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# Advising Rural and Native American Students:

# The Role of Advisors Role in Cultural Reproduction

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## Dedications

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, who have supported and encouraged me during this entire process. To my husband, Billy, who has been my constant support this entire time. You have been with me this entire journey, encouraged me when I was frustrated and pushing me to finish. To my son, Liam, you were born right as I was finishing my research. You are the light of my life and my greatest accomplishment. I am so proud and thankful to be your mom. To my parents you have prayed for me, cheered me on, and supported me during my entire academic career.

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## Abstract

One in five students in the United States live in a rural community. Research has shown students from rural areas are less likely to graduate college when compared to their urban peers. In Oklahoma, Native American individuals are 66% of the rural population. Yet, the educational experiences, needs, and concerns of Native American and/or students from rural areas are often left out of the research centered on college advising. Additionally, the forms of cultural capital these two student populations bring with them to college and how their capital may differ from dominant groups is ignored in the college advising literature. There is no research on how advisors view cultural capital or what role it plays in the advising process. This qualitative inquiry study explores the lived experiences of 15 advisors working at the university and community college level in Oklahoma. Oklahoma was selected for the study due to the high number of Native and rural students in the state. Study participants had little to no knowledge about rural or Native American students. The advisors were unaware if their students identify as Native American or are from a rural community. Another major finding is that advisors gave no value to the forms of capital that Native American or rural students bring to college and the advising process. Instead, Native American and rural students are "treated like everyone else." More concerning, advisors misrecognized Native American students, defining and treating them as "international students." Most importantly, this study reveals how advising contributes to cultural reproduction of the dominant social group on Native American and rural students. Advising is continuing the oppression and forced assimilation of Native American students.



*Keywords*: Advising, Rural, Rural Communities, Rural Students, Native American, Native American Students, and Cultural Reproduction

# Chapter 1: Introduction

Approximately one in five students in the United States is from a rural community (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2010) and only about 17% of these students earn a bachelor's degree, which is much lower than the 34% of the general population (Aud et al., 2010). In addition, about 66% of the rural population in Oklahoma consist of Native American peoples (Palmer, 2017). Oklahoma has 39 recognized Native American tribes (see Appendix G). With the large number of tribes in Oklahoma it was impossible in this study to cover each tribe. Each tribe in Oklahoma is unique with their own history, culture, and values. Due to these issues I would suggest that future research should address these unique differences to help advisors understand the uniqueness and diversity of each tribe. There are many issues surrounding college students from rural communities, but there has been little research done on this student population, including Native American students. Native American rural populations are not considered a separate population within the rural population research (Dewees & Marks, 2017). This results in Native American peoples being underrepresented in any research concerning rural students or populations.

Ongoing federal and state political and budget issues mean rural students are more likely to attend underfunded and under-resourced schools than suburban students (Perna, 2006). Students from rural communities attend small public schools that often have limited resources (Perna, 2006). For instance, rural students are more likely to attend schools with out-of-date technology and books, and studies also indicate that rural students attend schools with minimal college preparatory programs (Alleman & Holly, 2014). These structural deficits make it difficult for small rural schools to offer college-focused curriculums and cultures, which results in students and parents not having access to adequate information about the college process (Maltzan, 2006). It is also not unusual to see a single school counselor serving grades PK-12th

(Arnold et al., 2007). Schools without a designated high school counselor (advising) result in students having limited access to information pertaining to the college process, including the application process, degree options, and how to apply for scholarships and financial aid (Maltzan, 2006). Many students in rural communities are low-income and/or the first generation to consider college and their parents often do not have knowledge about the college admission process, such as how to apply, how to access financial aid, and availability of other scholarships, which hinders the assistance they can provide to the student (Perna, 2006). These issues together with the limited resources and college-focused culture in rural public high schools' results in a severe disadvantage for the student that they have no control over.

Students who attend rural schools with limited resources and few school counselors are afforded fewer exposures to and knowledge of the higher education processes than their urban peers, including the advising process (Perna, 2006). This is particularly harmful considering rural community schools are the primary resource for students to learn about college (Alleman & Holly, 2014). Having the knowledge of how to apply to college does not address the additional challenges embedded in higher education admission practices. Research shows that attending a rural high school can be a disadvantage to a student in relation to gaining access to college culture, experiences, and choices (Perna, 2006). There are two major challenges facing rural schools. First, there are structural deficits impacting these schools, including federal, state, and local policies and funding. This leads to less resources within the schools that directly impacts students' knowledge, access to college, and therefore the likelihood the student will attend college. Second, these structural deficits can have a lasting impact on a rural student's success and graduation rate once in college.

Rural schools have smaller campuses, class size, and smaller communities when compared to a college campus. Students from these schools often experience cultural shock when attending a large four-year university with a larger campus and community size (Maltzan, 2006). Higher education does little to help students from rural communities adjust to the larger class sizes at a four-year university (Maltzan, 2006). This can result in the students reporting feeling lost or overwhelmed, possibly leading to departure before their sophomore year (Padgett et al., 2012).

In addition, research has shown the value and benefit of college academic advising on persistence and graduation rates (Hatch & Garcia, 2017). Advisors can help students make connections on a large college campus, helping them navigate the college process and campus environment. College students from rural communities may not have been exposed to academic advising in high school which can impact their understanding, expectations, and overall experiences with the college advising process (Hatch & Garcia, 2017).

