Decolonization Not Inclusion: Indigenous Resistance to American Settler Colonialism

Erich W. Steinman

Abstract
American Indians experience forms of domination and resist them through a wide range of decolonizing processes that are commonly overlooked, misidentified, or minimally analyzed by American sociology. This inattention reflects the naturalizing use of minoritizing frameworks regarding tribal members and ethnic rather than political conceptions of American Indian nationhood, membership, and identity. Drawing upon a settler colonial framework, the author uses an analytic typology to identify particular dimensions of settler colonialism, their manifestations, and indigenous action addressing those forms of power. Implications for race and ethnic scholarship and for indigenous participation in racial politics are considered.

Keywords
American Indians, ethnicity, racialization, social movement, settler colonialism, indigenous, decolonization

INTRODUCTION
Since the 1960s American Indians have been engaging in various types of actions against different forms of domination. However, only a limited set of these actions have been identified and analyzed by race/ethnicity, social movement, and political scholarship within sociology. Centrally overlooked are a host of actions done in the name of Indian nations but which neither seek greater inclusion of Indians as a marginalized racial group within the liberal order nor promote recognition of tribal sovereignty and tribal governments. These are overlooked partly because they involve the more complicated status of tribal members, who are citizens both of the United States and also of Indian political entities that predate the federal government and have formal treaty relationships with it. It is still true, as Snipp (1986) stated, that “the broader significance of these arrangements is seldom recognized” (p. 145) by most sociologists. The ubiquitous minoritizing conception of American Indians, although capturing some dynamics of treatment and identification, inadvertently conceals these multiple statuses. In the absence of analyses critically identifying this context of dual citizenship, the minoritizing conception also contributes to the naturalization of the processes through which indigenous people have been constructed as members of a racial or ethnic group. In turn, social movement and political sociology scholarship implicitly constructs American Indians as one of various social groups that can organize to make demands upon the state for full inclusion in the liberal order, rather than acknowledging the multiple statuses and divergent demands of tribal nations and their members.

Such actions are overlooked also because the limited sociological research addressing tribal nationhood has focused predominantly on tribal sovereignty and the strengthening of state and

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federal actions that are not readily interpretable through race/ethnic or tribal sovereignty/recognition perspectives largely go unobserved or unexplained. To address this gap, in this article I draw upon settler colonial and multi-institutional politics (MIP) frameworks to provide an analytic model for identifying a range of contemporary indigenous sociopolitical actions and their goals, targets, and strategies. The analysis suggests that indigenous efforts should be understood in relation to particular dimensions of settler colonialism, thus generating distinctive decolonizing actions that may be imperceptible to scholars who are more attentive to shifting ethnic identities and demands for inclusion and equality or to struggles over tribal sovereignty. By identifying such actions through a typology linking forms of power and specific indigenous struggles, this article responds to Glenn’s (2015) call for scholarship detailing group experiences of racial (and gender) formation in the United States through a settler colonial perspective.

The most documented and analyzed contemporary indigenous sociopolitical actions are the high-profile American Indian Movement organization and the broader “Red Power” protests of the late 1960s and 1970s (Josephy, Nagel, and Johnson 1999; Johnson, Nagel, and Champagne 1997). The main thrust of subsequent sociological scholarship in response to these developments examined Indian identity preceding, as part of, and as affected by this militant grassroots protest. Cornell (1988) provided a theoretically informed analysis of how emergent pan-tribalism, combined with new resources and political opportunities, generated American Indian insurgency. Nagel (1994, 1995) and Snipp (Nagel and Snipp 1993) attributed an increase in Indian self-identification in the 1980 and 1990 censuses to federal policies, the availability of resources, broader ethnic politics, and the presence of the Red Power movement. These analyses cast Indian cultural revitalization as an outgrowth of generalizable processes of ethnic renewal and reorganization. Garroute’s (2003) later critical examination of Indian identity located the topic in relation to American racial norms.

The preceding scholarship discussed tribal and pan-tribal identities as well as tensions between separatism from and inclusion within the dominant society (also see Cornell 1990, 1996). Even with such attention to tribalism, sociological attention to American Indians prior to the past decade consistently focused more on the ethnic, rather than the political, nature of tribal nationhood. Tribal nationhood-based actions, however, commonly conflict with or are in resistance to racial and ethnic conceptions of American Indians, as they assert the distinct legal and political status of tribal nations. The preponderant focus on ethnic identity formation in previous scholarship meant that the political standing of tribes, and their legal status as nations, was neither centrally examined nor used as a point of analytical departure. Demography, not (de)colonization, informed disciplinary interests. Reflecting this, the use of minoritizing frameworks for categorizing American Indians was, and remains, routine at all levels of representation within the discipline. Given that American Indians represent less than 2 percent of the U.S. population, their issues are easily seen as marginal to core American racial and ethnic dynamics. Textbooks and theorizations commonly note some distinctive elements of the American Indian experience but nonetheless represent them as a racial and ethnic minority. Thus, while making important advances, scholarship spurred by Red Power and published primarily in the 1980s and 1990s did not clearly disrupt predominating minority conceptions of American Indians or locate the racialization of American Indians in relation to continuing colonial processes.

Assertions of Indian nationhood and the practical reality of tribal sovereignty have become more pronounced in the past two decades; post–Red Power indigenous agency has both transformed social realities and increasingly revealed the inadequacy of minority conceptions for capturing the range of indigenous social realities and sociopolitical agency. Reflecting this, a small but growing number of sociologists have in the past decade emphasized tribal nationalism (Wetzel 2009; Hormel and Norgaard 2009; Steinman 2012), following, building upon, and including the continuing scholarship trajectories of Duane Champagne, James Fenelon, and Stephen Cornell. Even here, however, much of the scholarship asserting the sociopolitical nature and significance of tribal nationalism appears outside the discipline (Wetzel 2006; Champagne 2005; Goldberg and Champagne 2002), in interdisciplinary venues (Champagne 2008; Fenelon 1997; Fenelon and Hall 2008; Fenelon and Trafzer 2014; Steinman 2005) or separately from issues of race and ethnicity (Cornell 2009), and has not seemingly transformed the scholarship in the array of strongly discipline-identified journals of American sociology, or until very recently, significantly affected the general treatment of American Indians, including within the race/ethnicity subfield. The diversity of American Indian assertions and the strong distinctions between minority identity and inclusion, and
tribal nationhood–based identities and goals, remains underacknowledged.

