to provide positive comments about their experiences and personal strengths than reservation youth.

In order to gain a greater understanding of the complex relationship between cultural protective factors and experiences of trauma, Walls, Whitbeck, and Armenta (2016) used a quantitative study to investigate the cultural relevant risk (discrimination and historical loss) and protective factors (spiritual activities) in youth and adults. Similar to previous quantitative studies, their sample included 569 adolescents and 563 adult caretakers. Similar to Stiffman et al., (2007), their results indicated that Native American spirituality was positively associated with poorer psychological outcomes such as depressive symptoms, anger, and interpersonal difficulties.

For example, the relationships between youth spiritual activities and perceived discrimination which were statistically significant with a positive correlation and moderate effect size. It is important, however, to note that the correlation between poor psychological outcomes and spiritual activities became nonsignificant when discrimination or historical loss was added as predictors. This indicates the potential psychological outcomes that discrimination and historical loss can have on the lived experiences of youth with a strong Native American/Alaskan Native identity. Overall, these studies exposed the need for research that explores the intricacies of phenomenon that impact Native American/Alaskan Native ethnic identity, trauma response, and resiliency (Denham, 2008; Mendelson, Turner, & Tandon, 2010; Walls et al., 2016).

Victim-Based Perspective

Although historical trauma research has generated deep interest in mental health issues directly affecting Native American/Alaskan Native and has contributed to the professional fields of social work, psychology, and counseling, the construct has also generated criticism for being a victim-based perspective of Native American/Alaskan Native communities (Hartman & Gone, 2014; Kirmayer, Gone, & Moses, 2014). Historical trauma construct runs the risk of being used to support biological reductionism because of the intergenerational conceptualization of its effects (Kirmayer et al., 2014). This can lead scholars and practitioners to approach Native American/Alaskan Native culture and identities as static and overlook important aspects of current experiences of suffering "by obscuring the ongoing forms of material disposition and political domination, the discourse linking Indigenous culture and historical trauma may deflect attention from the fundamental structural causes of distress" (Kirmayer et al., 2014, p. 311).

To address institutions and discriminatory actions that continue to harm Native American/Alaskan Native requires researchers and practitioners to critically explore counter-narratives of experiences that may not fit within the box of historical trauma. For example, recent research has exposed such counter-experiences in youth who did not identify historical trauma as the cause of current issues negatively impacting their community (Goodkind et al., 2012), while another investigating the frequency of historical trauma thinking and suicide risk in young adults found that historical loss thinking may not directly influence susceptibility to suicide ideation (Tucker et al., 2016). Overall, there was a need for research that explores the current lived experiences of

Native American/Alaskan Native young adults with a critical conscious approach which includes all narratives even those that counter historical trauma theory.

Resilience, Resistance, and Healing

Experiences of resilience, resistance, and healing have existed in Native American/Alaskan Native communities for as long as colonialism has existed. It is important to acknowledge those experiences even when they exist in relation to acts of harm. This is most prevalent in Native American/Alaskan Native identity where Native American /Alaskan Natives have to balance their "reclamation of self" within the context of home, school, and society (Lee, 2009). This "living in two worlds" is further described by Lee (2009) as:

> all people negotiate multiple realities, but the two-worlds notion makes problematic Native peoples' abilities to adapt to (or resist) the dominant society, when in fact Native peoples have been adapting to (and resisting) other people's cultures, values, and worldviews for hundreds of years. (p. 310)

Recently, there has been an increased focus on Native resilience, resistance, and healing from wounds created by educational experiences of harm and trauma (Denham, 2008; Dionne & Nixon, 2014; Goodkind et al., 2012; Stumblingbear-Riddle & Romans, 2012; Walls et al., 2016). Resiliency research has included protective factors to colonialism such as traditional spirituality, self-esteem, ethnic identity, and social support (Stumblingbear-Riddle & Romans, 2012; Wexler, 2014), and reframing of historical trauma narratives into family histories of survival (Denham, 2008). Similar to resilience, resistance of colonialist educational practices can look like reclamation of native languages (Marker, 2009; McCarty et al., 2006), sharing of community narratives of

resilience (McMahon, Kenyon, & Carter, 2013), and policies that give Native Nations K-12 educational oversight and cultural integration into classroom pedagogy (Freng et al., 2007; Martinez, 2014; McCarty, 2015; Roppolo & Crow, 2007; van Hamme, 1996). Healing trauma wounds has become a broad focus as scholars and practitioners work to find culturally conscious interventions that can address the negative psychological effects of colonialism (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998; Dionne & Nixon, 2014; Friesen et al., 2015; Gone, 2009; Goodkind et al., 2012; Waldram, 2014; Walkley & Cox, 2013).

In order to support and help heal any traumas experienced by Native American/Alaskan Native students, social service and mental health workers need to have an understanding of the possible impacts of historical loss. To understand this need, Nicolai and Saus (2013) conducted a qualitative study exploring how social service providers conceptualize Indigenous children's experience of trauma. The sample included 17 participants (4 in Norway and 13 in Montana) young to middle age women who worked as social workers, therapists, advocates, or government officials with Indigenous and Tribal Nations. The semi-structured interviews were forty five minutes to two hours in length and were analyzed using two-tier thematic analysis. They found eight major themes including; (a) mistrust and systems trauma; (b) resilience; (c) grief and loss; (d) and Indigenous values (Nicolai & Saus, 2013). Specifically, themes of resilience and historic traumas were consistently present throughout the interviews in both reflections of present and future accounts of trauma. The participants also reported that their young clients experienced lingering grief and anger over cultural loss. Overall, the social service workers utilized historical systems of trauma to explain the current realities of their Native American/Alaskan Native clients while also including positive

aspects of Native American/Alaskan Native cultural identity to help children process trauma (Nicolai & Saus, 2013).

Though boarding schools were the sites of colonialization, they at times also became the sites of cultural resistance such as in the Salish Nation where Indigenous youth were taken out of public schools and sent to boarding schools by families in an act to preserve their language and cultural practices (Marker, 2009). This counters, however, research that has found positive associations between protective factors of Indigenous spirituality and ethnic identity to poorer psychological outcomes such as depression, anxiety, and experiences of discrimination (Stiffman et al., 2007; Walls et al., 2016). The following sections describe theories that were included in my approach to interviewing and analysis in order to create safety in a space that honored the authentic narrative of the participant.

Cultural Capital and Spatial Justice

Cultural Capital and Spatial Justice are two theories within critical theory scholarship that offer suggestions for what healing can look like in education (Schwartz, 2014; Yosso, 2005). In contrast to assimilation, "cultural capital" focuses on the cultural wealth that comes from cultural knowledge, skills, abilities, and forms of resistance such as linguistic, social, spiritual, and familial (Yosso, 2005). Although there have been an increase of schools that include tribal language classes and celebrate tribal history/tradition, for the majority of Native Americans /Alaskan Natives who attend public schools, this cultural capital can remain disregarded, unjustly appropriated, or conceptualized as a cause of their own psychological suffering (Freng et al., 2007; Marker, 2009; Martinez, 2014; Quijada Cerecer, 2013; Tippeconnic & Tippeconnic,

2012). One aspect of cultural capital is physical and relational space where cultural wealth is validated and experienced. "Spatial justice" is conceptualized as an action of resistance where allies create sites of healing wounds of trauma and oppression (Schwartz, 2014). In accord with Red pedagogy, "spatial justice" in education has been theorized to look like classrooms where educators recognize that students are experiencing the impact of oppression, and creates a physical and emotional safe space for students to voice their counter-narratives of dangerous knowledge as well as cultural wealth (Schwartz, 2014). Accordingly, for witnessing to occur in scholarship, researchers and scholars need to become allies and work towards creating healing spaces in which difficult discourse of Native American/Alaskan Native experience can be voiced and most importantly heard (McInnes, 2017).

Witnessing. "Critical witnessing" is an act of experiencing the counter-stories of trauma through listening and engaging in empathetic dialogue (Gubkin, 2015). In education witnessing becomes an act of resistance to dominant narratives that support false history and discount the subjective experiences of those impacted by trauma (Dutro & Bien, 2014; Zembylas, 2006). According to Zembylas (2006), affect is a force of energy that is in response to phenomenon which influences an individual's mode of existence. As such, emotion is a product of affect as well as discourse, becoming aspects of existence, or the lifeworld. There remains a need, however, for scholarship that continues to explore the lifeworld of Native American/Alaskan Native students as they journey through K-12 education that witnesses rather than theorizes or proves a construct. As such, this research does not prove or disprove the existence of constructs such as

historical trauma, but describes the lifeworld of Native Americans/Alaskan Natives who experienced *cultural identity silencing*.

Personal narratives of phenomenon can become lost in the movement from listening to response, shuffled within the cloud of previous knowledge and bias, and dismantled even further when responded to from a place of interpretation. In this way, it was important to investigate the *cultural identity silencing* of Native American/Alaskan Native using bracketing and qualitative phenomenological approach holding space for narrative description to include the multiple realities that exist.

Summary

Cultural identity silencing of Native American/Alaskan Native identity in education is quite a fragmented construct in recent literature with a lack of in-depth phenomenological investigation. In regards to educational achievement, statistics provide insight into the obstacles Native American/Alaskan Native students have to face, but such research remains focused on deficits instead of strengths, while neglecting more complex causes that have created current suffering. This victim-based perspective extends into theories, such as historical trauma, that continue to be built upon and can unintentionally disregard the range of experiences that can paint a more detailed description of the phenomenon of current Native American/Alaskan Native suffering (Kirmayer et al., 2014). There remains a need for scholarship that honors Indigenous knowledge from first-person narratives, and challenges the dominant framework in education that existence of experience requires validation from empirical interpretation (Quijada Cercer, 2013).

Even critical theory which supports the need for counter-narratives in scholarship has been criticized as muting the experiences of Native American/Alaskan Native especially in regards to descriptions of identity. As stated by Grande (2000):

> Moreover, the paradox of having to prove "authenticity" to gain legitimacy as "recognized" tribe and of simultaneously having to negotiate a postmodern world in which all claims to authenticity and legitimacy are dismissed as essentialist (if not racist) conscripts American Indians to a gravely dangerous and precarious space. This reality of Indian existence not only deeply problematizes various postmodern theories' insistence that we move beyond concretized categories, but also reveals their colonizing impulse (p. 476).

The phenomena of *cultural identity silencing* and identity are both transcendental and subjective. In investigating and describing the phenomenon of *cultural identity silencing* of Native American/Alaskan Native cultural identity in education, mental health practitioners as well as educators can become allies engaging in witnessing the voice of the experiencer. Overall the intention of this study was to address the need for witnessing the voices of young adult Native American /Alaskan Native, through investigating and describing the subjective experiencing of *cultural identity silencing* of Native American/Alaskan Native identity.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Investigating the phenomenon of *cultural identity silencing* in education as experienced by Native American /Alaskan Natives required a methodology that provided in-depth narratives, acknowledged the important dynamics of the relationship between researcher and participant, and witnessed the authentic experiences of Native American /Alaskan Natives. Qualitative methodology includes research that is grounded in discovery and exploration of lived experience where researchers are the tools used to "achieve an *understanding* [emphasis original] of how people make sense out of their lives, delineate the process (rather than the outcome or product) of meaning-making, and describe how people interpret what they experience" (Merriam, 2009, p. 14). Included in qualitative methodology is phenomenology which is an approach that focuses on the meanings of phenomenon as they present themselves in the consciousness of the experiencer rather than reducing essence into facts (Giorgi, 2006, 2008a, 2009, 2012; Merriam, 2009; Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, Higgins, & van der Riet, 2016). Therefore, this study used a descriptive phenomenological method to investigate the psychological essence of *cultural identity silencing* of Native American/Alaskan Native cultural identity.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to investigate the phenomenological psychological essence of *cultural identity silencing* of Native American/Alaskan Native cultural identity in education and create a structural description of its everyday lived reality. Furthermore, the questions used in this study to investigate this phenomenon were: (a) *How is cultural identity silencing of Native American/Alaskan Native identity experienced by young adult*

Native American/Alaskan Natives in education? (b) What is the psychological meaning of cultural identity silencing of Native American identity? Accordingly, the intention of this study was *not* creating theory, validating pre-existing theories, nor quantifying the meanings of the experienced phenomena (Englander, 2016; Giorgi, 2008a, 2009).

Study Design

This study used a descriptive phenomenological psychological approach in order to describe the underlying subjective essence of *cultural identity silencing* of Native American/Alaskan Native cultural identity in education from the voice of the experiencer. Currently there are two dominant schools of phenomenological research methodology, descriptive/eidetic and interpretative/hermeneutic (Dowling, 2007; Flood, 2010). These two schools of phenomenological research design are differentiated by the specific research questions and phenomenon under exploration (Bevan, 2014; Dowling, 2007; Flood, 2010). Descriptive phenomenology, rooted in the philosophical works of Husserl (1967) and more recent philosophical psychological works of researchers such as Giorgi (2008b, 2009, 2012), was used to investigate the most core aspects of experienced phenomena within a specific context in order to form a description of meanings from the lifeworld of the experiencer. Under descriptive phenomenology, in-depth phenomenological interviewing and analysis strive to use epoché or bracketing, in order to obtain primordial reflections of the experience rather than researcher interpretations that can challenge the original meanings of the phenomenon formed by the experiencer (Caelli, 2000; Dowling, 2007; Englander, 2016; Giorgi, 2012).

Descriptive phenomenological design captures aspects of the experienced phenomenon that are mirrors of the underlying core psychological essence,

contextualized but without the influences of researcher biases (Bevan, 2014; Caelli, 2000; Dowling, 2007; Giorgi, 2008a, 2009, 2012; van Manen et al., 2016). The structural descriptions can then be used to help further the understanding of a specific group's experience of the phenomenon (Englander, 2016; Giorgi, 2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2012). Ultimately, this study used a descriptive phenomenological design.

Descriptive Phenomenological Design

Descriptive phenomenological design was used to clarify the nature of psychological phenomena, not enter lifeworlds of the experiencer. Therefore, the results of this study describe the psychological experiencing of *cultural identity silencing* contextualized within education and Native American/Alaskan Native cultural identity *not* the individual lives of the participants (Giorgi, 2008a, 2009, 2012; Siedman, 2013). Research using descriptive phenomenological design places great emphasis on phenomenological reduction which utilizes researcher epoché in order to capture the description of the participant's experience of the phenomenon as it presents itself into consciousness, without judgment or bias. As explained by Giorgi (2009):

> Implied within the notion of epoché or bracketing is the notion that past knowledge about whatever is presently given is also put aside so that unprejudiced attention can be directed to what is present in the current act of consciousness being considered. (p.11)

Epoché is present throughout descriptive phenomenological design because it calls for the researcher to account for prior knowledge and judgment which can challenge the original meanings participants apply to lived phenomenon (Giorgi 2009). The distinctions between epoché, used in descriptive phenomenology, and interpretation, used

in hermeneutic phenomenology are like differentiation vs. discrimination. For example, a crying baby is a common experience, and someone's description of that experience might be, "a moment where I felt anxious and worried because baby's often cry when they are unwell". The description of that experience using epoché could be described as a moment of questioning the health of the baby versus the discrimination (interpretations) of the same narrative could be a moment of panic stemming from biological cues. The latter moves past the words of the experiencer and adds researcher bias from previous knowledge in an attempt to find causality rather than describe the phenomenon.

Context is an essential aspect of descriptive phenomenology and includes three main tenets: *natural attitude, lifeworld*, and *modes of appearing*. "Natural attitude" is the approach and interpretation of the present world which includes all previous knowledge and influences (Giorgi, 2009). The "natural attitude" one has in experiencing phenomena builds onto the layers of present experiencing. Accordingly," lifeworld" is what is described within descriptive phenomenology and encompasses the ways in which one experiences the world under natural attitude (Henriques, 2014). The lifeworld of the participant is discovered through "modes of appearing", which can be describe as the ways in which objects first present themselves to the consciousness of the participant (Giorgi, 2009**)**. This study describes *cultural identity silencing* as experienced in the lifeworld of participants using phenomenological interviewing, epoché, and phenomenological reduction.

Phenomenological Interview

The phenomenological interviews are the heart of phenomenological research. Such interviews focus on the reconstruction of experience, *not* the re-telling of memories, to

encourage pre-reflection of the experiencing of phenomenon and provide space for the participant to explore their experience in a new way with little to no interference from the researcher (Bevan, 2014; Dowling, 2007; Englander, 2016; Giorgi, 2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2012; van Manen et al., 2016). Additionally, phenomenological interviews align with the oral traditions of American Indians, and honor the meanings participants give to experienced phenomenon (Struthers & Penden-McAlpine, 2005). Ordinarily, researchers would take a more active role such as in semi-structured interviews where there was a formal structure of specific questions and prompts. An interview guide for a phenomenological interview consists, however, of very few questions and can vary upon the context of what might arise within the interview as it was brought up by the participant (Siedman, 2013).

Phenomenological interviewers use different types of open-ended questions in order to balance open disclosure with the need for detailed context (Bevan, 2014; Siedman, 2013). In this study the interview guides (see appendix A) are reflexive including both structural and descriptive questions. Beven (2014) stated that "descriptive and structural questions provide a basis for maintaining the phenomenological reduction as well as a configuration for examining experience and avoiding explanatory questions or premature interpretations on the part of the researcher" (p. 141). Although structural questions frame the participant's reconstruction and experienced meaning around the phenomenon, descriptive questions ask the participant to reconstruct particular details and subjective meanings about their experiences (Bevan, 2014). Silence can also become an aspect of the interview especially during the first interview when the participant was asked to share an aspect of their life history after only just meeting the

investigator. I was mindful to accept silence, giving time for the participant to process and proceed as experiences naturally arise in consciousness, while staying within the 60-90 minute timeframe (Seidman, 2013).

Following critical theory as well as phenomenological method, the narratives and meanings that arise from the reconstructed experience are taken as truth and were not questioned. On the other hand, during the interview process when I was unclear about what the participant was describing, I did not assume complete understanding, and asked the participants to clarify what they shared (Seidman, 2013). To assume understanding without clarity or to place participants in a position of questioning their experience goes against the epoché stance. Epoché remains present throughout the interview process by remaining focused on the primary intentions of the interview, life history, experience of *cultural identity silencing*, and meaning. As such, all prompts and follow-up questions stem from what was already shared by the participant, and describing the details of those narratives. To achieve these goals this study used Seidman's (2013) interview model to capture the descriptions of *cultural identity silencing* in education in an approach which honored the lifeworld of participants.

Seidman Interview Model

Seidman's interview model is frequently used in qualitative phenomenological studies (Bevan, 2014; Seidman, 2013; Van Manen et al., 2016). The intention of Seidman's (2013) three part interview model was to provide a rich in-depth description of the participant's reconstructed experience that cannot be obtained within a single interview. The model consisted of three 60-90 minute interviews spaced at least four to seven days apart completed within a five week timeframe (Seidman, 2013). This

structure provided time for participants to reflect on their experience of the phenomenon, in this case *cultural identity silencing*, as the layers of meaning presented itself to consciousness and carried into the next interview. As such, the questions focused on "how" rather than "why" in order to gain a personal narrative that set the stage for how the participant subjectively experienced the phenomena and the events that helped construct its meaning (Seidman, 2013). As described by Seidman (2013) the three part model includes:

> The first interview establishes the context of the participants' experience. The second allows participants to reconstruct the details of their experience within the context in which it occurs. And the third encourages the participants to reflect on the meaning their experience holds for them. (p. 27)

The first interview focused on life history which provided descriptions of contexts within the phenomenon American Indian *cultural identity silencing* in education. Specifically for this study the first interview focused on the reconstruction of the participant's first experience of their American Indian identity and education up to the present moment by focusing on the question: "*Please share with me your life experience of your formal education, cultural education, and identity*". Continuing on, the purpose of the second interview was to explore the details specific to the lived experiences of *cultural identity silencing* which were rooted in the life history context which was described during the first interview. The question asked during the second interview was: "*Describe your experiences of cultural identity silencing of your Native American*

Identity in education." Details included specific experiences within the classroom, with educators, relationships, dialogue, and relationships.

Lastly, the third interview explored the meaning of those experiences and asked ". . . that the participants look at how the factors in their lives interacted to bring them to their present situation. It also requires that they look at their present experience in detail and within the context in which it occurs" (Seidman, 2013, p.23). The third interview in this study asked: "*Describe the meaning of your experiences of cultural identity silencing.*" Unlike semi-structured interviews, Siedman's model used very few scripted questions and only utilized prompts to further the natural reconstruction of the experience, without interpretation. Overall, this interview process provided rich detailed descriptions of *cultural identity silencing* of Native American cultural identity from the voice of the experiencer.

Researcher Role

The researcher role within qualitative phenomenological research is one of great responsibility and empathy because it tasks the researcher to be a "worthy witness" of the participant's experience. In doing so the relationship formed between the researcher, participants, as well as the narratives becomes one of acknowledgment, affirmation, and dignity (Seidman, 2016). As an instrument within the qualitative analysis process, researchers doing phenomenological work need to take an epoché stance and bracket out personal knowledge including their cultural identity and perspectives (Bevan, 2014; Dowling, 2007; Englander, 2016; Giorgi, 2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2012; Moustakas, 1994; van Manen et al., 2016).

Bracketing/epoché is a constant reflexive process of phenomenological reduction where the researcher's attitude and biases are exposed and put aside in order for the words of the participants and meanings of the phenomenon to emerge (Giorgi, 2009, 2012). Epoché approach was followed throughout the whole research process including literature review and interview questions, remaining an element of every decision about the work. For example, the literature review for this study did not extend past what was necessary for understanding the need, nor did it extend into theories past my pre-existing theoretical knowledge. This action was taken in order to approach the work with some purposeful naiveté and investigate the phenomenon as it was experienced by participants, in their own words, theories, etc. rather than my own interpretation.

For this study epoché looked like intentional distance and ceasing thought about the data outside of working with it directly. Epoché is a letting go of bias and as such very few field notes were taken. Any thought that arose outside of working directly with the data was allowed to pass by instead of making it concrete and difficult to detach from by writing it down. I took intentional physical and psychological actions to exclude myself, "I", from the analysis. All in all, my role in this study was one of listening and witnessing to create a description of *cultural identity silencing* of Native American identity in education as experienced in the words of the participants.

Sample

In accordance with phenomenological research, this study used purposeful sampling that included participants who provided in-depth first person accounts of their psychological experience of *cultural identity silencing* of Native American/Alaskan Native cultural identity in education. This study focused on emerging adults ages 18 –

25, who identified as Native American/Alaskan Native. Emerging adults were old enough to have a rather crystalized cultural identity while still young enough to have had recent experiences in education. Additionally, the sample included participants who identified as multiple heritages, and there was no Nation membership requirement. To require Nation membership would uphold the colonialist construct of "blood quantum", in itself an act of *cultural identity silencing* that would have unintentionally excluded individuals who would provide rich descriptions of the phenomenon. This study was also open to urban and rural tribal identities within the United States and Canada. Staying true to phenomenology, the sample size was small with a total of eight participants. Overall, this study included 24 interviews from eight self-identifying Native American/Alaskan Native young adults who had experienced *cultural identity silencing* in education.

Recruitment and Data Collection

The data for this study included a total of 24 individual interviews collected using Seidman's three part interview model (2013). It was imperative that the design of the study acknowledged and respected the participants' dual National identities. The study rationale and procedure were presented to several Native Nations Institutional Review Boards [IRB] and community leaders before recruiting participants from specific regions. Faculty and Native American student organizations were contacted to share the recruitment information with possible participants. While some asked for a copy of the research design and IRB approval number, others had separate IRB approval processes specific for research recruiting Native American/Alaskan Native students. In fact, some Nations requested that the study gain approval through NIH. This study did not require NIH approval because it did not collect health information and omitted identifiers such as

Nation name, age, address, etc. commonly collected in health studies. Since it did not fall under NIH qualifications or procedures it left the study in limbo never able to gain approval for those particular Nations.

Participants were recruited through snowballing technique using flyers and referrals from faculty, community leaders, email, and family. The most difficult task was reaching participants who could fully commit to all three, 60-140 minute Skype interviews. In fact, there were three occasions when the potential participant abandoned the study after signing the consent form and scheduling the first interview. Two were due to scheduling issues, and one was due to technology issues. As such, each participant that completed all three interviews received a $50 visa gift card for their time and sharing their story.

In order to continue to establish some deliberate naiveté, I did little in-depth research of the specific Nation identity of the participants to buffer against prejudgment and maintain epoché (Bevan, 2014; Dowling, 2007; Englander, 2016; Giorgi, 2009; Van Manen et al., 2016). As stated, epoché was an essential aspect of phenomenological interviewing and analysis in which the researcher has to take a critical self-questioning and reflexive stance in relation to their perceptions and experiences of the phenomenon (Bevan, 2014; Dowling, 2007; Englander, 2016; Giorgi, 2009; Van Manen et al., 2016). Therefore, any information outside of the interview and participant narratives was excluded.

Data organization

Data organization is a necessary element of conducting qualitative research. For this study the interviews were audio recorded and files were stored on a password

protected laptop computer. All writings and audio files taken during the interviews were named with the participants' number, interview number, and date of the interview for example: P1 interview 1-11-8-16, each file was encrypted, and stored on a password protected laptop computer. Similarly, all written transcripts were named and saved in an encrypted electronic folder. Any hard copies of transcripts were stored in a locked file cabinet and all electronic data were backed-up on an encrypted external hard drive where they remained stored.

Descriptive Phenomenological Psychological Analysis

In congruence with the studies descriptive phenomenological design, this study used Giorgian's phenomenological psychological method of analysis grounded in Husserlian philosophy in order to create descriptions of the experienced phenomenon. This framework of phenomenological analysis required that the researcher limit any "imaginative variation" of the analysis that extended the interpretation beyond the psychological meaning given by the participant, while at the same time maintaining an epoché stance (Bevan, 2014; Dowling, 2007; Englander, 2016; Giorgi, 2009). "Constituents" are lifeworld meaning units that are interrelated and whose relationships form the structure of the phenomenon (Giorgi, 2009). Imaginative variation is the heart of descriptive phenomenological analysis and occurs when the researcher takes the constituents, reflects on the possibilities of the essence of the constituent, and discards what does not fit within the phenomenon described by the participant. Along with epoché, this form of analysis required that the researcher take on a natural attitude of the phenomenon under study (Giorgi, 2009). This study maintained a phenomenologically, psychologically, and educationally-sensitive natural attitude/approach throughout data

analysis investigating the *cultural identity silencing* of American Indian identity for phenomenological psychological meaning. This natural attitude was congruent with my identity as a counselor educator, previous psychological knowledge, and the phenomenological framework of the study.

Analysis Procedure

In accordance with descriptive phenomenological psychological design, the steps of the Giorgian analysis procedure included line-by-line coding and phenomenological reduction of the transcripts (Dowling, 2007; Giorgi, 2009, 2008b, 2012). The steps of Giorgian analysis were as follows: (a) I read whole description (data set) of the phenomenon to gain holistic understanding of data. The data set included all three interviews from one participant. (b) I then re-read each interview description from the beginning and marked meaning units where there were shifts in psychological meaning noted by change of psychological attitude within the words of transcript, *not* a change in my attitude while reading those words (2009, 2012). These meaning units were correlated to the reaction of the researcher to the participants words *not* the meaning, because meaning would include interpretation and bias.

In concert with natural attitude, free imaginative variation is a phenomenological technique used in descriptive phenomenological analysis. As defined by Giorgi (2009), "free imaginative variation requires that one mentally remove an aspect of the phenomenon that is to be clarified in order to see whether the removal transforms what is presented in an essential way" (p. 69). Imaginative variation was the final stage of analysis used to transform data into constituents, psychological descriptions of how the participant experienced *cultural identity silencing* while remaining in the words of the

participant. "In other words the psychological value of what the subject said is made explicit for the phenomenon being studied" (Giorgi, 2012, p. 5). The essential psychological constituents created in step three were reviewed and imaginative variation was used again to create a structured description of the phenomenon. Lastly, the descriptive structure was then used to describe the psychological phenomenon under study (Giorgi, 2009, 2012).

Trustworthiness

Several steps were taken to establish trustworthiness. In order to preserve the unique descriptions of the participants, the transcripts from each participant were analyzed separately in the first two phases of analysis to guard against cross contaminating one experience with another participant's experience. It was important to maintain the words of the participant throughout the descriptive analysis-only eliminating data that did not describe the phenomenon, and were not present across narratives during the final phase of analysis. Maintaining the personal textual descriptions was of the upmost importance. This was essential to the phenomenological psychological analysis approach and maintained the authentic lived experience of the participant.

Traditional member checks in which descriptions are sent back to participants for validation was *not* used in this study because they countered the underlying conceptualization of phenomenological research as transcendental and primordial. As described by Giorgi (2008a):

> When a researcher presents phenomenological findings back to a participant, he or she is asking them to confirm what was lived through. The participant may not have even thought about that issue. Participants are surely privileged when it

> comes to what they experienced, but not necessarily concerning the meaning of their experience. The findings, if properly obtained, are concerned with meanings of experience. (p. 6)

The purpose of this work was to capture the participants meaning making as they were reconstructing it for the first time, not their interpretation of their experience. The resulting descriptions were shared with participants, but no edits were made to the resulting description for the purposes of validating their interpretation. Ultimately, trustworthiness relied on maintaining the structure of interview and analysis, while bracketing throughout the process to establish epoché.

Bracketing. Phenomenological reduction requires that the researcher bracket their knowledge, biases, perceptions, beliefs, etc. before entering into interviewing and analysis (Giorgi, 2009). This was another reason to use phenomenological interviewing in order to create space for the participant to direct the interview while holding the investigator accountable to consistently critically reflect on the impact their previous knowledge has on the living experiences taking place during the interview. Phenomenological reduction was an awkward balancing act between critical reflexivity and authentic presence to prevent unintended distancing from the participant and the data. For the purposes of this study I described my personal narrative that lead to this study including my own cultural identity. Then I described how I bracketed out this information along with previous knowledge. Lastly, I summarized the epoché approach that was taken to create the phenomenological psychological descriptions.

As earlier described in the introduction, I identify as a Biracial, Non-Native, 29 year old, heterosexual, female counselor educator. I grew up in a small northeast city

located near a Native American Nation. Although I do not have a Native American heritage, I had mentors (see chapter one for example) in my life who introduced me to the culture, and I identified with some of their experiences of cultural loss. As a very light-skinned Biracial individual, my Blackness was often invisible and I often had to prove my African American identity. In proving my identity it also, however, isolated my experience because I never felt fully accepted by either community, Black or White. Navigating through school meant that I was often caught in a paradox of either fitting within the Black or White community knowing that in doing so meant that my biracial identity would remain unacknowledged, or confident in my identity without any community's full acceptance. My mentors were the first to witness my experience as a biracial little girl, and this acceptance was the start to creating my own community where I now gain strength to resist society's push to place me in a cultural box of simple understanding. I now have the privilege to continue the work of my mentors as an outsider who works to critically witness the invisible narratives, and transform the consciousness of educators as well as counselors towards understanding the lived experiences of Native Americans.

Although my experiences of cultural loss and silencing have developed into an interest in investigating this phenomenon as experienced by Native Americans, it was also previous knowledge that can lead to interpretation of participant's experiences. My outsider identity also caused unintended obstacles when recruiting for participants because of the history of harm by non-Native educators and researchers. As described earlier in the chapter, I worked with community allies and took the time to explain the intentions of the study.

To bracket out any of my previous knowledge (see chapter 2) or personal experience, I used very few field notes during analysis to write any thoughts, reactions, etc. that were not based on the words of the participant or my "natural attitude" in order to maintain the exact words of the participant throughout the analysis and descriptions. The field notes were reflections of my own conscious bias, and did not contain any personal information that identified participants.