College students from rural communities and schools have unique characteristics that can influence a student's college experience, such as advising and the decision to persist. Students from rural communities are viewed in research and practice as having a deficit in many areas related to different forms of capital. The deficit point of view places the blame on the student and family for the lack of resources within their communities and schools (Dalal, 2016). Cultural capital can be defined as forms of knowledge or assets that are given value to be exchanged for social mobility (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Cultural capital "is possessed in greater amounts by the ruling class and can be cashed in in the form of diplomas or credentials at a later date in exchange for economic capital" (Gorder, 1980, p. 341). Cultural capital is transmitted to students from parents, schools, and communities; nevertheless, rural students are often viewed in research

and practice as being responsible for not having the dominant form of cultural capital (Gorder, 1980). Lareau and Weininger (2003) stated academic achievement is influenced by the different forms of cultural capital found in different social groups. Schools more often uplift the cultural capital associated with white, middle-class communities, thereby granting these students automatic educational advantages (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Lreau & Weininger, 2003). This is a way that educational system reproduces inequalities found in society. Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) cultural reproduction address social inequality within education and how this inequality impacts educational outcomes of students. By virtue of who they are and where they live, rural and Native American students are less likely to obtain the dominant forms of capital valued in the school system.

This is not to say that rural and Native American students lack cultural capital. Rather, living in a rural community and attending a rural school produces different forms of capital than those produced in white, middle-class communities. Those living in rural communities receive different forms of resources and capital that are beneficial in education and society (Theobald & Nachtigal, 1995). Rural communities have a strong sense of community that is centered on the school system, which in turn, provides a supportive environment for students (Theobald & Nachtigal, 1995). Students attending rural schools are often heavily involved in school activities that can help promote a feeling of belonging and support (Theobald & Nachtigal, 1995). Rural schools tend to have smaller class sizes which results in more one-on-one time between student and teacher (Theobald & Nachtigal, 1995). Yosso's Community Wealth Model addressed the strengths that marginalized student populations bring to college, including the advising process, providing a way to offset the commonly used deficit model. Yosso (2005) introduced six forms of cultural capital students have that should be viewed as strengths and assets: aspirational,

linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capital. These six forms of capital and how they apply to rural students will be explored in chapter two.

## Problem Statement

There has been extensive research on the role of college advisors and the advising processes in overall student success, including graduation. However, there has been little research focusing on the impact of cultural capital in the advising process. The overall structure of the institution of higher education favors the dominant cultural capital and continues to facilitate social inequities in higher education (Shirley, 1986). This structure impacts all aspects of the college campus, including the advising process. Bourdieu views higher education as an agent that reproduces the social inequalities within the educational setting (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

Academic advising is considered one of the most important connections for a student on campus, however, there is little research exploring the ways advisors advise Native American and rural students or what advising styles are most effective (Fielstein, 1989). There is no research addressing academic advising and the role of cultural capital in the advising process of rural students. However, research does consider advising impacts on non-traditional students, first-generation, and low-income students (Hatch & Garcia, 2017). Many students from rural communities fall into one of those previously mentioned categories. These studies have found that the "frequency of seeing an advisor was the variable among other background characteristics with the largest significant association with enrollment status for nontraditional students and first-generation students" (Hatch & Garcia, 2017, p. 356). Research has found that it is not only access to advising that is important but also the quality of the advising (Hatch & Garcia, 2017). Studies have shown that good academic advising services can be "a key determinant of students' GPA, satisfaction as a student, perceived value of a college education for future employment,

intent to leave the university, and the public's perception of the institution" (Kim & Feldman, 2011, p. 222).

Research has supported the benefit and need of quality advising to promote student success. Habley (1981) has conducted extensive research on academic advising and advising styles. According to his research, academic advising is related to enrollment and persistence. Habley (1981) viewed effective advising as a developmental process. In addition to the developmental modeling of advising he warned that it may not be possible for advising to undo or reverse other variables that lead to a reduced enrollment or persistence (Habley, 1981). The impact of academic advising on student development and retention has been the focus of many studies (Fielstein, 1989). These studies have produced evidence that academic advising can have a positive impact on a student's development and retention, however poor advising can have a negative impact (Fielstein, 1989). Habely (1981) stated, "Academic advising and support services available on the campus are critical elements in a retention strategy, the academic advisement process has been called the cornerstone of student retention" (p.45).

With all of the importance placed on advising it is surprising the lack of research on advising Native American and rural students. DeLaRosby (2017) found there were many factors that impacted the advising relationship, such as high school advising, race, gender, campus environment, and individual student characteristics. Academic advising should promote student learning and development (Creamer, 2000). While academic advising should be student driven and focusing on student goals, the advising process is shaped by the policies and procedures of the institution (Creamer, 2000). Institutional policies and procedures can impact the advising relationship and the students' overall experience and outcome. In addition, advisors wear many hats beyond academic advising, including assisting students with personal issues (DeLaRosby,

2017). Academic advising has been positively linked with student retention, however students often reported being unsatisfied with the advising process (Kim & Feldman, 2011). There are many student characteristics associated with satisfactory experiences with academic advisors, including pre-college academic characteristics, race, gender, student engagement, and college environmental factors (DeLaRosby, 2017).

An additional gap in the research of academic advising is within the American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) student population. The large number of AIAN youth in Oklahoma public schools suggests Oklahoma colleges have the chance to serve a large number of AIAN students seeking higher education degrees. Yet, there is little research on AIAN students and the advising process or relationship. The few studies that have looked at AIAN students and the advising relationship found that an effective relationship "hinges on understanding Native American Indian culture attitudes, beliefs, and values and on being able to incorporate them into counseling strategies" (Herring, 1998, p.171). AIAN students have limited access to college advisors that are trained in multicultural counseling or advising (Herring, 1998). While counselors are often trained in multicultural counseling, college advisors often do not have this training (Herring, 1998). This is one area that needs to be addressed across college advising programs.

Rural communities and schools have different values and forms of capital than their urban counterparts (Marshall, 2001). These communities and schools often have limited resources to offer their students (Marshall, 2001). The resources available can be translated to forms of cultural capital that often differ from the dominant form of cultural capital. Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) theory of cultural reproduction and cultural capital was used to explore how these different forms of cultural capital play a role in the advising process. The advising process has long been acknowledged as one of the most important contacts a student has on a

college campus, however there is little research on advising rural students and the impact cultural capital can have on this process (Hatch & Garcia, 2017). College students from different social groups bring different forms of capital to college that are beneficial, even though they can differ from the dominant form. Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth Model provides a way to view the different forms of cultural capital as a strength, instead of the weakness/deficit model often used in research and practice (2005).