SETTLER COLONIALISM

The recent scholarly identification of settler colonialism as a distinct social formation, along with scholars’ increasing applications of the construct to the United States (Goldstein 2008; Hoxie 2008; Janiewski 1995), provides the basis for an alternative conception of American Indians and their sociopolitical actions. This can be seen as an addition to the broader revival of sociological attention to colonialism, postcolonial states, imperialism, and empire in the past two decades (Go 2011, 2013; Steinmetz 2013). Within this colonial/imperial “turn,” however, only minimal sociological scholarship has begun to address the “logics of resistance to colonial regimes, offering insights into how anti-colonial nationalism and anti-colonial movements unfold as distinct social movements” (Go 2009:781). To address such processes, a settler colonial framework provides the foundation for bringing into clear view the ongoing modes of domination that contemporary indigenous peoples are resisting, for understanding a variety of nationhood–based actions as potentially decolonizing in nature, and for understanding similarities and differences between these dynamics and the experiences of other groups. Scholars from a variety of fields, including sociologists Fenelon (Fenelon and Trafzer 2014) and Steinman (2012), have begun to draw upon the settler colonial conceptualization in analyzing indigenous experience.

With a different goal, Glenn (2015) importantly argued for the necessity of a settler colonial framework for understanding overall United States racial and gender formation. Glenn thus noted elements of settler-indigenous dynamics and also illuminated the social positioning and treatment of Mexican Americans, Chinese Americans, and other exogenous others. In terms of the implications for political actions, Glenn’s settler colonial overview calls for subsequent attention to “(a) commonalities, (b) relations and connections, and (c) differences” (p. 71). Against this substantial task, this article contributes primarily to the identification of differences, by detailing central elements of the settler domination of American Indians and corresponding contemporary indigenous resistance.

Settler colonialism aims to create a new version of the home or metropolitan society in a different land; settler supersession of indigenous nationhood and presence is the underlying goal for settler colonial societies. This requires settlers to displace the indigenous nations and populations rather than, as in “classic” colonialism, coercively control their labor in the process of extracting resources. Thus settler domination is for substitution or elimination rather than for extraction. Settler normativity is foundational; processes of settlement institutionalize settler privileges materially and discursively, constructing settlers and their culture as superior and modern and indigenous nations and their cultures as inferior and primitive. An asymmetrical settler-Native binary is sustained; separation between settlers and indigenous groups is rigidly enforced. Veracini (2010:33–52) employed the notion of “transfer” to inclusively refer to a variety of techniques (removal, reclassification, etc.) that can be flexibly used to empty land of indigenous peoples. When assimilation is encouraged, it is oriented toward the disappearance of indigenous groups rather than the creation of hybrid or mestizo groups or the survival of indigenous nations that might mix cultures and individuals in a self-determining manner. Following Patrick Wolfe’s (1999) oft-cited observation that “settler colonialism is a structure, not an event,” these characteristic processes remain in effect even as they evolve in response to changing circumstances. From these dynamics, discrete dimensions of settler colonial power can be identified. Drawing especially from Veracini’s (2010) theoretical synthesis, I provide in Table 1 a rearticulation of settler colonialism’s relationships with indigenous peoples.

The import of identifying modes of settler colonial power is that these can be used to systematically extend sociological analyses of American Indian collective action to include patterns of resistance against those specific forms of domination. Armstrong and Bernstein’s (2008) “multi-institutional politics” approach to power and contestation suggests that a movement’s goals, targets, and strategy will reflect the particular forms of power it challenges. The MIP approach asserts that domination can be sustained through a variety of social fields rather than being centered on the state; accordingly goals, tactics, and strategies will reflect efforts to target these possibly wide-ranging forces and locations (Armstrong 2002). MIP scholars assert that that researchers “must understand how activists grasp the nature of domination” (Gürbüz and Bernstein 2012:70), which can help make movements’ strategies and goals newly “intelligible” (p. 72). Armstrong and Bernstein suggested that scholarship should start with “how activists understand . . . institutional and cultural power” (p. 92), as their strategies inform researchers about the forms of power they are resisting.

Steinman (2012) used such an approach, in combination with a settler colonial framework, in
analyzing the American Indian sovereignty movement of the 1970s through the 1990s. While continually denouncing the common conception that they were racial/ethnic minorities, tribal leaders asserted American Indian tribal nationhood through building infrastructural power, promoting sovereignty discourses, and establishing pragmatic coexistence with non-Indian governments. However, this analysis and others like it focusing on tribal governments’ pursuit of recognition from and improved relationships with settler governments suffer from two limitations. First, as argued most forcefully by Coulthard (2007, 2014) regarding the Canadian case, analyses of the pursuit of state recognition (and such tribal efforts themselves) overlook how recognition may function as a contemporary mode of extending colonial control through material and juridical concessions by indigenous governments and the construction of indigenous identities and rights on settler colonial terms. Second, analyses focused on tribal sovereignty identify just one set of contemporary indigenous actions against settler colonialism: actions featuring tribal governments as key actors, tribal sovereignty as a conceptual focus, and legal and governmental fields as locations of struggle. Other types of indigenous action that are not embedded in or shaped by state recognition processes have been even less evident or recognizable to sociologists and other scholars focusing on sovereignty and recognition.

**Table 1. Dimensions of Settler Colonial Power.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Denial of the existence of settler colonialism and the settler colonial nature of society</td>
<td>• Formal and direct settler policies and definitions</td>
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<td>b. Foundational settler violence and its concealment and diminishment</td>
<td>• Informal or indirect material techniques</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Ideological justifications for indigenous dispossession and naturalizing settler authority</td>
<td>• Informal or indirect conceptual techniques</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Settler control of population economy, or biopolitics, to create and sustain settler character and demographics of the new society, through various mechanisms for eliminating or “transferring” indigenous nations and populations out of existence</td>
<td>• Formal and direct settler policies and definitions</td>
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<td>e. Cultural appropriation</td>
<td>• Informal or indirect material techniques</td>
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<tr>
<td>f. Denial and elimination of possible alternatives in the past, present, and future</td>
<td>• Informal or indirect conceptual techniques</td>
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METhODOlOgy ANd OVERVIEW