Additionally, field notes were not taken during any of the interviews to maintain focus on remaining present with the participant as they reconstructed their experience. To take field notes during the interview would have taken attention away from the participant and potentially silence them. Ultimately, bracketing was present in every phase of this research: (a) the intention to restrict the literature review to the specific research that formed the study; (b) in the choice of using the Seidman interview model to witness the participants' experiences as they reconstructed it without interruption or interpretation; and (c) the bracketing using field notes and distance from the data throughout the analysis phase. Overall, this work investigated and described the subjective experiences of young adult Native Americans in their voice.

Ethical Considerations

Several steps were taken to ensure the emotional and physical safety of participants. Before any recruitment, the project was approved by three IRB committees serving the home institution and two additional universities that had their own IRB process for recruitment. This research qualified for expedited review and included a copy of the informed consent (see Appendix B), interview guide (see Appendix A), email solicitation (see Appendix C) and informational flyers used for recruitment (see

Appendix D). In accordance with NIH ethical standards, participants were informed of their right to end the interview and withdraw at any time. I explained the purpose of the study and how the data were to be stored. Additionally, the participants were also informed of the mandated reporter laws. Considering the history of harmful events enacted by the federal government on Native Nations, steps were taken to build a relationship with the Nations to which the participants belong and to gain permission from the community. Additionally it was important to establish boundaries with the Native Nation because, no matter how well intentioned I was, the rights and confidentiality of the participants must be maintained. This required specific transcription rules that omitted specific Nation cultural details in addition to pseudonyms in the interview transcripts and results in order to protect the participants.

At times there was a desire to take on a counseling role during the interview (reflection of thoughts, emotions, nonverbal), which would move the participant into a space of unwanted vulnerability rather than safe reflection and reconstruction of experience. As such, I maintained the position of witness and refrained from entering the lifeworld of the participant. Accordingly no personal questions beyond the phenomenon of study were asked (Seidman, 2013). Ultimately, I continuously worked at balancing the detailed information necessary for the phenomenological description with the information that could identify the participants.

Limitations

Before the study has took place limitations were noted. One of the most difficult aspects of qualitative research to address was data saturation, which occurs when the number of participants and themes generated by the data reach a point where nothing new

arises (Merriam, 2009). This phenomenological study had a small sample size because of the in-depth interviewing and the purpose of the study to gain an understanding of the essence of a phenomenon (Cresswell, 2009). As a result, the small sample size provided a limited fragmented understanding of the phenomenon that could possibly only be generalized as it pertained directly to the phenomenon. In other words, the descriptions resulting from this phenomenological investigation provided an in-depth understanding of the essence of experience, *not* of the specific populations.

Saturation of phenomena was as important to be aware of as data saturation described by Van Manen et al. (2016): "Marion argues that some human phenomena are so saturated with excess meaning and intuition that an eidetic or originary phenomenological analysis of the meaning of this phenomenon is not really possible (by means of the reduction)" (p. 5). This was important to be aware given the recent popularity of historical loss and tribal critical theory becoming a focus within agencies and schools. Presently, there is a large body of research on mental health and educational phenomenon outside of *cultural identity silencing*. If participants had previously reconstructed similar experiences, it could interfere with participants' primordial reconstruction of their experiences of *cultural identity silencing* of American Indian identity. Lastly, my position as a doctoral student representing a university was a limitation because of the history of educational institutions perpetuating traumatic experiences faced by Native Nations.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to address the questions: *How is cultural identity silencing of Native American/Alaskan Native identity experienced by young adult Native*

American/Alaskan Natives in education? What is the psychological meaning of cultural identity silencing of Native American identity? Using descriptive phenomenological qualitative design allowed the phenomenon to be investigated with a phenomenological psychological and educational attitude to create a description of its subjective essence. Using Seidman's three part model for interviewing structure provided rich in-depth first-person accounts that were used to construct the structural description. Finally, the descriptive phenomenological analysis using the Giorgian process provided a descriptive structure of the lived psychological experiencing of *cultural identity silencing* of Native American/Alaskan identity in education. Overall, this project was a first step of many towards forming an understanding of the phenomenon of silencing and the experiences of education.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Cultural identity silencing is a construct that defines a phenomenon where the existence of cultural identity is dismissed, omitted, and challenged. This study asked participants to reconstruct their subjective experiences of *cultural identity silencing* of their Native American identity in education in order to create a structural description of how this phenomenon was experienced. Before articulating the structural description of the phenomenon, it is essential to distinguish Giorgian psychological phenomenological analysis from other forms of qualitative phenomenological analysis (Giorgi, 2009).

Descriptive phenomenological analysis intends to describe the psychological phenomenon as it arises within the consciousness of the experiencer, not the objective truth (Giorgi, 2009). Although the reader may see causes, conditions, and outcomes within the description, they were not the primary focus. For example, *education* was part of the context of this research question and an aspect throughout the structural description, but is neither universal cause nor outcome. Going back to the tree falling in the forest, the focus was not how the tree fell, what the tree was as it fell, nor its impact when it hit the ground, but the subjective psychological experience, the *how*, of it was falling. The descriptive phenomenological psychological structure expresses the eidetic not universal generalization of subjective experience of the *cultural identity silencing* (Giorgi, 2009).

Participants reconstructed their experiences within the boundaries of Native American identity, education, and psychological meaning. As if the boundaries were walls that created the “house” or phenomenon, participants walked through their “house” of *cultural identity silencing* and described the rooms as they appeared into

consciousness. Their descriptions included "phenomenal clues" that indicated sub-themes, objects, and relationships in which the participants engaged (Giorgi, 2009). During each interview participants were asked to describe subjective elements of their *cultural identity silencing* "house" which included their psychological intrapersonal, interpersonal, and spatial (environmental) experiences. During analysis all interviews were coded for meaning units marked by shifts in psychological meaning. Then the meaning units were transformed into third person and weighed for descriptive richness. All interviews were then narrowed down using phenomenological reduction to the essential constituents that created the descriptive structure (Giorgi, 2009; 2012; Moustakas, 1994). These essential constituents were present across participant narratives and necessary for the psychological experience of *cultural identity silencing*. Every house/phenomenon is different; however, these pillars of morphological essences are inexact and exist within the psychological edict generalization of this phenomenon which existed upon the foundation of Native American identity, education, and the construct cultural identity silencing (Giorgi, 2009; Husserl, 1983). This chapter describes the participants, descriptive phenomenological analysis, and the structural description of *cultural identity silencing*.

Participants

Participants ranged in age from 18-26 and self-identified as Native American/Alaskan Native. There were eight participants that completed three individual Skype interviews that ranged from 60 to 90 minutes long and were at least one week apart. The participants represented eight distinct Native American/Alaskan Nations from different regions of the United States. One was from Alaska, one from the Northwest,

two from the Southwest, two from the Midwest, and two from the Northeast. All were currently enrolled college students with one currently working towards a graduate degree. Out of the eight participants, six were connected to the study by a close friend or family member who shared the information and two discovered the study through a social media post with the flyer information. It is essential to acknowledge that while the structural description of this study presents shared structure of the experienced phenomenon each participant's Nation had distinct cultural differences and unique values.

This research does not support a Pan-Indian notion of Native identity that ignores the very unique aspects of each Nation's culture. All participants could identify with the *cultural identity silencing* phenomenon such as P1 "as soon as I heard it I immediately able to pick out instances in which my identity was sort of taken from me through K-12, the certain situations where I felt as if they weren't elaborating enough or had skipped over." Although their interactions with cultural identity silencing ranged from cultural misidentification to extinguishment of their Nation language's, they shared the intention to have their experiences heard. A few voiced the importance of having current voices of Native American young adults present within academic research to educate other Native students as well as educators and counselors. As stated by P5 "kind of going back to that idea of education, you know, that's just a huge factor for me, not just for myself, but for other people, for other Native students. Just to be like, 'oh these are some of the issues that I face' by thousands of other students as well and hopefully they can learn."

To maintain the confidentiality of the participants' identity, identifiers such as Nation name, institution names, locations, and specific details about cultural ceremonies were not included in the summaries or final descriptive structure. Also the gender of the

participants was not included to further remove the "I" of the participant and focus on the universal experience of the phenomenon. The intention of the structural descriptions is to describe the structural psychological essence of the phenomenon under exploration not the bias of the reader or researcher. Although the individual participant summaries were merged for the structural description, they have been included in Appendix E for the reader to explore and learn more about their individual experiences.

Data Analysis

Each interview was conducted over Skype, recorded using a Taskcam digital recorder, saved on SD cards, and transferred to a password protected laptop. Using MaxQDA software, each audio file was uploaded and transcribed using shortcut keys and timestamps for every change in narrator (researcher, participant). The researcher transcribed all 24 interviews in order to form a closer relationship and an understanding of the data necessary to distinguish psychological *meaning units* and *essential constituents*. Meaning units distinguished the shifts in psychological meaning described in the transcripts, whereas constituents were meaning units transformed into descriptive parts of the phenomenon. As stated by Giorgi (2009) "constituents are nonindependent parts of a whole that need other moments in order for the phenomenon to be experienced" (pp.206-207). The relationships between constituents were described by the descriptive structure. All constituents needed to be in place for the phenomenon *cultural identity silencing* to occur, but their presence did not guarantee that it took place (Giorgi, 2009).

As part of epoché, it was important to look at the data as they were revealed by the participant rather than interpret using researcher bias or comparing against other participants. Transcribing was the first step in utilizing epoché because it distanced the

voice of the researcher from the data and maintained the voice of the participant. Forming this relationship with the data allowed the participants' voices to carry-on throughout the analysis even when coding for subjective descriptions across datum. Each audio file was named with the participant number and saved in three locations: MaxQDA software, desktop file, and external hard drive. After each interview was fully transcribed they were each read from start to finish, gaining a whole understanding of the description (Giorgi, 2009). Then, upon the second reading, the meaning units were coded when there was a change in psychological meaning. This shift was not interpreted but justified in change in stated emotion, focus, or context by the participant, for example, if the description shifted from an external focus on interpersonal dialogue to an internal questioning of their emotions.

The meaning units were coded and organized under the interview domains of *education* (formal and cultural), *Native American identity*, and *cultural identity silencing*. There was overlap with some of the meaning units, points of interaction with multiple contexts. Additional contexts also created *reasons for participating* and *reflection of the interview* (which took place during the last interview) to incorporate the participants' experience of the research process. As the coding continued, the researcher realized that many of the primary meaning units could be combined for a better understanding of their psychological meaning within the larger textual description. For instance, early on some of the sentences were separated, or *spliced,* between changes in emotion. When transforming the meaning units into the participant summaries, it became, however, apparent that they could be combined into brooder psychological meaning.

Comments were used to help organize the data by connecting the meaning units with specific events that were described at different points of the interviews. The comments also noted the question with which the meaning unit was aligned. For instance, in the first interview participants often described but did not reconstruct their experiences of *cultural identity silencing*. Then, in the second interview they reconstructed and described their psychological experiencing of *cultural identity silencing* in in-depth detail. While coding the transcriptions a comment was added by the researcher that the meaning unit was in response to an interview prompt to further describe the experience mentioned in the previous interview. Not every meaning unit had a comment nor did any have memos, researcher reflection/interpretation of the unit and its possible relationships to other units. As part of epoché it was important to keep "I" as the researcher out of the dialogue between transcript and analysis, therefore, my feelings, thoughts, etc. were bracketed out.

Meaning units were based on indicators of shift in subjective psychological meaning originated from the words of the participant. These indicators included shifts in emotions, focus, and object of their experience. Appendix F provides an example of the coding of meaning units within P8's description during interview three when they were asked about their hopes for their Nation, the lines represent the meaning units indicating shifts in psychological meaning. These meaning units were then transformed into third person narrative (see an example of the Code Book in Appendix G) and re-read to analyze for shared psychological description.

All of the text in each interview was analyzed into meaning units. After all 24 interviews were analyzed for meaning units, each interview domain was

exported from MaxQDA into Excel format where they were re-read and weighted for subjective richness and meaning to describe their experience of *cultural identity silencing*. This was a necessary step since there were over 4,000 meaning units. It was necessary to have a method to organize them in order to further analyze and transform them into the essential constituents. Referring to the "house" analogy, this process took all the objects and descriptions of the rooms and broke them down into little pieces. The thousands of pieces then needed to be sorted for meaning according to its richness, its connection to specific narrative, and frequency (see Appendix H for structure illustration).

Then following Giorgi's (2009) descriptive psychological phenomenological method, each weighted meaning unit that described the subjective experience of *cultural identity silencing* was transformed into third person narrative. This transformation was essential to maintain epoché and separated the description from the "I" of the participant and focused on experience as told by the data. Some direct quotes were maintained, however, in order to validate their origination and ground the reader to the authentic, lived experience of the participants. Then the descriptions were organized into individual summaries of the participants' experience within the contexts of education, dialogue, community, and meaning. These contexts were the four "rooms" of the *cultural identity silencing* house that were neither predetermined nor essential to the final structural description. Their purpose was to help organize the pieces of described experience into a broader structure built upon the

foundation of Native American identity, the cultural identity silencing construct, and education.

These summaries served another purpose as well, to acknowledge to the participants that their unique narrative was heard. Since the end result of this study was a structural description of the psychological experience of the phenomenon, it did not include the in-depth experiences that were unique to each participant. Each summary was sent to the participant not as a validity check, but as an act of gratitude and appreciation. Since the interview itself was a separate phenomenon and the participant viewing their summary was another separate phenomenon (Giorgi, 2009), participant checks were therefore not a valid form of validity check because the meaning, description, and participant had already changed from the time of the interview.

The final phase of analysis reduced the walls of the universal rooms to the essential constituents that are the, morphological essences of the experienced phenomenon (Giorgi, 2009; Husserl, 1983). This was also the phase where *imaginative variation* was used to transform the psychological descriptions into essential constituents. *Imaginative variation* is the process of examining the descriptions from a transcendental phenomenological attitude as how they are experienced whether or not that was the way they were experienced (Giorgi, 2009). As stated by Giorgi (2009), “the object may not be real, but the perception-belief complex is an experiential given” (p. 88). This was done by *horizonalization* in which all constituents were of equal value and horizons (essential constituents) of the experience were formed (Merriam, 2009;

Moustakas, 1994). Similar to the bracketing within the third phase of this analysis which was used to delimit irrelevant or repetitive data, the descriptions in the summaries were analyzed for subjective descriptions that described the essential parts- constituents- necessary for the *cultural identity silencing* to occur.

Seven essential constituents were described by the participants as the essential psychological constituents of how they experienced *cultural identity silencing*. They included: *what makes a Native American Native*; *my existence as Native informs my experience*; *we are relics of the past*; *I question my existence*; *I shield my existence*; *I connect with my existence*; and *identity evolution*. An illustration of the structure is provided in Appendix H. Each essential constituent is built upon the context of the phenomenon. The arrows indicate the process in which each constituent arose to consciousness. The boxes on the left represent the encounters that were consistently experienced (in no particular order) and the boxes to the right represent the subjective and cognitive states that were re-occurring throughout the process. The boxes (self-acceptance, identity permanence, sadness/grief, and hope) are the subjective experiences that were intensified by the experiencing of the essential constituents and felt when *cultural identity silencing* was experienced.

Unlike theory which discusses causes, conditions, and outcomes, these seven essential constituents were descriptions of the interactions participants had with the phenomenon as it was brought to their consciousness. These morphological essences are nonindenpendent, fluid, re-occurring, and transformative. These constituents were “process-long” and present throughout

the phenomenon of *cultural identity silencing* (Giorgi, 2009). Although each participant's narrative included these essential constituents, the conditions, outcomes, and causes of the phenomenon are not discussed in rich detail. The intention of these results are to describe the psychological structural experience of the phenomenon, and in doing so leave the reader with an understanding of how *cultural identity silencing* of Native American identity in education was psychologically experienced.

Structural Description

Cultural identity silencing of Native American identity within education included seven essential psychological constituents necessary for the phenomenon to occur. Together the essential constituents describe the psychological structural process of how the participants experienced their existence as Native American when it was dismissed within education. These psychological constituents of *cultural identity silencing* were described within the lifeworld of each participant from their earliest experience until the time of the interview. Each essential constituent was present throughout all three interviews. *Cultural identity silencing* became present to the consciousness of the participant through the essential constituents at various life points, duration, and intensity; however, all had to be present for *cultural identity silencing* to occur. At times participants' experienced some of essential constituents experiencing *cultural identity silencing*, but once one constituent was realized it allowed the next to be experienced (Giorgi, 2009). The descriptive psychological phenomenological structure consists of the following essential constituents in order and aligned with the life point in which it was first experienced: *My existence as Native informs my experience* (early childhood into

elementary school); *What makes a Native American Native* (late elementary school into middle school); *We are relics of the past* (middle school); *I question my existence* (late middle into high school); *I shield my existence* (late middle school into high school); *I connect with my existence* (late high school into college); and *Evolution of identity* (college). The following further describes how each essential constituent was psychologically experienced.

"My Existence as Native Informs My Experience": Early Childhood - Elementary School

The Native American identity of participants was dependent upon their lived existence "I could not be wrong in what I did because that's just, it informs itself, I am Native therefore, whatever I do is what a Native does" (P2). Native identity was difficult to navigate trying to help others understand that being Native is a political as well as cultural identity. For participants there was an inherent aspect of their existence as Native that was held with permanence. Before entering school, to be Native meant simply to live. Although their experience as Native varied, it existed in all participants. No matter how near or far they lived from Nation territory or reservations, they all maintained pride and connection to their Native identity. This freely lived existence was taken for granted and participants found themselves wishing that they would have understood the importance and uniqueness of their culture during that young age. It was not until they experienced the dismissal and challenge to their Native American culture that they became aware of its uniqueness. To witness the unique aspects of their cultures was a surreal experience of many emotions such as joy, sadness, and pride when listening to the music, Native Nation language, and the community.

When the two worlds collided, participants were left feeling misunderstood by peers and educators. Absence of their culture and false representation became markers which validated their existence as Native rather than confirmed their cultural knowledge and experience. For example, participants experienced peers dressed in sexualized and offensive costumes depicting Native Americans for Halloween. "We are not a Halloween costume. We are entire generations, we are entire history; a history that cannot be bagged and sold in stores for $20.00" (P1). These false representations and the false history of Christopher Columbus became trends and barriers for their voices to be heard. Participants were intrigued by these differences in identity and experiences that were far different from their non-Native peers. Their experience informed by their existence started to psychologically evolve from self-confidence to conflict in contrast to the non-Native world. Meanings found important were disregarded; languages and accents were outcast; cultural history became myth. Experienced challenges to their Native American identity became validations of its existence. All the while, participants consciously maintained their Native identity, never fully wavering nor abandoning.

The permanence of their Native identity created experiences of isolation especially when their identity was exposed. To voice their identity was to become displaced from the social and academic environment. This looked like laughing at cultural humor within silent classrooms without the time or space to explain. "Just being a minority amongst everyone else you just don't say anything about it. It's just like a needle in a haystack sort of way" (P3). Participants were often chosen to validate the small pieces of Native American history included in formal education curriculum, but were the last chosen to contribute to dialogue about Native Americans or colonialization.

Their voice was perceived by educators and internalized by participants as an executioner to classroom dialogue that discussed Native American issues and history. Being Native created experiences where they were often judged and unheard. As they continued through middle and high school, they encountered re-occurring questions about their identity. It meant being one of a kind in a classroom of non-Native s and a growing complex desire to educate about their culture. To always feel dramatically isolated outside of the norms of the systems they existed within became internalized. Now isolated and working to consciously maintain their connection to their Native identity, their lifeworld became burdensome “this is on me; this is what I have to do. Unfortunately even though I am tired I can't stop" (P6).

When they spoke, they immediately felt everyone’s discomfort and silence. Their voices were singular entities with unique knowledge that could not be woven into the fabric with other cultural identities such as African American and Latino. Often participants’ interactions were the first experiences someone had with a Native American. Participants felt as if they were representing a larger community. Introductions were experienced as opportunities to educate and mutual dialogue was very rarely experienced. Instead, participants were often challenged to explain and define the different elements of their Nation’s Native culture and identity in simple enough terms that could be effectively understood.

The lack of understanding of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous systems led to the worlds colliding together when participants tried to voice their experience. Educating others about issues impacting Indigenous peoples felt both tiring and empowering. Instead of pulling away from the role of educator participants adopted it as an aspect of

their existence as Native American and became cautious of what their representation of their existence communicated to the outside world. Their permanent existence as Native informed their experience in contrast to the non-Native world around them and they started to question the permanence of their Native identity. To find a space to exist freely seemed like a very distant and unrealistic hope.

"What Makes a Native American Native": Late Elementary School - Middle School

Native American identity was acknowledged by family early in their youth before elementary school age, and provided a voice that substantiated their existence to the Native American community and beyond. There existed an inherent pride in being Native and security that came with that acknowledgement. A strong connection and fluid sense of what it meant to be Native existed within all participants. This pride and connection remained as a psychological backdrop within the reality that their identity would be questioned as they entered elementary school. When faced with challenges to their declaration of Native identity, a psychological statement emerged within each participant- "what makes a Native American Native" This question brought with it a wondering for objects, relationships, and experiences to validate their underlining existence as Native.

Cultural history taught from their family's perspectives reinforced their identity as Native, but often was not enough to surpass the invalidation experienced. Although cultural knowledge was experienced as essential to their Native existence, all found themselves saddened by the amount of knowledge that remained unknown to them. This sadness became confusion and internal dialogue about what validated their existence as a Native person especially when it was often misidentified or unacknowledged. Learning

more about cultural history meant asking family to describe harsh realities such as the boarding school which continues to cause pain and affect their family and community. The other alternative was asking educators, the majority of whom did not know the answer and dismissed their questions. Faced within this binary with questions remaining brought with it feelings of shame, embarrassment, and self-doubt. As such participants attached themselves to what cultural knowledge they could which included objects, stories, and traditions to substantiate that they were Native enough to be Native American. For example, the first lesson in P7's cultural education was learning how to say their Clan. Taught by their mother, Clan identity and Nation language were the most empowering experiences in P7's life. First P7 learned how to recite their Clanship. Then, P7 came to understand the meaning behind the words. There was power within those words. Lastly, P7 was able to hear and identify other Clan members. This knowledge was powerful because it provided P7 with a community, in which they would always have family.

Existing as Native meant identifying beyond the racial identity. This created intrapersonal and interpersonal interactions which began in elementary school and continued throughout college. Participants had to balance living up to societal expectations while honoring the backdrop of their self-defined existence. Less knowledge about their lineage and culture contributed to imbalance between their inherent existence and societal expectations. These expectations included physical characteristics which were often a set of criteria grounded in romanticized images of Native Americans including high cheekbones, darker skin, and round face. Paired with misidentification by non-Native s in school, participants further internalized this wondering as confusion

about what validates Native identity. A self-questioning emerged of their phenotypical fit in the absence of some of these romanticized images. “I found myself looking in the mirror a lot of the time and wishing I had more of a jaw line or just very narrow features” (P1). Even when exposed to the vast diversity of Native physical features, this questioning remained.

Their existence was further challenged as they entered early adolescence in middle school and noticed silent separation within the Native community between degrees of “Nativeness” which included activity within the community, cultural knowledge, and blood quantum. This silent separation within community did not isolate their existence, but contributed to a doubt that was further challenged by non-Native peers and educators. Blood quantum provided another societal expectation by which participants felt needed to be met in order to exist as “Native”. Although blood quantum was not created by Native Nations (it was created by the US government), it was internalized, and reinforced by Nation membership ID cards which included “Certified Degree of Indian Blood [CDIB]”, an object of proof to substantiate their existence as “Native”.

For participants who identified with multiple heritages, blood quantum combined with misidentification countered the early acknowledgement of their existence and sent mixed messages from within and outside the community. For example, P8 received mixed messages while they were actively defining and developing their identity, such as when P8’s grandmother referred to P8 and their sister as Native “mutts” in contrast to their mother stating “you're Native be proud.” Similar to physical features, blood

quantum was a permanent aspect of self that could not be ignored when trying to validate existence while balancing between the worlds of Native community and education.

Connections to Nation land and cultural practices became strategies of healing and survival. They promoted resilience while also distance from the harsh realities affecting participants. Powwow's were highly valued celebrations during which participants never discussed their personal experiences of harm or overarching issues affecting their community. These ceremonies were also experiences of belonging where their Native identity was liberated and allowed to exist freely without question. Sweat lodges were another shared healing practice which provided participants the space and community to share their experiences. “I remember after leaving the sweat lodge there was a real calmness in the air. That I’d never experience anywhere before and it was almost as if the negativity had disappeared completely” (P1). Although cultural practices and Nation territory/reservations were emotional and physical connections to a sense of purpose and responsibility, distance from either added to the challenge of validating their existence as Native American. “I kind of feel left behind when I'm with the other Native students because they've been on their tribal lands or they have a lot more family members that are alive so they are still learning about their culture” (P8). Therefore, the closer to the Nation land the more validation of their Native identity and opportunity to participate in ceremonies; the farther away the more complex obstacles were faced in gaining cultural knowledge and community to validate their existence.

Ultimately, when the inherent existence as Native was challenged, it created a psychological questioning of validity of their existence “what makes a Native, Native” Participants experienced interplay between grasping knowledge, objects, and

relationships that would validate and invalidate this existence during their earliest schooling experiences to the most recent college experience. None arrived at consensus to answer what validates Native identity, nor did they all experience each aspect in this order. All toiled with these questions while trying to maintain their inherent existence.

"We are Relics of the Past": Middle School

Participants became aware in middle school that they existed within a society where Native American people were cast as relics of the past. Learning the Native history in comparison to the curriculum felt jarring, "I felt almost lied to in a sense. It was almost as if the parents were keeping something from you, like sort of prevent the harsh reality of it all" (P1). The layers of their Native identity faced a unique challenge: how to exist as Native when it does not exist within the history lessons taught in educational institutions. To validate their existence meant maintaining a balance between its inherent permanence and meeting societal expectations of what makes a Native American person, while encountering experiences in which Native Americans did not exist at all. Instead curriculum was intentionally designed to indoctrinate Native students to an education focused on the colonist as told by the colonizer.

> I remember I asked teachers why we do the pledge over there and they said because we do. You know? It was never some great meaning behind it and I really wish someone could have explained that to me as well as other things. (P1)

History created an unanswered question: "where did all the Natives go?" To navigate education meant adopting the essential knowledge that disregarded Native American history. For example, Christopher Columbus was a praised hero who

discovered the “new world” in stark contrast to the savage yet kind Indians that assisted the Pilgrims. Native American identity was an historical object. The presence of Native American identity was as an “otherness”, removed from class discussions, representations, and textbooks. Educators’ pedagogy and actions closed opportunity for an intersection of their lived experiences into the discussion. Participants looked for role models to validate their historical existence only to be presented with romanticized or false images of Pocahontas, Sacajawea, and historical events that no longer existed. When Native Americans were mentioned, it was brief and glossed over without space for participants to add their voice. These experiences created environments in which participants felt their identity was disregarded, diminished of importance, and impermanent. There was a growing sense of loss of their culture’s significance in comparison to other things such as college and career readiness that were valued in education. Ultimately, participants were only asked to voice their identity to validate the romantic images and false notion that Native American cultures no longer existed.

While trying to maintain their Native American identity, participants had to choose what to hold onto and what to let go in order to adopt the “essential knowledge” of the curriculum. For P3 this meant the extinguishing of Nation language during preschool in order to fit within the expectations of educators. They deprived P3 of Native language fluency and from forming a deeper connection to Native culture. “I can’t even hold a conversation. I can just get single words out of a whole sentence. Even though I did take a language course in college it really just hasn’t stuck” (P3). This loss cycled into the questioning of participants to validate their Native identity while balancing between cultural and societal expectations. It was an internalized struggle that connected

with the fear that the loss would be passed onto the next generations. Participants began to suppress their desire to pursue their cultural identity while still recognizing that it should have greater importance. In the midst of letting go, regaining balance, preserving their culture, and claiming their own inherent unique existence, participants also witnessed the loss of their own cultural history with the deaths of relatives and elders. Many experienced this loss during middle school, times when they were unaware of the value and impermanence of the knowledge of elders.

In addition, participants were often faced with dichotomies, and identifying as Native American was outside all of the cultural boxes in history and social interactions. As such, expressing their identity upon introduction was often an immediate palpable novelty, experienced as an "ah ha, I see it!" by the person, as if their Native identity was cloaked. One participant was even called a "unicorn" by a peer who did not know that Native Americans still existed. In the eyes of society, to exist as Native meant to fit into personality stereotypes such as the "stoic Indian" and "noble savage".

In the midst of the layers of denying their living existence, participants witnessed non-Indigenous peers appropriating aspects of their culture without any understanding of its true meaning. In high school and college, participants were faced with the discomfort and polarizing reality of clubs and courses that focused on diversity, but did not include Native identity. Even in proclaimed safe and diverse classroom spaces, their Native American identity was isolated and denied. For example, P6 had an African American professor that taught "Women, Race, and Class" who constantly misidentified P6 as White, grouping P6 with the White peers when discussing race relations. No matter how much P6 would clarify their Native identity or experience, it would not matter. For

example, the professor would state “well, all you white kids. You guys need to work on your privilege. None of you will ever have to experience discrimination like that” (P6).

In concert with their questioning the validity of their identity while living as Native, this new awareness of denied existence changed the questioning of validity to one of existence. Dialogue about their identity became a cursed experience, a chore that placed participants in a bind to stand out and defend their Native identity, or remain hidden. In order to continue to pursue their education and preserve aspects of their identity, participants questioned and compartmentalized their interactions. It was easier to move past and accept others if their intentions were perceived as innocent and ignorant rather than intentional and hurtful.

“I Question My Existence”: Late Middle - High School

The context within which their Native identity existed was perceived by others as an ungraceful and unappealing truth, and became an imposed limitation to knowing and living as a Native American. This shifted from encounters with environment and peers to P4 challenging self-existence. Questioning existence as Native arose as a question of why Native American/Alaskan Native cultural identity was not valued enough to be visible. Voicing their experience seemed pointless in the presence of ambivalence of the listener, peers, and educators. Participants experienced a straying away and doubting of the permeant self-existence of Native American culture and identity. “If that's not a thing anymore, if Natives aren't around, I guess I can't be Native if they're not here. If we don’t' exist then I must not” (P8). Psychological distance from Native American/Alaskan Native identity grew into further cultural loss and no longer actively fully embracing their identity. For example, P7 had to self-train, reorienting to speak English only and forgot

how to have conversations in their Nation language. “It was really sad for me because I did all this work and I felt confident in being, in taking on that sense of identity.”

Moments of freely expressing their unique identity were rare and fleeting as they moved from middle school into high school. Two worlds collided and participants questioned their existence within their Native American culture, social relationships with peers, and academic settings. College admission was clouded with doubt. The diversity quota was of greater importance than their achievements. Their self-doubt within academic settings felt like they were an imposter. P6 thought “what am I doing here? I'm so nervous to be here. I'm nervous about every single interaction, every test, homework assignment, and soccer practice.” Self-confidence dropped and the inherent permanence of Native existence felt fragile and exposed. It was difficult to brush off encounters of ignorance when faced with continued disrespect and denial. P7 asked “was there ever going to be a time where I don't have to feel uncomfortable with being who I am” (P7)? Participants began to silence other aspects of their existence such as engaging in conversations about their personal experiences and culture. They felt discomfort in educational settings, questioning if the challenges to their existence occurred, and believing their personal lived experiences as Native were wrong.

While questioning their existence, participants began to respond less to ignorance. This physical silence was personally upsetting because it was a missed opportunity to educate and potentially the only time to correct the ignorance of the other person in a “logical” manner. Letting go of the possibility of changing another was an incredibly hard and sad reality. It hurt because the interactions are often about Indigenous rights and it was hard to see those interactions pass by unaddressed.

They experienced physical discomfort when there was a challenge to their existence with the fear that voicing their presence would cause more isolation. Their desire to educate and share experiences ceased when met with ignorance and disillusionment. This physical silence became an internalized shame and isolation. In the midst of such questioning, the need to voice their existence continued to rise. To voice meant navigating a unique balance and questioning of "who is the real authority?" on subjects that included Native American cultures - educator or Native American student?