## Purpose Statement

A large portion of Oklahoma is considered rural. These rural public schools have fewer resources, teachers, and reduced access to high school guidance counselors for students (Perna, 2006). Rural communities are often located a far distance from a large university. These issues can create obstacles for rural college students in enrollment, persistence, retention, and graduation (Perna, 2006). In Oklahoma, a large portion of the Native American population lives in rural communities, however they are often left out of the conversations surrounding rural students. Additionally, Native American students are largely ignored as a special student population in higher education. Native American and rural students present different needs and challenges when being advised in college (Hatch & Garcia, 2017). College advising is believed to support student persistence (Hatch & Garcia, 2017), but there is little research to support whether this holds true for Native American and rural students. Understanding how to tailor advising to the unique needs of Native American and rural students is vital because advising is a critical piece in the success of students and the institution due to the fact that "retention research suggest that an estimated 75% of college students who leave higher education institutions without obtaining a degree do so within their first two years of college" (DeLaRosby, 2017, p.146). Advising provides support to students in navigating the large, complex college campuses

and advising provides a point of contact that a student can rely on to help access resources and departments across campus (Hatch & Garcia, 2017).

The purpose of my study is to explore the concerns surrounding the advising of college students from rural public schools and Native American students, from an advisor's understanding and perspective, and will include the role/impact of cultural capital on the advising process. The research questions are:

1. What cultural capital is valued at different institutions of higher education in Oklahoma?
    a. What cultural capital do Native American and rural students bring to college and the advising session?
2. What are the financial, political, and institutional factors that shape college advising?
    a. How do advisors articulate/come to understand how these forces impact their role/responsibilities in higher education?
3. What are the expectations/demands placed upon advisors by institutions and how do those expectations/demands impact their job/interaction with students?
4. What skills, knowledge, and dispositions are students expected to possess when they arrive in higher education?
    a. Do these expectations differ across institution types?
5. What assumptions do advisors make about the skills, knowledge, and dispositions of rural students and Native American students?
    a. What impact do these assumptions have on the educational opportunities/outcomes for rural and Native students?

## Significance of Study

This study investigated the impact of coming from a rural community on the college advising process, including the impact and/or role of cultural capital. The study also considered Native American students as a separate population within the rural communities. Students bring cultural capital to the advising process. Students from rural communities bring forms of cultural capital that differ from the dominant form of cultural capital to college. Bourdieu's (1977) theory of cultural reproduction views higher education as being structurally built from the dominant social group's cultural capital. Advising is a part of the internal structure of the institution. The unique characteristics of rural communities, rural schools, and the individual college students from rural communities present a challenge when considering a framework. These unique characteristics, including cultural capital, cannot be discounted as having an impact on the college advising process. Rural communities and schools are also impacted differently when it comes to aspects such as social, economic, and political policies, which in turn, can impact the student. Institutions of higher education are not immune to these issues either, which does impact a student's experience, including the advising process. In addition, the characteristics of the institution play a role in the effectiveness of the overall advising experience. Cultural capital plays a role in the characteristics of the college students and the institutional structure. Therefore, cultural capital must be considered in the advising process to provide effective advising that will meet the needs of college students from rural communities.

## Defining Rural

Rural communities have unique characteristics when compared to more urban settings (Marshall, 2001). A large number of Americans live in rural communities. Koricich, Chen, and Hughes (2018) found that "approximately 60 million Americans live in rural areas, and thus, the problems of rural people bear national importance" (p. 282). Rural communities cover more than one-fifth of the American landscape (Rosenkoetter et al., 2004). This is a large portion of the

American population and, thereby, high school students in America. In the United States, over 20% of students are from rural community schools (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2003). However, there is a lack of research on this population in relation to college advising and its relation to college access and persistence. Additionally, this population is often overlooked as an underrepresented student population in higher education and research.

There has been ongoing difficulty in defining rural. There are many different definitions assigned to the term rural and different viewpoints on what makes a community rural. Arnold et al. (2007) stated "the word rural has many meanings. It has been defined in reference to population density, geographic feathers, and level of economic and industrial development" (p. 1). The many meanings assigned to the term rural can lead to confusion on what communities fall under this grouping (Arnold et al., 2007). Marshall (2001) stated in regard to rural communities that the "great differences among people and places in America make it hard to fashion national policies that fit all places" (p. 59). The definition of rural impacts educational funding at the state and federal level as well as funding for the rural communities (Arnold et al., 2007). The Rural Policy Research Institution (2006) gives the following classifications or definitions of rural:

1. U. S Census Bureau classification, which defines rural by geographical features, population and as a residual.
2. Metropolitan status codes, which define rural relative to core-based statistical areas.
3. Urban-rural continuum codes, which define rural by population and proximity to urban areas.
4. Metro-centric locale codes, which are used primarily for statistical procedures.

5. Urban-centric locale codes, which improve the reliability and precision of locale code assignment.
6. Core-based statistical areas, which are statistically defined geographical areas. (p. 4-7)

These classifications demonstrate the difficulty in defining rural. A simpler definition for rural is given by the U.S. Census Bureau and is used for collecting national data. For the purpose of this study, the U.S. Census of definition of rural communities will be used. The U.S. Census Bureau definition of rural communities is defined as having 2,500 or fewer residents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006).

Rural communities have struggled with jobs moving out of the area, resulting in a reduction in funding for schools and increasing risk for poverty for those living in these communities (Lamb et al., 2001). The result of economic loss to these rural communities touches all aspects of life, such as reduced access to health care, mental health care, early sexual activity, and other delinquent behavioral issues (Lamb et al., 2001). The government has acknowledged the importance of supporting rural communities, especially rural schools, by developing programs such as No Child Left Behind and the Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP) (Arnold et al., 2007). Each of these programs provide financial support for rural schools by helping to make up the difference in funding that is lacking due too little to no economic commerce in these areas. These rural schools often have one teacher per subject, with some teachers teaching more than one subject (Arnold et al., 2007). Limited access to school counselors is another concern within rural communities, where there is often just one school counselor for the entire school (Arnold et al., 2007).