In this article, I attempt to identify and interpret patterns of indigenous action beyond the state field. The article continues an evolving line of inquiry I have pursued for almost two decades through a mutually informing cycle of empirical research, theoretical application and development, and community engagement (Holland 2005) with indigenous communities (Steinman 2004, 2005, 2011a, 2011b, 2012). The ongoing investigation and this particular analysis are based in two complementary elements: the “puzzle” of extensive indigenous actions I observed that did not align with or were not readily interpreted through available sociological conceptualizations, and the MIP perspective that enables the identification of settler colonial aspects of the social context as salient to interpretation of these actions. Continuing community engagement has highlighted diverse types of indigenous agency that are not explained by existing sociological scholarship regarding race and ethnicity (particularly as it relates to goals) or Indian nationhood and sovereignty (relating to the centrality of sovereignty and tribal governments). To examine the social relations producing these actions, I conducted an iterative process of conceptual development, data gathering, and analysis on the basis of the MIP model. Indigenous articulations of continuing colonial domination and the limits of tribal sovereignty as a liberatory framework respectively alerted me to the potential salience of settler colonialism and its varied forms of settler colonial power, listed in Table 1 (e.g., “settler violence and its diminishment”). These forms of power were used, in conjunction with area scholarship, to identify and categorize well-established patterns of their empirical manifestations (column 2 in Table 2; e.g., “minimizing representation of settler violence in national narratives”). In turn, these patterns were used to guide systematic identification of indigenous resistance to these particular forms of power (column 3 in Table 2; e.g., “challenges to Thanksgiving mythology”).

As part of this iterative process, I conducted three main types of data gathering. First, a wide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colonial Forms of Domination</th>
<th>Manifestations</th>
<th>Illustrations of Decolonizing Action</th>
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</table>
| Denial and naturalization of settler colonialism | a. Emphasis on settler independence and postcolonial status  
b. Narrative of democracy, exceptionalism  
c. Absence of relationships with Indian nations in national mythologies  
d. Settler narrative of wilderness, frontier, establishment of new promised land | • 500 Years of Resistance, Columbus Day protests  
• Iroquois Confederacy passports  
• Use and circulation of indigenous place names  
• “Indian Country” map (all of United States)  
• Territorial acknowledgment norms  
• Assertions of Indian conceptions of natural world  
• Scholarly and grassroots challenges to ubiquitous denial of U.S. colonialism  
• Disruptive “truth telling” in museums |
| Settler violence and its diminishment | a. Pervasive use of violence by colonial military  
b. Pervasive use of state-directed violence by federal military  
c. Pervasive locally directed violence by state and local military, and by autonomous settlers  
d. Minimizing representation of settler violence in national narratives and rituals | • Scholarly highlighting of settler violence  
• “Homeland Security: Fighting Terrorism for 500 Years”  
• Strong critiques of Western/settler civilization as a sickness, barbaric, destructive  
• Challenges to Thanksgiving mythology  
• Public ceremonies naming violence, honoring victims  
• Media and artistic spotlight on boarding school ethnicide  
• Healing circles and historical trauma |
| Ideological justifications for indigenous dispossession and settler authority | a. Indigeneity as static and located in the past; settlers as dynamic and defining the future  
b. Indigenous as savage, perverse, uncivilized; contrasted with settler morality and civilization  
c. Indigenous as heathens; Doctrine of Discovery  
d. Manifest destiny  
e. Empty or unused land claimed by settlers’ productive ownership  
f. Self-governing authority (sovereignty) as limited to European settlers  
g. Equating indigenous and settler movements to North America | • International campaign exposing and challenging the Doctrine of Discovery  
• Assertions of human rights, self-determination, and indigenous rights  
• Challenges to discourses of “settlement equivalency”  
• Critiques of Western epistemology, methodology, and scholarly construction of Indian savagery  
• Tribal IRB control of reservation research  
• Articulation of Native science and indigenous knowledge  
• Asserting Native modernity and dynamism  
• Two Spirit affirmations of indigenous gender and sexuality  
• Indigenous women’s rejection of colonial patriarchy |
| Control of population economy | Methods of transfer | a. Defining individual and collective indigeneity  
b. Self-interested revision of identity classifications  
c. Gradual narrowing of indigenous identity  
d. Collapsing specific indigenous nations into generalized “Indians”  
e. Administrative disappearance of collective status and rights  
f. “Accounting” techniques of not counting, undercounting, or reassigning American Indians | • Extensive critiques of official definitions of individual and collective Indian identity  
• Critique of “blood quantum” in establishing identity  
• Tribal control and redefining membership criteria  
• Critical inclusion of mixed bloods as “real Indians”  
• Sustaining of tribal collectives without federal recognition |

(continued)
### Table 2. (continued)

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<th>Colonial Forms of Domination</th>
<th>Manifestations</th>
<th>Illustrations of Decolonizing Action</th>
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<td><strong>B. Indirect, material</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Destruction of habitat base of Indian lifestyles</td>
<td>• Protection and reacquisition of territories and resources</td>
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<td>b. Denial of access to habitats via relocation</td>
<td>• Challenges to Eurocentric settler education and creation of Indian-supportive learning contexts</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Breakup of collective tribal lands</td>
<td>• Decolonizing consciousness</td>
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<td>d. Loss of access to culturally sustaining place-specific relationships</td>
<td>• Native language retention and revival</td>
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<td>e. Assimilation-based education; “save the man, kill the Indian”</td>
<td>• Tribal control over Indian children; NICWA</td>
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<td>f. Administrative construction of individualizing consciousness</td>
<td>• Native hubs sustaining urban indigeneity</td>
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<td>g. Prohibitions on Native language and spirituality</td>
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<td>h. Child removal</td>
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<td>i. Urban relocation of reservation residents</td>
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<td><strong>C. Conceptual</strong></td>
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<td>a. Unidirectional schema for Indigeneity; one can only exit Indian identity</td>
<td>• Individual, family, and communal acknowledgment of concealed indigenous heritage</td>
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<td>b. “Repressive authenticity”; indigeneity as continually degraded by contact and mixing</td>
<td>• Indian pride and valorization of indigeneity</td>
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<td>c. Ethnification</td>
<td>• Consistent rejection of racial or ethnic minoritization</td>
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<td>d. Racialization</td>
<td>• Education of progressives and ethnic studies scholars about Native nation–based difference</td>
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<td>e. Stigmatization and discrimination producing Indian self-concealment</td>
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<td>f. Representational erasure of contemporaneous indigenous peoples</td>
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<td>g. Transforming “nations” into “populations”</td>
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<td><strong>Cultural appropriation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Land-based settler indigenization and ethnogenesis</td>
<td>• Scholarly analyses of playing Indian</td>
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<td>b. Playing Indian, or settlers “occupying Native identities” and their portrayal</td>
<td>• Campaigns against Indian mascots</td>
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<td>c. Name confiscation and mascots</td>
<td>• Challenges to commercialized imitation.</td>
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<td><strong>Denial of alternatives</strong></td>
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<td>a. Inattention to historic “middle grounds” of intercultural mixing</td>
<td>• Critiques of new age (White Shamans, Plastic Medicine Men)</td>
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<td>b. Rejection of synthesizing possibilities (i.e., Cherokee Nation joining the union of states)</td>
<td>• Identification of respectful interaction in the past, and of “peace and friendship” treaty traditions</td>
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<td>c. Rejection of legally sound indigenous claims to land, nationhood, self-determination</td>
<td>• Solidarity education for allies</td>
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<td>d. Absence of any reconciliation dialogue</td>
<td>• Disrupting settler norms to facilitate creation of decolonized relationships and interactions</td>
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<td><strong>Note:</strong> IRB = institutional review board; NICWA = National Indian Child Welfare Association.</td>
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DIMENSIONS OF COLONIZATION AND RESISTANCE