Additionally blood quantum levels (CDIB) and Nation membership created a paradox. Although the criteria politically validated Native identity, it also challenged its future existence creating sadness, burden, and fear to know that marrying a non-Native would disqualify their children regardless of how strongly they identified as Native American. This awareness included grief, living in a world in which their culture was dying, while actively living, preserving, and growing as Native.

"I Shield My Existence": Late Middle School - High School

Straying away from their identity was a conscious intention to keep it protected and hidden in order to fly under the radar of oppressive hurtful acts. This took courage and strength to preserve their Native identity, while costing them the freedom to explore and fully express their experience. This began during middle school and continued into college. As stated by P8, "I was very guarded about my identity, and if anybody was disrespectful to me or my culture I would just shutdown. Like I wouldn't talk to them or I wouldn't participate in any dialogue with them" (P8). It became necessary to shield their Native American identity to maintain its inherent existence in the midst of it being

challenged, searching for validation, and questioning its existence. The only moments it was uncovered were among their community and when necessary for defense. Participants went with the flow of the surrounding social and educational environments, but never relinquished their Native identity.

In the midst of self-doubt and shielding, they searched for anchors. Some became drawn to certain stereotypes like the "stoic Indian" and stopped countering re-occurring assumptions about their identity. Misidentification of their identity added to their psychological shield, where passing as non-Native meant not having to directly confront their differences and the ignorance. Surviving also meant developing a subconscious suppression of their desire to pursue unanswered questions about cultural history, practices, and language. This blind eye to daily denial of their existence became normalized with many silencing events passing over without awareness of the full scope of what they meant. "I just continued living without the thought of becoming more Native American than I am" (P3). They stopped discussing their experiences with close family because it was adopted as a normal aspect of being Native American. The focus became completing school, and trying to fit within peer groups. During this time, the few spaces where they found full acceptance were in isolation such as playing an instrument, listening to music, and going to the movies.

No matter their shield, all of the participants continued to encounter direct dialogue that dismissed and challenged their Native identity. When exposed and forced to defend their identity, they experienced physical "fight or flight" reaction that ranged from tension to difficulty breathing. Either path had additional obstacles that participants had to face. To fight meant voicing their experience and being viewed as disrespectful,

overly sensitive, or aggressive. It also negatively impacted their academic success. Flight meant missed opportunities to educate and possibly correct the ignorance. In a brief moment participants silently negotiated and calculated their options. The existence of their identity became a benefit-cost fallacy which further displaced its permanence. This negotiation included a heightened awareness to perceive if the environment would welcome Native identity and experience. The greater the threat to their existence, the greater the cost. Many stonewalled, turning completely inward to protect their identity. When called upon within the classroom, their reaction felt center stage, forcing them to respond. They had to walk a fine line and develop a "logical" voice to address the bias calmly and civilly, using logic instead of emotion in an attempt to be heard. This logical voice meant picking and choosing what and how they spoke which was often against their natural way of being. Feeling forced to advocate for their existence was frequent and exhausting. Even in proclaimed "safe spaces" or "social justice focused classrooms" surrounded by other people of color, this experience continued to occur. Ultimately, shielding was compromising their lived existence in order to protect it and pass through school.

"I Connect with My Existence": Late High School - College

Participants began to connect with their existence towards the end of high school and college. The desire to know more about their culture and voice their experience was rekindled. Protection and preservation was no longer enough, they wanted to live their existence. They took steps to piece together their cultural history, a history that could not be found through search engines, and could only be found through dialogue with their Native communities. They started asking their families questions with an awareness of

their importance and value. The impact of historical events that challenged their identity became realized as present experiences such as when P3 recognized the impact of the boarding schools on family members “I think there’s a big scar in her (grandmother) that kind of helped change the foundation of how my family was.” Attending ceremonies were times to reset, step back, and realize the overarching valleys on which they needed to focus beyond the individual interactions. This intergenerational connection provided reassurance and a path to reconnect with their culture regardless of the circumstances. There was a new found strength in re-connecting with their history and a stronger sense of responsibility to voice their lived existence.

There was also an obligation to honor their culture and help their Nation by taken actions to help the past and future generations. Educating the world about their existence as well as the importance of their Native American cultures became a primary focus. Although it was still a tiring and complex experience, they hoped sharing details about their cultural history, practices, and beliefs would create a ripple that amplified their existence to counter narratives that continued to threaten. They actively searched for windows to integrate their voice into the conversation and effectively counter someone's point instead of shielding and waiting to be called upon. Each time they spoke it was with the intention to present as honest a representation of their self as possible in that moment. For many of the participants, this looked like approaching educators, expressing the importance of teaching their cultural history, and stepping into the formal role as educator providing class lessons that connected textbook narrative to living history. Even though the fear of their existence being silenced remained, participants established new strategies of shielding while affirming their existence, providing others

the opportunity to be curious just enough to ask a question or two. Although only a rare few took the opportunity to engage in mutual dialogue, they persisted. Connecting with their existence helped them heal. "I feel like I connected to my culture and woke up in a sense at the same time that I was healing" (P8).

In addition to connecting with their existence through educating others about their Native American identity, participants also found connection through relationships of acceptance. These relationships included family, friends, educators, and associations. Participants were given space to authentically express their Native identity and connect with its lived existence in new ways. They felt heard and seen as a person rather than a representative, educator, or anomaly who had to prove their worth. This looked like educators taking time to validate Native existence and space to discuss their lived experiences; family members taking time to share experiences that had remained untold; participants hearing the new ways to express their identity; and strangers joining with participants in mutual dialogue about the similarities and differences in their lived experiences. For example, during a social gathering P1 met a non-Native man who had worked with their Nation. They sat and talked about the cultural practices and values of P1's Nation and it felt refreshing. Their conversation became a significant aspect of P1's life and identity. It demonstrated the existence of a community that wanted to hear about P1's Alaskan Native culture and demonstrated the existence of non-Native s who cared about Native American/Alaskan Natives. "It was one of those one-time meetings that kind of change you a little bit, that happens every once in a while, certain people and I feel like my life grows on those moments" (P1).

Participants also found fit on college campuses that held events acknowledging and celebrating Native American cultures. Native American student associations were often the first spaces where participants experienced community away from their home and acceptance of a broad range of what it meant to be Native. "They had no sense of if I went to long house or if I was enrolled., or do you have a clan, of if you, um, you know, how sort of culturally aware or community oriented you are" (P2). The pressure to suppress, shield, and prove their existence started to fade, replaced with flexibility and self-acceptance. Connecting with other Native college students and being witness to displayed cultural pride and integration of identity into navigating education was revolutionary. The questioning and shielding of their Native identity was transformed into connection and inner strength. "I could just imagine you know being as happy and comfortable in their skin as they are" (P4). Participants became conscious of the witnessing of their identity and its evolution.

"Evolution of Identity": College

Living their inherent Native identity in the midst of societal expectations, absence from history, fragility, preservation, and desire to connect, they reached self-acceptance and self-definition of their Native identity. This evolution of identity began in late adolescence, but was not fully awakened until adulthood. They no longer doubted if they were "performing" their identity according to societal standards. Their frustration in navigating spaces to voice their experience evolved into action. No longer did they remain suppressing and internalizing the threats to their identity. "I feel like to kind of put it into an analogy, it feels like I was rolling a dice and like constantly getting zero, but now I feel like I'm moving" (P4).

Their voice gained strength and its expression felt freeing, especially when countering ignorance with education. Although missed moments still felt disappointing, it was put aside to come back to rather than cast away and never revisited as stated by P5, "well I may not be able to make a big deal about this now but I'm going to put it in my memory and come back to it later" (P5). Threats to their Native American existence remained a common occurrence, but they were now armed with new tools to defend while continuing to learn and grow. Knowing the skills to integrate their experience within dialogue was empowering. Empowered, they used their voice to present their culture and community to the world that remained in denial. Now, standing firm against the backdrop that negated their existence, they engaged in dialogue and challenged educators to hear their experience. Their identity moved from underneath its shield into the forefront of advocacy in reclaiming their power "I'm Native and I'm here, and I have something to say" (P8).

Becoming an advocate felt good and for some played an essential role in their career path. Their voice felt like a breadth of fresh air, an experience of less self-censorship and greater self-acceptance. Without experiencing *cultural identity silencing*, they would have no conscious awareness of the oppression they experienced through the psychological negation and challenging of their lived existence. Their voice became the confidence to express emotions and thoughts consciously and unapologetically. It protected their inherent Native identity, as well as educated others, creating conditions of "safety" for their Native American identity to exist freely without judgment. Even though the questioning re-occurs, they emerged each time reaffirming their Native identity with greater strength and voice. "The whole process in a roundabout way, kind

of makes, like reaffirms my identity almost because if I wasn't Native I wouldn't experience all these things" (P8).

Chapter Summary

These results present the descriptive structure of *cultural identity silencing* of Native American identity within education, analyzed from these eight participants. *Cultural identity silencing* was experienced as a series of psychological processes which threatened and reaffirmed the living existence of Native identity. Through the use of Giorgi's (2009) descriptive phenomenological psychological analysis, seven essential constituents emerged that described the structure of the phenomenon:

1. My existence as Native informs my experience.
2. What makes a Native American Native?
3. We are relics of the past.
4. I question my existence.
5. I shield my existence.
6. I connect with my existence.
7. Evolution of identity.

Although the conditions, intensity, and outcomes were not universal across participants, their primary experiencing of each constituent was specific to a time within their life narratives. The first "My existence as Native informs my experience" arose during early childhood into the first few years of elementary school. "What makes a Native American Native" came into consciousness in late elementary into middle school age. "We are relics of the past" was faced in middle school when participants were confronted with educational history in contrast to their cultural knowledge. "I question

my existence" began in late middle into the first two years of high school. "I shield my existence" overlapped with the former during late middle into high school. "I connect with my existence" was realized at the end of high school into college. Lastly, "evolution of identity" came into consciousness during college. All spoke to the importance and commitment they have in giving back to their community.

The order of the constituents was essential to the structure once each was awakened to consciousness; it paved the way for the rest to be possible. Once awakened, each constituent could appear at any time with or without the other constituents. Also, in order for *cultural identity silencing* in education to take place all constituents had to appear, but could be present in the absence of *cultural identity silencing*. These results have implications to the counseling and education fields working with Native American students. Implications, recommendations, and conclusions are discussed in Chapter five.

CHAPTER FIVE: IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Recent scholarship began a discourse within social work and education, connecting past historical acts of genocide and ethnic cleansing to current colonialism and mental health disparities (Bombay, et al., 2014; Brave Heart et al., 2011; Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998; Dionne & Nixon, 2014; Whitbeck et al., 2009). Termed historical trauma (HT) and historical trauma response (HTR), these theoretical constructs provide space within academia, more specifically the fields of counseling and education, for the individual experiences of American Indians to be voiced and heard (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998; Brave Heart, 2003; Mohatt, Thompson, Thai, & Tebes, 2014). These constructs sought to raise consciousness to the existence of counter-experiences in which American Indians were harmed by K-12 education and colonialism. This previous research interpreted individual experiences to create theory meant to raise the consciousness of the academic fields and challenge dominant perceptions that place blame on the Native American communities rather than holding colonialist systems accountable (Brayboy, 2005; Denham, 2008; Dionne & Nixon, 2014; Kirmayer, Gone, & Moses, 2014; Zembylas & Bekerman, 2008).

This act of repositioning accountability to institutional systems gave rise to further calls for critical examination of the effects of intergenerational trauma as well as resiliency (Denham, 2008; Dione & Nixon, 2014; Mohatt et al., 2014). From a philosophical grounding, consciousness occurs, however, as acts of reconstructing primary experiences. Previous research has instead attempted to name experiences before they arise in consciousness. Theory names the individual pre-consciousness process and assumes lifeworld outside of context instead of their lifeworld within the context of the

phenomenon. In this way developed theories do not describe experiences as they appeared to the experiencer.

Ironically recent literature has criticized HT scholarship for focusing too little on anti-colonialism, ways to change the systems that oppress, and instead leads towards diagnosing American Indians as generationally damaged (Kirmayer et al., 2014; Maxwell, 2014). Creating theory to find causes, conditions, and outcomes rather than understanding the essence of phenomenon reigns dominant throughout research in both counseling and education fields. This study sought to address this gap by exploring and describing the structural psychological experiencing of *cultural identity silencing* of Native American identity in education. The following chapter summarizes the study while providing implications, limitations, and recommendations.

Summary of Study

This study explored the lifeworld's of eight young adult Native American college students as they described their experiences of *cultural identity silencing* of their Native American identity. Participants were recruited through snowball sampling in which close contacts passed along the recruitment information or they contacted the researcher after seeing the information posted on community websites (Facebook groups, association listservs). Each participant participated in three Skype interviews which ranged in duration from 60-90 minutes long. The interviews were at least one week apart which provided researcher time to form questions to prompt the participant into further in-depth subjective description of specific experiences mentioned in the previous interview. Each participant received a $50 gift card for their time and knowledge.

All 24 interviews were transcribed, coded, transformed, and organized by the researcher for meaning units of psychological meaning. These meaning units were then used to construct individual summaries of each participant's description under the contexts of education, dialogue, community, and meaning. Then, the summaries were coded across each other for universal textual descriptions of the subjective psychological experience of *cultural identity silencing* of their Native American identity in education. The descriptions were then examined within the natural attitude of the researcher and, using *imaginative variation*, descriptions were transformed into seven essential constituents that described the morphological essences of the psychological phenomenon (Giorgi, 2009; Husserl, 1983). The essential constituents form a structural description of the psychological experiencing of *cultural identity silencing* of Native American identity in education (See Appendix G). In the absence of an essential constituent the psychological structure of the morphological essence would fall apart (Giorgi, 2009; Husserl, 1983). The resulting essential constituents were:

1. My existence as Native informs my experience.
2. What makes a Native American Native?
3. We are relics of the past.
4. I question my existence.
5. I shield my existence.
6. I connect with my existence.
7. Evolution of identity.

My existence as Native informs my experience was the inherent freedom of existence as Native American which came into the consciousness of participants in early

childhood. Their identity informed their interactions and experience. *What makes a Native American Native* was the psychological experience of external challenges to the authenticity of the participants' inherent Native American identity. This constituent arose into the consciousness of the participants during childhood in elementary school and participants searched for objects to validate the authenticity of their identity and experience as Native. Entering into adolescence during middle school, *we are relics of the past* first came into awareness - a challenge to the being of their existence as Native American. During late middle school transitioning into high school, participants were faced with "facts" that completely erased the present living existence of their identity. *I question my existence* then arose and participants experienced threats to their living existence. Also, during late middle into high school, participants suppressed their freedom of authentic expression of their identity to maintain their inherent Native American identity and *I shield my existence* was awakened. Then during the final years of high school into the first years of college, the desire for freedom to express their existence evolved into action and *I connect with my experience* arose. This constituent was experienced as reclamation of their existence as Native American in which participants engaged with relationships of acceptance, educated others, and challenged ignorance. Lastly, *evolution of identity* came into consciousness during college and was experienced by participants as an evolution of their existence which for some looked like a change from forced educator to activist as well as a desire to contribute to the evolution of their community.

Although the essential constituents came into consciousness at specific time periods during the life time of the participant, they did not all cease upon the awakening

of the next (Giorgi, 2009). Once they arose, they are present throughout the process of the phenomenon. As such, within the description of their subjective experiencing of *cultural identity silencing,* all constituents needed to be present for it to occur. The participant, however, could experience a constituent without *cultural identity silencing* occurring. For instance, in describing a family heirloom that was worn during high school, P4 stated:

> It felt like I was um like secretly like wearing this little badge of pride. I mean, I don't know if I'm actually Navajo, but it felt like I was at least wearing something Indigenous, you know. Um I wouldn't' wear it above my clothes because I felt like if I did more questions would come up. So I would just wear it under my shirt or I would wear it under a scarf and then occasionally if I were walking in the hallway by myself, which often happened, I would you know take it out and play with it and I'd feel okay with playing with it because nobody really saw. I don't feel like I should have done it but I had that nagging voice in the back of my head saying "maybe you should put it away; you shouldn't let anybody see you wearing that. (P4)

Present within this description are four of the essential constituents: "it felt like I was um like secretly like wearing this little badge of pride" (P4), connects with *my existence as Native informs my experience*; "I don't know if I'm actually Navajo, but it felt like I was at least wearing something Indigenous" (P4), describes objects to validate identity within the second constituent element *what makes a Native American Native*; "I wouldn't wear it above my clothes because I felt like if I did more questions would come

up" (P4), describes questions which were psychological threats to existence *I question my existence*; and "So I would just wear it under my shirt or I would wear it under a scarf. . ." (P4), describes the constituent *I shield my existence*.

These four essential constituents of identity psychologically appeared almost simultaneously. In fact, as earlier stated, many essential constituents were cycled simultaneously when encountering environments, interactions, etc. where the construct of cultural identity silencing was present. The structure was only linear in the manner in which the essential constituent arose to consciousness. Furthermore, the intensity and frequency of each constituent was unique to the individual and not a focus of this study.

As earlier stated, the generalization of the essential constituents and resulting structure do not extend past the psychological boundaries of the phenomenon under exploration. The essential constituents existed across the three interviews for each participant and the descriptive data analysis supports high internal validity. The structure's external validity is confined, however, within the psychological boundaries established by the research question and descriptive psychological phenomenological analysis (Giorgi, 2009). Additional limitations are discussed in the following section.

Limitations

This study was not without limitations that impacted its external validity and generalizability. The descriptive psychological phenomenological analysis used in this study required strict adherence to the textual descriptions of each participant. It also required the researcher to utilize epoché while transforming constituents into essential constituents using *imaginative variation* (Giorgi, 2009). Although epoché was applied to the study, it was from the "natural attitude" of a researcher who identified as a counselor

educator. As such, the coding of text for changes in psychological meaning included a natural attitude that had defined psychological meaning. If the transcripts were coded by a researcher from another field such as social work or education, the shifts in psychological meaning might be different. Although the essential constituents might remain, there could be variations in their descriptions. Also the interviews were their own phenomena which created a reconstruction of phenomena as its own experience. This was the reason why validity checks by the participants did not occur. Ultimately, the phenomenon of the interview set conditions to the experience that became aspects of the participant's reconstruction and would vary upon researcher's natural attitude and time.

It is essential to note that external validity is a limitation of all qualitative research when compared to empirical generalizability of quantitative research (Merriam, 2009). Instead what is sought is the transferability of the study results to other conditions (Merriam, 2009). In the case of this study, transferability of the results did not extend past the psychological boundaries and the foundational contexts that *cultural identity silencing* under which was explored (Giorgi, 2009).

In addition to the limitations in the conditions of the study, the participants themselves also limit the study's generalizability. The sample was specific to young adult college students who self-identified as Native American/Alaskan Native and experienced *cultural identity silencing* in education. This meant that the sample was from a specific voice of individuals who had academic success and excluded those who did not attend college or graduate from high school. As such, the descriptions of the psychological experiencing of the seven essential constituents could be quite different,

especially for *I connect with my existence* and *evolution of identity* which became realized towards the end of high school into college and were dependent on experiences specifically related to college i.e. student organizations, access to research, access to Native American studies programs.

It is also important to recognize that each participant identified with a different Native American Nation which has its own unique experiences, knowledge, traditions, and culture that was not explicitly stated in Chapter Four: Results. Similar to educational achievement, Nation identity creates variations of the psychological descriptions of each essential constituent. There were also variations in cultural knowledge, participation, and access to their Native American cultures. Though the essential constituents were present across participants' subjective descriptions, they do not address the unique differences that are important aspects of Native American identity. This study does not support a pan-Indian idea of Native identity; however, it does acknowledge the shared psychological experiences of these young adults across their Nation identities.

In regards to the qualitative interview process there were limitations in regards to researcher identity, researcher-participant relationship, and interview quality. Being a non-Native mixed-race female doctoral candidate presented some obstacles in recruitment and interviewing. Although the recruitment information did not disclose my cultural identity, it was answered when asked, which often occurred through email or during the initial phone call. There were a range of responses including silence (no return email or commitment), curiosity (questioning my intention), education (recommending anthropology text books that were specific to research with Native Americans), surprise (misidentified the researcher as Native American), and procedurally (requested to

complete additional IRB). This limited the spread of recruitment information to eligible individuals. Many were surprised that I had genuine interest in their experiences which provided a unique discussion when, during their descriptions, they discussed cultural appropriation, ally-ship, and non-Native researchers acting in "savior roles".

Building relationships was critically important to the success of this study. This looked like flexibility with interview times with some interviews starting only to be stopped and continued at a later date, a fine balance between non-directive and directive interviewing allowing space for the participant to freely associate after a prompt to further describe their subjective experience, and creation of the individual summaries to demonstrate that their unique experience was heard.

Additionally, every participant asked for a definition of the construct cultural identity silencing. Even though they had identified with the research question, they needed validation that it fit. The pre-defined construct limited what experiences were shared within the confines of the definition which was why the three interview process was critical. The interviews gave space for the participants to wrestle with the pre-defined construct and provide their own definition of the construct (included within essential constituents). It also gave them time to disclose history and experiences that were previously unrecognized by them as an experience of *cultural identity silencing*. In fact, many of the participants started describing their experiences of *cultural identity silencing* much later in their history than when it actually began. As such, it was the reconstruction of their history and meaning that validated the timeline of the essential constituents. The richness of descriptions varied, however, with some providing more details of their college experiences than adolescence. The variations provided anchors

for the descriptions of the essential constituents with the least descriptive interviews providing the foundation and the richer interviews provided examples of description. Therefore, the methodology of the study set limitations that kept it within the eidetic generalization of the phenomenon.

Additionally, the technology impacted the flow of the interview with unexpected Skype video camera freezing, variation in voice quality (participants using phone vs. computer), and the recorder battery dying during the second interview of P2. This resulted in a loss of 30 minutes of interview data which was revisited during the third interview, but never fully gained back. These limitations were taken into consideration when describing implications of the results to the counseling and education fields.

Lastly, it is important to note that the novice researcher had an impact on the interview experience and data analysis. There was an evolution of researcher interview skills with each new participant and interview. As a result, the transcriptions of the first participant include many unnecessary interruptions by the researcher who was learning how to non-verbally validate through Skype. Also, as the interviews progressed, the questions became more informed with phenomenological interview techniques that used prompts and open-ended questions that encouraged the participant to further engage with the reconstructing of their experience subjectively. Accordingly, the differences in description might be attributed to this change in researcher interview abilities.

Implications for Practice

The question under exploration lay within two dominant fields' education and counseling. Both education and counseling intersect within the school counseling profession. As such, the following implications for practice center especially on school

counseling practice. The presented implications were grounded in the resulting structural description of *cultural identity silencing* of Native American identity within its eidetic generalization. Meaning, it cannot be generalized to all Native American students as a given, but should be considered when exploring cause and conditions that affect academic, career, and social-emotional development. School counselors work within the *American School Counselor Association National Model* and curriculums that address the social-emotional, career, and academic developmental needs of students (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2012). The implications describe the similarities of identity development models and the time-orientation of the structural description, the presence of curriculum within the structure, the interactions between the essential constituents and academic development, and the presence of the phenomenon throughout their educational experiences.

Identity development models

Described in Chapter 4, the essential constituents of *cultural identity silencing* align with specific timeframes within the participants' lifespan. The first constituent *my existence as Native informs my experience* came into consciousness during their earliest memory of education during pre-school and first few years of elementary school; the second what makes a Native American Native during elementary school; the third we are relics of the past transitioning into and during middle school; the fourth *I question my existence* during late middle into high school; the fifth *I shield my existence* overlapping slightly with the fourth into late high school; the sixth *I connect with my existence* late high school into college; and last *evolution of identity* during college.

The timeframe in which these constituents came into consciousness of the participant is similar to Sue and Sue's (1999) five stage *Racial/Cultural Identity Development Model* (R/CID) which is described as a model which "defines five stages of development that oppressed people experience as they struggle to understand themselves in terms of their own culture, the dominant culture, and the oppressive relationship between the two cultures" (Sue & Sue, 2008, p. 242). The five stages are *conformity, dissonance, resistance and immersion, introspection, and integrative awareness* (p. 242). Each stage describes attitudes towards self, attitude towards others of the same minority, attitudes of others of a different minority, and attitude toward dominant group. The following is a comparison of each stage in the R/CID model with the seven essential constituents identified in this study.

R/CID Model Comparison

The Racial/Cultural Identity Development Model is a "not a comprehensive theory of personality, but rather a conceptual framework to aid therapists in understanding their culturally different clients' attitudes and behaviors" (Sue & Sue, 2008, p. 242). Similar to the seven essential constituents, the R/CID model notes the importance of attitudes and beliefs as foundational to a minority person's identity (Sue & Sue, 2008). Also, like the descriptive structure of *cultural identity silencing*, the R/CID model was not intended to be a template that is generalizable to all people who identify with a minority culture, but transferable to those experiencing similar psychological phenomenon.

Conformity. The *conformity* stage includes an attitude towards self that is self-depreciating or neutral as well as an attitude towards the dominant group of group-

appreciating (Sue & Sue, 2008). This is similar to attitudes experienced by the participants in the essential constituent *I question my existence* when participants began questioning the validity of the existence of their Native identity and made attempts to fit within the dominant group. Conformity is also present within the essential constituent *my existence as Native informs my experience* when participants' attitudes towards self were neutral and their view of education was appreciative and somewhat trusting. For example, they trusted formal education as a tool for their success even though it differed from their cultural history.

Dissonance and appreciating. Similarly, the *dissonance and appreciating* stage includes attitudes towards self that are at conflict between self-depreciating and group-appreciating (Sue & Sue, 2008). These attitudes were present within essential constituents *we are relics of the past* and *I shield my existence.* When participants experienced the intentional negation of Native American existence within educational history, they experienced it as an internalized conflict between self-pride in their inherent existence in the face of obvious racism and distrust in educators and peers. Furthermore, when participants shielded their existence, they experienced conflict between group-appreciation and group-depreciation while trying to preserve their Native American cultural identity by hiding its worth.

Resistance and immersion. The *resistance and immersion* stage includes attitudes towards self that are self-appreciating, group-appreciating of their cultural group, and a self-depreciating attitude towards the dominant group (Sue & Sue, 2008). The constituents *I shield my existence* and *I connect with my existence* include these attitudes represented in this stage. While participants were shielding their Native

American identity, they at times experienced high group-appreciation and desire to preserve their identity while forming a great mistrust and depreciation of education. For several of the participants, this self-depreciation of the dominant group, in this case education, was experienced as diminution in academic performance and struggling in school. Furthermore, while connecting with their existence, participants expressed attitudes of high self-appreciation and group-appreciation in their Native American culture. Group-depreciation attitude of the dominant group looked like the desire of participants to take actions that moved away from the education of the dominant culture towards their cultural education, i.e., courses, celebrations, and clubs.

Introspection. *Introspection* is the fourth stage of the R/CID model and includes questioning the intentions of self-appreciation and group-depreciation (Sue & Sue, 2008). These attitudes were present in several constituents when participants questioned their cultural pride and worth in contrast to the necessity of educational success for cultural and personal growth. This includes the constituents *I connect with my existence, I question my existence,* and *I shield my existence*. While experiencing these constituents, participants questioned their inherent self-pride, desire to educate others, and how to continue to exist freely while attaining academic success. At times, the attitudes present within introspection overlapped with the attitudes of conflict in dissonance and appreciation.

Integrative awareness. The last stage of the R/CID model, *integrative awareness* includes attitudes of appreciation across self, cultural group, other minority groups, and selective appreciation of dominant group (Sue & Sue, 2008). This stage is most evident within the constituent *evolution of identity* in which participants express a deep self-

appreciation and cultural worth while continuing to navigate the dominant educational systems. Participants experienced a greater confidence to freely express their Native identity even when faced with re-occurring racist acts. Additionally, participants spoke to the ways in which they were going to use their knowledge and new found confidence to contribute towards the success of their communities.

Native American Identity Development Models

Identity development models specific to Native American identity, such as Markstrom's model (2011) contribute to the richness of the psychological structure of *cultural identity silencing*. In their study Markstrom examined the identity formation of Native American adolescence along local, national, and global social contextual influence. In the model each social contextual influence was conceptualized under *type of identity* (ethnic; bicultural multicultural hybrid; Indigenous hybrid), *dynamics of identity* (identification, connection, and cultural/spiritual; historical consciousness, local vis-à-vis, national values, and acculturation; Indigenous identity, Indigenous rights, risks, and responses), and *sources of influence* (family/kin, tribe/band, culturally-based education, and oral history; media/internet, schools, peers, and travel; media/internet, personal exposure, and travel) (Markstrom, 2011). The descriptions of the seven essential constituents included the aspects of this identity model most specifically the local and national levels of contextual influence.

When participants experienced the first three constituents: *my existence as Native informs my experience, what makes a Native American Native,* and *we are relics of the past,* they toiled with their ethnic identity, it's dynamic of identification, connection, and culture, as well as looked to sources of influence such as family and culturally-based

education to further validate their inherent existence. Furthermore, the last two constituents *I connect with my existence* and *evolution of identity*, included experiences of identity influenced at a national and global social-contextual levels. Their sources of influence had expanded to include social media, personal experience, and travel that helped them connect with their Native American culture. Their identity as Native American also included acceptance of their multicultural and hybrid identities. They had established a fluid sense of Native American identity and did not look to fit within the stereotypes of dominant society. Lastly, participants experienced greater depth in the dynamics of their Native American identity that included a historical consciousness, responsibility to contribute to their Native communities, and actions to advocate for Indigenous rights.

Application to School Counseling

The potential similarities between the descriptive structure of *cultural identity silencing* of Native American identity in education and identity models such as the Sue and Sue (2008) R/CID model and Markstrom's (2011) conceptual model demonstrate, however, the importance of school counselors having a strong awareness of the identity development of Native American students. Students may be experiencing a particular essential constituent during a very complex stage of their identity development. For example, a Native American student experiencing the essential constituent *I question my existence* in which the existence of their Native American identity was threatened, could also be experiencing the identity stage of *conformity* in which their attitude towards dominant group is group-appreciating. As such, Native American students could appear

to be forming positive supportive relationships with non-Native White peers and educators while deeply questioning their existence as Native American.

The similarities and possible interactions between identity models and the seven essential constituents of *cultural identity silencing* of Native American identity call upon school counselors to work with the conscious awareness of the complexity of Native identity, the oppressive systems policies that influence it in order to create counselor-student relationships that validate the present and unique existence of students' Native American identity.

Curriculum

The absence, misrepresentation, and falsity of historical narratives presented within school curriculum were dominant throughout participants' experiences. In fact, curriculum interacted with every essential constituent including the last, *evolution of identity*, in which some participants were taking coursework specific to issues of diversity and oppression, and still encountered experiences which triggered the processing of other essential constituents. Curriculum influences identity development by how much it allows space for the integration of cultural with academic knowledge. Integration of these two knowledge systems has been found to best support resilience of Native American identity (Marker, 2009). Integration includes the acceptance of the personal narratives of Native students as legitimate truths and history (Brayboy, 2005). Participants described challenges when attempting to integrate their voice within classroom discourse and the negotiation of their identity when engaging with educators (Burk, 2007). Ultimately, to act with empathy and advocate for Native students it is necessary for school counselors to challenge the colonial consciousness present within

educational systems (American Counseling Association [ACA], 2015; Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs [CACREP]: 2015, Grande, 2004).