Additionally, a high school student's interaction and exposure to institutions of higher education has been shown to improve enrollment and persistence rates (Rosenkoetter et al., 2004). However, there are few universities located within these rural communities (Rosenkoetter et al., 2004). This results in rural students not having direct access to universities. In addition, students from rural communities are often not exposed to the larger community of a university (Tinto, 1988). This distance from universities can lead to lack of exposure to higher education for rural students. An additional issue that rural students face is moving a considerable distance to attend college. Johnson (2008) found the distance of the high school from an institution of higher education negatively impacts persistence. Johnson's (2008) research found that students who attend high schools located within 60 miles of an institution of higher education are 2.25 times more likely to attend college. This same research found that students from a high school within 60 miles of an institution of higher education are 1.22 more likely to persist (Johnson, 2008). Rural students that attend a university can experience shock at the overall size of the campus, community, and student population. These students can struggle to adapt to this new larger community that has different values and norms than their smaller communities (Tinto, 1988).

## Summary of Chapter and Organization Dissertation

This chapter provided an introduction and background to the research problem, the purpose statement, and research questions that were the foundation of this study. This study sought to provide a better understanding of advising Native American and rural students from an advisor perspective, considering cultural reproduction and cultural capital that may impact the advising process. This study consists of eight chapters: introduction, theoretical framework, literature review, methodology, three data chapters: Academic Advising: Advisors' Perspective on Advising and the Role of the Institution in Advising, Advisors' Practices that Contribute to

Cultural Reproduction in Advising Rural Students, and Cultural Reproduction in the Advising of Native American Students, and the discussion chapter.

# Chapter 2: Theoretical Frameworks

The education system is a reproduction of the dominant social group and their culture and contributes to the legitimacy of the symbolic power granted to the dominant culture (Dalal, 2016). Institutions of education "are designed to transmit the dominant cultural capital" (Beckman et al., 2018, p. 201). Cultural capital influences policies, procedures, and the overall structure of the institution of higher education, including the advising process. Academic advising is one of the first points of contact a student has on a college campus. The success or failure of the advising process directly impacts the student and their future college success (Habley, 1981). It is important to remember that advisors are agents of the institution of higher education. As a result, advisors are guided by the policies and procedures of the institution, which value the dominant cultural capital above other forms of cultural capital. It is vital to understand what cultural capital advisors see as valuable and/or beneficial for the student to improve the advising process. In addition, it is important to understand what cultural capital is given value in institutions of higher education that can impact internal and external structures. Students who are viewed to be lacking the form of the dominant cultural capital are seen as having a deficit, even though they have cultural capital that is of value (Dalal, 2016).

College students from rural communities are viewed as lacking the dominant forms of capital, resulting in them being viewed from a deficit model (Dalal, 2016). Urban settings differ from rural settings in the economic, social, and cultural capital (Smith et al., 1995). These differences can result in institutions of higher education located within urban settings viewing students from rural communities as entering college at a disadvantage (Smith et al., 1995). Institutions of education assign the "privileged status to middle-class values" above all others (Valadez, 1996, p. 394). The values placed on the cultural capital of the upper and middle-class are assumed to be possessed by the student either naturally or earned (Valadez, 1996). This

means students who do not have this form of cultural capital are viewed at a disadvantage or to be lacking. This value is assigned by the dominant social group and legitimized by institutions of education in policies and procedures (Valadez, 1996). These policies and procedures can impact staff and faculty thoughts and interactions with students. While this view is flawed, the dominant forms of capital are considered to have value and given power (Dalal, 2016). It is possible that institutions of higher education located within rural settings might value different forms of capital, in particular cultural capital, than their larger urban counterparts.

Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction was used to explore and understand how a rural student's cultural capital, individual characteristics/habitus, the characteristics rural communities and schools, the higher education context, and the broader social, economic, and policy context impact the effectiveness of the college advising process of this student population from a college advisor's perspective (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). In an attempt to move away from the deficit model that is often used to explore minority students or any student viewed as lacking the dominant cultural capital, Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth Model was used to view college students from rural communities from a strength-based model (Yosso, 2005). A critical question within higher education is "whose culture has capital" (Yosso, 2005, p. 69). This question leads to the additional question of: what cultural capital is valued within the higher education setting, including within the advising process? In the following chapter I will describe each of the frameworks and how they were used to frame and guide this study.

**Bourdieu's Theory of Cultural Reproduction**

Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) found that educational systems must look at what leads to the different educational attainment in students from different social classes. This difference according to Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) has to consider more than economic differences. Roksa (2017) stated that"Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction provides an important

framework for understanding social inequality in educational outcomes" (p. 1230). Bourdieu's theory addresses the inequality that results in the assignment of value to what is perceived as the dominant cultural capital, which grants the dominant social group symbolic power over the non-dominant group (Roksa, 2017). Bourdieu's cultural reproduction theory refers to the reproduction of culture and inequality across generations through education and other social institutions that assign value and power to one form of capital over others (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Bourdieu moved away from the Marxist view of inequality through economics, social capital, and idea of only valuing social relationships and networks; instead, he also viewed the importance of cultural reproduction and legitimizing of one social group and their social capital over another (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). This inequality can be seen in forms of oppression of those who are not part of the dominant culture. This power and oppression can be seen in various policies and procedures found throughout the educational system (Valadez, 1996). According to Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), "every power to exert symbolic violence, i.e., every power which manages to impose meanings and to impose them as legitimate by concealing the power relations which are the basis of its force, adds its own specifically symbolic force to those power relations" (p. 4). The dominant social group is granted symbolic power and force over the non-dominant social group that goes unacknowledged by the dominant group and by educational institutions and society (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Bourdieu's theory addressed the relation between education, class/social groups, and the reproduction of class inequalities (Gorder, 1980). Bourdieu (1986) viewed a direct connection between a student's social class, forms of culture, and how that impacted access to education through cultural capital. Power, in institutions of education, including higher education, "derives from the structure of class relations but adds to it its own symbolic force" (Gorder, 1980, p. 341).

Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) stated that educational institutions conceal power relations, which results in symbolic violence. This concealment is created by laws, policies, and procedures influenced by the dominant cultural capital and impacts the institutional policies and procedures (Gorder, 1980). Educational institution administration and staff are often unaware of the power granted to the dominant cultural capital and the resulting impact across the institutions on policies and procedures that directly impact students and the overall college environment (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). This unawareness is created by administration and staff viewing the policies and procedures as unchangeable and not questioning them, perhaps to avoid conflict and job security. Giroux (1983) stated Bourdieu's take on cultural reproduction and cultural capital was based on the fact that "schools are seen as part of a larger social universe of symbolic institutions that, rather than impose docility and oppression, reproduce existing power relations subtly via the production and distribution of a dominant culture that tacitly confirms what it means to be educated" (p. 87). Institutions of education give intellectual value and reward diplomas based on the dominant cultural capital, thereby devaluing any other forms of cultural capital a college student might possess (Giroux, 1983).

Social inequality impacts a student's academic achievement and overall academic success (Roksa, 2017). Bourdieu's theory addressed the reproduction of inequality in schools "by rewarding cultural capital of the dominant social class" (Roksa, 2017, p. 1230). The dominant cultural capital is based on the "White, middle class culture as the standard, and therefore all other forms and expressions of culture are judged in comparison to this norm" (Yosso, 2005, p. 76). The dominant cultural capital is valued within the educational setting, resulting in students with different forms of cultural capital to be viewed as having a deficit. Institutions of higher education value the cultural capital of the dominant social group and ignore other forms (Gorder,

1980). This cultural capital is ingrained across the institution and impacts all aspects of policy and procedures, including the advising process. Valadez (1996) pointed out that, “the policies and practices of higher education, and the expectations of faculty concerning the cultural and social competencies of students favor individuals from middle and upper-income families” (p. 398). This results in students from lower-income families or those without the dominant cultural capital to be placed into categories that are not applicable and leads to assumptions/judgements about the student (Valadez, 1996). Valadez (1996) also pointed out that the social class difference between faculty and staff, including advisors, affects attitudes and relationships with students.

However, educational institutions do not acknowledge their role in the “reproduction of inequalities in society whilst simultaneously concealing its own role in processes of social reproduction by masquerading as neutral and universal” (Gewirtz & Cribbs, 2009, p 144). This is especially concerning when considering that advising policies and procedures are developed based on these inequalities and advising is often the first connection a student has on a college campus. Institutions of education are not “culturally neutral zones, as it embodies the culture of the dominant group, endorsing it as legitimate and naturally given” (Dalal, 2016, p. 237). This false notion of the educational system being culturally neutral and naturally given leads to the student being viewed as being responsible for not having the dominant cultural capital and at a deficit. Cultural capital, social class, oppression, privilege, and environmental factors of rural communities and the institutions of higher education cannot be factored out of the development and success of the advising relationship. Speaking with advisors allowed me to gain a better understanding of what cultural capital is valued within the advising process at various sizes of higher education institutions.

Bourdieu's theory encompassed three areas: field, habitus, and capital (Patton et al., 2016). The field included the areas of an individual's social life that play a role in various areas of life (Patton et al., 2016). These fields represented areas around which groups compete to make their "norm" the norm of the dominant society (Patton et al., 2016). Bourdieu's habitus was "the disposition that composes one's worldview and behaviors within a given field" (Patton et al., 2016, p, 250). Habitus was built into the field, the systems, and environments, including the community, educational systems, and interactions with people within the field (Patton et al., 2016). Habitus provided an individual with guidelines that shape their interactions and reactions within a given field, which can lead to an individual setting goals based on their habitus (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The habitus is traded within the cultural capital.

Cultural capital in an educational setting includes "the privilege and attitudes that middle-class and upper-middle class families transmit to their children as a mechanism for preserving their economic status" (Padgett et al., 2012, p. 247). This statement points out that students from low-income or first-generation are at a disadvantage within the educational system because the cultural capital they possess is not the cultural capital that is valued by the educational system. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) believed that educational systems legitimize the dominant classes' cultural capital and grant power by the development of school curriculum, policies, and procedures based on the dominant cultural capital, thereby rewarding students with the dominant forms of capital. Dalal (2016) supported this idea with the statement that "school curriculum acknowledges and rewards the cultural capital of the dominant class, while systematically devaluing that of the lower classes" (p. 237). Dalal (2016) supported the idea that school rewards students who have the dominant cultural capital, thereby facilitating the viewpoint that students without this form of cultural capital are at a deficit and contributing to the continuation of the

social inequalities. Students with the dominant cultural capital have access to resources based on this cultural capital and are granted an advantage (Padgett et al., 2012). Students cannot gain this access but are granted it by the educational institutions. This access is granted because the educational institutions are built from a White male model that devalues students from other cultures, including those that English is not their first language (Gorder, 1980).

Cultural capital is something that students have access to through their parents. Cultural capital can be developed once a student enters college with the help of the institution (Padgett et al., 2012). According to Bourdieu, cultural capital is seen across institutions of higher education (Patton et al., 2016). Patton et al., (2016) emphasized the importance of understanding cultural capital with the statement, "colleges and universities tend to give preference to the kind of cultural capital that is more readily available to middle-class and affluent groups rather than what is readily available to poor or working-class groups" (p. 22). It is concerning that the policies and procedures of the institution and the overall institutional structure are stacked against the less privileged group, such as the selection of what course to offer, including the curriculum taught, recruitment practices, and advising processes (Dalal, 2016). These policies and procedures within educational institutions are a form of symbolic violence that is essentially practiced across the educational system (Dalal, 2016).