European colonization of North America was a multidimensional catastrophe for the continent’s inhabitants. As historian Walter Hixson (2013) summarized, the “the colonial encounter brought disease, disruption, enslavement, diaspora, indiscriminate killing, destruction of communities, and loss of ancestral homelands” (p. 43), leading scholars to characterize settler-indigenous relations as genocidal in whole or in part (Woolford, Benvenuto, and Hinton 2014). As part of the core settler colonial dynamics of the displacement and elimination of indigenous peoples, enacted through violence and many other means, major social institutions were profoundly disrupted, and tremendous amounts of pain and suffering were inflicted at the same time that traditional healing practices were undermined. Euro-American settlers denied the existence of Indian civilization and asserted the superiority of their own values, beliefs, and knowledge. The multidimensionality of colonization is crucial to recognizing the many different types of indigenous resistance in the past and present that can be understood as decolonizing in nature. Table 2 presents a list of decolonizing actions, identified in terms of a primary rather than a comprehensive or singular categorization; many actions serve to challenge multiple forms of colonial power simultaneously.

Identifying Settler Colonialism

In addition to the declarations of sovereignty by American Indian leaders in the 1970s, a host of other contemporary actions have functioned to characterize the United States as a settler colonial society amidst surviving indigenous nations. In 1992, actions throughout the hemisphere protested Columbus celebrations and provided public expressions of mourning, unity, and resistance. Challenging the celebration of Columbus’s “discovery,” indigenous actors proclaimed a counternarrative of “500 Years of Resistance” that pointedly cast the European presence as an “invasion” that has continued (Varese 1996). The emphasis on the contemporary coexistence of indigenous nations and colonial societies illegitimately built upon indigenous lands is also conveyed through the assertion of indigenous conceptions of, and relationships with, places, the natural world inhabiting those places, and other Indian nations. One type of such assertion resists imposed nation-state boundaries. In the northeast, the Iroquois Confederacy, or the Haudenosaunee, has continually issued its own passports since 1977. More recently, Kumeyaay, Kickapoo, Yaqui, Cocopah, and Tohono O’odham peoples have been asserting tribal nationhood, working to enable border crossings for members, and acting to renew common culture across the southern U.S. border (Luna-Firebaugh 2002). In the Pacific Northwest, Salish people from both Canada and the United States have created a transnational coastal and marine resource management relationship that is manifested by both a governing council and events such as the annual Tribal Canoe Journeys (Norman 2012).

Indigenous naming of places and linked discursive assertions are ubiquitous throughout Indian communities in North America. The term Turtle Island has been widely used to identify the North American continent in place of, and to disrupt, Euro-American names. Indigenous people and their allies have used cartography as means to disrupt and expose the incomplete nature of settler authority (Goeman 2008). The common bumper sticker image of all of North America, identified as “Indian Country,” names the settler society as an illegitimate occupation. Relatedly, the acknowledgment of specific indigenous peoples and their relationships with particular lands is asserted through the articulation of “territorial acknowledgment.” In this
increasingly diffusing practice, indigenous pronouncements, reports, and other representations pointedly identify place names and areas in terms of the nations indigenous to those particular places, whose people are recognized as the traditional keepers of the land. Similarly, Native artist Edgar Heap-of-Birds advances such discursive and geographic interventions in numerous art projects around North America (Anthes 2012). Heap-of-Birds gathers information about the indigenous nations and natural environment of an area and then generates official-looking public signs that identify the location and features with indigenous names and understandings.

Challenges to the denial of continuing settler colonialism have been increasingly widespread in the field of history. Native (and non-Native) historians have directly confronted the continuing scholarly omission of the fact of U.S. settler colonialism itself (Edmunds 1995). Uncritical acceptance of the hegemonic narrative emphasizing U.S. independence from Britain as a self-evident signifier of the former’s noncolonial status has long limited analysis of the distinctly colonial elements of U.S. society and political power (Veracini 2007). Scholars have identified the process of settler substitution in granular detail, such as O’Brien’s (2010) analysis of nineteenth century New England historical societies that “wrote Indians out of existence” even as those Indians were contemporaries, identifiable and in their midst. Others have explicitly challenged professional historians’ discounting of indigenous sources and with it indigenous perspectives on shared colonial history (Wilson 2005). Such battles are also being fought in the realm of museums, starting with challenges to colonial misrepresentations, such as that articulated by curator Paul Chaat Smith (2009) in his book Everything You Know about Indians Is Wrong. Institutions have transferred curatorial authority to Native peoples through “community-curated exhibits” that newly engage in “truth telling” by “speaking the hard truths of colonialism” (Lonetree 2012:32).

Exposing and Healing from Settler Violence

Indigenous peoples of North America have suffered immensely from various types of violence at the hands of multiple colonizing powers. In the contemporary context of widespread diminishment of this record of violence or aversion to facing it, indigenous and other scholars have worked toward a more definitive acknowledgment of the reality, nature, duration, and multidimensionality of settler violence. In some cases this is direct, such as historian Ned Blackhawk’s (2008) highly awarded Violence over the Land, in which he argued that scholars “have failed to reckon with the violence upon which the continent was built” (p. 3). In contrast, Blackhawk argued, “violence and pain remain essential prerequisites in the study of American history” (p. 8), as “violence and American nationhood, in short, progressed hand in hand” (p. 9). This characterization of American society as a violent threat, and a continuing one, is conveyed by the image, popular on t-shirts in Indian country, of an Indian with a gun, with the title “Homeland Security: Fighting Terrorism for 500 Years.”