Although school counselors cannot change school curriculum or teacher pedagogy, they have ownership of the ways in which their school counseling curriculum is implemented (ASCA, 2012). Their role within classrooms provides opportunity to foster positive identity development of Native American students. As Portman (2009) stated:

> Professional school counselors may be required to facilitate the social construction of students, families, and community cultures in the future, while heeding to social, political, economic, environmental, and psychological society issues that move beyond cultural competence. (p.21)

School counselors having an understanding of the essential constituents can aid in the creation of classroom guidance lessons that are informed by critical Indigenous consciousness and acknowledge the presence of Native students as well as the importance of their Native culture (Lee, 2009). Furthermore, school counselors can create space within classroom discourse for students to share their experiences by shifting the dialogue from focusing on lateral self-other dialogue to engagement in mutual dialogue within the classroom community. Some of the most meaningful experiences shared by participants were the moments where they were allowed to give a presentation about their Nation and given ownership of what and how they were going to share the knowledge. School counselors can expose students to positive representations of Native American culture and resources to connect them to Native communities.

Dialogue that includes personal lived experiences of being Native American validates the existence of Native American culture, countering the re-occurring threats to Native existence present within colonialist-conscious curriculum (Brayboy, 2004; Duran, Duran, & Braveheart, 1998). Mutual dialogue and acceptance of personal narratives as truth, further confronts the "false empathy" of educators, and allows Native American students to exercise their existence while they navigate walking the knife's edge between the borderlands of Indigenous identity and colonialist worldview (Freire, 1997; Grande, 2004; Jacobs, 2015; Lovern, 2012; Warren & Hotchkins, 2014).

Academics

In conjunction with curriculum, all participants experienced academic struggles which interacted with the essential constituents of *cultural identity silencing* of Native American identity. The achievement gap and consistent reporting of low graduation rates were constant reminders of the academic barriers participants faced while navigating education as a Native American. Many of the participants stated that educators shared NCES data as an attempt scare them towards academic success, or casted their success as an anomaly of their Native communities ([NCES] U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Their academic success was very much aligned with the personal, familial, and environmental strengths found to be significant in earlier research (Stiffman et al., 2007). Therefore, school counselors need to be cognizant of the strengths that foster academic success instead of relying heavily on the potentially harmful portrait created by such national statistics.

Participants shared feelings of not belonging within academic environments in middle school throughout college. They doubted their academic achievements even

attributing their college admission to the institution's need to fulfill a diversity quota. Several had transferred from institutions due to these experiences which further impacted their academic success. Within their education between middle school and college, all participants experienced a drop in confidence in their academic performance, a significant decrease in grades, and disinterest in education. This was in stark contrast to their desire to succeed and correlates with Flynn and Sangganjanavanich's themes of post-secondary success (2015). School counselors play a significant role in the preparing and transitioning students into post-secondary educational opportunities (ASCA, 2012). An understanding of the essential constituents of *cultural identity silencing* provides a foundation for school counselors to engage in conversations that prepare Native American students for successful transitions into such academic and training options. This includes providing resources that connect students with their traditional spirituality, self-esteem, ethnic identity, and social supports (Stumblingbear-Riddle & Romans, 2012; Wexler, 2014).

School counselors also have a role in creating academic interventions for struggling students (ASCA, 2012). Understanding the essential constituents can inform the creation of interventions that include students' Native communities (Moore-Thomas & Day-Vines, 2010). School counselors partnering with families and communities provide Native American students a path to form supportive relationships with the school community rather than isolation (Moore-Thomas & Day-Vines, 2010). This collaboration also provides opportunity for students to engage in interventions that include Indigenous ways of healing, further validating students' Native American culture and "reclamation of self" (Lee, 2009; Marker, 2009; Stumblingbear-Riddle & Romans,

2012; Waldram, 2014; Wexler, 2014). Understanding the relationships between the essential constituents of *cultural identity silencing* provides a new language to inform and expand the cultural consciousness of educators who misinterpret the academic performance of Native students. Overall, the role of school counselors to integrate education and mental health places them in the position to witness, validate, and create space for the student's lived existence as Native American.

Relationships

As stated within the Chapter Four: Results, the essential constituents arose at specific times within the lifespan of participants, but did not permanently cease. Instead they often reoccurred in various intensities at different points and at times simultaneously with already experienced constituents. The constituents do not imply nor explore the direct causes, conditions, and outcomes of *cultural identity silencing* within the lifeworld of the participant. They create and describe a structure of the psychological experiences that occurred within participants. School counselors need to be aware of *cultural identity silencing* when working directly with Native American students. The reoccurring and morphological nature of these essential constituents implies multiple causes, conditions, and outcomes. As such there is no standard blueprint for school counselors to follow to address the multitude of issues that arise when students are experiencing *cultural identity silencing* of their Native American identity. School counselors are capable, however, of utilizing direct services and advocacy to take pro-active steps to minimize the potential harm Native American students may experience (ASCA, 2012; ACA, 2015; CACREP, 2015).

The data, however, indicate periods in which relationships that validate the existence of their Native identity were instrumental in the participant's experiencing the essential constituents. Participants described experiences of feeling unheard and encountering inauthentic interest from others to witness their lived experiences. When shielding their existence, participants had various modes of being which ranged from complete isolation from classroom peers and educators, to lashing out in attempts to have their existence seen.

School counselors play a critical intricate role in exposing students to meaningful authentic relationships and space to freely share their experience. Understanding the seven essential constituents, school counselors can provide a foundation for themselves to build upon forming those authentic validating relationships with Native students. Authentic validating counseling relationships align with humanistic counseling practices such as Relational-Cultural Theory (Jordan, 2008, 2017). Relational-Cultural theory posits that interpersonal connections built on mutual empathy contribute to the "five good things" identified as zest, clarity, worth, creativity, and a desire for more connection (Jordan, 1997, 2008, 2017). Chronic disconnection, however, creates, (a) drop in energy, (b) decreased sense of worth, (c) less clarity and more confusion, (d) less productivity, and (e) withdrawal from all relationships (Jordan, 2008)., which align with the emotions experienced by participants within the constituents *I question my existence* and *I shield my existence.* School counselors practicing RCT can work to break through the boundaries that maintain the interpersonal conditions contributing to *cultural identity silencing* of Native American students.

Relational-Cultural Theory. RCT focuses on creating therapeutic relationships grounded in mutual dialogue which counter "power-over" dynamics that predominantly exist within counseling relationships (Jordan, 1997; Miller & Stiver, 1997). It requires school counselors to form "authentic growth-fostering" relationships with students that embrace mutual empathy and lead to mutual empowerment (Jordan, 1997. 2008, 2017; Miller & Stiver, 1997). By counselors acknowledging their bias, repairing disconnections (which are inevitable), and placing culture at the center of relationships, Native American students will be able to engage an authentic and empowering therapeutic relationships (Jordan, 2017). "To place culture alongside connection at the center of the theory is to break a critical silence" (Jordan, 2017, p. 230). To break a "critical silence" such as the phenomenon *cultural identity silencing* is to counter the "condemned isolation" (Miller, 1986, p. 5) experienced by all participants (Jordan, 2017). Ultimately, school counselors practicing RCT and critically witnessing the lived experiences of Native American students is an action towards healing the harm created by *cultural identity silencing* of Native American students in education.

Consultation and collaboration. Beyond the classroom, social justice and advocacy within the school counseling role can include professional development and consultation with educators (ASCA, 2012). In these interactions and relationships, dialogue can occur focused on the impact of false empathy, colonist consciousness, and chronic disconnections on Native American students (Duran, Duran, & Braveheart, 1998; Freire, 1997; Grande, 2004; Jordan, 1997; 2008; 2018; Lovern, 2012; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015; Quijada Cerecer, 2013; Warren & Hotchkins, 2014). School counselors practicing RCT can model and provide feedback to educators who seek to move beyond

"power-over" relationships with their Native American students and engage in "radical empathy" within their teaching (Jordan, 2018). This form of consultation and collaboration expands the dynamic of the school counseling role to include advocacy as a cultural mediator (Portman, 2009).

School counselors as cultural mediators. School counselors have a unique role in which they can engage within the school system as "cultural mediators". Cultural mediation within school counseling is described by Portman (2009) as:

> an intentional process through which a school counselor, in the role of cultural mediator, engages in prevention, intervention, and/or remediation activities that facilitate communication and understanding between culturally diverse human systems (e.g., school, family, community, and federal and state agencies) that aid in the educational progress of all students. (p. 23)

As cultural mediators, school counselors can act in creating relationships between schools and Native American Nations to create activities that best support Native American students. These relationships would be best for non-Native school counselors who do not have the cultural knowledge that can best support students who are experiencing essential constituents that challenge their Native existence. All in all, the purpose of school counselors engaging in cultural mediation is not to move beyond the boundaries of their role to form consensus about solutions for the external factors that cannot be controlled (systemic oppression, curriculum creation, standardized educational models, etc.), but to discuss the ways in which school staff can form relationships that validate rather than threaten the existence of Native American identity.

Recommendations for Future Research

The variety of fields and experiences that interact with the phenomenological structure of experiencing *cultural identity silencing* provides several paths for future research. Future research can explore the causes and conditions that perpetuate the cycle of the seven essential constituents. This includes explorations into the possible interactions between *cultural identity silencing* and historical trauma theory. In regards to future research addressing the conditions of *cultural identity silencing* it would be meaningful to explore the role of school counselors in becoming cultural mediators for Native American students, and becoming advocates for reconciliation for Native Americans in current educational systems. Furthermore, the researcher/participant relationship was a critical aspect of the success of this phenomenological study and it deserves further exploration into the importance of phenomenological methodology in counseling and education research.

HT and Cultural Identity Silencing

The Mohatt et al. (2014) model of historical trauma addresses personal and public reminders, including objects, actions, and relationships. These reminders were also present within *cultural identity silencing*. Some participants spoke to this when describing their experiences of education and including narratives of their family members who experienced boarding schools. Exploring the possible interactions between reminders of historical trauma and the seven essential constituents could address the criticism of HT models (Kirmayer et al., 2014; Maxwell, 2014). This exploration could use mixed methodology by incorporating the *Historical Loss Scale* and *Historical Loss Associated Symptoms Scale* (Whitbeck et al., 2004) to measure the degree of

historical loss experienced by Native American young adults, followed by two individual interviews that focus on how the specific types of historical loss symptoms were experienced. The first interview would focus on how the types of historical loss were experienced and the second would focus on what personal and public reminders they currently experience. This study would provide a more detailed portrait into the conditions and causes of the subjective experiencing of the essential constituents of *cultural identity silencing* as well as its interactions with the Mohatt et al. (2014) model of HT.

School Counselors as Cultural Mediators

Future research could also explore what school counselors as cultural mediators for Native American/Alaskan Native students would look like and its impact on fostering Nation building (Portman, 2009). Co-creation with Native American leaders would be an essential piece of this study since it explores Nation building and mediation between Nation and school. This would also include mixed methodology. The process includes focus groups to co-create the mediation role between the Native community and district school counselors then quantitatively and qualitative assessed. The quantitative measures would be for evaluation of the program and students' relationships with school at different time points throughout the year. Only students who work with the school counselor would be included. The study would also include exploring the quality of the relationships formed between school counselor and Native communities. Together along with exploring the data from students, these would provide insight into how school counselors as cultural mediators, contributes to Nation building.

All participants expressed hope, desire, and action in supporting their Nation or Native American community. In fact, many saw it as an inherent responsibility and essential role in their career development. As earlier mentioned, Native American identity development and academic curriculum are two areas that had a critical presence within the subjective experiencing of the essential constituents. This calls for further exploration into the ways in which educational institutions can begin a reconciliation process for the past and current harms.

Phenomenological Method in Counseling Research

Lastly, the methodology of this study is not popular within counseling or education. It required the researcher to form key relationships with participants that were cross-cultural, trusting, authentic, and validating. These foundational elements the studies are similar to the foundation of relational-cultural theory and it could be argued that the study allowed for growth-fostering relationships to occur between researcher and participant. Although the only guaranteed direct benefit that participants received was a $50 Visa gift card, they all expressed gratitude and growth during the interview process. The researcher also experienced growth during the interview process. Similar to therapeutic relationships, the researcher had to find ways to form authentic relationships that created space for mutual dialogue and empathy to occur. This conflicted with the "power-over" conditions of a researcher-participant relationship and became a unique balancing act. Although I could not change the conditions that have historically harmed Native Americans (research, non-Native identity, discussing very personal and culturally significant topic), I took intentional steps to create space for mutual dialogue to occur. Ultimately, by placing Native American culture at the center of the discourse, it allowed

for the relationship to break through “critical silence” and form an authentic growth-fostering relationship (Jordan, 2017).

Future research might explore the authentic growth-fostering research relationships in phenomenological counseling research. The methodology for these types of studies would require the participation of both researcher and participant which make it a more difficult recruitment. The sample could include 20 pairs of qualitative researchers in the counseling field and their corresponding participants from a recent or currently on-going study. They would be interviewed once about how they experienced the researcher-participant relationship, how it impacted their research experience, and how participating in the study changed both. For the counselors the interview would also include an additional question about how the interview impacted their counseling practices during the time they conducted their studies. The analysis would be descriptive focused on describing the constituents necessary for authentic-growth fostering relationships to occur within counseling research. The intention would be to offer insight in to the importance of phenomenological methodology as well as its various implications for counseling. Therefore, the possible benefits and importance of qualitative phenomenological counseling research deserves exploration.

Participant Interview Reflection

During the last 15 minutes of the third interview, space was created, for the participant to reflect on their current experience of the interviews and research study. All spoke to how the interview structure and methodology impacted their experience. Their reflections demonstrate the active and positive role of qualitative phenomenological research in validating participant’s existence. This section includes sections of the third

interview in which participants were given space to reflect on their experience of the study including the phenomena of focus, recruitment, and the interview process itself. These reflections come directly from the transcribed interviews and organized from first participant to last. The responses of the researcher were not included.

Participant One

"Um it's a lot of self-reflection. I've really appreciated that. Um during these hours it's kind of a meditative state for me because I get to self-reflect a lot, and um-through this journey I guess, I've learned a lot about myself. And it also it, it is a nice thing to know that people like of researchers like you care so much about small Native American cultures like mine, and um so I guess I feel like if there was any silencing before this is going to effect the - and uplift that silencing. It's really helpful to go through this, and be a part of this" (P1).

Participant Two

"Um, yeah good question. I think that um, I think that this whole process has really helped me kind of understand what I went through. Hold on. . . *pause*. . .yeah so I think what the main thing that this interview process has done for me is kind of, I think you asked me a lot of questions that I've never been asked before. I never really felt like, I didn't really dive into these things. So I think for me it's been - I knew what I experienced absolutely was connected to what I was doing now. That it really informed my, my career journey, my evolution of identity. Those things were readily, I noted those things more clearly. But, I think it's also been a bit cathartic too, to just kind of revisit some of my experiences from middle school and from high school or something. That talking to someone who is completely removed from the situation forced me to kind

of, I had to explain things in, in sometimes more general or more specific terms than I may have had to at any other point when discussing them. So I think it was a, useful for me in that way too, that I had to pause and kind of consider how I would explain it to you. Which in turn kind of helped me make sense of some kind of things that maybe I hadn't ever had to breakdown in that kind of way. Um I also think that like when we talked on the phone and I wasn't sure if I was the right fit, I mean at first, I mean it was because I didn't really have what I felt were experiences to kind share from highs school k-9 or k-12. Um but also this process has kind of helped me see the kind of types of microaggressions, if that's the proper phrase here, this sort of challenges to my identity and a you know my, my yeah my cultural identity my cultural self in having to just kind of navigate those things. I don't think, I. I think it helped me understand that, that how kind of, challenged I actually was through that whole process. I think it's easy to down play it in the moment. You know? You- just that's what happened to today or something. But to really reflect on it kind of lets me see how much I had to deal with and how much I've grown since then" (P2).

Participant Three

"Um . . . I think it's been like um more toward expressing or more outgoing because I've never done this before so it's a new experience. Like a part of a change thing that I'm doing over here. I guess that's the way to a explain it. Yeah decided to just take a huge leap forward and here I am. Um I guess it's just to talk about it, it just feels like a normal conversation to me essentially. It wasn't like a huge thing off my chest like how other people keep huge secrets. I don't think I'm not that sort of person, but yeah it's just, a, I think something different is what, is what it is. Just something different. Um I guess

because it's allows me to say certain things that happened really far in the past, I think I got to really think. . . I think it changes my viewpoint on how certain things are, or my original understanding of what the problem is and what not. I think it just changed my perspective, essentially. Um I think it made me look at a different angle than what I normally would have like um I would have thought that. I didn't know that it was a, a, silencing was an issue back when it was my grandmother was like going to the boarding school or what not. I didn't know it was an issue 50 years ago plus, even 100 years ago even when Columbus found this area there was still silencing going on. They wanted to change us more into the likes of them towards their religions of Catholics or what not. I think it changed the perspective, or the feeling, or yeah the perspective of how I use to look at things or how I use to look at things at face value. I still look at things that way, but slightly different, but I could see that there could have been a different solution to all the problems, or to all the silencing that has happened. (In response to having new awareness) um not really sure I guess it's not a reassuring feeling. It's more of a looking back on the past like how you could, how you had that feeling like if you could go back in time and change it sort of feeling. I think that's how I would essentially go towards. Um . . . *pause*. . .that I'm slowly changing to something more outgoing. Um I think a sense of easiness I'm just um I could do more than just sit around and finish work and sleeping later. What's this experience been like overall? Um . . . I guess a reassuring experience is pretty much what I could think of . . . that um that people such as yourself are taking the time to look more into this matter that shouldn't be present in, in modern society but it is" (P3).

Participant Four

"This process… um at first I was very nervous like 'what if I say something wrong, what if I um what if I go on a random tangent and all my information is just useless'? Um and then once I got more comfortable about talking about my experiences, and talking to you personally, I feel like I loosened up more, and I was able to open up more. Um overall each interview has been a positive experience, but you know it just got better as time went on. It evolved to get better because from the start I was excited like 'okay I'm contributing to a cultural silencing study you know that's pretty cool,' and then once I figured out it was not just about cultural silencing you know it was about my experiences with culture, culture in general, I loosened up more, like okay I can talk more about it, you know I can talk more about me. It's okay to talk about me. I'm not super comfortable about talking about myself, but that definitely helped with the fact that I could just delve into my experiences, and how I've been trying to piece together who I am really.

Um and then this interview it just felt like, I don't know if you feel this way but I feel like it's just talking to a friend you know. At first it was strange because not a lot of people ask. Um like how I feel about things or how I took to it. So at first answering the questions was like 'huh how do I verbalize this' because I've never really been prompted to before. Um it's still a little bit hard to find words to describe it, but it's getting better. You know I feel like it shouldn't have been that way. You know maybe people should have you know asked more, a, about how I internalized things or how I am developing, how am I feeling about this. But um it's definitely, it's definitely gotten easier. I learned that I that I can actually talk about myself. Even though that for a while I felt that I really

couldn’t. Um and I also found out that, hmm, I think that's pretty much it that I am that I can be okay with talking about myself for an hour and change [laugh] you know um yeah” (P4).

Participant Five

“It's been so, it's been really enjoyable because it's showing me that there's interest in this world and interest in these issues. And the a, yeah I guess I'll use, there's interest in the struggle that Natives go through and what's really interesting about the way you describe what the project, like what you're doing it sounds really great because it doesn't sound like you are focusing on this idea of the struggling Indian. It doesn’t sound like that stereotypical way, it's like really trying to find the root causes of these issues to move forward from that. And for me talking with you about these issues, you know, it’s fantastic it's really excited to see kind of where it goes from here.

Um but it's also I'm really happy that I got to share some of my viewpoint…. and experiences that I’ve gone through because hopefully in the end that will affect somebody else and you know be a source of, just be a different source for them. You know whether that's a source of strength or motivation you know anyone would be fine [laugh]. Um it was, that was a little interesting. (in response to prompt about interview experience) A, it, it's interesting because since my time in college I’ve been doing a lot. So I’ve gotten to do a bunch of interviews so it's becoming a bit more normal. I guess? I'm a bit more use to this feeling now than I was a couple of years ago, but it’s always interesting, it's interesting because it's like ‘alright someone is interested at least in what I’m talking about’ [laugh] it's, it's you know, it's a little bit of back and forth while at the same time it's like ‘well I'm doing a lot of the talking, I'm talking a lot about myself’, and

on some level that's very weird for me I've never done that. But on the other level, the other hand it's like well I'm using the experiences that I've been through to help somebody else. And so if I have to talk a lot and it's just me that's fine [Laugh]" (P5).

Participant Six

"Um it's been really good [laughs] you're really easy to talk to. Um which is great, I know a few times we've had some scheduling conflicts, but you know pretty smooth. Um I don't think that it's necessarily something that I really thought about recently or that I've really been conscious of you know. Um I think it's good to reflect upon things, and kind of you know find meaning in things even if they are bad experiences. So you know I think it's important to kind of look back every once in a while and kind of analyze a little bit about what you have experienced.

Um I think that I mean I think that especially when talking about my experiences of silencing I hadn't necessarily talked to really in-depth to other people about what I really had experienced, and what I, how that really felt. So you know just being able to share that is kind of really cool, and actually having a space to kind of talk about it and um, um having a safe space to kind of talk about it and analyze it a bit is really cool [laugh]. Um I think that, I don't know, I think it's nice every once in a while to focus in on one aspect of your life. Um sometimes it gets a little overwhelming with everything that you are, and so like having that space to kind of I think it's kind of therapeutic sometimes just to have that like space to just kind of talk about one aspect of you. Um I think just really, um, I don't think I have nothing that really surprised me, but like I was saying before really having that space to kind of analyze. I you know, I experienced these things, but I don't necessarily think about it after or my thought process behind it so being

able to articulate it I think is important for me to figure out the way I actually deal with stuff or handle situations" (P6).

Participant Seven

"Um I think it's really helped me to reground myself, and think about how far I've come. You know I've just seen it on a paper and I was like 'okay I'll do it' and my friends like 'you'll be perfect for this' just because of all the work I've done, and um the fact that I try to use my voice as a tool. I was like 'okay. This, I don't know what she is doing, but I think she really needs youth so, I was like okay let me do this.' But I was really curious about like the kind of questions you were going to ask and, but I was like 'well I'm just going to go with the flow' and so far it's been really great. I think every week that I've it's just given me time to think about how far I've come, and even some of the most recent incidences it's just made me realize how much better I have it in college than in elementary school.

And I don't know I think this has been really fun um I don't do this too often. So the fact that I do get to share is pretty neat. Um I don't' think I mind. Honestly I think with all the leadership training that I've done, or even events where I get up, and speak at random moments, I'm kind of use to it. It's really nothing that I was really embarrassed of or scared to tell you. Um I think that it is better that it is on Skype rather than on the phone because you just kind of like wondering 'who is this person' and I think it's a lot easier to talk on Skype but other than that it's really, it was really easy going it wasn't anything too stressful about the questions or even like um it just seemed natural it wasn't too I guess robotic [laughs] like just reading the questions from the paper like it seems really natural like we're having conversation" (P7).

Participant Eight

"I think it's been really helpful cause its, I think I probably said this every week, but I don't think I've ever thought about it before until somebody asked me a question, and so I think it's been really helpful to kind of walk through these things. Like how you started all the way at the beginning until now. It's been really helpful to just walk through these things, and kind of like reflect on my just development. As just like coming into my cultural identity cause I, I was thinking over the break that my, my grandma told me that I'm probably the most traditional grandchild that she has. And she has like nine of us. And she said that I'm one of the, that I'm the most traditional. She says that she feels the most pride, or that I'm the most. She said that she felt successful because I was carrying on the Native ways and so. I thought 'well that fits perfectly. I've just been thinking about how we've been developing my cultural identity and how this has happened, and you know how I've got to where I am today'; because I'm one of the younger ones on our list of grandchildren. Like I'm one of the younger ones, and so I think that it's, to fit perfectly and I really just enjoyed it.

I don't know I thought it would be weird and I didn't know that I would know any answers to your questions at all. I'm just like 'I'm going to try I don't know if I'm going to be any help to her at all', but I think it's actually been really helpful to me because, you know, I want to be a mentor going forward, and a role model; and I think that it's important to kind of know who I am and how I got here. And so this is really helping me reflect on my life, which is weird. A stranger helped me get to know myself a little better. Isn't that weird?" (P8).

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to describe the phenomenon *cultural identity silencing* of Native American identity in education and create a descriptive structure of the participants psychological experiencing. Eight young adult Native Americans participated in three interviews over the course of several weeks sharing their experiences with a non-Native researcher, a stranger, whom they trusted with witnessing, analyzing, and sharing their experiences. Many of the described experiences had not even been shared with their family or close friends.

Participants experienced seven essential psychological constituents that interacted with the existence and evolution of their Native American identity at specific time frames in their life story. Their descriptions interacted with established theories and provide a rich picture of how *cultural identity silencing* was experienced. Participants shared their experiences to add their voice to counseling and educational research that has a history of ignoring and misinterpreting Native experience. Their participation was an action of advocacy. They chose to become vulnerable and face a commonly oppressive experience (research) with the intention to provide a current representation of Native American experience to those still searching for a Native voice to validate their existence. The individual participant summaries have been included in Appendix E along with a few of their responses to the summary, to honor the unique truth of each shared narrative. I thank them for their trust, commitment, and honesty, and hope that this study honors their stories.

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APPENDIX A: Interview Protocol

The following protocol is for three 60-90 minute interviews and is a phenomenological interview format (Merriam, 2009; Seidman, 2013). As such, the questions listed below are not stated in any particular order, but will occur in the natural course of dialogue.

First Interview: Focused on life history (Tell me about yourself)
Intro: researcher and participant introduction, gratitude towards participant for participating in study, review consent form, purpose of the research, structure, and participant rights

Researcher explains: *This first interview is focused on your experiences of your Native American/American Indian cultural identity and what drew you to participate in this study*

- What drew you to participate in this study?
- Describe your life as a Native American outside of K-12 education
- Describe your formal educational experience.
- Describe your cultural education
- What kind of education did you receive about your Native American culture in K-12 education?
- Describe the culture of your schools.
- What was your favorite subject in school?
- Please describe your Native American heritage and cultural identity?

Demographic questions:

- What is your current age and major?
- What's the origin story of your name?

Second Interview Guide: focused on the lived experience of cultural identity silencing (What was cultural identity silencing like in education?)

Researcher explains: *Our first interview was focused on your life history leading up to your experiences of cultural identity silencing in education. This interview will focus on your experiences of cultural identity silencing as a Native American student. Cultural identity silencing is an experience that dismisses or omits the existence of American Indian cultural identity including history, language, and traditions (Clarify only if needed).*

Main question: How was cultural identity silencing experienced during your education?

Sub-questions:

- Describe cultural identity silencing in your own words?

- What was it like to experience cultural identity silencing of your Native American identity in education?
  - What did it look like?
  - How did it change over time?
- How was silencing of your Native American identity approached within education?
- Educational institutions are described as a "safe space" of cultural acceptance. What does that mean to you?
- Who was an advocate of during your education?
- How did experiences of cultural identity silencing impact the development of your Native American identity?
- Please tell me more about the impact cultural identity silencing of your Native American identity had on your journey through education.

Third Interview Guide: Reflective interview
Researcher explains: *This is the third and final interview. During the first two interviews you shared your experiences of cultural identity silencing of your Native American Identity during education. Today's interview will be focused on reflection on your cultural identity silencing experiences and what they mean to you today.*
Main question: What meaning did you create from your experiences of cultural identity silencing of your Native American identity during education?
Sub-questions:

- How has the cultural identity silencing of your Native American identity during education impacted your life?
  - As a student while attending K-12 education?
  - As you reflect back on your cultural identity silencing experiences?
- How has the cultural identity silencing of your Native American identity that occurred during your education affected your life decisions, for instance your career, college major, your participation in your tribal nation?
  - How might your life have been different if you had not experienced cultural identity silencing of your Native American identity during education?
- How has cultural identity silencing of your Native American identity impacted your view of formal education?
  - Your Native American heritage?
  - Your worldview?
- How has cultural identity silencing of your Native American identity impacted your interaction with people of other cultures?
- What socio-political issues are most important to you?
- How has your experiences of cultural identity silencing of your Native American identity during education impacted your relationships?
- How has your experiences of cultural identity silencing of your Native American identity during education influenced your ideas of what it means to be Native American?
- Describe your current involvement with your Native American community/tribe?

- What advice would you give to Native American students who are currently in K-12 education?
- What would you like to change about K-12 education?
- Describe your voice as a Native American adult?

Follow-up prompts/questions to gain more detail about their experiences:

- Would you say more about. . .?
- Please share some examples. . .
- What else can you tell me about. . .?
- What was your experience. . .?
- Would you please clarify what . . . means?
- Do you mind if I ask you more about . . .?
- What happened then?

Intro phone call

As part of the selection process participants will take part in a brief 5-10 min phone call. The following questions will be asked to determine if the participant meets the criteria to participate (i.e. identifies as Native American who has experienced cultural identity silencing). If they meet the criteria the location for the interviews will be mutually agreed upon.

How did you find out about the study?
What would participating in the study mean to you?
What is your cultural identity?
Logistical questions:

- Can you commit to three interviews that are a week apart?
- Where are you located?
- Any potential conflicts (transportation, personal, work, etc.) that would prevent you from being able to participate?

APPENDIX B: Informed Consent

Department of Counseling and Family Therapy

One University Blvd.
St. Louis, Missouri 63121-4499
Telephone: 314-516-xxxx
Fax: 314-516-xxxx
E-mail: klh2q3@mail.umsl.edu

Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities
Silencing Native American Cultural Identity

Participant _____ HSC Approval Number __1059707-1_____

Principal Investigator _____Katheryne Leigh_____ PI's Phone Number (716) 969-5414_

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1. You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Katheryne Leigh, doctoral candidate supervised by Dr. Mark Pope (faculty advisor) in the College of Education at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. The purpose of this research is to understand the experiences of cultural identity silencing of Native American identity during education. Cultural identity silencing is an experience that dismisses or omits the existence of American Indian cultural identity including history, language, and traditions. The interviews will approximately be conducted in the summer and fall of 2017.

2. a) your participation will involve:

    - If you are selected and agree to participate, you will take part in three 90-120 minute in-person or Skype interviews with the lead researcher, each at least 3 to 7 days apart. During the interviews you will be asked a series of open ended questions about your experiences of cultural identity silencing of your Native American identity while in education. Each interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis by the researcher.

- The first interview will focus on your life history prior to experiences of cultural identity silencing of your Native American identity in education
- Interview 2 you will be asked about specific experiences of cultural identity silencing of your Native American identity during education.
- Lastly, the third interview is an opportunity to reflect on your cultural identity silencing experiences and what they mean to you today.

- Follow-up: After the last interview you will be contacted within three months to share the results of the study and obtain your response.

- The location and/or time of the interviews will be mutually agreed upon between you and the research at a location and time that is most convenient and comfortable. This includes Skype interviews.
- Approximately 7-15 participants may be involved in this research

b) The amount of time involved in your participation will be 90-140 minute interviews adding up to 4.5-10 hours total (includes introduction phone call and follow-up) and you will receive a $50 visa gift card for your time and participation.

3. There may be certain risks or discomforts associated with this research. They include:
    a) Feelings of discomfort when talking about the events in your life while answering the interview questions. You can stop the interview at any time, do not have to answer the questions, and/or can withdraw from the research with no consequences.
    b) You can choose to use pseudonym (different name) for the researcher to use during the transcription and analysis
    c) Even if using a pseudonym in the final results of this study and any published materials, you still may be identifiable. In this study we will be using your name (or pseudonym), tribal identity and the region (northeast, Midwest, southwest, etc.) where you attended K-12 education. We include this information because sharing about the diversity of experiences with cultural identity silencing as well as Native American culture is a goal of this study. As you consider participating, understand that the results will be associated with Native American culture and K-12 education.
    d) The analysis of each interview will be shared with participants to include your reaction and any criticism in the study.

4. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge about cultural identity silencing of Native American identity and may help society.

5. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or to withdraw.

6. By agreeing to participate, you understand and agree that your data may be shared with other researchers and educators in the form of presentations and/or publications. In all cases, your identity will not be revealed. In rare instances, a researcher's study must undergo an audit or program evaluation by an oversight agency (such as the Office for Human Research Protection). That agency would be required to maintain the confidentiality of your data. In addition, all data will be stored on a password-protected computer and/or in a locked office.