Closely related to cultural capital is social capital. Bourdieu (1980) stated social capital is a result of "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition- or in other words, to membership in a group" (p. 248). This membership, according to Bourdieu (1980), results in an individual gaining access to various resources known as social capital. Social capital aids in the access of higher education by helping the student gain "specific

knowledge or strategies that can be applied to the process that leads to college enrollment" (Cates & Schaefle, 2011, p. 322). Social capital is developed by interpersonal relationships a student develops and the group they belong to (Padgett et al., 2012).There are many benefits that high levels of social capital can bring to a student, such as the ability to develop and maintain beneficial networks of support and resources (Padgett et al., 2012). Students from more well-to-do families often come to college with high levels of social capital, therefore they are viewed as having an advantage going into college (Padgett et al., 2012).

Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction was used to explore the advising process and the impact and/or influence cultural capital might have on this process. Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction was used to explore the cultural capital that is valued within the advising process, how the advisor values the student's cultural capital, and the perceived value of the dominant cultural capital that may differ from that of the student.

It is important to keep in mind that Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction is not without critics. One major criticism to be aware of is "an over-dependence on the culture at the expense of economic considerations and an inability to discuss change and struggle" (Gorder, 1980, p. 343). Bourdieu's theory does not place any value on the cultural capital of any social group, other than the dominant social groups (Gorder, 1980). This lack of acknowledgement of the value of any other cultural capital outside the one of the dominant social groups completely ignores the value of culture in other social groups (Gorder, 1980). Additionally, Bourdieu's theory does not address race and gender when considering forms of power (Dalal, 2016).

Another issue is that Bourdieu does not address any form of change that can take place as an individual gains more experiences that can lead to new forms of cultural capital (Dalal, 2016) Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth Model addresses the fact that Bourdieu's work views

students who do not possess the dominant forms of cultural capital as entering college at an overall disadvantage or deficit model (Patton et al., 2016). Combining Yosso's model with Bourdieu's allowed me, as the researcher, to acknowledge that Native American and rural students have valuable cultural capital that can be a benefit in the college experience, including the advising process. Yosso's model also allows me to address the limitations of Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction by allowing for consideration of the value of different forms of capital, addressing race and gender, and allowing for the exploration of change and growth based on experiences.

**Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth Model**

According to Yosso (2005), students who have family that have the dominant forms of social and cultural capital have access to the knowledge that is considered valuable, resulting in the "potential for social mobility through formal schooling" (p. 70). The value placed on the dominant forms of capital, including cultural capital results in institutions of education viewing students without access to this knowledge from a deficit point of view (Yosso, 2005). Cultural capital is often viewed as something that is naturally given, meaning the student possesses this as a talent or ability (Weininger & Lareau, 2007). If a student is viewed as having a talent or ability for the dominant form of cultural capital, those without this form are viewed from a deficit model. While students have no control over their access to these forms of capital, students are often seen as responsible for this lack of the dominant cultural capital. Yosso (2005) stated that "culture influences how society is organized, how school curriculum is developed and how pedagogy and policy are implemented" (p.75). This statement shows how formal education can work against students when viewing those that do not have the dominant cultural capital as having a deficit that is not within their control (Yosso, 2005). This results in students with

different forms of capital being devalued within the educational system that is designed based on the dominant social group's cultural capital.

Yosso's (2005) model views students from a strength-based viewpoint and can be used to move away from the deficit model often applied in research and practice. Yosso's model also addresses the limitations mentioned above of Bourdieu's cultural reproduction theory. Yosso's model acknowledges that all forms of capital are valuable and have benefits for the student (Yosso, 2005). While Yosso (2005) used this framework to explore the access and experiences that students of color have in college, it can be used to explore students from rural communities, who are often also viewed from a deficit model. Yosso (2005) gives six forms of cultural capital that can be used to frame interactions with students from a strength-based model. The first form of cultural capital is aspirational capital, which refers to the hopes and dreams that a student and their family has for educational attainment in the face of the social inequalities (Yosso, 2005). Linguistic capital is the next form given by Yosso (2005), which refers to a student's language, social skills, and communications skills that are forms of cultural capital and strengths for the student. The next form of cultural capital given by Yosso (2005) is familial capital. This form of capital includes resources the student has from the environment prior to college, including family, school, and their community (Yosso, 2005). The fourth type of capital is social capital that includes "the networks of people and community resources" that can be used to leverage and level the playing field in college for these students (Yosso, 2005, p. 79). Navigational capital is the next form that "refers to skills of maneuvering through institutions" (Yosso, 2005, p. 80).

The last form of capital is resistant capital that, according to Yosso (2005), includes the student gaining knowledge and skills from "oppositional behavior that challenges inequality" (p. 80). Yosso's (2005) six forms of cultural capital allow the researcher to view students based on

their strengths and the cultural capital they do possess. Yosso's model is widely used across higher education to move away from the deficit model. Yosso's model has been used to explore student's access to higher education and was used in this study to explore the advising or the advising relationship.

I used this model to address the deficit model often used by researchers and in practice to view students without the dominant cultural capital as being responsible for not possessing the dominant cultural capital. This framework allowed me to acknowledge the different forms of capital that college students from rural communities bring to the advising process. Students from rural communities attend smaller schools where the students, parents, staff, and community members tend to be more involved in school activities (Nelson, 2016). Additionally, these rural community members, including students, often have closer relationships, resulting in a supportive environment (Nelson, 2016). The rural advantage is often not considered a form of cultural capital; however, research has shown that it can be a great benefit to the student (Nelson, 2016). Yosso's model of cultural capital allowed me to acknowledge the rural advantage as a form of cultural capital.