Indian challenges to hegemonic Thanksgiving mythology and the celebrations instantiating it bring the effort to expose settler violence to broader institutional domains. Indigenous authors have generated educational materials challenging the mythology of settler-indigenous harmony and providing a contextualized account of the eventual massacres of the Pequot Indians (Dow and Slapin 2004). These efforts have generated alternative Thanksgiving class lessons and rituals in some schools, protests at others, and periodic public discourse destabilizing the fantasy of harmonious sharing of the land (Stenhouse 2009). Using the same approach of bringing further specificity to settler violence, members of various Indian nations memorialize particular episodes of violence that their ancestors suffered. For example, Dakota activists have marched to expose the 1862 mass hanging of 38 Dakota men at the order of President Abraham Lincoln and the subsequent forced walk that exiled hundreds (Wilson 2006). California Indian activists continue to challenge the virtuous representation of Father Juniper Serra, architect of the Spanish mission system, who was nominated for sainthood and canonized in 2015 (Costo and Costa 1987; Newcomb 2015). For many, Serra represents enslavement and forced religious conversion. His sainthood symbolizes a naturalization of Spanish colonial destruction, which lays the groundwork for Californians’ profound ignorance of their own state-sanctioned genocide.

Another type of settler violence that still reverberates among Indian families and communities is treatment at Indian boarding schools. In a system established by the federal government in the late 1800s, Indian youth were coercively extracted from their families and sent to distant institutions, where they were the recipients of abusive methods of cultural cleansing and indoctrination aimed at
“killing the Indian, saving the man” (Grinde 2004). Indian writers, filmmakers, and scholars have worked to shine light on this shameful and painful past, such as portrayed in the dramatic film Older Than America and the documentary Our Spirits Don’t Speak English.

Decolonizing indigenous efforts also work to heal the complex, continuing, and destructive effects of this cumulative violence. Blackhawk (2008) stated, “As many Indian people know all too well, reconciling the traumas found within our community and family pasts with the celebratory narratives of America remains an everyday and in many cases overwhelming challenge” (p. 287). To address intergenerational “historical trauma” (Brave Heart and DeBruyn 1998), indigenous communities and healing practitioners have developed or adapted culturally based and holistic restorative practices, which commonly use “healing circles” for addressing issues from alcohol dependency to domestic violence.

Justifications for Indigenous Dispossession and Settler Authority

Colonial and American settlers have embraced and articulated a variety of beliefs to justify their dispossession of, and violence toward, the indigenous inhabitants of the continent. Indians were labeled as savages and as heathens who had no standing in the human family and thus were excluded from rights affirmed by Enlightenment ideals and settler notions of freedom, democracy, and sovereignty. Others are slightly more implicit, such as the notion of manifest destiny and the conception of indigenous people as static and belonging to the past, and the corresponding notion of settlers as being dynamic and defining the future. Other justifications were more deeply embedded in other discourses, such as the perception of empty land awaiting settlers’ cultivation and with it legitimate ownership claims. Although in evolved forms, these justifications still circulate in the present.

North American indigenous peoples have made highly public challenges to a number of these justifications. Following a historical appearance by American Indian leaders at the United Nations (UN) in 1977, indigenous peoples have continually called on member states to acknowledge their right to self-determination (Mohawk 1986). These efforts led to the creation of the UN Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) in 2002 and to the eventual UN Declaration on the Rights on Indigenous Peoples in 2007. A three-decade-long campaign led by American Indians is currently challenging the Doctrine of Discovery, which gave Christian explorers the right to “discover” and claims lands not inhabited by Christians and which has been cited as a legal doctrine by the U.S. Supreme Court as recently as 2005 (Newcomb 2008). This campaign reflects years of research and the circulation of critiques by indigenous scholars and activists, resulting in growing attention within UN, human rights, and religious networks. In 2009, the UNPFII called for a preliminary study on the Doctrine of Discovery. Since the report’s release (Frichner 2010), critical attention to the doctrine has intensified; international conferences examining and “dismantling” the Doctrine of Discovery were held in 2012 and 2013.

Indigenous nations and activists also resist and reject more indirect justifications. For example, indigenous commentators challenge immigration-framed discourses that suggest a fundamental equivalency between American Indians and other groups that simply “came later.” Stepping back to broader questions of epistemology, Indian scholars and practitioners have critiqued Western knowledge of indigenous peoples as reflecting and advancing colonialism and have identified its role in the construction of Indian savagery and “otherness” (Smith 1999). Increasingly critical of scholarly misrepresentation, tribal governments have taken control of research on reservations, and North American indigenous scholars have articulated their own culturally based methodologies (Wilson 2008). Concurrently, indigenous scholars and communities have explicitly affirmed the value of indigenous knowledge (Battiste and Youngblood Henderson 2000), such as by the insertion of the notion of “Native science” into academic discourse and practice (Cajete 1999; Brayboy and Castagno 2008).

On a personal level, countless American Indians have pointedly cast themselves, and Indian people more generally, as “moderns,” thus suggesting that Indians are not static or fading into the past (Deloria 2004). Other actions refute more deeply embedded notions of Indian savagery. The contemporary Two Spirit movement has articulated Native gender and sexual identities and has developed HIV/AIDS public health strategies that are distinctly indigenous, affirm tribal nationhood, reject the colonial conceptions of Indian sexuality as perverse, and resist being collapsed into or appropriated by the broader gay, lesbian, transgender, and bisexual movement (Morgensen 2008). Similarly, indigenous women have organized to reaffirm or reassert their high status and power in many indigenous
nations and cultures, against the patriarchal social patterns and norms imposed by settler colonial officials (Smith 2003). At the same time, Native women have resisted merging into, or being subsumed by, the broader feminist movement and have developed their own distinctive, culturally indigenous and Indian nationhood–affirming voice and presence in grassroots organizing and scholarship (Goeman and Denetdale 2009). Such efforts function to support indigenous identity, challenge settler defamations, and disrupt schemas that elide or erase indigenous specificity.