7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, Katheryne Leigh (716) 969-5414 klh2q3@mail.umsl.edu or Faculty Advisor Mark Pope (314) 516-7121 PopeML@msx.umsl.edu . You may also ask questions or state concerns regarding your rights as a research participant to the Office of Research Administration, at 516-5897.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above.

Participant's Signature	Date	Participant's Printed Name
Signature of Investigator or Designee	Date	Investigator/Designee Printed Name

APPENDIX C: Email Solicitation

Hello X,

My name is Katheryne Leigh and I am a doctoral candidate in the counselor education and supervision program at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. I'm currently looking for participants for my dissertation study exploring the experiences of cultural identity silencing of Native American identity in education under the advisement of Dr. Mark Pope. I reached out to you because I am looking for persons who can directly share the study information with potential participants (family, friends, and community members). I'm not asking for names, just for the information to be shared. If you have the time I would love to talk with you about the study and answer any questions.

In order to participate in this study the participant must be:

- **18-25** years old
- College student (includes new 2017 freshman)
- Identify as *Native American/American Indian* (including multi-racial and multi-ethnic identities)
- Participate in 3 Skype interviews
- ***Have experienced cultural identity silencing of your Native American/American Indian identity during K-12 & college education***

Each interview takes 90-140 min each 3 to 7 days apart. Participation is voluntary and can be ended at any time. This study will include 7-15 participants. Each participant who completes all three interviews will receive a **$50 visa gift card**. Participant selection will include a 5-10 min phone conversation with the researcher to talk about your interest in participating in the study, explain the procedure, and answer any questions you have about participating. **I plan on conducting interviews August through November.**
If you are interested in participating, in this study, or know someone whom might be please contact Katheryne Leigh at klh2q3@mail.umsl.edu also if you know of any contacts in the community that can help spread the study information please let me know.

I thank you for your time and look forward to hearing from you

Katheryne Leigh, M.Ed.
Doctoral Candidate- Counselor Education & Supervision
University of Missouri-St. Louis
[klh2q3@mail.umsl.edu%20]**klh2q3@mail.umsl.edu**

APPENDIX D: Recruitment Flyer

Research Interview Participants Needed

Native American Cultural Identity Silencing Study

Currently recruiting participants for a study exploring the experiences of cultural identity silencing of Native American identity in education. *Cultural identity silencing is an experience that dismisses or omits the existence of American Indian cultural identity including history, language, and traditions.*

In order to participate you must:

- 18-25 years old
- College student (includes new freshman)
- Identify as Native American/American Indian (including multiracial) Participate in 3 interviews (*Skype interviews)*
- Have experienced cultural identity silencing of your Native American/American Indian identity during your education

* Each interview takes 90-140 min each 3 to 7 days apart. Your participation is voluntary and can be ended at any time. This study will include 7-15 participants.

Selection will include a 5-10 min phone conversation with the researcher to talk about your interest in participating in the study, explain the procedure, and answer any questions you have about participating.

Participants will receive $50.00 visa gift card upon completion of all three interviews

If you would like to participate or find out more details about the study contact:
Katheryne Leigh, M.Ed., klh2q3@mail.umsl.edu

APPENDIX E: Participant Summaries

P1 Cultural Identity Silencing of Native American Identity

P1 has always acknowledged and lived with pride in their Alaskan Native cultural identity. As a child, their grandmother became its early "voice", providing P1 with knowledge of their Alaskan Native heritage including its history, customs, beliefs, and language, while making it known to educators that P1 identified as Alaskan Native. Some of this knowledge included the understanding that Alaskan Native identity is unique, "we see ourselves as slightly different due to the fact that we never really were colonized". This rich cultural history taught from their family reinforced P1's Alaskan Native identity.

Connections to their native identity were further fostered by official Nation membership substantiated by a Nation ID card received at birth, monthly newsletters, and trips to Alaska. While there P1 would take part in Sweat lodges which provided P1 the space and community to share their experiences. "I remember after leaving the sweat lodge there was a real calmness in the air. That I'd never experience anywhere before and it was almost as if the negativity had disappeared completely." While peers learned of historical heroes, P1 learned of their great-grandmother who was a hero to their Nation, a living intergenerational link and source of cultural strength. This link created a

sense of responsibility to voice that "we" are a strong people and motivated P1 towards achieving their goals. Furthermore, this intergenerational connection to ancestors provided reassurance and a path to reconnect with their culture regardless of the circumstances.

During their early childhood, P1 was exposed to the vast diversity of physical features within the Native American and Alaskan Native communities. Even with this exposure P1 often questioned their physical features. Asking others if they looked native, and often told that their skin tone, round face, and straight black hair were markers for native identity. These physical criteria created confusion, an internalized wondering of what makes a Native American/Alaskan Native, Native? This confusion contributed to an internalized shift from identity pride to shame, experienced during the end of elementary school and continued through their adolescence.

During their adolescence they often became aware of their reflection in the mirror creating negative feelings of wishing to change their physical characteristics that aligned with commonly described Native American/Alaskan Native features. “I found myself looking in the mirror a lot of the time and wishing I had more of a jaw line or just very narrow features.” This dislike was not hatred towards their Alaskan Native identity, but a deep feeling of disgust at their physical features that left it exposed and vulnerable. P1 identifies with multiple ethnicities and at times P1 experienced their Alaskan Native identity as being fractured from others. For example, P1’s African American ethnicity often generated more interest from peers and educators than their Native American identity. This interest was just one of a multitude of experiences in education which left P1 questioning the existence of their identity.

Education

In 3rd grade P1 participated in a class presentation and reenactment of Christopher Columbus's journey. After participating, their grandmother shared the true history of the genocide that took place as a direct result of Christopher Columbus. Learning this truth was jarring. "I felt almost lied to in a sense. It was almost as if the parents were keeping something from you, like sort of prevent the harsh reality of it all." Histories taught in the classroom focused on the skewed attributes of America to cloud the absence of Native American/Alaskan Native cultures. As a result, P1 experienced history lessons as intentionally designed to indoctrinate students to an education focused on the colonialist as told by the colonizer, an indoctrination that became normalized as P1 continued through school. This felt lack of meaning placed on Native American/Alaskan Native cultures continued to create questions for P1 about educational experience and the importance of education that disregarded the lived histories of their own Nation. P1 felt bad for not knowing more about their cultural history such as the overlooked details of Sacajawea and Navajo code talkers. To address these questions and guilt P1 became interested in a Native perspective of the cultural knowledge left unexplored. They grew a desire to learn the past and present lived experiences of Native American/Alaskan Native cultures including language, historic figures, and practices.

Growing up P1 was witness to an underrepresentation of Native American/Alaskan Native people in mainstream American society. P1 questioned: why Native American/Alaskan Native cultural identity was not valued enough to be visible? For example, the absence of round faces in pop culture, a trait P1 associated with Native American physical appearance, was a constant reminder of the underrepresentation, false

representation, and lack of appreciation of Native American/Alaskan Natives. P1 experienced a psychological searching to validate the present living existence of their culture and lived experience. They were faced with the dichotomy of the predominate White and African American historical figures in the absence of strong Native American/Alaskan Native historical figures in curriculum to emulate. In fact, White historical figures and role models were all that were present until middle school. P1 noted feeling actively drawn to identify with their African American culture. Unfortunately, history lessons that excluded native experiences while presenting false representation were re-experienced throughout P1's education.

P1 felt misunderstood by peers and educators. In middle school P1 encountered a female classmate dressed as Native American for Halloween which sexualized and offended Native American/Alaskan Native identity. The act was hurtful because of the ignorance behind the intent. "We are not a Halloween costume. We are an entire generations, we are entire history, a history that cannot be bagged and sold in stores for $20.00." This ignorant act disarmed P1from their ability to defend. Ultimately, without an understanding of the meaning and significance behind symbols of Native American culture, false representation became a trend and created a barrier for P1's voice to be heard.

On the other hand, understanding would have looked like helping P1 recognize the inherent awesomeness of Alaskan Native/Native American culture. Instead P1 was confronted with statistics of poor graduation rates of Native American/Alaskan Native students, along with a push from high school counselors and educators to label their Native American identity for advantages in college. This propagated belief of college

diversity quotas overshadowed P1's view of their academic accomplishments and attributes that contributed to their college admission. In referring to conversation with peers about college acceptance; "I was kind of… I didn't want to tell um, where I got accepted into. It was kind of you know, it felt like my accomplishments weren't as great." P1 continued to wonder if their college admission was due to their ethnicity or their achievements well into their first year of college.

P1 endured an education formatted for non-Native s, learning the essential knowledge that disregarded Native American history. Educators casted P8's cultural history as a harsh reality in order to glorify White culture which indoctrinated students into American nationalism; "It wasn't necessarily to… I guess say like white supremacy. It was not like they were going around saying that, but um, as if um, like teaching to kids at a very young age that American was number one very important." Failures to emphasize and explore the complexity of Native American/Alaskan Native histories were purposeful actions to eliminate truths. When P1 asked beyond the "essential knowledge", the response by educators diminished the importance of the cultural knowledge P1 sought. "I remember I asked teachers why we do the pledge over there and they said because we do. You know? It was never some great meaning behind it, and I really wish someone could have explained that to me as well as other things." Ultimately, in order to gain the knowledge that linked curriculum to Native American cultural history meant that P1 had to individually seek out resources.

P1 experienced a straying away from Native American/Alaskan Native identity during middle school, a conscious intention to keep their identity protected and hidden in order to fly under the radar of ignorant educators and peers. It was only slightly

uncovered when necessary for defense. This minimal exposure contradicted P1's desire to express the depth of their Alaskan Native cultural identity. P1's straying looked like absence of wearing cultural clothing such as moccasins in order to fit in middle school, always with an internalized belief that their identity should not be voiced. To voice their Alaskan Native identity was to stand out and become displaced from the social and academic environment. Accordingly, voicing seemed pointless in the presence of ambivalence of the listener, peers and educators. Furthermore, P1 gave up educating others about their culture from around 6th grade to 10th. This psychological distance from their Alaskan Native identity continued into senior year of high school at which point P1 lost their culture and no longer fully embraced their identity. Overall P1 experienced a growing sense of loss of their culture's significance in comparison to other things such as college and career readiness that were valued in education.

According to P1 an educator's choice to silence Native American/Alaskan Native cultures conflicted with the preconceived neutral role of an educator to teach the multiple realities that exist within history. Educators had a perception that P1 was Native American/Alaskan Native by P1's physical features. As a result, P1 was often chosen to validate the pieces of Native American history included in the curriculum. Although educators often described Native Americans in generalized positive terms such as peaceful and helpful, the descriptions would be in the past tense, further disregarding the living existence P1's culture and identity. P1 experienced feelings of embarrassment when placed in the position to validate the romantic notion that Native American/Alaskan Native cultures no longer exist. Sadly P1 did not start experiencing meaningful dialogue

in school about their Alaskan Native culture until high school when the Dakota Access Pipeline protest occurred and generated popular interest.

Dialogue

P1 experienced a complex desire to educate non-Native s about Native American/Alaskan Native cultures. While questioning of their own existence as an Alaskan Native remained, P1 felt a sense of honor to represent their Alaskan Nation. There was a shared pride felt that directly tied their success to the survival and progress of their Nation. That pride and honor felt like active support from their Nation that carried-on into adulthood. Sharing details about their culture's history, practices, and beliefs added also importance to Native American/Alaskan Native peoples. It provided a great hope that their knowledge would pass from one person to the next. However, this desire to educate and share experiences ceased when met with ignorance and disillusionment.

P1 also experienced an absence of mutual dialogue about Native American/Alaskan Native cultures with peers and educators. Mutual dialogue would have included follow-up questions and exchange of personal experiences of cultural identity. Instead most of P1's educators did not make it known that they were open to talking about Native American/Alaskan Native cultures. As such, P1 did not feel safe to ask questions and discuss their experiences. Although P1 did not feel ashamed of their Alaskan Native culture, they held the belief that if voiced, it would encounter ambivalence. On the other hand, there were a few experiences in which P1 did voice their identity such as exchanges when they were asked "are you an Eskimo?" These reoccurring Eskimo references began in middle school and continued throughout high

school. These specific acts felt emotionally abusive and portrayed a disinterest in knowing P1's culture as well as their personal experience as an Alaskan Native. Even though P1 thought favorably about discussing their identity the sensed lack of desire in others became an internalized shame.

Community

During their education there were times when P1 found acceptance. For instance, P1's 4th grade teacher took time to create a classroom environment and teacher-student relationship where P1 felt heard and valued. Within this space P1 was allowed to be their self and express their identity without fear of it becoming a target. Unfortunately, through middle school and high school P1often felt judged and unheard, surrounding their self with any one that would allow them in their presence. As such, being heard was a valued experience which became an important aspect to the life of P1 and created supportive relationships. Being heard was also a fleeting moment of mutual dialogue often brief interactions but very meaningful. Their middle school counselor was interested in P1's culture and provided a relationship where P1 could discuss their experiences. Being an ally meant seeing P1 for their achievements and not making it harder.

Any time P1 meant someone that identified with their Nation it created an instant connection and felt understanding of experience as a Nation member. For instance, at a recent party P1 met and conversed with a man who had worked with their Nation. They sat and talked about the cultural practices and values of P1's Nation, and it felt refreshing. Their conversation became a significant aspect of P1's life and identity. It demonstrated the existence of a community who wanted to hear about P1's Alaskan

Native culture and personal lived experience. It meant that there were also Non-Natives who cared about Native American/Alaskan Natives. "It was one of those one-time meetings that kind of change you a little bit, that happens every once in a while, certain people and I feel like my life grows on those moments."

P1 also found strength in their family and Native community. Unity was a value learned and experienced early-on in P1's life. Their grandmother ensured that P1 had a connection to a Native community. She included P1 in professional organizations where they were surrounded by a diverse group of Native American leaders who demonstrated the significance of self-love and appreciation of their native heritage. Spending time with their cousins was also an extension of community and acceptance where they never found the need to focus on the oppression they personally experienced. Instead P1 listened to their cousins discuss the events that were occurring on their reservation. It was through these discussions that P1 became aware of the diverse realities that Native communities and people faced. Being witness to their cousin struggling in comparison to their own experience P1 felt helpless "It just always feels like it's unfair that people that I know and many people like them were placed in situations where, they weren't going to thrive, and it just kind of sickens me. ..."

In addition to this difference of experience, blood quantum levels and Nation membership created a paradox. At times P1 felt that their blood quantum levels invalidated their representation of their Nation's culture. The criteria politically validated the existence of P1's Alaskan Native identity while challenging its existence for their future children regardless of how they would be raised. This critical awareness to the complex existence of Native American/Alaskan Native identity within the realms of

policy, social constructs, and self-belief created a sense of burden when P1 thought about major life decisions. The realization that marrying a non-Native would genetically disqualify their children from Nation membership created feelings of sadness and fear. Losing Alaskan Native identity because of blood quantum seemed unfair to P1 especially when it denied their children an important aspect of their Alaskan Native identity. There was also an experienced sense of loss and unfairness when P1 witnessed Native American/Alaskan Natives choose to live in denial from their Native identity as if it is not "cool" to mainstream society. This psychological balancing act of existence created a sense of grief that P1's culture was dying whilst actively living and striving for its preservation and growth.

P1 perceived that elements of Native American/Alaskan Native culture were out dated, but recognized the "out dated" was an intentional act to preserve cultural history and practices. Reservations and territories are few of the remaining spaces preserving Native American/Alaskan Native cultures. On Nation land cultural practices became strategies of healing and survival. They promoted resilience while also distance from the harsh realities affecting Nations and individuals. The Nation land served as a source of strength and healing for P1 even though they lived in another state. Pow Wow's were highly valued celebrations in which P1 never discussed their personal experiences of harm or overarching issues affecting the community. To P1, Pow Wow's were a method of celebrating in order to make the oppression faced bearable, a justification for the harsh realities faced by being Native; "as if the reservations are in a way preserving our culture and without them our preservation wouldn't be as grand."

Meaning

P1 made it known the permanence of their existence as an Alaskan Native. It could not be consciously abandoned even when P1 experienced periods of silencing that caused them to "stray" away from identifying as Alaskan Native. "I found myself not telling as many people about my Native American culture and not discuss it as thoroughly as I would have liked to." At times P1 abandoned the existence of their own Native identity, but their Alaskan Native culture remained an aspect of their being, claimed or unclaimed. They experienced environments in which their culture was disregarded, diminished of importance, and impermanent. These experiences existed as a conscious awareness used to validate previous and current lived experiences. For P1 this awareness began to exist in middle school, with a grand realization occurring most recently in college. When faced with denial of their existence and it became necessary to "go with the flow" to objectively learn from the experiences. This "learning" became a transformation of their experiences into strengths that would never be forgotten.

Without these questioning and growing in their existence, P1 would have no conscious awareness of oppression they experienced. P1 emerged with a stronger voice of strength and identity. Their voice became the confidence to express emotions and thoughts, with a consciousness to act when they witness oppression. Their voice protected as well as educated, creating conditions of "safety" for their identity to grow to exist freely without judgement. Although "they" [educators] placed dominant culture on pedestal of greater legitimacy, it did not eliminate the importance of P1's lived experience or Alaskan Native identity. Its importance no longer had to be seen by non-Native s for it to exist. This evolution included educators and researchers taking extra

time to know P1's lived experience of beyond the culture, advocates that respected P1's cultural identity without crossing the boundaries into appropriation.

P1 appreciated the stronger connections to their Alaskan Native identity that came with their experiences. P1 gained strength from their Nation's strength and gained the ability to interweave their Alaskan Native cultural identity into their own life. They grew proud of their accomplishments, and looked into a mirror with genuine appreciation of their identity. Being "seen" as Native became validating. Overall, their most meaningful accomplishment was their self-esteem, now lived with a new self-assurance and strong will. Strong-willed and confident P1 has a new perspective that illuminates the possibilities for progress and the ways in which P1 can contribute to the growth of their Nation.

P2 Cultural Identity Silencing of Native American Identity

Since their early childhood P2 felt secure in their Native American ethnic and Nation identity. These aspects of identity provided direction, sense of self, loyalty, and responsibility to community that extended beyond family. To identify as a citizen of their Nation meant being part of a distinct community with its own rich history. Nation territory was home experienced as an emotional and physical connection to a land that was for the Nation's people. It provided P2 a sense of purpose, responsibility, and connection to the land. This physical, emotional, and spiritual foundation further validated the existence of P2's Native American identity. Living on Nation territory provided a protective bubble within which existed a level of understanding of their culture. As such, P2's existence as Native American was known to others without question including non-Natives that were living on the territory. This shielded P2 from gaps in understanding and the questioning of their existence for most of their youth. As a result, P2 took for granted their cultural norms and practices. It was not until they experienced college that they realized the uniqueness of their Nation and cultural experiences.

The existence of P2's Native identity depended on their lived existence "I could not be wrong in what I did because that's just, it informs itself, I am Native therefore; whatever I do is what a Native does." However, being misidentified as various cultures throughout their life P2 still questioned their phenotype "fit". When off Nation land P2 was often misidentified as Hispanic or White which allowed them to pass as non-Native . Not fitting the stereotyped Native American features expected by non-Native s, kept P2 from a layer of anxiety that comes with experiencing overt racism. At times it was

difficult for P2 to honor their self while living up to societal expectations of what a Native should be. Additionally, there was the element of existing in a society where Native American people were cast as relics of the past. When their Native identity would become known there was an immediate palpable novelty, experienced as an "ah ha, I see it!" by the person. P2 never denied their Native American cultural identity and held it with a great sense of pride and honor.

Education

P2 experienced a loss of direction during their early adolescence when questions arose about what a Native American existence should look like. As a child and adolescent, P2 did not have a Native American role model and struggled to find current and positive representations of Native Americans. This lack of positive representation of Native people and for Native people made it difficult to counter damaging stereotypes which extended across every facet of history and pop culture. Instead they learned a skewed borrowed history repackaged then sold to society and accepted as truth in films, textbooks, storytelling, media, and government. In college P2 continued to have concern that lack of representation would lead Native youth to gravitate towards owning stereotypes such as the stoic Indian, the mystic, etc. instead of their Nation's unique culture. The narratives of American history taught to P2 in K-12 omitted the lived experiences of Native Americans. It began with colonialization and never discussed the genocide of millions. Instead, only a few names of nearby Nations were mentioned before fast forwarding to established colonies. History left an unanswered question: where did all the natives go? Its answer hidden to guard against countering the romantic narrative of manifest destiny and mask the terrible genocide necessary for America to

become the number one super power of the world. Ultimately, the victors' history silenced the existence of P2's Native American experience of that history.

During their first year of college P2 encountered subtle or dismissive actions that placed their existence outside of the norms of existing social and educational systems. P2 experienced actions from educators and peers that suppressed, denied, and punished them from expressing their Native American identity. The intentions of this ignorance range from innocent to hostile due somewhat in part to the misinformation and misrepresentation of Native people in history, education, and lack of experiences. In the classroom P2's identity was overlooked, spotlighted, and challenged. Furthermore, P2 felt a pressure to be the voice to refute ignorance about Native peoples and cultures. For example, when P2 encountered insulting comments about the infrastructure of their Nation's territory, P2 felt a physical discomfort which increased with each additional comment made. This physical discomfort included a fast heart rate alongside a fear that voicing their presence and experiences would place them in further isolation. There was a reoccurring desire and pressure to speak up, to make their Native presence known to the classroom, "I would feel compelled to say something. There would be all this pressure that no one else knew about but me in that room", but often P2 remained silent. This physical silence was upsetting because it was a missed opportunity to educate and potentially the only time that person would have a chance to have their ignorance corrected.

In the classroom P2 was often the last chosen to contribute to dialogue about the experiences of Native American cultures. Whether the professor was native or non-

Native , P2's voice remained the last to speak. An action in which the educator's need to keep the dialogue alive casted a voice of Native experience as an executioner. P2 internalized this belief that their voice would cause others discomfort and limit opportunity for a wider range of viewpoints to be shared. When they spoke, immediately they felt everyone's discomfort and silence. There existed a unique balance and questioning of "who is the real authority?" of subjects that included Native American cultures. Although their comments were not seen s malicious or aggressive, educators' theory closed opportunity for an intersection of P2's experiences into the discussion. P2 often justified educator's actions as ignorance in order to move past the hurt. This was experienced by P2 as disrespect which further complicated P2's struggle to find balance and understanding with educators. Although the actions of educators never felt aggressive, they placed P2 outside of the norms of the systems they existed within, and P2 always felt dramatically outside of it.

Dialogue

Voice in the midst of silence became a balancing act between helping others gain a new understanding of Native American culture while P2 maintained their unique identity. P2 was aware that their interactions were often the first experience someone had with a Native American person, especially with an opportunity to engage in 1:1 discussion. Though not often experienced, each new interaction was an opportunity for P2 to experience mutual dialogue. P2 was often challenged to explain and define the different elements of their identity in simple enough terms that could be effectively understood. As such, existing as Native often required an explanation that displaced P2's individual experience in order to educate about Native American culture. It was

strength in numbers, the more people were sharing then it didn't warrant an explanation. Hotly contested topics such as Columbus Day or sports team mascots were easier to negotiate because P2 could quickly create a straightforward, powerful, and convincing argument. P2 lived with a perception that their voice and presence changed the direction of dialogue and question. They feared their presence and voice would cause discomfort and cease the conversation. On the other hand, they believed it was their responsibility to inform the ignorant. This responsibility placed great pressure on P2 to speak and was isolating. They often searched for "windows" to integrate their voice into the conversation and effectively counter someone's point.

P2 often silently negotiated and calculated how much time was needed to offer the explanation; "it was a fine line that needed to be walked because I wasn't trying to point a finger at anybody or attack anybody…" This negotiation included a heightened awareness to perceive if the environment would welcome Native identity and experience. P2 also weighed the amount of background information that would be needed in order to provide a full answer, and depending on the time would chose to educate or let it go. Even though individuals were worth P2's explanation, time often did not provide enough space for P2's voice to be heard. Also mutual dialogue did not occur if the class or environment did not seem appropriate. These dialogues/debates became familiar and P2 became very comfortable strategically using their voice. To have more effective conversations P2 applied both their education and cultural knowledge. Each time they spoke it was with the intention to present as honest a representation of their self as possible in that moment. Consensus was not the goal of expressing their voice.

Therefore, regardless of where the conversation ended, P2's Native American existence remained.

P2 felt a need to educate their classmates and created a film documentary as their final project during their second year of college. P2 chose to create a documentary about the forced removal of their Nation from their territory that took place only two generations ago. When they presented their project the class was silent, no one could connect to the topic. The professor attempted to facilitate discussion, but instead of feedback about the historical narrative, the class focused more on the technical elements. P2 remained proud of their project, but never expected it to exist beyond the classroom. Not too long afterwards, P2 was contacted by a small film producer who wished to collaborate to create a documentary to share with the larger community. This was surreal experience that demonstrated the significance of their voice and a path to contribute to their Nation's progress.

Community

Even though P2 grew up on Nation territory, they still experienced differences within their community. During 6th grade P2 began to notice a grouping between peer groups who were more traditional compared to those that were perceived as not. This identity policing within their Native community affected P2 since they did not grow up practicing and attending religious ceremonies on a regular basis. It was a silent judgment, another push to perform up to societal and Nation expectations of what Native identity looked like. At different points of their adolescence P2 was drawn to certain stereotypes like the stoic Indian. Although P2 always felt secure in their own identity, they often thought they weren't performing it right according to others, especially when comparing

their self to more traditional peers. They felt outside of their more traditional peers who shared a core ethnic identity that gave them a center, an identity as Native rather than a Native person. During high school this distinction was more noticeable and difficult to break into. For example, P2's family went sporadically to ceremonies and events. When P2 attended long house after being away from two years they experienced their absence as silent judgement. P2 saw this as unique in comparison to white peers who never had to prove their whiteness. Although P2 found acceptance and community they remained conscious of the differences in experience from more traditional friends.

At their second college institution P2 found support and validation. There was an experienced awakening about their Native identity. P2 connected with the Native American student program and sought more knowledge about their culture including identity, histories, and art. P2 was free to express their personality within a community that had no preconceived notions of P2's history of participating in cultural ceremonies, Nation enrollment, or clan identity. There was an acceptance of a broader range of what it meant to be native than P2 had experienced at home, no longer judged on aspects of their identity that were not visibly present. “They had no sense of if I went to long house or if I was enrolled., or do you have a clan, or if you, um, you know, how sort of culturally aware or community oriented you are.” This allowed P2 to become more confident and secure in their identity as a Native American. P2 began to express their self with an honesty that aligned with who they were becoming. This shared understanding offered a reprieve from P2 constantly defending their identity and dialogue became a sharing of experiences rather than educating.

The student association provided a way for P2 to translate their new feelings of frustration to pride. In addition to the student association, P2 also formed connections with their roommate who when moving in asked P2 about the displayed Nation flag and belt. They began sharing experiences and by the end of the year the roommate knew the meaning of the clans, the history of P2's Nation, and some of the traditional practices. Mutually P2 learned about their roommate's culture and life. Ultimately, the community provided a space for P2 to translate their feelings of frustration to pride, and from emotion to action.

Meaning

P2 experienced an evolution of identity which began in middle school and continued to provide direction till today. P2 began to recognize their cultural knowledge along with the unique privilege and honor that comes from being Native. This recognition further strengthened their Nation identity and they no longer doubted if they were "performing" there identity according to societal standards. It opened doors and provided P2 a new level of confidence that emboldened P2 to represent their identity more publically and loudly. Their voice brought with it a critical responsibility to share their experiences and educate. It became important for P2 to help others understand the importance of Native Americans existing in relation to one other in order to better relate. These experiences also influenced P2's career path to document the histories of Nation elders, and show the world their community. Coming home from college P2 was compelled to be more actively in touch with their culture, community, and language. Being a mouthpiece for their Native community felt good, and P2 remained intentional in representing it accurately in their actions. For example, P2 found themselves supporting

their younger sibling through their experiences, a role that felt full circle. They normalized their sibling's experiences and encouraged them to not put too much pressure in educating others. These discussions felt different from talking to other native students. It felt good to share what P2 had learned and help their sibling find footing within college faster.

P2's experiences informed all elements and aspects of their life. It helped form their worldview, hopes, loyalties, and responsibilities. They gained a new set of tools to become more involved within their community and counter ignorance. P2 hoped that their voice created a ripple that amplified the existence of Native Americans and counters narratives that dismiss their existence. This ripple aligns with the seven generation philosophy of P2's Nation; to act with the consciousness to provide a foundation for seven generations to come. Although P2 has experienced denial and isolation they strived to use their unique voice of experience to be a positive representative of their Nation and culture. Therefore, P2 experienced an evolution of identity from challenges that left them questioning, to confidently embracing and voicing their Native American existence.

Response to Summary

"I'd like to begin by thanking you for sharing the narrative with me. It truly was fascinating to read about my own personal evolution of identity through the writing of another person. It was particularly impactful to read through that process chronologically noting how much of a change there really was. I also have to say that our conversations helped me verbalize some key experiences, thoughts, ideas, etc. that I maybe hadn't before, or at least not so specifically. I may have known cognitively most of what I was

sharing with you, but to have to find the words to explain it to another person, unfamiliar with my story, really did force me to engage with the memories in a new and helpful way."

"Overall I think you did an excellent job. It's certainly no small task to develop a research narrative about another person's evolution of identity and self during their transition from adolescence to adulthood based only on three 90 minute Skype conversations."

"Pg. 2 - I wouldn't say people would typically react with, "Ah ha, I see it" when they discovered I was Native. In fact, many times I've been told, "Really? You don't look Native." But the' immediate palpable novelty' you described being present after they found out is a spot-on way to describe those situations."

"Pg. 2 - I don't think I experienced a 'loss of direction' during my early adolescence 'when questions arose about what a Native American existence should look like' - specifically with regard to role models. I think I had plenty of role models within my community (family, community leaders, tribal leaders) that I looked to during this period of my life. What I didn't have were people on television, in movies, music, and popular culture, etc. that I could truly identify with, in a contemporary sense. I'm not saying that one's role models necessarily need to belong to the same racial or ethnic group as one does, or even the same sex or gender, but I do think we generally form stronger connections to those we can identify more readily and specifically with due to shared lived experiences".

"Pg. 2 - Regarding stereotypes - I was more concerned with the impact stereotypes and misinformation had had on my non-Native classmates. So much of their

"knowledge"/understanding of Native peoples, culture and history was based on stereotypes, caricatures present in film, television, popular culture, etc. There was also the simultaneous lack of education/lack of positive/contemporary/well-rounded representation of Native peoples across those same art/media platforms and outlets that might have been able to correct or challenge the stereotypical representations of Native people they had been exposed to, leaving only the stereotypes. I wasn't as concerned that the lack of positive/real/contemporary representations of Native people would leave Native youth to be drawn away from their own personal cultures, traditions, etc. rather that"

"Pg. 3 - Infrastructure comment - To provide a bit more context, the other half of the reason why those comments about the roads (infrastructure) on the territory were so upsetting was because they were misinformed. Those people assumed because the roads run through the Nation territory that it must fall to the Nation to tend them, when in fact maintenance of those roadways are the responsibility of the State. When my classmates were making rude comments about the condition of the roads on our territory they would blame the Nation - "Those Indians have all that casino money and they won't even take care of the damn roads.", "Lazy Indians, etc." This comes back to the lack of education/information/understanding as well as the rampant misinformation.

"Pg. 3/4 - I wasn't always the last to speak in a classroom discussion relating to Native subject matter - although I would often wait to speak, but this was self-imposed, not because a professor wouldn't call on me out of fear that it would end the opportunity for open discussion. In classes that frequently discussed Native issues, history, culture, etc. it would "come out" that I was Native fairly early on during the semester so my

classmates knew that I, or oftentimes many of the students in the class, were Native. The instance I remember sharing with you, in my 'Sociology of Sport' course - a class that didn't often breach many topics relating to Native people, culture, identity, etc., we were discussing the Native mascots issue. I had written about being Native in a paper earlier that semester so my professor was aware I was Native, specifically [Nation]. I believe that he chose to call on me later in the discussion to allow people to speak openly."