## Conclusion

Literature lacks a framework that explores the advising process/relationship from an advisor perspective that takes into account cultural capital, Native American and rural student's individual characteristics/habitus, the impact of the unique characteristics of rural communities and schools, the higher education structure, policies, and procedures, and the broader social, economic, and policy context that play a role in the advising process. These two frameworks will be used in an attempt to understand how Native American and rural students' cultural capital, individual characteristics/habitus, the characteristics of rural communities and schools, the higher

education context, and the broader social, economic, and policy context impact the effectiveness of the college advising process of this student population from a college advisor's perspective. However, you cannot rule out the impact of the environment and context the student was raised in, rural community and school, or the overall power structures and structures of the educational institution on the overall advising process. These two theoretical frameworks allowed me to investigate all aspects of advising college students from rural communities and how cultural capital plays a role in the advising process. Using these two frameworks allowed me to understand advisors' knowledge of Native American and rural students, as well as the role/impact of cultural capital in the advising process.

# Chapter 3: Literature Review

The following chapter will explore the connection between the American rural living experiences, including Native American peoples, and the U.S. educational context in PK-12 and higher education that can impact/influence students' success in college. This discussion will explore the terminology, the educational structural issues, the rural community characteristics, the rural school characteristics, and the rural student characteristics. I will explore the rural community and school characteristics that have a positive and negative impact on students. This exploration will include defining cultural capital and exploring what cultural capital rural students bring to the college experience, including the advising process and relationship. Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction refers to the reproduction of social values and culture that contributes to social inequality between social groups (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). This cultural capital is not equally distributed across social groups and the dominant social group's cultural capital is given value and power over the others.

Rural community and school characteristics are influenced by federal and state policies and funding issues that, in turn, impact the students who live in these communities and attend the rural schools. The exploration of Native American and rural student characteristics will further investigate how federal, state, and institutional policies, procedures, and budget concerns can create obstacles and barriers for this population. In addition, the power structures of race, class, and gender will be explored in terms of the structures of the various institutional structures and at the individual student level. Additionally, I will address rural schools in Oklahoma and the Native American population within Oklahoma.

## Understanding Rural Public Schools and Rural Students

The Alliance for Excellent Education (2010) found that one in five students in the United States lives in a rural community, which means that rural schools serve a large number of

students. Roughly 46% of school districts in the United States are rural and “most likely to be located in the North Central, Southern, and Western parts of the United States” (Schroth, 2001, p.9). Understanding rural schools and the impact they can have on college students who attended these schools is important to help with increasing college enrollment and persistence. Rural schools represent over half of the public school districts in the United States, enrolling around 10 million students (Provasnik et al., 2007). In the State of Oklahoma, approximately 33% of all students are enrolled in rural public schools (Provasnik et al., 2007). This is a large portion of Oklahoma students that are located within a rural community and face unique challenges when gaining access to college and persisting to graduation (Provasnik, et al., 2007).

Attending a rural school presents many challenges and/or barriers for students. Means et al., (2016) found these barriers were “lower family income and parental education, fewer school resources, less academically-rigorous courses, lower academic achievement and post-secondary aspirations, and lower college attendance and completion rates” (p. 544). Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) viewed educational institutions as agents of reproduction of the social inequalities that inhibit academic achievement of students from the non-dominant social group. Educational institutions are not culturally neutral but instead favor the dominant culture (Roksa, 2017). The very structure of educational institutions is designed around the values and culture of the dominant society, the White male social group (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Educational institutions “advantage children whose socialization experiences are aligned with those expectations and thereby facilitate the conversion of dominant cultural capital into educational success” (Robinson & Roksa, 2016, p. 1230). According to Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), educational institutions reward the students with the dominant cultural capital, which in turns continues the reproduction of social inequalities. The preference given to the dominant social

group within education gives an advantage to some students over others, which impacts educational access and success (Lareau & Weininger, 2003). The structure of educational institutions facilitates the ongoing power, privilege, and oppression concerns on campus (Patton et al., 2016).

Rural schools face many challenges in hiring and maintaining qualified teaching staff (Arnold et al., 2007). Resources are another area where rural schools fall behind their urban counterparts (Arnold et al., 2007). Rural schools have less access to computers and internet (Provasnik et al., 2007). The shortage of computers and a stable internet connection can result in limited access to academic and college resources for students (Provasnik et al., 2007). Insufficient PK-12 school resources can impact a student's preparation for college. If the school has few resources the result is students have reduced access to resources, including college prep activities (Provasnik et al., 2007). This lack of resources in rural schools means these students often do not have the skills to enter higher education, the skills that are considered useful and given value by the dominant cultural capital. The skills that the non-dominant social group brings to college are devalued by the educational institutions that value the dominant cultural capital (Robinson & Roksa, 2016). The PK-12 educational system is designed to funnel students into what is perceived as class-appropriate courses of study based on the forms of capital a student possesses, which can impact the students' decision to attend college and what degree programs they pursue (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

Alleman and Holly (2014) identified two tasks students need to complete to be ready for college: academic qualification and on-time graduation. Academic qualification means these students will have the rigorous, college prep coursework in high school, such as AP classes (Alleman & Holly, 2014). On-time graduation means a student graduates after four years of high

school. Alleman and Holly (2014) found that students from rural schools often lag behind their peers in these two areas. The rural schools are not able to provide rigorous coursework due to limited funds and lack of quality teachers (Alleman & Holly, 2014). Rural schools can attempt to overcome the lack of resources by providing encouragement to students to attend college, provide workshops to educate students and parents on college, and assist with preparing for college (Alleman & Holly, 2014). Rural community schools need to provide students with information about the college enrollment process, such as application, admission, and financial aid processes (Alleman & Holly, 2014).