Managing Populations through “Transfers”

Managing populations, particularly indigenous peoples who are obstacles to settlement, is crucial to settler colonialism. The American settler colonial society has used a variety of formal, conceptual, and material types of techniques to transfer (out), or diminish and eliminate, indigenous nations and peoples. Decolonizing actions in the past 40 years have directly challenged many of these. On the provocative and unavoidable question of “Who is an Indian?” numerous American Indian voices have criticized federal categorizations based on both the (varying) underlying criteria and their application. More fundamentally, the concept behind the term Native Americans or American Indians—the notion that indigenous ancestry is socially salient even when untethered from tribal membership—is for many itself symptomatic of U.S. colonialism. In this critique, the unilateral extension of U.S. citizenship to tribal members in 1924 manifests the denial of tribal nationhood and stands as a notable moment of individualizing assimilatory “transfer” (Porter 1999).

The simple fact of the settler state having the power to define Indian status at the individual and collective levels (through federal acknowledgment of a tribe) is widely decried even as its practical implications are powerful. Formal classifications of Indian status reflect and channel a mix of settler understandings that narrow and restrict indigeneity, such as the logic that one leaves but does not reenter indigeneity, which is only lost and gradually degraded over time rather than being capable of being revitalized with cultural and biological mixing. Although more than 300 tribes in the United States are awaiting determination of their requests for federal recognition, it is virtually impossible for many tribes to achieve this status because of fairly rigid and questionable criteria and the effectiveness of colonial destruction in limiting tribes’ likelihood of satisfying the criteria. Many individuals have sought to have their indigenous status or tribal membership reinstalled or reaffirmed, after it had been lost through “accidents of history” (i.e., missing records).

Indian activists and allies have vehemently criticized the widespread use of blood quantum—the percentage of Indian blood—as defining Indian identity at the individual and tribal levels (Churchill 1999). More explicitly than other mechanisms, this manifests the notion of Indianess as inherently degrading rather than regenerating and is critiqued as a form of demographic genocide. Against this and other colonial legacies, individuals, intertribal communities, tribal members, and tribal governments have been engaged in widespread grappling with the complex issues of Indian identity. The publication of two books titled Real Indians in the first decade of the twenty-first century reveals long-standing and ongoing grassroots reflections on the question of who is Indian (Garrootte 2003; Lawrence 2004).

One community impulse is to widen the criteria so that people of indigenous descent who have been de-Indianized by colonial mechanisms may have a way to recover and rejoin the specific or general indigenous collective. The contrasting impulse is to protect group boundaries so that they are meaningful and members are able to sustain and support their shared values and uniqueness. In the post–Red Power era, as stigma attached to being Indian lessened in many locations and indigenous belonging held more emotional, interpersonal, and other benefits, countless people have belatedly learned about their own Indian ancestry from parents and have grappled with what was a concealed heritage. One response has been a claiming of “mixed blood” as a common and emphatically “Indian” experience and identity.

Indigenous decolonization relating to identity goes much further than technical questions of who is an Indian. North American indigenous scholars and activists have identified and have helped lead individuals and their communities into the protracted and challenging process of decolonizing one’s consciousness. What are called for are efforts to undo the effects of Eurocentric cultural impositions and to develop indigenous understandings. Contemporary indigenous intellectuals suggest that decolonizing the mind engages deep cultural premises—underlying logics, epistemologies, and rationalities—and requires critical self-reflection. For example, Wilson and Yellow Bird (2005) produced
working toward decolonization . . . requires us to consciously and critically assess how our minds have been affected by the cultural bomb of colonization. Only then will we be positioned to take action that reflects a rejection of the programming of self-hatred with which we have been indoctrinated. (p. 2)

A central element of cultural transformation instigated by colonialism was the creation of a certain type of individualism. As explicated by Biolsi (1995), drawing upon Foucaultian power/knowledge perspectives, the United States “constructed new kinds of bureaucratically knowable and recordable individuals, with new kinds of self-interests that could be predicted and manipulated by the officials.” As conveyed by indigenous advocates, decolonization of the mind involves a fundamental emphasis on relationality—to ancestors, the natural world, other species, and more—against illusory individualizing, atomizing, and autonom-ous conceptions of selfhood and agency.

Settler colonialism has also diminished Indian populations through the destruction of habitats required for living in relationship to the land. A great variety of contemporary tribal actions can be understood not just as decolonizing efforts protecting the environment and natural resources but as protecting the material basis for the survival of distinctly indigenous peoples (LaDuke 1999). Territorial protection and the indigenous reacquisition of lands are inseparable from the sustaining of Indian peoples themselves. Similarly, widespread efforts to revitalize Native languages are a strategic means of facilitating indigenous and more specific tribal thinking and consciousness; many Native values and beliefs are embedded in concepts that cannot adequately be expressed in English. Other future-oriented actions target formal education. Indigenous educators, community members, and scholars identifying Eurocentrism as a ubiquitous element of settler education (Grande 2004) have worked to create educational contexts supportive of indigenous cultures and of a tribal framework. Tribal colleges, indigenous studies programs, and campus Indian cultural centers challenge colonial beliefs and support the continuing population base of indigenous nations (Barnhardt 2005; Brayboy 2005; Kirkness and Barnhardt 1991).

Finally, indigenous leaders, tribal members, scholars, and activists resolutely and repetitively challenge transfer by “ethnification” or “racialization” by insisting that they are not merely an ethnic or racial group. Although only a small number of American Indians reject the American citizenship unilaterally extended to tribal Indians in 1924 (Bruyneel 2004; Steinman 2011b), citizenship in respective tribal nations is vigorously affirmed, even as Indians are simultaneously counted as a racial minority or cast as merely a cultural group. Although clarifying Indian nationhood status and rejecting minoritizing conceptions has been a recurring element of the polity-focused indigenous sovereignty movement (Steinman 2012), additional decolonizing interventions have engaged progressive, liberal, multicultural, and multiracial movements in the past decade, such as calls for “decolonizing antiracism” (Lawrence and Dua 2005) and critiques of the occupy movement (Barker 2012).

Cultural Appropriation

Settler appropriation of indigenous identities and practices functions both to make claims on the land and to symbolically displace actual indigenous peoples. It also generates public portrayals of Indianness that are based on settler projections and stereotypical caricatures. “Playing Indian” gets its power and appeal from, and reveals, the complex symbolic relationship between indigeneity and settlement (Deloria 1998). Appropriation commonly draws upon the positive valence of the dichotomous “noble/savage” discourse, without challenging the overall framework and its legitimation of dispossession and replacement. Activists have notably organized against mascots in college and professional sports (Rosenstein and Miller 1997; Springwood 2004), registering major victories at the college level and tilting public opinion. Tribal elders have also issued formal statements against new-age appropriation of Indian spirituality (Aldred 2000), and have specifically warned against thinly-veiled imitation sweat lodges (Macy et al. 2006).