"Pg. 4 - The "who is the real authority" power struggle that is referred to here was seldom something I experienced by myself. This typically happened in Native Studies classes, history classes, etc. and oftentimes, at [X] University anyways, there would be multiple Native students in the class who would often feel similarly to me when a non-Native professor would boldly claim X, or explain Y, when both X and Y were seemingly rooted more in lived experience, perception, living cultures. I should say that many, many of my professors at [community college] and [x] University would welcome input, testimony, opinions from the Native students in class - that was much more common than the former "authority on the subject"."

"Pg. 6 - "P2 chose to create a documentary about the forced removal of their Nation from their territory that took place only two generations ago." P2 chose to create/produce a documentary about the forced relocation of over 600 members of their Nation from treaty protected tribal lands that took place only two generations ago. I wouldn't say that my professor was unable to facilitate classroom conversation about the content of my student film (not just the technical, editorial) but my classmates and professor's unfamiliarity with the history certainly hindered their ability to participate in an informed discussion, but they did try. Also, to clarify, it was a little over years later

and it was two film producers, not one, and they were PBS alumni now working independently."

"Pg. 7 - long house should be Longhouse - capitalized and one word."

"Pg. 9 - I wouldn't say that I encouraged my younger brother not to put too much pressure on educating others. In fact, I did encourage him to just that, but I wanted him to understand that that those feelings of discomfort, pressure to speak up, and ultimately the disappointment in himself that he felt when he wouldn't speak up were completely normal, understandable, and something I went through myself. I didn't want to dissuade him from trying to educate his classmates, friends, etc. when the opportunity came along."

P3 Cultural Identity Silencing of Native American Identity

P3 has always maintained pride in their Native American identity and a connection to their Nation even when growing up off Nation land. They were intrigued by how different their identity and lived experience was from others, and had even developed a different mindset than natives that grew up on Nation land. Their identity was reinforced through stories and histories taught to them by their mother. P3 strongly identified with the story of a Nation chief that tried to keep their people safe from colonizers and their choice to keep their culture alive even at a great cost resonated. Their Nation was one of the lucky ones that were able to maintain their language and traditions. It was often thought of as a peaceful and welcoming Nation.

As a youth P3 would sometimes attend Pow Wow's, sweats, and medicine dances. They started attending the medicine dance when they were fifteen. The dancing was spiritual, performed for good luck and blessings for the year to come. P3 appreciated the sense of family and purpose it provided. In addition to ceremonies and history, P3 was also taught how to fish using traditional practices by their father who surprisingly, rarely participated in cultural practices. In fact much of P3's family did not actively participate in cultural ceremonies. Although P3's grandmother never spoke of her past which included the traumatic memories of boarding school, she too shared some of her cultural knowledge. By contrast, during their formal education P3 was taught to view America as a collage of different cultures where Native American cultures were valued the least compared to dominant cultures.

Education

Throughout their formal education P3 experienced an intentional masking of history, a masking that extended within their family history as well to protect P3 from the harsh reality. These histories intersected with the boarding school era, a history that P3 thought was of the distant past, but was only two generations prior. One day, while driving past an old three story school building, their uncle shared that it was a boarding school where P3's grandmother had attended. They had driven past the building several times before but this time it was explained. At that moment, P3 realized that it was something extremely significant that occurred rather than a small point in history. They looked at the old school building with sadness, understanding the harsh reality that their grandmother lived through during an essential part of their lifetime. At the boarding school their grandmother's Nation language and cultural perspectives were lost. Their grandmother was punished unless she turned away from her cultural and religious practices towards the forced catholic religion. To think about their family forced to separate from their identity, the cutting of their hair, verbal silence, and harsh corporal punishment for practicing their culture, created an ill feeling. P3's grandmother hardly ever said anything about her experiences at the boarding school, but even in silence P3 felt her pain while she sat silently re-experiencing the loss. This event gave P3 a new deeper understanding of their Nation and family history. "I think there's that big scar in her that kind of helped change the foundation of how my family was."

P3 highly valued their Nation language which connected their cultural history to present cultural practices, beliefs, and identity. P3 started learning their Nation language at a young age from their grandmother and mother. Naturally their Nation language was

P3's first language and contributed to a sense of Native identity. Unfortunately, P3's language was extinguished during preschool. They attended a school off Nation territory with no Nation representative, surrounded by white peers and educators. When P3 spoke using their Nation language they were no longer understood. As such, educators made P3 speak English the entire time and instructed their mother to focus on English at home as well. As a result, P3's mother ceased communicating in their Nation language in order to transition P3 into fitting within the educational structure. Since preschool P3 can only recall certain words or phrases in their native language. "I can't even hold a conversation. I can just get single words out of a whole sentence. Even though I did take a language course in college it really just hasn't stuck." This language loss also risked the loss of cultural beliefs and history that validated P3's existence as a Native American. Ultimately, educators were more willing to snuff out P3's cultural identity instead of providing an environment for P3 to exist fully as a Native person. Although this was a key event in P3's history and identity, it remained difficult to reconstruct, some of the pieces remain missing from memory.

Coping with the forced removal of their native language meant having a "blind eye"; a subconscious suppression of one's desire to pursue unanswered questions about cultural beliefs, practices, and language. It became a repetitive daily task that became normalized. Although P3 belonged to a Nation that was fortunate to still have their language, P3 was prevented from knowing it. Language loss remained a common occurrence and significant aspect of P3's life.

P3 attended K-12 as only one of two Native students, a single entity with a unique voice and knowledge that could not be woven into the fabric with other cultural identities

such as African American and Latino. They were the single Native American entity in their primarily white school systems and isolation was a common. “Just being a minority amongst everyone else you just don’t say anything about it. It’s just like a needle in a haystack sort of way.” There were instances when P3 found meaning in what others disregarded, such as a Native cultural joke in the movie “Smoke Signals” which classmates perceived as being serious. P3 was the only one laughing in the silent room and even though they wanted to explain, there was never an opportunity. In school, P3's cultural identity and history did not matter in comparison to white culture. Educators brushed past the history of the first Nations and never discussed the destruction of Native Nations.

Education was cast as a necessity to life and success. For P3 this meant dismissing the desire to pursue their Native cultural identity while recognizing their culture should have a greater importance. This looked like understanding the spiritual importance of cultural events, then putting aside their desire to know more in order for them to continue to navigate the educational systems. This thought process became normalized like a repetitive cycle allowing P3 to live without distress from one day then the next. P3 values this normalization as strength because they could continue on to the next day regardless of the harm they faced, never questioning their existence as a Native American. Unfortunately, this dissonance kept P3 from consistently participating in traditional ceremonies and sharing their experiences with others. During their adolescence school work became the focus in order to achieve a career and become able to support their self, things that seemed more important than culture.

Disconnecting from culture in order to cope was unconsciously reinforced within P3's family. Their grandmother and father placed the Catholic religion above cultural ceremonies and traditions. P3 believed this emphasis on Catholicism stemmed from their grandmother's experiences at the boarding school. When they were young P3 was taken away from the Pow Wow to attend mass. They wanted to stay at the celebration, but did not have a choice. For three or four days P3 wondered why the Catholic religion was more important than their Native cultural traditions and beliefs. Left unanswered and exhausted P3 set their questions aside and continued to attend Catholic mass, never having another second thought of becoming more involved in their culture. P3 believed their family members were unaware that their actions suppressed P3's Native identity, and their intentions stemmed from habit rather than harm. Similar to their extinguishment of language, this event had a lasting impression on P3 and as they became older the connection they had with traditional ceremonies became less and less. Pow Wow's became just another event and P3 knew the general meanings and routines of practices such as length, songs, types of dances, but not their depth "I just continued living without the thought of becoming more Native American than I am."

Dialogue

At a very young age P3 was taught to read body language and eyes to find the intention behind spoken words and search for understanding. People were often surprised at P3's Native American identity, comparing them to stereotypical phenotypical features such as darker skin tone. As a result, P3 was often misidentified as Caucasian or Asian. P3 also had a noticeable accent that remained after learning their Nation

language. Navigation and coping through dismissive discourse included multiple responses when asked about their cultural identity.

During their childhood through early adolescence P3 would correct people and explain their Native identity. P3 was often asked the same questions about their tribe and practices. Those questions were so common that encountering unique questions specific to aspects of their culture was rarely experienced. On the other hand, familiar questions were a relief because they did not risk exposing P3's emotions and lived experiences to potential harm. In high school they did not share or educate peers about their culture. "I already knew that it was not going to matter to them anyways, and I think partially to me too just because it's just how the world works now."

Explaining their identity became a burden and P3 began agreeing with assumptions. They continued on living with their Native existence remaining silent to others. P3 never discussed these experiences with their mother including the experiences from family, for worry that an argument would ensue. They did not want to become stuck in worry unable to get through the week or sleep at night. Although rarely experienced, to be heard felt like a sense of gratitude and understanding.

Community

During elementary through middle school P3 struggled to form close friendships, but did have three acquaintances that could relate to some aspects of P3's life. Transitioning into high school P3 made significant friendships and started to open up more. There was a shared understanding of hardships experienced such as living off of twenty dollars a week. Also while visiting their grandmother who lived closer to the Nation territory, P3 was able to play with other Native youth and enjoy a shared humor

and open mindedness that was not experienced in school. In college P3 was able to take Native American language courses and on a campus where other Native students were present. The college even hosted Pow Wow's and a cultural week. Although P3 did not actively participate in campus activities or organizations it provided a sense of satisfaction, "even though I am not a person who partakes in them, just that satisfaction that it was going to be there constantly".

Living more than an hour away from Nation land created obstacles for P3 to connect to their Native American community. However, P3's mother was a constant support throughout their life and a relationship where P3 felt most understood and belonging. If P3 ever had a question about their culture their mother could provide a straightforward answer compared to their grandmother whose responses were like a roller coaster, often difficult to understand. Additionally, their uncle who was a Native representative at a university became a role model. He influenced P3 Native heritage and encouraged P3 to pursue their college in the robotics field. Together they would discuss their experiences and their uncle would share traditions and practices that had remained unknown. Their uncle's support and encouragement provided a new perspective about the future. "I didn't have plans for what I was going to be in the future. I was probably just going to keep continuing to go to school and not really think about it." Although their uncle died before seeing P3 become an engineer, he remained a significant inspiration in P3's life.

Meaning

P3 experienced challenges to their Native American identity very early in their youth, the extent of its impact continued to into adulthood. They were deprived P3 their

language fluency and from forming a deeper connection to their culture. It forced P3 to adopt a duality rather than a spectrum of existence, of living authentically. However, this duality became a coping strategy to navigate harmful actions and resist getting caught in a negative spiral. This courage and strength came at a cost; the freedom to explore and fully express their Native American identity.

Even though P3 has made steps towards reclaiming their language, they still struggle to go beyond singular words, a loss that P3 grew to accept while continuing to grow. They hope to learn their entire language and have it as proficient as their spoken English. P3 had the strength to accept their world with the ability to solve problems in ways far different from what others would perceive. Their experiences also pushed P3 to become more outgoing and expressive. Ultimately, P3 remained on a journey to find their fit in a career and experiences where they will feel fully accepted. Through their journey they have witnessed themselves evolve from a rather quiet and reserved person to being more outgoing and expressive of their identity.

Response to summary

Q: How did it feel to read the narrative?

"By reading the narrative I felt Intrigued that I was essentially reading a small biography of my experiences of my cultural identity and its problems and knowledge that partakes in its understanding. Its view would essentially help my own understanding of how I view my culture and heritage as a Native American and have a push to understand more of my culture even just a little more."

Q: What was it like experiencing the study?

"Experiencing the study was interesting, meaning to do something new or rather to start looking back at experiences that makes it me; myself and how that reflects the understanding of my heritage and culture as a part of my identity as a human being that is Native American."

Q: What other thoughts, reactions, and criticisms did you experience from reading the narrative?

"The thoughts that accumulated in my head during reading the narrative where simply that I have been through a lot, but I normally dismiss the issues that involve my cultural identity and move on to other problems such as school and finance related problems. I need to solve normal life problems before I can start looking at my culture is essentially what my mind prioritize now."

P4 Cultural Identity Silencing of Native American Identity

Although much remained unknown to P4 about Native American heritage, a strong connection to their Native American identity remained. P4 embodied their parents' strengths including independence, thoughtfulness, and humility. As if walking on egg shells the necessary actions for their Native American identity to exist were endless and burdensome. On the surface P4 lived protected and quiet while navigating encounters of ignorance that challenged their Native American identity and searching to find ways to learn more. This quietness allowed for P4 to blend in with environments and relationships to avoid the isolation that came with fitting outside the societal cultural box. "I look pale, I could fit in with the white kids, or I'm very dark I can fit in with those from the Middle East or from African American."

P4 never wanted to be singled out from peer groups and lived as others assumed throughout their K-12 experience. They identified with multiple heritages a context within which their Native identity was perceived by others as an ungraceful and unappealing truth. These perceptions became imposed limitations to P4 knowing and living as a Native American. This looked like encounters with environment and peers to P4 challenging their own existence. As a result, P4 did not want their identity and existence to clash with others. They believed quieting their Native American identity would help them find acceptance. These experiences were a degradation of the detailed portrait of their Native identity into a self-perceived bland surface that hid the depth and richness of their life; "I wanted to be a social chameleon; I just wanted to fit in." Ultimately, finding space to exist freely seemed like a very distant and unrealistic hope.

Education

P4 experienced much ignorance throughout their education. Native American history and experience was unacknowledged during P4's K-12 education making ignorance an ally to colonialism. For example, Christopher Columbus was a praised hero who discovered the "new world" in stark contrast to the "savage" yet kind "Indians" that assisted the pilgrims. P4 felt their history was swept under the rug which prevented them from knowing more outside of the cultural stereotypes presented in history. Fortunately, their parents provided the counter truth of Christopher Columbus along with other historical idols and P4 became armed with the knowledge that there were untold truths within American history. As their education continued, P4 remained watchful of the content that was being presented, carrying the burden of "grinning and bearing it" when hearing the reoccurring false narratives of Christopher Columbus and Thanksgiving.

P4 wanted to unveil what had been swept under the rug, to bring Native American living history above the surface. When P4 would break through the white noise and ask educators questions about the presented history they would receive watered down responses. Educators often danced around their ignorance and dismissed P4's inquiry rather than guide them to resources that might provide answers. Witnessing this avoidance P4 questioned their own actions and wondered why they were the only one asking for the untold histories. As time went on P4's feelings of isolation remained while the desire and need to voice their existence continued to rise. Only knowing general knowledge about their Native American heritage presented thoughts of future obstacles in trying to obtain official records. P4 wanted to dip their toe in enough to cause a ripple,

but feared a current. They were concerned that colleges, employers, and peers would deny their Native American identity and access to access to cultural ceremonies, beliefs, and privileges.

P4 experienced bullying during their early childhood and adolescence. Since P4 did not fit into any particular cultural box, they would experience a continuous stream of questioning about their identity. Eventually P4 would respond with what they believed that person wanted to hear while disregarding their truth. Correcting peers risked too much and P4 used their responses to distance. In middle school P4 often felt that it was necessary to physically fight back because they had no allies. In those moments of P4 felt anger and isolation. Once when P4 voiced their existence and challenged the ignorance they were pushed down and laughed at by on lookers. P4 left crying and felt like they should not have to fit in order to stop the bullying. Instead, peers and educators should listen. Instead of hateful words, P4 wished their peers would have just asked what they were curious about.

"You'll move past this. It's not permanent." Thinking of the impermanence of those moments in contrast to the presence of their Native American identity helped P4 when encountering these harmful acts. They conditioned themselves to keep their head down, and quite to make it through without getting bullied by life. Eventually they could find answers when everything quieted down. More recently P4 used their voice to express what society would prefer to censor and toward discovering more about their identity without the anxiety of being ridiculed. Although they experienced harm and isolation P4 evolved to accept those experiences as an aspect of living as a Native American.

Dialogue

P4 sought dialogue that would create a space for them to freely express their experiences. Instead what they encountered were questions about their identity that added to the already complicated maze. Since P4 identified with multiple heritages questions were often focused on the degree of P4's Native identity. This created more unnecessary steps in explaining their identity. Dialogue about their identity became a cursed experience, a chore that placed P4 in a bind to stand out and defend their Native identity or remain hidden. To stand out away from the wall of whiteness was like pushing water in a bathtub; at first a relief, a calm, but then as quickly as the force went forward it came back. P4 did not like to experience the "splash" that came with standing out to affirm their existence so they kept it closely guarded.

P4 possessed a family heirloom, an obsidian arrowhead that affirmed P4's Native American identity. Wearing it felt like a connection to a much cherished, but still unknown aspect of their existence. Although its weight was light, wearing it was like carrying a great badge of pride that's significance upheld their existence as a Native American. However, protecting their identity meant hiding the necklace. "I wouldn't wear it above my clothes because I felt like if I did more questions would come up so I would just wear it under my shirt." Occasionally and when in isolation, P4 would unveil their necklace and allow their identity to walk freely. Unfortunately, the experienced challenges of their existence created self-doubt and distrust, and those moments of freely expressing even the smallest aspects of their Native American identity were fleeting.

P4 described their identity as a chameleon fitting into the cultural landscape in order to avoid direct challenges of their existence. This looked like verbal code-

switching, shifting interests, and changing the way in which they presented their self to others. P4 desired acceptance and community. While constantly working to maintain their camouflage, P4 continued to encounter questions about their identity. Although questions such as; "where are your parents from?" seemed simple, the answer did not fit into the nice little box of cultural expectations. Asking questions about their Native American culture was not an easy task and brought with it feelings of shame, embarrassment, and doubt. P4 felt that seeking that knowledge deviated from what they believed as normal. They thought; "why do I have to change myself because other people are making me feel insecure? I don't know about my own culture as a whole."

During high school, P4 grew the courage to move past their fear and started to ask more specific questions about their heritage. Although they received a small amount of information, the answers were significant enough for P4 to become aware of the depth of their identity beyond the social chameleon. There was more about their identity than the little box created by their parents, educators, and society. Keeping their head down, never questioning and surviving were no longer norms that P4 intended to fit within. The questions that remained were "how far can I go?" Even with a new self-awareness P4 still experienced a fear of a boundary and limitation to their Native American identity.

Community

Unlike K-12, college provided P4 an opportunity to research their Native American culture, and participate in ceremonies such as the sweat lodge and discussions with Nation elders. They found a community in the Native American Student Association where P4 felt welcomed and excited for the opportunities to learn more about Native American culture. NASO provided P4 with a space to experience shared

dialogue. To walk into accepting spaces such as NASO, surrounded by strangers P4 felt a universal belonging. "I was almost brought to tears because I felt like, they're not exactly comprised of what I am…but they still feel it. I could just imagine, being as happy and comfortable in their skin as they are." For the first time P4 felt they that they belonged somewhere and they could continue to grow to be their own entity. Being able to participate was an emotional experience for P4 because they felt acceptance and an empathy never experienced before. P4 felt that they found a fit within a community; a belonging finally satisfied, further growing to be their own entity. Having found a community added to the presence and permanence of their Native American identity. In college, their friendships evolved from allies that would defend P4 against bullying to an accepting community.

On the other hand, P4 became hesitant to freely express their emotions such as joy, excitement, and deep interests in participating for fear of intruding. There remained lingering feelings such as, "what if they don't want me to attend the Sweat lodge or Potluck?" P4 remained cautious and would look to the body languages of the group to sense if a boundary was being crossed. Without the knowledge of their family lineage, P4's Native American identity felt fragile even when welcomed within a group of Native American peers and elders. P4 continued to feel as though they could not fully express their self. The experiences of living as a cultural chameleon left a scar that P4 believed afforded them privileges that distanced them from their newly found community. Even within an accepting Native American community it was as if there was a quota of oppression and suffering to be met before P4 could freely live as Native American. Additionally, P4 experienced negative reactions from their parents when they shared their

new experiences. Instead of excitement and encouragement, P4 encountered skepticism and feared that more discussion would create more abrasive responses. Although these familiar fears of insecurity and disappointment were buffered by their new feelings of home and community, P4 found themselves still censoring aspects of their identity.

P4's experiences evolved into navigating self-imposed limitations. They feared an identity crisis, being caught in the middle between where they want to go, where they are, and where they should be in their identity development. Potential for road blocks in researching their heritage such as trying to find their grandparents birth records, could keep P4 from being able to politically identify with their Nation. Having little knowledge of their linage and identifying as multiple heritages provided P4 with several paths, but little direction on where to first reach out to. Even discussing potential obstacles made P4 feel nervous. This perceived limit created feelings of anxiety and panic. The best result would be to experience a lifting of the barrier and experience the freedom of living as their authentic self. Once in college discussing their Native American identity became easier. P4 realized it was okay to correct ignorance, and use their voice. Instead of following the identity of others, P4 began walking their unique path with pride.

Meaning

Experiencing college for the first time was like the sudden release of water from a very pressurized and full balloon. There was a comfort and weight lifted off of P4. This new experienced freedom allowed P4 to feel safe to voice their identity, engage in dialogue, and ask questions. Even if they never get all their questions answered, they were still evolving. They felt closer to being part of a great community one that provided acceptance that they deserve. No longer acting as a chameleon, P4 grew to stand out

from the crowd and found where they fit most. Now seen they have become closer to others knowing their authentic self. Newly armed with knowledge about their Native American culture and heritage, became empowered and equipped to defend their Native American identity. They no longer felt the pressure to suppress or contain their identity. The nagging thoughts of stagnancy and limitations have died replaced with flexibility and acceptance. P4 has made steps to observe and experience new ways of freely expressing their Native American identity. Their voice felt like a breadth of fresh air, an experience of less censorship and greater acceptance.

This journey presented P4 with barriers and environments that challenged them to stand out, a journey that P4 would not erase. They experienced harm that became the driving factors towards discovering their identity. Instead of emulating environments and cultures P4 found fit in spaces where they could be their self. P4 enjoyed living the full portrait of their identity offering their knowledge and experience to those willing to witness. As they continued to learn and grow their portrait gained depth and detail. Though their voice remained fearful of silence it was also assertive and driven ready to counter ignorance. "It feels like I was rolling a dice and constantly getting zero, but now I feel like I'm moving. It's only one or two spaces, but I'm moving ahead regardless."

Response to summary

"I enjoyed reading the summary immensely. If memory serves, it flawlessly encapsulates our interviews together. The study, although daunting at first, proved to be more of a relaxed setting as if I were casually talking to a coworker. As I read, it felt like I was reliving the feeling of sharing my journey; it was almost like a much-needed therapy session for me. Not very often do I get the opportunity to share such thing

without scrutiny AND benefit someone else with the information. All-in-all, I truly enjoyed the summary and am eagerly looking forward to reading the final version."

P5 Cultural Identity Silencing of Native American Identity

Throughout their life P5 very much identified with their Nation. Upon their first introduction their Native American identity becomes known to others. The values of their Nation include generosity which P5 emulated through participating in opportunities to educate and share their cultural knowledge. P5's family was deeply involved in the Nation's religious traditions. Their first experience of their cultural practices occurred when they visited their uncle and saw him making prayer sticks with feathers, immersing them in cornmeal and planting them outside. They were four years old.

The significant ceremonies that P5 treasured most were the rain dance and welcoming the New Year. Rain was a blessing that P5 honored even living away from Nation territory, opening their door to allow the spirts to enter the house. These ceremonies demonstrated the Nation's spiritual and physical survival. During the ceremonies if someone was not in a good state, and fell during the dances the spiritual consequence affected the entire community. If the dancers remained strong and standing it translated into a great blessing for the community. These celebrations were also a time when Nation citizens that have lived off the reservation come back. For P5 witnessing these ceremonies helped them grow as a person and was a surreal experience of many emotions as they heard the music, singing in their Nation language, while immersed within the community. The ceremonies were of greater significance than issues of everyday life, beyond the individual, and for the community. Going back to the Nation and taking part in ceremonies was always a time for P5 to reset and realize the valleys they have to focus on in life. In this way the ceremonies were humbling experiences, and an essential aspect of P5's Native American identity and Nation citizenship.

Unfortunately, the geographic location P5's Nation was a double-edged sword, fantastic for preserving their culture but a detriment to their economy and education about the rest of society.

Education

Growing up on the Nation land kept P5 semi-sheltered from the outside non-Native world until they transferred to a private school during their early adolescence. Although P5 attended private catholic schools, it never affected their view of their Nation nor deterred their interest in celebrating their Nation culture. However, P5 encountered experiences in which their opinion was devalued and experiences ignored. Their history and culture were excluded from general education. For example, in English class they watched a 20min YouTube movie which included a scene with depictions of two Native individual that were in cartoonish style dress. At the end of the movie, nobody talked about the depiction. Ironically, they were talking about this heavy topic about race relations and at the same time there was depiction of cartoonish Natives that everyone glossed over.

P5 experienced a significant cultural shock when they transferred to a private high school. Their value system was completely different than their peers. There existed a lack of understanding these two different value systems; the Indigenous and non-Indigenous systems. The colliding worlds were especially salient for P5 because they came from cultural and historical knowledge backgrounds trying to succeed in an educationally defined way. The collisions were a focal point, the reason for much of the misunderstanding between P5 and non-Native peers and educators. P5 often doubted their experience by questioning their accomplishments; “Am I here because I got myself

here or am I here to kind of filling a diversity check mark?" P5's experienced culture shock transformed into "I feel like I don't belong here." These feelings only became worse throughout their freshman year. It resulted in struggling grades and an emotional snowball effect; "well I'm not really performing at school very well, is this someplace where I actually belong?"

P5 experienced a dip in confidence and when all of those emotions came together, P5 stonewalled, turned inward into a complete silence out of fear that they would be found out. It was as if they were an imposter that did not deserve to attend the private high school. This was one of many factors that lead to P5's quietness and reluctance to voice their experience. Even when sitting in the study hall P5 questioned "what am I doing here? I'm so nervous to be here. I'm nervous about every single interaction, every test, homework assignment, and soccer practice." Overcoming those feelings of not belonging has been a journey into adulthood at which point they became fully aware of the impact of those experiences and felt anger for their unawareness, even though they understood that at the time they needed to stay focused on school.

P5 often took trips home several hours away from their private high school. Unfortunately their friends did not understand the importance of going home to reconnect with the Native American community and participate in sacred ceremonies. When P5 tried to explain, their friends reacted by distancing and giving P5 the silent treatment. Living in this silencing P5 became aware that their Native culture was very different and not fully accepted outside of their community. P5 also felt confused. They knew why they couldn't attend, why were their friends angry? This confusion transformed into a mix of anger and disappointment. It became a frequent experience, the two worlds colliding

and left to choose between their culture and peers. P5 started to push back “well okay fine I guess that's how it's going to be if you don't really understand why I have to go back, then I'm not going to hang out with you anymore.”

Prior to this experience, home brought joy and relaxation while spending time with family. Unsure of how to handle these new conflicting emotions P5 spent most of their visit talking with friends trying to make them understand. They became distant, quiet, no longer fully 100% invested in their interactions with family. Even when they returned from home they still remained somewhat isolated from their friends. For two and a half years P5 would go home feeling guilt for leaving as well as guilt for not being fully present during their visit. As they went into junior year of high school the dialogue with friends developed into coordinating friend time around weekend trips and P5 was able to build meaningful long lasting friendships.

The first two years of college were also an experienced culture shock. Their speech and values continued to differ from their peers. That gap made it a difficult freshman year and their academics suffered. P5 found themselves in a familiar mindset of questioning their fit on campus. This emotional pressure felt torturous. Being one of only a few Native students felt like a burden; “this is on me; this is what I have to do. Unfortunately even though I am tired I can't stop.” Having a community to take on the fight would have made education much more manageable. A community’s voice was much more coherent, powerful, and effective. When P5 was the only one of Native American from their Nation they had to reach out and look for help. P5 believed that they did not give themselves time to adjust “I've got to hit the ground running and prove that I can be here that I can get the grades.” When they were grades were suffering P5 got

down on themselves and didn't allow themselves room to breathe. As they continued through college this suffering changed “you got into this school, you're fine, don't be afraid to reach out, to ask for help, and start a conversation.”

Professors seemed receptive and open to Native American experiences compared to college administrators who P5 viewed as acting as saviors with scholarships while failing to support Native students on campus. There was a gap from an administration perspective to get Native students to campus with scholarships then send them out "into the wild" without support to live. From P5’s perspective college scholarships from the institutions were not supportive actions but pity. While Nation scholarships were to support and empower students towards Nation building. P5 felt that sentiment; “they believe in me, they want to help me here.” All savior mentality perpetuated the stereotype that Native people were backwards and needed someone to help pull them out of mediocracy into a better life. Whereas being an ally meant; “how can I give them the tools to help raise themselves up?”

Dialogue

In some ways the dismissal of their experience was self-inflicted because P5 chose not to speak. There was a fear of isolation and P5 did not have anyone to turn to provide an example of their experience. Within the classroom P5 wanted to form discussion about why racist depictions of Native Americans was justified whereas false depictions of other cultures were not acceptable such as blackface compared to Native mascots. Initiating a discourse would have possibly lead into an educational about the absence of Natives in history, but rarely did P5 make that step. Furthermore, P5 did not have any meaningful conversations with friends about racism, exclusion, and history of

Natives in high school. They feared getting into heavy conversations because they didn't know what to say. Then they experienced a feeling of “well if we're not going to talk about it then I don't have to worry about it.” The fear of not knowing how to communicate, concern about saying the wrong thing, or encountering an argument that shut down P5’s experience was a common fear during high school and college.

Everybody saw P5 as the person to educate about their culture and P5 became intentional about starting conversations about their culture that aligned with the inherent pressure and obligation to educate others. To always be in this mode of “I have to educate people about who I am and what I'm doing” became tiresome. To an extent it feels P5 had to let one thing go to focus on their education. During their junior year of high school P5 started to share more but still received responses from teachers that it was not enough. Overtime, P5 gradually became more outspoken and knew how to express their feelings changing from; “okay I kind of have a handle on things” to “finally at least I know how to partake in these discussions.” Their first experience of mutual dialogue occurred during their Native student orientation and P5 was introduced to a community that they could discuss experiences. The evolution of their self-expression developed alongside their self-confidence. Having those experiences to draw from helped P5 realize their voice and feel that they are being heard and understood.

Engagement in mutual dialogue was the basis of what it's like to be heard and required an unconscious mental rubric that searched for signals of genuine interest from other. P5 found that those who listened to their experiences often appeared to have a high self-acceptance and appreciation. The person did not have to have the same experience, but good intentions. Non-Indigenous allies took time to learn about P5’s

culture and used that knowledge to educate others as well. For example, P5 was happy to see allies from the Dakota Access pipeline protest on campus voicing words only spoken at the site while helping others to understand it's not a phrase to appropriate. P5 was extremely grateful because these allies took the time to learn the deeper meaning of the phrase, and didn't use the knowledge for self-benefit. Instead they took it as a sign to speak to other non-Indigenous an attempt to get them to understand what the movement was about.

Becoming an educator was a back and forth, a give and take both tiring and empowering. Sharing their knowledge was not always met with welcomed reception, but at the same time hearing others speak about Native issues based on their conversations was empowering and demonstrated a small sense of progress being made. Most of the conversations that P5 took on in college dealt with education. P5's Indigenous value system was very much based in this idea of giving back and when speaking to an audience their reaction was often a deer looks into headlights. There was also the risk of the shared knowledge becoming further lost in cultural appropriation or being romanticized. Romanticizing existed between an image/idea of Native Americans as extinct and the noble savage. Overall, being heard as an educator was a pleasant experience because the listener walked away from the dialogue with an appreciation and understanding of Indigenous people.