Alternatives

Challenging settler colonialism involves advancing possible alternatives to the logic of substitution. In the history of settler-indigenous interaction in North America, many possibilities for sustained mixed communities, social and political amalga-mation, or the formal inclusion of Indian nations in the union have appeared—and have been definitively rejected by settler citizens, courts, and
officials. Veracini (2010:95) asserted that there is a narrative deficit for decolonizing settler colonialism. However, as noted in previous scholarship, tribal leaders in the United States have in the past 30 years advocated for and have partly created structures implementing the coexistence of tribal governments alongside state and local settler governments (Steinman 2005). Similar agreements and arrangements in Canada are more problematic, because of a weaker standing for indigenous rights in Canadian jurisprudence (Coulthard 2014; Gover 2013:189–90). It may be even more difficult to decolonize relationships and interactions in non-governmental fields, where individuals are less exposed to information about tribal nationhood and are less bound by laws, policies, and shared practical interests. Without disruptions of settler colonialism’s normative power, interactions with and even alliances between Natives and non-Native peoples are located “in power-laden discursive and institutional relationships, whether they wish or not” (Morgensen 2011:229; Steinman 2011a).

At least two modes of indigenous action are perceptible in response to this challenge. The first involves critically educating non-indigenous allies and aiding their efforts to educate others about settler colonialism. In the context of bitter treaty rights conflicts in Wisconsin in the 1980s and 1990s, tribal fishermen asked non-Native allies to train other supportive individuals, so that the latter could appropriately support tribal rights by serving as “witnesses” and provide a buffer between intimidating protestors and vulnerable tribal members fishing at night (Nesper 2002). More proactively, in 2009 Dakota activists taught a 10-week course, “Dakota Decolonization: Solidarity Education for Allies,” in Minneapolis that led to the creation of the Unsettling Minnesota collective, which in turn produced the sourcebook Deconstructing Colonial Mentality (Unsettling Minnesota 2009).

Second, indigenous leaders highlight past respectful indigenous-settler relations and invite settlers to reclaim such honorable interactions. In New York, indigenous leaders and nations provided support and guidance to the “Two Row Wampum Renewal Campaign,” honoring the 400-year-old treaty relationship between the Iroquois Confederacy and colonists and their settler successors. The relationship that this first covenant formalized was one that Indians originally understood to be based on “peace and friendship,” rather than merely legalistic or purely conflictual (Williams 1997). Heeding Onondaga direction, the educational and advocacy campaign launched in 2013 sought to create a decolonized understanding of history and to build local and regional foundations for respectful relationships (Manno 2014).

In more specific substantive fields, various types of new symbolic and material arrangements are being advanced. Those articulating Native science are not only seeking to promote tribal access to and benefits from indigenous knowledge, and gain respect for it (Trauzer, Gilbert, and Madrigal 2008), but propose it as a complement to Western science. From applied science education programs at the secondary school level to college courses and academic conference keynote speakers, the advocates of Native science are working to carve out relations of coexistence in educational structures. Similarly, they have been inserting Native science into grassroots environmental and climate change efforts (Nelson 2008).

**DISCUSSION**

Prevailing sociological conceptions of American Indians and their actions have been constrained by the predominance of frameworks that are oriented toward Red Power dynamics, posit minority status, feature ethnic identity, and omit attention to colonialism. In contrast, a small set of sociologists have highlighted contemporary American Indian nationhood, emphasizing its political rather than ethnic dimensions. Building on this scholarship, this article joins the growing identification of settler colonialism as the context of past and present indigenous experiences and of indigenous resistance. The analytic typology highlights a wide range of actions corresponding to, and challenging, settler colonial forms of power beyond the state field. Although many sociopolitical actions by individual American Indians undoubtedly reflect political goals and visions constructed by and within settler nationhood and citizenship frameworks, such as racial equality and multicultural inclusion, and are the focus of predominant race and ethnic scholarship, those presented here are outside of or resistant to the liberal order and can be understood as decolonizing in nature. At the core they function to deepen and enhance indigenous nations’ abilities to reproduce themselves across generations. These actions undermine various dimensions of settler colonial power through a “long-term process involving the bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic and psychological divesting of colonial power” (Smith 1999:98). By “exposing the practices and the contingencies” of settler colonial power (p. 98), these actions invite others to
join in critical scrutiny of it and to strengthen and regenerate indigenous spirituality, cultures, identities, territory, lifeways, languages, healing practices, and more.

The regenerating thrust of much contemporary indigenous efforts highlights both links to and departures from other conceptual approaches regarding American Indians. It extends the elements of ethnic revival discussed by Nagel (1995), for example, by valuing Indian identity. Understanding this as decolonizing of settler colonial power, however, highlights indigeneity as lived resistance to the political and cognitive foundations of North American settler societies. For example, consider Alfred and Corntassel’s (2005) exhortative description of “being Indigenous,” which they summarize as “thinking, speaking and acting with the conscious intent of regenerating one’s Indigeneity” (p. 614), through which “Indigeneousness is reconstructed, reshaped and actively lived as resurgence” (p. 612). This is a form of ethnic renewal, broadly conceived, but is not primarily or exclusively about sustaining or revising group identity or populations within settler society. Although based in Indian nationhood, this movement simultaneously constructs a broader idea of indigeneity in tension with notions of Indians as a component of domestic demographic diversity.

Many Native scholars and activists assert the need to regenerate indigeneity in tribal governance. They critique sovereignty as a Eurocentric notion based on dominance and charge that some tribal leaders are uncritically incorporated into non-Indian political systems. As a result they act in the interest of external elites when, for example, they facilitate the exploitation of reservation natural resources (Coulthard 2014). These critiques highlight that even ideas of “effective public administration” are premised on often unacknowledged combinations of instrumental and subjective value rationality (Weber 1978). The crucial point for these critics is that indigenous culture provides the foundation, the subjective values, upon which indigenous leaders should make conscious decisions about when and where to incorporate particular techniques and practices.