P5 has used public speaking to share their historical knowledge while also translating it into the academic world through writings. These two forms of voice allowed P5 to speak with authority while teaching lessons based on their Nation culture. It was a balance of understanding the contradiction between oral and written knowledge being

played out through the use of these two forms of voice. P5 wove their experiences with other Native viewpoints into conversation. Being able to add the voice of others into their experience was humbling because it demonstrated that P5's experience was not the only Native experience. It became a learning of different perspectives and using those perspectives to strengthen beliefs, view points, and appreciation of their Nation culture. P5 evolved to let go of the smaller challenges to their identity such as macroaggressions, to focus on their education and giving back to their Nation. Getting to the next step meant letting go of those smaller interactions in order to focus on the bigger picture. It was incredibly difficult, a sum-cost fallacy in which P5 had to weigh "if you had gone to talk to this person what would have happened afterwards?" Letting go of the possibility of changing another was an incredibly hard to accept. It hurt because the interactions were often about Indigenous rights and it was difficult to see those interactions pass-bye unaddressed.

While at home conversations about issues never really occurred. There was a psychological and geographic distance from the external world. The focus was on ceremony and family. As such, talking with family about their experiences in high school and college was incredibly difficult at times. For example, P5's grandma didn't have a sense of what it was like to go into a classroom and hear her history misinterpreted because she lived on the Nation land her whole life. She was with other Nation citizens who knew the Nation history and religion. Unfortunately, when P5 did discuss their experiences, their family's response was often "oh that's just those teachers", instead of, "here's what you can do, here's what you can say if someone says this, you can counter it with…"

During their later years in college, going home became rewarding and P5 began to share their new experiences of college with their family. P5 started to express their voice and share experiences in ways that their family could understand and enjoy. For instance, P5 went to standing rock during thanksgiving break and surprisingly their grandmother asked if she could go. When P5 heard of his grandmother's interest in their experiences they almost fell on the floor in disbelief. That winter break P5 shared their experiences of the protest with their grandmother who was excited and happy to hear about the interactions P5 had with other Natives from around the country. As P5 evolved their family grew too. They knew that the knowledge P5 brought back from college would help them all grow. P5 simultaneously felt acceptance and voice. P5 now has no guilt in going home. They look forward to mutual dialogue with family. Those events are almost healing events, conversations, are like a reset button.

Community

After two years of college P5 transferred to a university that recognized its ties to Native American communities and the existence of its Native students. The institution also had a Native student orientation during which the chancellor spoke to Native students. This orientation helped P5 gain a sense of belonging. “Okay he knows we're here, we know we're here, he recognizes us, and we belong here.” The Native student orientation was empowering. Towards the second to last day they had a dinner with Native students and professors. They recall sitting at the table with Native faculty and students laughing. They made jokes about common cultural experiences such as off brand soda, foods such as fry bread. It felt like home. For the first time in their

educational journey P5 had a Native student community to draw on. P5 finally found a community that created space for them to freely exist. They could freely identify as Native American and voice their experiences because they were validated by other Native students. It became easier for P5 to speak-up in class “okay there's other Native students here, I'm talking to them…I'm talking, I'm getting good feedback from professors and other students.” P5 developed the confidence to approach someone and counter their ignorance. Even though they were still a minority on campus, they belonged and could engage in a community that embraced their existence.

Having spaces of openness and acceptance where P5 felt comfortable expressing their experiences was vital to their success in education. As earlier stated their car and playing guitar were P5's safe spaces during their K-12 education. These were described as interesting manifestations of safe space because they weren't an area of dialogue. The guitar was just a space where P5 could be relaxed and focus on something else outside of their hurt. In college that changed to physical spaces where P5 can go to engage in discussions. The Native student program office was a safe space because they could discuss issues without having someone berate or dismiss. For example, when they were attending their first institution, their grandma sent them packets of Kool-Aid. The package made P5 feel really happy, but as they drank it in the lounge someone asked what they were drinking. The fact that the student did not know Kool-Aid was strange and the other issue was the fact that this knowledge was something that everyone back home drank; there existed a gap of lived experience. However, while sitting in the NASO office P5 saw someone drinking Kool-Aid and it became a dialogue. It was those shared

experiences such as being a Native student on campus that created a growing sense of community.

Teaching Indigenous perspectives and having Native faculty created a space for P5 to share their experiences. Willingness to share experience with others outside of the culture was a big issue among Indigenous peoples since most Natives grew up around a very close knit community. For P5, seeing Native American faculty provided a level of comfort and an outlet to share. The presence of Native faculty was immense because it stopped P5's mentality of the professor as the expert allowing P5 to feel that their voice was important and heard. On the other hand, when P5 attempted to speak about their history to a non-Native faculty they were quickly dismissed. Therefore, Indigenous faculty reduced a barrier and in combination with finding a native student community P5 began to feel that they were actually partaking in education.

Meaning

P5 would tell their 14 year old self to not worry about giving others a complete answer that will solve the issues of misunderstanding, start a conversation instead. They grew wisdom to recognize when ignorance attempts to limit their existence as Native American. This new perspective has made P5 aware of issues beyond Indigenous struggles. Their experiences of identity denial motivated them to speak about Indigenous issues, and learn about different experiences of oppression. They began to engage in mutual discussions about issues affecting various cultures, and the dialogue became a healing process eventually arriving at a point where it became exchanging ideas of resiliency.

Expression felt freeing with the newly developed confidence to respond to ignorance. This growth also combated their fear of the intellectual/educational gap that often kept them from sharing their knowledge in the classroom. Now they can walk into a classroom and directly debate with somebody. P5's voice grew out of a desire to close this gap between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous value systems. Ultimately, P5 evolved to view themselves as an advocate for Indigenous rights and wisdom to know when exercise it; "well I may not be able to make a big deal about this now but I'm going to put it in my memory and come back to it later."

In the absence their experiences of silencing, P5 would have remained in their own bubble, unaware of their own voice. Seeing two worlds made P5 aware of the uniqueness of their Nation culture. Recognizing, this uniqueness was significant because it allowed P5 to continue to push their Indigenous values and learn the significance of their Native identity. Having those experiences on some level created a siege mentality "hey my culture is really unique and I'm going to fight for it and band together with people. We got to fight that world through education and any means." Talking about their Nation evolved from burden to a huge sense of pride because it contributes to its survival and progress. P5 works to use their knowledge to instill other Native students with the belief that one can go to college and succeed. They can succeed in this different world where success and education are defined differently. P5 evolved to walk with confidence and embrace their existence which merges the Indigenous and non-Indigenous worlds.

Response to summary

Q: How did it feel to read the narrative?

"Reading the narrative was very surreal. I have always understood these barriers, challenges, and difficulties to be true and in an interview setting I was able to verbalize and express what I have experienced in life. However, in day to day activities I think it's easy to gloss over the experiences I've had, and how I got here. Reading the narrative brought me back to "reality", and that was a welcome feeling. As students, I think it's so easy to get caught up in the craziness of school and trying to turn in the next assignment that we sometimes forget to be thankful or appreciative."

"It was very interesting to see parts of my life written out by someone else. This was the first time that I participated in a study like this. There have been previous times where I read a transcript from interviews that I have given, but reading what I said in context of education, silencing, and growing up was very cool."

Q: What was it like experiencing the study?

"I really, really enjoyed working with you on this study. In other interviews time has always been a constraint so many times I was never given the full opportunity to explain what I needed to."

"I was also really happy when we first met and discussed this project. I am usually pretty weary when individuals ask me to share my story because it's so personal, and intimate. Additionally, I am always weary as to how the individual will portray and use the story. When I spoke with you, I was very happy with your description and how you were framing this study."

"Because I trusted your study and how you would portray these stories I felt incredibly comfortable and I think that translated well during the 3 interviews. It was easy to speak, and the questions were excellent. In some rare cases, especially with

Indigenous cultures, there are some questions that some people aren't supposed to ask but this never happened during our interview. I think that speaks well of your sensitivity and understanding of Indigenous cultures."

Q: What other thoughts, reactions, and criticisms did you experience from reading the narrative?

"During our first interview, when we were speaking about my background and experience with my culture, there was a moment when I described prayer sticks. I was little worried that I spoke more than I should have, and I was wondering how it would come up in the narrative. I was happy with the way you described it! That would have been one of the main criticisms that I would have had, but luckily it didn't come up!"

"I really enjoyed the way you ended my narrative, and I had such a good time completing the 3 interviews. I am really looking forward to seeing the final product!"

P6 Cultural Identity Silencing of Native American Identity

P6 identified with multiple heritages and grew up in the northeast off Nation territory. The core values of their Nation included walking a good moral road in order to live a healthy life, respect people, and respect the environment. They always held a strong belief that life was about the generations that came before them and the generations that will come after. Furthermore, there was an obligation to honor their Nation and use their privilege to help their family and people. Their Native identity was often difficult to describe and to have others understand its political as well as cultural aspects. The political identity related to not only Nation citizenship, but also the laws specifically against Native people that criminalize religious and ceremonial practices. The large aspects of their Native identity included being immersed within the culture, learning Native teachings and spirituality. For instance, P6's family was very diverse. As a result, P6 had a fluid sense of what it meant to be Native, and tried not to define Native American identity for others.

Most of P6's connection to their Native identity was through their dad and being around Native communities during their travels really made an impact. During their senior year of high school their father died from cancer. His death was a powerful event in P6's life. It brought them full circle and back into reclaiming their Native identity. Additionally, P6's mother was their personal hero always honest about historic lies and P6 knew from an early age the truths of their Native American culture. P6's mother would often read Native stories every night including the tale about how the little rabbit ended up on the moon. Every time P6 looked to the sky they can see the outline of a rabbit. The story reminded them that whenever they get full of their self they can stand

outside, look up, and remember that they are a small little piece of the puzzle. It put everything into perspective. P6 maintained a connection to their Nation by regularly practicing small cultural ceremonies even living far from the nearest Native community. This connection kept them grounded and clear. P6 practiced smudging regularly using a spray within their dorm room over their bed every night to protect them. Listening to music such as Tribe Called Red was also helpful in feeling more connected to their Nation.

People often misidentified P6 as white because of their lighter skin tone. Being misidentified with each new interaction was difficult, and when P6 disclosed their Native identity they often heard; “Do you live on a reservation? In a teepee?” P6 has even been compared to a unicorn “I didn't even really know that Native people still existed” which became a common experience and normalized. The passage that came with having lighter skin tone led to an internalized responsibility to advocate for Native people who do not have the same privileges. These privileges were also grounded in the belief that their experiences of dealing with racism couldn't be true “I couldn't possibly be someone who is marginalized because I have pale skin.”

P6 developed a heightened awareness about their environment especially if they were with their father who had darker skin tone. For instance, P6 was very conscious of not having to worry about getting pulled over by the police based on their appearance or being followed around in stores. When P6 was younger they often wished for darker skin that looked like their mother’s in order to fit in the physical Native American stereotypes. They saw their identity as a burden and even today experiences days when it feels burdensome. This changed into not wanting to think or have to deal with the

implications of what it meant to be Native. As a teenager P6 experienced a period of distancing from their Native identity: “I'm not going to deal with the fact that, I'm just going to slide bye and just like pretend that I'm white and just not deal with this stuff.” Being white meant not having to think about oppression, just living a life without force to confront their differences from the world.

Education

In academic settings challenges to P6’s existence came from pure ignorance, an unknowing or misunderstanding of what Native American people have endured. For example, in preschool P6 used to go on walks in the woods and during one of those walks P6 talked about how the leaves were connected to a larger picture and they were alive. Their teachers responded: “What? You're special.” Even in elementary school P6 noticed that people were often confused about their Native identity when compared to skin tone. P6 experienced being singled out, feeling as though they spoke on behalf of every single Native person in the world. Being the only or one of a few Native Americans in predominately white schools was polarizing. This polarization was an experienced “me and them over there” when having to be the representative voice of Native Americans. P6 always had to defend their self. When there was discussion in history class about Native issues P6 was often spotlighted, called upon, even if it was about a completely different Nation. This spotlighting was isolating.

In elementary school the extent of Native American history was Columbus discovering the Americas and similar rhetoric such as the first thanksgiving. One day around thanksgiving educators asked students to dress up like pilgrims. Upon hearing this, P6's mother went to the school and talked with them about their request: “This is

not okay. I don't want my kid to dress as a pilgrim. You're not teaching what actually happened." P6's mother was often called to the school when P6 would share with the class their Native American history which was then labeled by educators as disruption and false. This recourse to P6's excitement to share their true history caused them much frustration. This frustration was only somewhat relieved by their parents' explanation that educators were not taught the history that they knew.

Around middle school age P6 was pretty impressionable and reflected often about their identity; "Is it really just about skin color?" P6 did not like middle school, and as a teenager, P6 experienced times when they did not want to be Native. Instead they wanted to just pass as white and not have to deal with stuff. It was hard just dealing with being a teenager along with identity. During high school their family was the biggest support, but experiences with non-supportive educators created a negative high school experience. For example, P6 had a history teacher who wasn't horrible, but just ignorant about Native issues. In class they were talking about the trail of tears and P6 mentioned an unknown fact. The teacher didn't know what to say and just moved on. The teacher pretended not to hear P6 and avoiding dealing with topic. Those experiences prompted P6 to reflect more and second guess their self "is this really what I am?"

As P6 became older being a representative included figuring out how to prevent sending a bad representation. In every class P6 brought up Native life such as in high school when they did a whole history on the American Indian Movement, or when they wrote a paper about the Dakota Access Pipeline. Towards the end of high school being "out" as Native American did not really change their school experience, but they transitioned into college with a very strong sense of who they were. This confidence

helped P6 establish new friendships, not shying away from stepping in and hanging out with other people of color. It has been good to surround their self by “woke” people who were open minded and understood that one needed to look beyond the stereotypes.

College was the first place/time where P6 felt that their academic performance matched their ability and they felt safe. Although there is no Native studies program at their college, they were able to explore their identity through other classes. Even in this new environment P6 still experienced ignorance on campus. Going to the ALANA (cultural student office) felt uncomfortable and really polarizing focused on white and black students rather than the full spectrum of ethnic and racial identities. In classrooms race and ethnicity were discussed in a binary way between African Americans and Whites, exclusive to Asian, Muslim, and Native cultures. It was another form of silencing also experienced at events outside of the classroom in spaces with people of color. In these spaces it was difficult for P6 to state “hey don't forget about me and my people” when those dialogues occurred, and to expect people to think outside of the binary system. The binary was taught and there was a lack of care in P6’s unique experiences.

P6 still struggled to navigate issues even when exercising their voice and was one of the most outspoken Native students on campus. Recently P6 brought attention to the presence of Native students on campus that may use tobacco as medicine for prayers as part of their religion. An action that went against the new campus smoke-free policy and it was hard being the only one having to advocate on this issue. Then one fall an RA created a dreamcatcher nametag made with ripped bandanas for the dorm rooms at P6’s building. P6 quickly emailed the RA and made them aware of the offensive and problematic nametag requesting their removal. In response the RA stated that they were

1/16 Native American and didn't see anything wrong with the nametag, but would look into giving informational cards to each resident to explain the meaning of dreamcatchers. P6 struggled to navigate this issue because even with info card, the bad representation of the dreamcatcher hanging on their door caused conflict.

Additionally, there was a survey sent out across the college to evaluate diversity. The skewed results painted the campus was 98% white and absent of any diversity issues, a false reality compared to what P6 experienced. Many students were also shaken up about the survey and protested around campus posting the surveys with the writing “we are here”. P6 was pleasantly surprised by how receptive people were to ideas to address the issues and their role in advocating for change on campus. This protest led to the hiring of a diversity officer. However, change was slow, P6 was saddened that they would not see it manifest.

Learning about microaggressions felt like putting a name to a common previously unnamed experience. Putting a name to the experience felt liberating like putting a name to a face that makes sense. P6 had an African American professor that taught “Women, Race, and Class”, constantly misidentify them as white. Regardless of how much P6 clarified their Native Identity and experience. The professor even grouped P6 with the white students when discussing race relations. P6 found it ironic that they were silenced in a course about race. A course that P6 thought would be a space where the professor would understand; be "woke" about race and its meaning. For example; the professor would state “well all you white kids. You guys need to work on your privilege. None of you will ever have to experience discrimination like that.” This experience was frequent and exhausting.

P6 found those experiences of feeling forced to advocate for their identity often occurred in social justice spaces especially among other people of color. P6 quietly questioned "why are you teaching this when you can't even get past the fact that people's skin tones are different and they still might be a minority?" They would experience anxiety “here we go again” every time they stepped into that classroom. Knowing what they would face and that they had to complete this required course required much self-care to endure the pain. P6 used self-rewards for motivation: “If I get through these two classes I have this week with her…I'll take myself out to dinner.” It was helpful that P6 was an interdisciplinary major which allowed them to avoid taking another course with that professor. Ultimately, it got to a point when P6 stopped correcting the professor, to “slide through” the harmful experiences and focused energy on completing the course in order to get away from the professor.

Dialogue

Voicing their experience when encountering denial became tiring and P6 strayed away from countering people’s ignorance in a public setting. To speak out and confront existing power dynamics felt isolating and awkward. Instead P6 put that energy into other more important things that were productive for their life. This impacted both their experience of education and their identity. Especially around 6th and 7th grade P6 did not want to stand out or speak up; they did not have the language to advocate for their self. Dialogue concerning Native American populations got P6 especially angry at times, often lessening their passionate voice to hide their emotions. Their mind would race, caught up and unable to get the words out. It became a recipe for those emotions to turn inward and P6 began to negatively reflect on their experience.

P6 would become frustrated unable to advocate in a certain “logical” way, one that would be understood by others. P6 believed that voicing meant addressing things calmly and civilly, using logic instead of emotion to prevent sending a bad representation such as the angry Indian. Voice meant to have control so the point does not get dismissed as easily. On the other hand, the logical voice of a professor, or someone they looked up to felt silencing. Even if P6 said the right things they were often told they were wrong. It took P6 awhile to recognize “this person is wrong even if they have whatever credentials that they do.” It was extremely frustrating when they tried to discuss Native issues and told their experience was invalid, even when they said it in the best way possible. Being told that their lived experience was wrong without any evidence challenged their existence and P6 felt invisible.

Through their experiences P6 became hyperaware not to be silence others by defining their culture, including Native American identity. Even white supremacists had their right to their own opinions. Silencing was not effective in forming a conversation. “I feel like when you isolate people and silence people it can really push people away to either extremes.” By contrast, open dialogue and understanding was really important to be effective in creating change. P6 learned how to brush off silencing and not take it on their self, but put it more on that person. In a sense it became a sharing or “outing” of their identity while remaining private about the spiritual aspects of their Nation culture. Being able to be out and allow people to ask questions created space for P6 to explain fully the meaning of their identity. This looked like integrating aspects of their culture into common conversation such as wearing an AIM t-shirt and being asked about its meaning. P6 wanted people to ask about their Native identity even if it was a silly

question. More specifically P6 wanted people to ask more about their cultural history and for people to understand that the country was founded on the genocide of the Native American people.

Community

An ally was someone who understood that the best thing for a marginalized person was to listen to their experience; to not place that pressure on a person of color to educate. Someone who knew when to step back when unneeded, was aware of their privileges, and used their privileges to better someone else's experiences in the world. Unfortunately, P6 encountered people wanting to be allies who were often "gun ho" about helping, but did what they thought was needed instead of listening. P6 needed support and being heard looked like listening manifested into change. To be heard was to be actively listened to, "okay you said that you heard me, now go show it to me." On the other hand, taking action without asking often evolved into cultural appropriation such as people going to a tourist shop leaving with the idea that they have a full understanding of Native American culture. Cultural appropriation vs. advocating looked like people going to standing rock for the selfie not for the movement. P6 believed there were more serious issues that required their energy beyond cultural appropriation. Issues such as healthcare, access to water, and addiction are issues affecting the survival of Native communities.

P6 was not that trusting of people, and held a strong belief in their intuition of trust vs. mistrust. Finding, experiencing, and talking to people was the only way to figure out who to trust. However, even in their most trusting relationships with family P6 did not often discuss their experiences and instead took on most of the growth alone. P6 used writing to get their thoughts out to release their hurt and frustration. Writing provided

space and time to think of more specific words to better describe their experiences than in just the moment. However, during high school P6 was close with their school counselor who would always welcome P6 into her office with acceptance. Having this space to decompress with toys, drawing, or coloring was therapeutic and greatly helped P6 through high school. There were places in school that were safe, but P6 believed it was naïve to think that every single space walked into will be. Professors and peers who put effort into creating a safe space helped P6 feel comfortable enough to express their identity.

Once in college they found supportive relationships that advocated for P6, correcting people when P6 was misidentified or identity denied. P6 spent time with many different people of different cultures. Sharing Nation food with friends was another way to validate their Native identity. They enjoyed discussing their experiences with peers who also experienced silencing. P6 also took many classes with their supportive advisor that helped P6 move past the bad experiences. Knowing that someone was on their side validated P6's experience. No longer alone, P6 was thankful of the support from their Non-Native advisor who understood their experience and turned college into a positive experience, "I can depress a little bit and actually talk about my experiences." Counter to their experience in the "Women, Race, and Class" course, stepping into their advisor's course felt refreshing. P6 also started to share their experiences with family. P6 often heard "I heard that because you're Native American that you are going to school for free from the government" from college peers and when shared with their mother she reframed ". . . students of color, you're actually getting paid to give these white people

this experience.” P6 used that to transform it to an empowering rather than diminishing statement “I'm getting paid because I worked hard and did what I had to do.”

In combination with communities found in education, Pow Wow's were also spaces where no one questioned the authenticity of P6’s identity. A space that was liberating and P6 gained the understanding of the vast diversity of Native American people. It built up their confidence and self-pride armed them with the ability to defend. “Having someone who is really supportive of who you are really helps you come into relationship with who you are.” P6 used the love to as fuel to transform negative experiences. In doing so it became important to take a step back, look from the outside in, and look at everything fully with humility. All in all, relationships of acceptance were revolutionary in helping P6 accept their identity and navigate education.

Meaning

Challenges to their existence in the classroom affected other parts of their life including self-silencing, and denying the truth of their own experience. P6 often felt paranoid second guessing their experience “oh did that actually happen?” Coping became about changing the narrative; “this may have happened to me, but that doesn't define who I am. Even though other people may think you are wrong, your feelings, emotions, thoughts are still very valid.” It took P6 a long time to become comfortable with their identity. To feel comfortable with being up front and stating that they are Native regardless of what others said; “you don't need other people to define who you are. Ultimately, it's you and your identity and not someone else's.” P6 grew to have the confidence to enter a space and state “this is who I am” and freely exist.

When P6 realized that they did not have to take on every single battle that happened they felt liberated. They no longer had the pressure to educate all on Native American culture. “Okay that thing really happened, that's on that person that I don't have to take that on right now if I don't feel like it.” P6 also became an advocate through writing about Native issues. P6 now works to help their Nation and joins other young adult Native Americans currently learning to practice more traditional values, stories, and teachings, and integrate them into their present experiences. Their voice was only recently created, formally timid and quiet, in recent years they have less patience to allow instances to slide and have become more outspoken. Ultimately, they found purpose for their voice.

Response to summary

Q: How did it feel to read the narrative?

I enjoyed reading my narrative. I was validating to tell my story and to hear my story told.

Q: What was it like experiencing the study?

I had a great experience taking part in this study. There was never a point where I felt uncomfortable or misunderstood.

Q: What other thoughts, reactions, and criticisms did you experience from reading the narrative?

I think this is an important study because many Native people experience silencing during their schooling which can lead to isolation and alienation from academic settings. Hopefully this study can help bring attention to this issue and can help with creating a solution.

P7 Cultural Identity Silencing of Native American Identity

One of the most empowering experiences in P7's life was learning their clan name. First their mother taught them how to recite their clanship, and then its meaning. Being able to hear and identify other members of their clan was powerful knowledge because it provided P7 with a community. On the other hand, knowing their language also gave P7 a unique accent which set them apart from the non-Native community they lived in. Another significant cultural education that P7 received was learning about cultural taboos which they learned from listening to their elders and paying attention to the creation stories. Being able to understand the meanings behind the creation stories as a 6th grader felt good. They were no longer a child but a member of their Nation, entrusted with their cultural history. Having this knowledge gave P7 confidence as a youth, and the more they learned the more empowered they became, "I think with all of those teachings you really become a stronger person for your community." Being home with family and participating in ceremonies cleansed their spirit. Whereas, time spent away from Nation land deprived spirt, and weakened their mental, emotional, and physical health making it difficult to cope with the experiences they encountered throughout their education.

Education

P7 had a range of formal educational experiences. In elementary school teachers discouraged P7 from educating others about their Native culture. They did not like the fact that P7 was different. In 6th grade they attended a Nation immersion school which was a bit of a culture shock. Although surrounded by their Nation community P7 struggled being fully immersed in their native language. When they were able to say

sentences in their language and contribute to conversations P7 began to walk around the school with more confidence and a sense of pride. At the immersion school P7 felt surrounded by family and educators that discussed real life issues. They were encouraged to sit down with their grandparents and ask questions about their culture and identity so the stories would not be lost. Even after P7 returned to public school the immersion school remained in contact sending updates, even presenting P7 with a stole for their graduation.

P7 had to leave the immersion school and transfer to public midway through their 6th grade year. There was a sense of kinship that was lost, and P7 was bullied for their thick accent that came from speaking in their Native language while at the immersion school. Their sentences were not formed in proper English grammar but were kind of flipped. Teachers felt that the students teasing P7 were just curious. P7 also noticed that their humor was not the same as their classmates. There were several things that made P7 feel like an outsider during the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade years. P7 had to catch up to the academic performance of their peers, and their confidence dropped significantly. They often had to stay after school to receive tutoring and felt that the teachers wanted to push them back to 5th grade. P7 started to become disrespectful towards teachers to protect their self from re-experiencing the hurt. As a result their grades dropped and P7 stopped trying in school.

Throughout their education classroom discussions were tightly aligned with curriculum with the absence of any side conversations related to Native American culture, or any culture outside of what was in the textbook. Colonist history shocked P7 who was one of only a few Native students at the school. They observed that none of the

events that P7 learned about in their Native American history was in their textbook. Neither P7 nor their classmates understood each other's histories especially when P7 referred to historical events such as the long walk. When P7 would ask their teacher "why aren't we learning about this?" The response was often that teaching Native American history was too much time and effort. From that point on, P7's trust and respect towards that teacher was lost. Teachers did not take the time to teach P7 what they needed to know. Instead teachers dismissed the fact that P7 needed help. The rest of the year was really difficult because P7 was playing catch up with their English language learning peers.

P7 tried to be less different than anyone else in the classroom and school, not to stick out in a crowd. "When all of that happened in sixth grade I began to stop using my language and I stopped participating in ceremonies as often." In sixth grade P7 became reluctant to learn about their cultural history and began to hate their identity. In training their brain to speak English only they lost the ability to have conversations in their Nation language. "It was really sad for me because I did all this work and I felt confident in being, in taking on that sense of identity." This sense of identity felt like a responsibility and pride that gave P7 a purpose. "It was really hard to kind of lose a sense of who you were and it was heartbreaking when I realized how much I had forgotten." It was difficult for P7 to go through those years without the strong native identity they developed at the immersion and reservation schools they attended before 6th grade. P7 suffered greatly and really relied on the presence of other Native students to get through school.

In comparison high school promoted difference and gave space for P7 to have a sense of identity. From that point on P7 grew in confidence and pushed their self to educate others. “I’m going to represent myself the way I want to and not the way I feel I need to just kind of blend in with everyone else.” During their freshman year they reestablished the Native American club which had not had a presence on campus in 12 years. However, history remained one of P7's worst subjects throughout high school. During their 11th grade history class P7 was excited to discuss WWII because their grandfather was a code talker. Unfortunately, the section about code talkers was dismissed. This dismissal was hurtful, disappointing, and angered P7. They no longer felt like sitting in the back of the room and remaining silent. Instead they approached their teacher and expressed why they wanted the lesson taught. In response, the teacher stated that there was not enough time and it was not as important as other lessons. When P7 explained to classmates the response, the class rallied behind P7 insisting that the lesson be taught. P7 offered to teach the class and created the lesson about WWII code talkers. The class sacrificed their homework time to learn from P7. This was a great moment of felt pride and validation of their identity.

After this lesson, it felt like the teacher was more open to hearing about untold history rather than teaching straight out from the book. The teacher began asking P7 questions “what's your input on this P7? What do you think about this?” At first it was really shocking, and at times caught P7 unprepared, and feeling embarrassed. The teacher always made fun of the fact that P7 always had something to say or argue. Sometimes it felt like the teacher was being sarcastic. Later on, it became curiosity “what do you think about this time? Is there anything else you have to share with the class?” In a way P7 was

always waiting for these moments to prove the teacher wrong. From that point on P7 did extra research to learn about untold histories.

P7 wanted to teach the larger part of history that had been ignored and its importance. P7 became an advocate integrating Native perspective in every place they could. When P7 graduated it was a huge relief of their shoulders. It was an emotional time standing up on stage, looking around at the small crowd of family, and realizing that graduating high school was not as significant to others as it was to them. “There’s more to do, there’s something bigger out there than just um, this little time.” Ultimately, being at the public schools was one of the best things that happened to P7 even though it was really hard at the time.

Dialogue

P7 was often asked cliché questions about their tribe which greatly influenced their academic success and identity. Question and comments often aligned with the portrayal of Native Americans as stereotypes such as getting money from the government, alcoholism, drug abuse, and having heavy accents. Over time the comments became cruel and disrespectful actions towards their Native American identity. P7 asked, “Was there ever going to be a time where I don't have to feel uncomfortable with being who I am?” In the eyes of peers and educators they were no longer a student, but a representative of Native cultures tasked with speaking for all tribes. P7 felt angry and isolated in the school. “Their fear of me kind of made me feel like I wasn't supposed to be around them.” P7 felt like they needed to prove their self, and when confronted with others fear or denial it became hard to breathe, and difficult to naturally think about experiences. Conversations included boundaries, having to carefully choose what to say

and the manner in which they spoke. As such, P7 had to alter their natural way of being. For instance, people wanted to know a generalized Pan-Indian idea of native identity instead of being open to learning about the true identity and diversity of P7's culture.

Shortly after starting the Native American club in high school, members realized that their presence had been mostly unknown around campus; "We were still getting questions like, really cliché questions like; do you guys still live in teepees? Or do you go to school for free?" There were many misconceptions and P7 worked to prove their inaccuracy. The club did not have enough resources to make a video so instead they chose a day to come to school dressed in traditional attire. There were fourteen members that participated ranging from freshman to seniors in high school. P7 expected criticism, but that was not their experience. Instead many people asked P7 questions about their attire. Classmates were more open to asking questions and no longer appeared fearful. They were comfortable enough to ask those questions and open minded to receive the answers. P7 spent day educating about their culture including the distinction that traditional attire was not a costume. However, when the club came together to discuss everyone's experiences P7 became aware that many of the freshman and sophomore students had negative experiences. They were teased about their traditional attire which included face paint, shells and wrap arounds like frocks. P7 was a little disappointed that the younger members changed out of their traditional attire. On the other hand, junior and senior members, like P7, did not have that problem. They were really excited to come back and share their experiences with the group. This event demonstrated to P7 the change they had encountered through their educational experiences and the threats to Native American identity that remained.

To be heard looked like respect, encouragement, and acceptance even when there was disagreement. This open dialogue was valuable. It created space for P7 to share their passion and perspectives without it becoming threatened. When disagreement occurred the only thing P7 could do was educate and hope that they were heard. Dialogue could be very frustrating and when they held onto their anger caused stress and illness. Once they were no longer holding onto that frustration and emotional weight on their mind it was easier to move through and continue their education. Overall, to experience their voice being heard encouraged P7 to embrace their identity and find supportive communities to continue their growth.