Such critiques suggest the potential complementarity of additional theoretical approaches combined with the settler colonial analytical framework. In particular, issues of political incorporation and resource exploitation reveal the potential salience of internal colonialism (Blauem 1971), underdevelopment (Jorgensen 1971), dependency (Anders 1980), and world system (Fenelon 1997; Fenelon and Hall 2008) perspectives. Regarding these various approaches, Champagne’s (2008) historical description suggests that different approaches may correspond to different eras, as the prevailing relationships evolved over time. Although the analysis presented here is not organized chronologically, one strength of the settler colonial framework is that the underlying logic of elimination can be used to provide accounts for changing indigenous-settler relations in terms of the conditions constraining available strategies of indigenous transfer. For example, the framework can offer cohesive and congruent explanations for spatial separation under conditions of possible westward removal, tribal destruction and forced assimilation upon the “end of the frontier,” and the recognition and political incorporation of tribal governments under racial orders and legal regimes characterized by postassimilation, human rights, and indigenous rights discourses. Accordingly, examination of indigenous resistance should be alert to evolving strategies in response to new conditions.

CONCLUSION

The future of indigenous resistance to North American settler colonialism is uncertain. Indigenous efforts are arguably more strengthened than at any other time in the past hundred years in terms of externally oriented factors, such as resources and the cultural context. Funds from tribal gaming support language revitalization, Indian schools, and a host of other efforts that have decolonizing dimensions. At the global level (albeit less so at the national level), cultural ideas of self-determination receive virtually consensus support, even though the implications are frequently resisted. As it is likely that neither settler colonialism or indigenous decolonization will reach an end point, these linked and ongoing processes will remain a feature of social and political life in the United States worthy of note to sociologists studying racial and ethnic formation, social movements, political sociology, colonialism, and inequality more generally.

Beyond identifying American Indian actions resisting settler colonialism, and adding to the recent sociological research on colonialism, the study has additional implications for overall disciplinary treatment of American Indians and for race and ethnicity scholarship. It suggests that the racial/ethnic classification of American Indians is a highly contested status and that scholars should
heighten their attention to indigenous distinctiveness, especially in the context of approaches emphasizing the construction of difference as a means of justifying inequality within societies. Although both American Indians and American society affirm Native difference, the nature of that difference and the meanings assigned to it are starkly divergent. Sociological representations of these contrasting understandings could provide more insight by more clearly and consistently distinguishing between nation-based assertions by tribes and their members and the racial formation of American Indians as a racial or ethnic minority. Scholarship that is cognizant of both minoritization and settler colonialism as ongoing and contested processes rather than as accomplished social facts can direct additional critical scrutiny regarding each process as well as the relationships between them. Such projects will be able to explore, with greater sophistication, the reality of indigenous people grappling with overlapping (asserted and ascribed) identities and social contexts complexly structured by colonizing and racializing dynamics.

In turn, scholarship concerned with indigenous collective action (and political behavior more generally) should attend to potential differences and overlap between goals and actions centered on racial/ethnic inclusion and those asserting Indian nationhood and distinctiveness. Such perspectives and projects also provide the foundation for comparative sociological studies of racialization, anti-racism, colonization and decolonization among settler colonial societies.

As suggested by Glenn (2015), scholarship employing a settler colonial framework can assist the identification of commonalities, differences, and intersections in various groups’ experiences of racialized domination within the United States and thereby inform both related scholarship and the development of antiracist coalitions. This article primarily articulates the distinct experiences of American Indians, in terms of their resistance to American settler colonialism. It suggests the depth and tenacity with which members of tribal nations assert their distinctiveness and resist being subsumed under “racial” politics, making coalitions with other racialized groups and participation in antiracism efforts challenging and even problematic. Indeed, leading tribal rights activists and organizations who pointedly join or support such multiracial/antiracial projects, such as Assiniboine-Sioux sovereignty advocate Hank Adams Jr. and his promotion of Northwest Indian participation in the Poor People’s Movement (Wilkins 2011), are uncommon. Participation in racially oriented coalition efforts can easily reinforce minoritizing perceptions of American Indians. Recognition of indigenous distinctiveness and of the fact that all other groups, including oppressed racial groups, are living on Indian land are virtually preconditions for indigenous participation in race-oriented coalitions. However, the settler colonial education that racialized groups receive poorly prepares individuals for collaborating on such terms (Lawrence and Dua 2005), just as it poorly prepares progressive (Barker 2012) and queer (Morgensen 2011) activists.

Although tribal officials are often categorically uninterested in race-oriented coalitions and campaigns, some individual tribal members are more willing to articulate their critiques and assertions in common cause with other racial groups and to address racism (in conjunction with colonialism). However, the strongest foundation for cross-group collaborations involving indigenous nations and individuals is protection of the land and the environment. Tribes and indigenous organizations are participants and leaders in current efforts against oil and gas pipelines in both the United States and Canada. Indigenous communities have defended habitats in alliance with individuals and groups from across the political spectrum, including fishermen and farmers as well as environmentalists (Grossman 2005). Recent developments suggest that the conditions favorable to decolonized and indigenous-inclusive coalition participation are more prevalent. For example, numerous indigenous organizations have been key participants in a statewide antifracking campaign in California, and an “Indigenous Bloc” marched at the forefront of large antifracking demonstrations in Oakland, California, in July 2015 (Deetz 2015).

The logic of the MIP approach, combined with settler colonial theorizations of the treatment of exogenous others (Mexican Americans, Asian Americans, etc.), and drawing upon additional detailed analytical narratives of such groups’ experiences (building on those sketched out by Glenn), can be used to identify where and when (1) common experiences suggest similar forms of resistance, potentially providing clear bases for coalitions; (2) divergent experiences suggest contrasting strategies of resistance likely inimical to collaboration; and (3) clear intersections that would require a more nuanced basis of joint action. Future research systematically using these narratives to compare groups experiences of domination under settler colonialism could contribute to scholarly attempts to understand the strategic possibilities for
and constraints facing multiracial coalitions and collaborations, including but not limited to those involving American Indians. At the very least, increased awareness of settler colonialism, which can be used to interpret a wide variety of racial phenomena through a historically specific, yet analytically structured and novel perspective, may provide new energy to attempts to grapple with these questions, and enable a greater facility for doing so among scholars and activists alike.

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NOTE

1. Although such an assessment effectively conveys extreme moral evaluation (Gone 2014), the categorizing of actions or policies as genocidal does not, on the basis of the extant genocide studies literature, seem to have distinct additional predictive power in terms of settler-indigenous relations. See Woolford (2014) and Rashed and Short (2012) for two partial exceptions that aim to use genocide more analytically, although in both cases the underlying settler colonial social formation is acknowledged as animating the highlighted genocidal actions.

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**AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY**

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