Community

To P7 safe space was where diversity was accepted and promoted. P7 found these spaces in the youth council and home. Going home was a huge relief because P7 did not feel judged. Their family was supportive even when their feedback did not always seem supportive at the time such as when P7 told their parents that they did not want to attend the public school "you have to stick it out . . . in the real world you are not always going to be surrounded by natives and you are not always going to feel comfortable. ...When you do stick this out you're going to be thankful later." While in school they would cope with their experiences with recess and playing basketball. They liked being away from the rest of the class and having time alone to process. Even though they had friends who were Native American, they attended separate schools. P7 felt that when they were with friends they did not have to prove their self and it was less stressful. Friends knew and appreciated P7's character rather than seeing P7 as a representative of their tribe or an educator. P7 used those feelings of acceptance to cope when back at school or a space

where they felt isolated. Thinking about their community became a natural way of coping with harmful experiences and a huge breadth of fresh air.

In spaces of acceptance P7 was heard and encouraged to grow in self-pride and acceptance. School was not a space where different cultures were allowed to exist. It was weird, as if being different went against societal norms. P7 thought that media and programming promoted this environment by not showing different communities including Native American Nations. Many times being within unsafe schools made P7 feel frustrated and irritable, not wanting to listen to teachers. When P7 experienced closed minds and a resistance of educators to go beyond curriculum, immediately they wanted to escape. Even in all the isolation, there were a few open minded educators that went beyond the curriculum, "when I did find teachers that had that kind of passion that it was a lot easier to learn." One such educator was a high school teacher who advocated and pushed P7 to continue with school, and attend college.

During that time in high school P7 experienced their coming of age ceremony and the creation of an intertribal youth council. The youth council was for Native youth living in urban areas to come together and voice their opinions on certain issues. P7 wanted to have the support from other Native youth and to learn about their identity. Having peers that were also experiencing being different or ignored in school helped them cope. P7 started to explore leadership roles and served as president for four years throughout high school, then becoming a youth advisor when they started college. As a new leader, P7 felt really good about their identity.

The youth council changed P7 and helped them develop a new perspective. P7 no longer sat in the back of the classroom quiet but grew to be comfortable expressing their

opinions. Additionally, their coming of age ceremony further fostered self-acceptance and appreciation of their Native American identity. Those four days of ceremony placed great pressure on P7's shoulders and was physically, emotionally, and mentally draining. It pushed P7 to develop discipline and perseverance. In the end P7 felt more independent, and could take a big breadth of fresh air with no worries about anything. They became aware of their inner strength and proved that life gets hard, but they can get grow through their experiences without sacrificing their identity.

Meaning

P7's voice became a tool to advocate for those were struggling with self-acceptance and confidence in their Native American identity. At some point along their journey when P7 spoke for people, they began to take the role in speaking for themselves. More recently, P7's passion included helping tribes gain back their rights to land and ceremonies. This includes language loss which created a great obstacle to P7 regaining their sense of Nation identity. "If we don't know our language how are we supposed to communicate with them? (Referring to Nation elders). How are we supposed to take back our identity if our form of communication is no longer existent?" As a young adult it was hard to see young people not want to learn about their language or culture. P7 feared the larger implications of language loss that ten years from now it would be really critical that young people know their language because fifty years from now it could be extinct. Overall, thinking about the harmful events that were taking place on Indian country gave P7 motivation to stay focused in school during periods of tiredness and isolation.

Education belonged to anyone and could be used to start a conversation that went beyond the walls of the school building. P7 used education throughout their daily life;

educating others about their culture, identity, and interests. When P7 was younger education meant going to school, and getting good grades. Being Native American was about representing a Pan-Indian rather than their unique Native identity. Then it became a tool for P7 to use to voice their experience and reveal their Native identity. They grew to appreciate their parents' decision to place them in a public school. Not surrounded by Natives P7 developed an awareness of the diverse opinions and feelings they would face in other life experiences. However, fears of challenges to their identity remained. "There is always that chance that they'll, oh they might tear me down or they might not want to listen." They also grew to become an educator. "I'm moving on into my adult years just knowing that it's my responsibility to teach younger people, and even older people who are trying to reconnect to their culture just knowing that I have, that I have that responsibility and it feels really good." Being able to educate and help other Natives reconnect with their culture felt accomplishing as if the work P7 was doing paid off. Overall it was a responsibility and badge of honor.

Even though their education included harmful and damaging experiences, P7 would not change it because of how they have evolved. Those experiences really opened P7's mind and motivated them to ask questions about their identity. Formerly they were fearful of being denied their experience, distancing from their identity and from others. P7 noticed an evolution from sixth to twelfth grade in which their felt anger moved them from observer to activist. Advocacy came in all forms but mostly in the passion P7 had for voicing the Native experience. They learned to externalize rather than personalize other's ignorance and fear. Instead of remaining in isolation they now reach out to their community and take on leadership roles using their cultural knowledge to educate non-

Native s and build their Nation by reconnecting Native Americans to their identity. “Now today I feel totally confident. I don't feel like an outsider even though I may look different, even though I might be the only native in the room, or maybe the only person of color in the room.”

Response to summary

“Overall this was a cool and fun experience. It felt good to read my story and see that someone can use this for research. I wish more young people could experience something like this. This was such a good narrative and everything seems spot on but there was one part where it says I experienced the coming of age ceremony and it was actually my sisters and I helped. Other than that it was pretty perfect. Thank you for sharing this with me. It has honestly allowed me to do some reflection.”

P8 Cultural Identity Silencing of Native American Identity

P8 grew up in a small town in the Midwest far from any Native American community. They always felt that their Native American identity was 100% of their self, never parceling it into percentages, or consider their identity as half Native American. It was hard for P8 to fully embrace their Native identity when in contrast to family members who were “full blooded”. For P8 blood quantum of Native identity was confusing; “you mean I don't count because I am partially white?” They would receive mixed messages from family, educators, and peers. Their grandmother referred to P8 and their sister as Native mutts, whereas their mother’s messages were empowering, “You're Native. Be proud.” P8 remembered at a Pow Wow their grandmother would get mad at white spectators “those white eyes just came to watch” and started to believe that their mixed heritage excluded them from participating in Pow Wow. The mixed messages about their “Nativeness” created a space where P8 did not feel fit within their Native community. This feeling of outcaste kept P8 from seeking out cultural knowledge. Fortunately, once their grandmother realized that P8 was internalizing her negative messages they changed and defended P8 against anyone who challenged their identity.

P8 loved attending Pow Wow’s where they felt full of pride being with people who freely expressed their identity, and could understand P8’s day to day world. There P8 did not feel like a minority, but felt belonging. Within the past decade P8 experienced significant loss in their family with the death of several family members including their uncle and grandfather. Their grandfather died when they were in 8th grade when P8 was not culturally aware of the value and impermanence of their grandfather’s knowledge. P8's uncle passed more recently and his loss meant the loss of his cultural knowledge and

inter-tribal connections. Since their deaths P8 had not been able to participate in ceremonies or attend Pow Wow's as they experienced their period of mourning. Before returning to participate in ceremonies P8's family needed to be blessed a year after the last death. Experiencing multiple deaths felt like their year of mourning never ceased.

P8 has tried to piece together all the cultural information of their family members based on all the people that P8's uncle knew and touched, a task that has proved difficult to accomplish, "It's hard because you can't google search your history. You know it's not easily available information." Additionally, P8's grandmother attended a boarding school where she lost aspects of her cultural knowledge and no longer spoke their Nation language. This was another experienced loss for P8's family. Their grandmother was remorseful, but acknowledged that she did succeed in passing on the culture to her grandchildren. P8's strong Native American cultural identity as Native American was a source of pride for their grandmother which further fostered P8's development. Thankfully, the more P8 was around Native people the stronger their cultural identity. P8 remained connected to their Nation through conversations with their grandmother and connecting to the larger Native community through social media.

P8 grew up in a small town with a small town mentality located away from Nation territory. "I kind of feel left behind when I'm with the other Native students because they've been on their tribal lands or they have a lot more family members that are alive so they are still learning about their culture." In their youth P8 was at times referred to a white girl with a really good tan. This reference contradicted P8's self-belief that phenotypically they were a good representation of what a Native person should look like, features that included their high cheekbones, darker skin, and a bump on their nose.

These features aligned with the romanticized image of Native Americans. Unfortunately, P8 was often misidentified as other cultures such as Hispanic. Being recognized as Native American tied into their cultural identity because it was more difficult to claim their Native identity if they appeared non-Native. These layers of Native identity contributed to the policing of Native identity within their Native American community as well which also included Nation enrollment, blood quantum, and cultural knowledge. Fortunately, P8 came to know individuals who were identified with multiple heritages, and still strongly identified as Native American.

Education

In education, Native American identity was an historical object, referred to in an "other" sense as if they no longer existed. Native Americans were dehumanized as well as P8's identity. This "otherness" was present in history books and class discussions. Genocide was absent and the most common image of Native Americans was the savage Native that did not wear clothes, were full of diseases, and had to be wiped out for the settlers to live. Representation of Native American role models was limited to false portrayals of Pocahontas and Sacajawea. As a kid they never thought of Pocahontas as Native American. Instead Pocahontas was very small, very thin, brown woman. The trail of tears was briefly mentioned before being quickly glossed over in their 7th grade history class focused on state history. After the 15min lesson, the teacher asked the class if anyone knew a Native American or had an opinion about the trail of tears. Everyone was called on except for P8. In that moment they did not know what to do, and moved aside their emotions.

They left the class feeling confused and angry knowing there was much left unaddressed. “We hear all about the whole history of white people from like the day we start school and I was like, okay cool we're finally to the Natives, and it was five minutes and we were done.” Journaling was a method P8 used to cope with the hurt. The walk home was also time to reflect on their experiences and the roots of their unhappiness. They often questioned if they had the right to claim their Native identity with all the information that remained unknown. P8 also found solace in going to the movies where they were unknown and could freely exist in a dark space of solitude. As their education progressed there was a movement of inclusivity around African American and Hispanic students, but Natives remained unacknowledged.

P8's dislike for history remained throughout the rest of their education. It was painful to experience the absence of their culture while still wanting to know more about their cultural history. Unanswered questions remained; “what happened to that information? Why isn't it in our textbook?” P8 thought “I guess we're just not that important. Maybe we don’t still exist. Maybe they like wiped so many people out that they didn't make it to the book.” P8 remained confused while trying to rationalize why their thriving existing culture did not exist in history. This also led to questioning many aspects of their culture and their identity. “If that's not a thing anymore, if Natives aren't around, I guess I can't be Native if they're not here. If we don’t' exist then I must not.”

During their last two years of high school P8 experienced two significant events that greatly challenged their Native American identity. As a junior P8 was harassed by a classmate who while the professor was out of the classroom stated: “what's your Indian name?” When P8 did not respond and the classmate continued calling P8 “bitch deer”

and “cunt eagle”. P8 began crying and left the classroom. When the professor returned to see P8 in the hallway he remarked if P8's boyfriend broke-up with them. The professor found out what happened, the high school expelled the classmate from the college program, and suspended him from the school. However, the professor never apologized and the principal remained silent. Nobody asked P8 if they were okay; nobody even called the school counselor. “No one ever came and asked me, so, nobody addressed it really. So it was kind of…like…an awkward silence kind of waiting.”

Then during their senior year P8 voiced against a Pow Wow themed pep rally and was disciplined for their verbal protest. Students dressed in face paint, plastic feathers were placed all around, and paintings of little fires were on display. P8 was even approached by the student body president who asked if P8’s mother and aunt could perform a dance. The school swept it under the rug and P8 was left in isolation with their anger and hurt. They were not surprised by the actions of educators, “I felt like I was the problem.” After that experience P8 was done and ready to graduate from high school. The excitement of college became the focus providing P8 hope that they would soon be away from the racist environment they were raised in.

At their undergraduate college P8 was excited to see Native American culture represented on campus. Unfortunately their excitement quickly turned to disappointment when they saw that the “spaces” for Native students were just conference rooms with paintings. P8 felt very underwhelmed and deceived that there was nothing for Native American students. The college had diversity initiatives such as African American, and Hispanic heritage months, but nothing Native American. P8 believed that professors viewed undergraduate students as fragile and as such, would try to create space for

students share their experiences. P8 felt that it was very different at the graduate level. As a graduate student, professors held a more serious impression of students and gatekeeping out of their profession was a fear. It was not a safe space where P8 felt safe to free express their experience, become too emotional, or disagrees. They did not want to appear argumentative and have a bad reputation to faculty whom they needed to be their dissertation chair, write letters of recommendation, and prepare for their professional career.

Although their confidence and self-acceptance had evolved P8 continued to encounter challenges to their existence during their doctoral program. In one class the professor asked the class if they had a place to eat for thanksgiving. The professor explained Thanksgiving and the tradition of making a big spread and everyone comes to eat to say what they were thankful for. The professor then looked at P8 and stated “P8 I know this isn't your holiday” and then went on with their conversation. Everyone looked at P8. They felt their ears get red, face become hot, and they felt embarrassed. They froze, stunned, but then hours later had a great response. In the moment P8 thought they would have to explain the whole history of colonialism, and was never given an opportunity to counter the professor’s dismissal. “It's like I'm a token. Like I'm a check mark that's a Native American check”, instead of an acknowledgement of their experience P8 was called out for their identity.

Dialogue

“I was very guarded about my identity, and if anybody was disrespectful to me or my culture I would just shutdown. Like I wouldn't talk to them or I wouldn't participate in any dialogue with them.” This was how P8 experienced discourse that challenged their

Native American identity. At the time these moments caused P8 to protect their self and shelter, although later P8 came to understand that these hurtful encounters were also opportunities to use education to counter their hurt. From a young age onto high school P8 often felt isolated when engaged in dialogue with peers and educators. Alone in their experience they felt: "I was just weird or just kind of out of place, or like didn't like understand a joke that was going on. You know? I just always felt kind of left out of the conversation." P8 chose not to confront to avoid creating more tension and risk their grades. It was a compromise that they felt they had no choice but to be the bigger person. Any reaction also risked P8 being placed into a Native American stereotype; if they expressed their anger then they were a little savage crazy Indian; if they were quiet and subservient, they were caste as the stoic Indian or what their grandfather referred to as the "wooden Indian". They played it safe, focused on controlling their physical and emotional reactions. At the time they felt it was best to work through their hurt in isolation than to talk to someone, out of fear that the conversation could lead to further hurt. Overall, they struggled to find balance and engage in dialogue authentically.

For a large span of their childhood and adolescence, P8 did not correct others when they were misidentified or misunderstood. Towards the end of high school into college they came to realize that internalizing their hurt and protecting their identity was preventing them from living freely. As such, P8 began to counter the misidentifications and affirm their identity. "I don't' care what color I look like or what season it is, I'm Native today, yesterday, tomorrow, and I will be forever." Voicing their existence, however, did not mean it was heard. In fact, being heard was a rare experience in which the receiver would not only listen to P8's experience, but also make attempts to correct

their biases. P8 thought that many times people did not want to hear their lived experiences because of white guilt. They also interacted with people who stated they loved Native Americans but continued to be offensive.

P8 navigated this obscure dialogue by explaining their point of view from a factual sense rather than emotional. They believed that people were more open to reconciling situations if the dialogue remained objective and factual. On the other hand, if P8 felt the actions by other were intentionally meant to hurt they would not attempt to educate. Whether encountering intentional or blissful ignorance, P8 would start each interaction feeling frustrated, annoyed, and on fire. Their ears would get hot as their frustration turned to anger. Their body would reach a state of calm anger, an intense laser focus on the hurt they were enduring. P8 could sometimes diffuse their emotions by trying to reframe it as an external threat rather than one that threatened their existence as Native American. Therefore, in order to maintain their existence within discourse P8 had to dismiss the reality that others took conscious actions to negate rather than accept their identity.

Community

P8 had less opportunity to connect with their culture since they lived far from the nearest reservation and this greatly influenced their identity. Fortunately, their mother and older sister helped P8 get through moments when they questioned their experience. Their sister was invincible, walking through the hallways of their school as if she was six feet tall. She always reframed P8's negative experiences and defended when present. In high school and college, P8 relied on their Native American friends and community who offered support and encouragement. Being among peers that had experienced challenges

to their identity provided a level of comfort and space for P8 to authentically exist. Within these Native communities there was no doubt about P8's Native American identity, they never asked if they were mixed. It felt good to be able to connect with people who embraced their identity and wanted to contribute back to their Nations. As a graduate student they had developed a confidence and pride in their identity. During times when they began to miss that sense of belonging they focused on their family and pursued more knowledge about their culture. Although their experiences have been harmful, P8 developed stronger values of family and culture.

Without those negative experiences P8 would not have sought out relationships with Native students, there would not have been a need to seek solace or solidarity. P8 believed that many of their bonds were created on shared experiences of suffering "oh my gosh, this happened to me in class, or we're in a system that isn't designed for us or wasn't designed by us." This included conversations about how to navigate academia when it was not made for Native Americans. In fact, one of their college professors believed that the federal government did not need to know their identity and was not a federally enrolled member of his Nation. That was a new concept to P8. Previously, P8 believed they needed to be purely Native which was an internalized oppression grounded in the blood quantum polices established by the federal government. Ultimately, P8's definition of Native American identity evolved.

Furthermore, ally-ship was earned and took actions beyond putting a sticker on a door. Good allies stood up for P8 alleviating the burden of correcting or educating others on their ignorance. Ally-ship was not to be confused with cultural appropriation in which the intentions were for self-benefit rather than benefiting Native Americans. When P8

would educate on appropriation people would become defensive. “It's like the whole help me white person kind of thing. It's like there is, there is a line there I think too, between being an ally and using your privilege to make you a better advocate.”

Social media also provided a path for P8 to connect with not only her Nation, but other Native American Nations as well. Seeing Native American young adults freely embracing their culture and integrating it into their everyday life was a new realization. They could be Native American beyond the Pow Wow and was not bound to fit within societal standards. It was empowering for P8 to witness Native peoples seamlessly combine the two worlds. One of the most prominent hashtags was "reclaim your power", to be Native unapologetically. It boosted P8's confidence to freely express and live authentically. To P8 reclaiming their power also meant coming back from their experience of sexual violence that occurred in undergrad and to be loud, seen, and heard as a Native American young adult. They were no longer embarrassed of their identity. “Me reclaiming my power is like standing up: I'm Native and I'm here, and I have something to say.” P8’s identity evolved into a voice full of pride and confidence to advocate for their rights to freely exist and be seen.

Meaning

P8 lived these experiences as constant state of balancing hurt faced when expressing or protecting their Native American identity. Identifying with a culture that remains the minority of the minority formed the basis of why their lived experiences were left out, disregarded, and glazed over. It was a numbers issue and P8 was on the wrong side of the number, reminded with each new encounter that threatened their existence. Both the pep rally and name calling were never addressed two events that were witnessed

by peers and educators. During those events it was as if P8 was not their real self. They were not seen as an individual or a culture “I actual don't think they saw me at all.” Fortunately, as they continued their education into college they started valuing their culture and how it could help them and others heal. “I feel like I connected to my culture and woke up in a sense at the same time that I was healing.”

Through their growth and experiences of silencing P8 became an advocate. When P8 went into a classroom, they would count how many Natives were in the room. “I'm always kind of cautious of what the general consensus of the people in the room.” They were assessing the safety of that space. Being the only Native in the room left no one to address issues except for P8 and they started to take steps to move beyond affirming their identity to advocating for their community. It did not feel like it at first but it helped, like resiliency, strength in adversity, and similar to allies having to earn their ally ship. “The whole process in a roundabout way, kind of makes, like reaffirms my identity almost because if I wasn't Native I wouldn't experience all these things.” P8's voice became stronger with every use because they developed the knowledge to be able to speak up for their self and advocate.

P8 had placed on their doctoral application that they wanted to be a voice for Native populations. They developed strategies of self-care and remained cautious to prevent burn out from the emotional work it took to advocate. It was important to address ignorance and speak out but it was not their job to educate everyone and fix their biases. “Now today I feel totally confident. I don't' feel like an outsider even though I may look different, even though I might be the only Native in the room, or maybe the only person of color in the room.” At first P8's voice felt like it lacked enough

knowledge to say anything. The more the world progressed the more P8 realized that they could not afford to remain quiet even if it was not what people wanted to hear. Through their experiences their voice and identity evolved to openly express their experiences. “I don't take; I just don't feel like that little student anymore. I feel like I have a larger role in the classroom if I am the only Native or the only person of color. I feel like there's a lot of education that can happen and a lot of growth that can come with that process.” P8 grew to fully embrace their identity.

Response to summary

“Oh my gosh, Katy!!! I LOVE it!!! I feel so incredibly empowered I want to show everyone right away!! But I will wait until your defense :) Thank you so much for this opportunity. Yes I would love a copy of the entire thing. I want to show everyone I know! The way you pieced all my "like's and "ums" together to be coherent and dynamic and strong! This is the perfect representation of me and really shows the journey that it has been to get to this point. I really appreciate it. I felt my smile getting bigger and bigger the more I read it. It's like I could breathe easier. I kept waiting for it to get bad but it never did! My only criticism is that I have to wait to tell people about this great work! It definitely feels like more reclaimed power. For sure” (P8).

APPENDIX F: Coding Example

I think there's a lot to be done about taking down Columbus statues or talking about that history. / We're not rewriting history; we're writing it the correct way it should have been told. Without all the white washing and without um just all of the one-sided debate actually**. /** I think my hope is that our side will be told, that tribal sovereignty will be taught, that Native populations are Native Nations that will be treated as such instead of having our noun slid over into reservations or kind of as we're steadily losing.- *Participant 8*

APPENDIX G: Code Book

Document name	Creation date	line section	Code	Meaning Unit	Transformation	Summary Context	Essential Constituent
P5 Interview 3 10-26-17	12/13/2017 20:27:08	31	Silencing	being only the really the only native in some of my classes and then being at first college where I was one of a few natives on campus, that's when it really became a burden, that's when it really felt like a burden. "like this is on me, this is what I have to do" unfortunately even though I'm tired I can't stop	Being the only Native in some of their classes and at their first college where they were only one of a few Natives on campus is when education really felt like a burden. "this is on me, this is what I have to do. Unfortunately even though I am tired I can't stop"	Education	My Existence as Native infoms my experience
P1 interview 3 9-24-17	12/10/2017 19:26:31	68	Silencing	that my strength comes from things like that and um the responsibility is to tell people that to let them know that we are a strong people and I am strong because of it	Their strength comes from their identity and experiences and there is a responsibility to tell people that "we" are a strong people and P1 is strong because of their Nation's strength.	Meaning	My Existence as Native informs my experience

P7 interview 1 (b) 10-28-17	12/8/2017 18:32:00	22	Identity	being around non-Native s you had to always explain yourself. Like there's different things that um they would ask about, maybe like my accent, my um like why my hair is so long, why, why I'm gone sometimes um or like I don't know there's just different cultural norms for non-Native s and natives and it really came out in elementary school.	Being around non-Native s they had to always explain oneself. There was different things that people would ask about, like P7's accent, hair length, and why they are gone. There was different cultural norms for non-Native s and natives and it came out in elementary school.	Dialogue	My Existence as Native informs my experience
P1 interview 3 9-24-17	12/10/2017 18:11:35	30	Silencing	it's just like kind of like an inside thing between all native Americans. It's kind of like "oh yeah you know that chat well then you must be native American"	P1 describes this chant as an "inside thing between all native American's" as if it to know it is an identifier for Native American identity.	Community	What Makes a Native American Native?

P1 interview 1	12/16/2017 17:58:20	153	Identity	what it meant to me was that I honest, it just kind of created a lot of confusion in me because I always wondered what makes one person look Native American while the other . . what makes a Native American a Native American	What it meant to P1 was that it created much confusion because they always wondered what makes one person look Native American while the other. . .what makes a Native American a Native American?	Dialogue	What Makes a Native American Native?
P8 interview 3 12-3-17	00:21:03.4 - 00:21:21.5 [00:00:18.1]	38	Silencing	t's kind of confusing because I...I think me without makeup I'm pretty easily recognizable native. Like I have really high cheek bones. I have a bump in my nose and I have darker skin. So I feel like I'm a pretty good representation of Native	It was kind of confusing because P8 without makeup was easily recognizable Native. They had high cheek bones, darker skin, and a bump on their nose. P8 felt like they were a good representation of Native.	Dialogue	What Makes a Native American Native?

P1 interview 3 9-24-17	12/10/2017 18:48:59	40	Silencing	I was kind of told my whole life that my native American would help me get into colleges, and it almost seemed like a diversity quota	[college admission] Throughout their life P1 was told that their Alaskan Native identity would help gain admittance into colleges. This messaging seemed to P1 like a diversity quota that colleges were trying to meet.	Education	We Are Relics of the Past
P1 interview 1	10/29/2017 18:39:00	157	Education\Formal education- elementary	it seemed like people were more fascinated with what I had to do with the culture but not necessarily the culture itself. . .	It seemed like people were more fascinated with what P1 had to do with their culture, but not necessarily the culture itself.	Dialogue	We Are Relics of the Past
P1 interview 1	10/29/2017 18:53:00	194	Education\Formal education- high school	in high school it seemed as though most of them pitied me, that being native American, as if I myself had gone through a plight like that	In high school it seemed as though most of them pitied P1. That being Native American, as if I myself had gone through a plight like that (genocide).	Education	We Are Relics of the Past

P3 interview 3 10-21-17	12/11/2017 20:15:42	138	Silencing	Since America is just a huge collage of different cultures from different parts of the world but they don't' they see the other cultures as valid. they don't see what the first culture was in this area.	American is a collage of different cultures that are view as invalid compared to dominant white culture. Native American cultures were the first cultures of the U.S. and are valued the least.	Education	We Are Relics of the Past
P8 interview 3 12-3-17	00:39:23.8 - 00:39:36.4 [00:00:12.6]	62	Silencing	if you think of well known Natives people will probably think of Pocahontas, Sacajawea. You know like historical people that don't exist anymore.	Most thought of famous Native people were Pocahontas, Sacajawea, the historical figures that no longer exist.	Education	We Are Relics of the Past
P4 interview 2 10-22-17	11/21/2017 18:26:00	17	Silencing	at first it felt like you know "why am I doing this?" you know "no one else is having an issue with this why am I being the difficult one in this situation?" but going further into it I felt like it needed to be done because no one else was questioning it	at first it felt like "why am I doing this? "No one else is having an issue with this. Why am I being the difficult one in this situation?" The further P4 got into it they felt like it needed to be done because no one else was questioning it.	Education	I Question My Existence

P4 interview 2 10-22-17	11/21/2017 18:37:00	31	Silencing	they were kind of short because I was embarrassed, a because I felt like me deviating from what I deemed normal for myself, felt very . . I don't know just a little bit shameful	They were kind of short because P4 was embarrassed. It felt like they deviated from what they deemed normal for themselves. Felt very…just a little bit shameful.	Dialogue	I Question My Existence
P6 interview 1 10-22-17	12/2/2017 12:28:00	58	Silencing	[laughs] um I think that it's hard like I've definitely had people come up to me and when I say that I'm Native and people being like "oh I didn't think you exist" and like "do you live on a reservation? do you live in a teepee" like "do you live on a teepee out in the woods". There is a lot of ignorance	Being misidentified is hard. P6 has experienced people state "I didn't think you exist. Do you live on a reservation? In a teepee?" when P6 shared their Native identity.	Dialogue	I Question My Existence

P1 interview 1	10/29/2017 18:48:00	188	Education\Formal education- middle	I, often in 7th grade I never really practiced my culture very much I kind of forgot about it to be completely honest. I was more concerned with the American culture you know my hair, my clothes	P1, often in 7th grade P1 never really practiced their culture very much. They kind of forgot about it. They were more concerned with the American culture such as hair and clothes.	Education	I Shield My Existence
P3 interview 3 10-21-17	12/11/2017 19:23:18	64	Silencing	I think I just accept it where it is because if I just, If I just fret about what's happened in the past or I don't need to know, then I just continue on worrying about other stuff that will essentially get me through the week. Through the day or what not	P3 just accepts it where it is because if they just fret about what's happened in the past or what cultural knowledge they don't know, then they would continuing worrying and would struggle to get through the day and week.	Dialogue	I Shield My Existence

P6 interview 2 11-7-17	12/3/2017 13:19:00	12	Silencing	I was like yeah okay whatever I'm just going to pass this class, I don't have to deal with anything else. I 'll just deal with it get my grade, and just not take a class with her ever again	P6 placed energy into getting through the course in order to get away from the professor.	Education	I Shield My Existence
P7 interview 3 11-9-17	12/16/2017 13:27:14	52	Silencing	I think it's always going back to my teacher kind of mocking my work and my grammar when I was coming straight out of the immersion school. So when I think about joining a new group of people it's always at the back of my mind	P7 thought it was always going back to their teacher mocking their work and grammar when they were coming straight out of the immersion school. When P7 though about joining a new group of people it was always at the back of their mind.	Education	I Shield My Existence

P8 interview 3 12-3-17	00:13:40.2 - 00:13:58.9 [00:00:18.7]	30	Silencing	f it's like intentional...that is like a strong anger. Almost like when you get so angry you get kind of calm and it's like just thinking of like all the ways their argument is wrong or whatever they're doing is wrong	It it was intentional then P8 felt a stronger anger. Almost like getting so angry they got calm. As if just thinking of all the ways the persons argument was wrong or what they were doing was wrong P8 would get laser precision.	Dialogue	I Shield My Existence
P5 Interview 3 10-26-17	12/13/2017 20:49:55	47	Silencing	those events are almost healing events cause, a like I said kind of early on in the beginning, kind of going home it's almost like a reset button.	Those events are almost healing events, conversations, are like a reset button.	Community	I Connect with My Existence
P5 Interview 3 10-26-17	12/13/2017 20:25:46	31	Silencing	it's not just me, you know it's not just me taking on this fight and trying to educate others. you know there are native students who understand this and who are also talking about this	It's not just P5 taking on this fight and trying to educate others. There are Native students who understand this and are also talking about it.	Community	I Connect with My Existence

P2 interview 3 9-26-17	12/12/2017 18:00:22	8	Silencing	really helped me, us find a um a way forward. A way to kind of translate these new feelings of, the kind of frustrations and pride	The community helped P2 find a way forward, a way to translate the new feelings of frustration to pride.	Community	I Connect with My Existence
P7 interview 1 (a) 10-23-17	12/4/2017 19:00:00	19	Identity	during ceremony it's kind of like your re-grounded and your rejuvenated and you feel that discipline and you know your purpose again	During ceremony it was as if P7 was re-grounded and rejuvenated. They felt that discipline and their purpose.	Community	I Connect with My Existence
P5 Interview 3 10-26-17	12/14/2017 18:20:19	65	Silencing	Then kind of the next step, moving on from that, is bringing in this academic knowledge and melding it with historical and traditional knowledge	Next step is to bring in the academic knowledge and melding it with historical and traditional knowledge	Dialogue	Evolution of Identity

P2 interview 3 9-26-17	12/12/2017 18:01:40	8	Silencing	think that kind of cultural identity silencing or sort of um the identity evolution that I experienced in college, that we experienced in college is really what is responsible for the type of work I'm doing today and where I think we'll be going in the future.	Cultural identity silencing, is an identity evolution that P2 experienced in college and is responsible for the type of work that they are doing today and headed in the future.	Meaning	Evolution of Identity
P1 interview 3 9-24-17	12/10/2017 21:01:24	104	Silencing	I'm really proud that I've gotten to a place today where I can look in a mirror and genuinely like what I see and like how I speak	P1 is proud of their accomplishments and that they can look in a mirror and genuinely appreciate who they are.	Meaning	Evolution of Identity

P6 interview 1 10-22-17	12/2/2017 13:19:00	188	**Silencing**	I used to be kind of timid and quiet but in recent years especially kind of with the election of trump and stuff, I just, [laughs] I just don't have anymore patience anymore to just kind of let things slide and I've definitely become more outspoken because I just I see the necessity of it.	P6 use to be timid and quiet. In recent years they have less patience to allow instances to slide and have become more outspoken. They see the necessity of their voice.	Meaning	Evolution of Identity

APPENDIX H: Descriptive Structure