An additional influence on a student is the school's overall structure, including rigorous courses offered, additional programs offered, such as gifted and talented, school climate (college-going culture), and resources within the school (Perna, 2006). Rigorous coursework can help a student feel prepared for college. Academic preparedness has long been associated with positive student persistence (Perna, 2006). Programs like gifted and talented provide students with a variety of challenging coursework and leadership opportunities that can help students be more prepared for the transition to college (Perna, 2006). A college-going culture within a school is the overall school climate that promotes college knowledge, enrollment, and creates access through various school-related activities. Rural schools often lack the above due to limited resources and rural location. Regardless of the schools’ lack of resources and cultural capital, students who have access to resources and cultural capital are seen as having a talent or natural ability and those without are seen as being at fault (Lareau & Weininger, 2003).

In addition to limited access to a school counselor and structure of the school, rural schools tend to be located a considerable distance from institutions of higher education. Johnson (2008) found the distance of the high school from an institution of higher education negatively

impacted persistence. An additional way a high school student can prepare for college is by taking concurrent enrollment courses. However, rural schools that are located too far from an institution of higher education may not have this opportunity to earn college credit while in high school (Johnson, 2008). A college student who comes from a rural community can face many challenges when transitioning to an institution of higher education. These challenges can be the overall shock in the size of the institution and community the institution is located within. These institutions and communities tend to be much larger than the community and high school the students attended. Various policies and procedures can be overwhelming. For example, a college student from a rural community may not understand the advising process or what to expect from this process due to limited high school advising.

An issue directly tied to rural schools and student preparedness and resources is funding. Rural communities have less commerce in the community, and less federal and state funding, resulting in less resources for the public schools which directly impacts students (Provasnik et al., 2007). These issues are directly tied to the reduced funding rural schools receive compared to urban schools from federal, local, and state sources. Funding at the state and federal level are tied to the October 1 child count. Rural schools' yearly enrollment and average daily attendance is significantly lower than urban schools (Arnold et al., 2007).

In addition, rural school districts are experiencing changes. There is some urban flight happening where people are moving to rural communities in search of a smaller community feel and smaller school setting (Arnold et al., 2007). This urban flight is changing the face of the rural communities and schools. The demographics of the people living in these communities are changing. Oklahoma is one of four states (Indiana, Alabama, and New Mexico) that is seeing a large growth in international migration (Arnold et al., 2007). The international migration is

causing additional strains on rural schools. Students that are English Language Learners (ELL) need additional support in the classroom that rural schools struggle to meet (Arnold et al., 2007). Rural schools struggle to hire enough qualified staff—finding an ELL certified teacher can be extremely difficult—resulting in the ELL students not receiving the services they need to succeed. Federal and state policies determine the funding amount given to schools yearly based on the number of students enrolled. Additional funds are given to schools with identified ELL students, however the additional funding is not enough to offset the low federal and state funding, making it difficult for rural schools to access resources to ensure a quality education for the new demographics of students entering their schools. Even the federal and state policies and procedures are structured to favor the dominant cultural capital located within the suburban communities and schools.

Rural communities and schools provide support and beneficial forms of cultural capital for students. Rural schools play a vital role in the communities they are located within. Rural schools are often the heart of the rural community (Wilcox et al., 2014). "Rural schools have traditionally been tightly linked to their communities," according to Theobald and Nachtigal (1995, p. 2). This connection can be a benefit to the students who attend rural schools by providing support for the students and school (Theobald & Nachtigal, 1995). This support can help to offset some of the barrier's rural students face. Attending a rural school can have positive benefits for the students. Byun et al. (2012) stated that "rural schools are diverse but share several characteristics, including small class size, strong community-school connections, and supportive teacher-student relations, all of which have positive benefits for youth" (p. 8). This community-school connection can create a strong sense of belonging to the community and school for students that can extend beyond high school (Byun et al. 2012). Another benefit of

attending rural schools is the teacher-to-student ratio, which tends to be lower in rural schools when compared to urban schools; however, it is important to remember that rural schools struggle to hire and maintain qualified teaching staff (Provasnik et al., 2007). Another benefit for rural students is that rural teachers tend to have more years of experience than urban teachers (Provasnik et al., 2007). Rural teachers often return to their home community to live and teach. However, these teachers earn less than their urban counterparts (Provasnik et al., 2007). Attending a rural school and living in a rural community creates cultural capital for rural students that differ from the dominant form of cultural capital.

**Native American Students**

Native American students are often left out of studies that focus on rural communities and rural schools, even though they represent a large portion of this population. The Sovereignty Symposium (2020) stated that the term Native American came about in 1960 out of respect for the vase cultural difference of the indigenous people in the United States. For this reason, I chose to use the term Native American in this study. I acknowledge that there are other terms that indigenous peoples might prefer. The study by Dewees and Marks (2017) found that roughly 54% of American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) people live within rural communities. It is important to note that 68% live on tribal homelands which are largely located within rural settings (Dewees & Marks, 2017). In Oklahoma, roughly 66% of the AIAN population lives within rural communities (Dewees & Marks, 2017). AIAN peoples are approximately 8.1% of the state population in Oklahoma at last census count (Palmer, 2017). The national average of AIAN population in other states is only 1% (Palmer, 2017). The highest number of American Indian PK-12 students in the nation are served in Oklahoma public schools with around 130,000 students (Palmer, 2017). National and state assessments in the 2016/2017 school year indicated

that AIAN students in Oklahoma public schools are performing at a higher rate than AIAN students in other states (Palmer, 2017).

Native American people in Oklahoma and across the United States have a long and troubled history within the educational system. Brayboy, Solyom, and Castagno (2015) reported, “the American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) educational context is unique from other racial and ethnic groups” (p. 154). Distrust and fear have been an undercurrent in AIAN communities since at least 1879 with the establishment of the first boarding school, funded by the U. S. government, the Carlisle Indian School (Fish & Syed, 2018). This boarding school and those that followed “worked to assimilate Native Americans by absorbing children into an educational institution framed by Euro American values and beliefs, while at the same time, minimizing those of Native Americans” (p. 387). These boarding schools have left a lasting legacy of distrust, fear, and suspicion of any government-run entity, including public education (Fish & Syed, 2018). The public school system, including higher education, is still structured and designed according to the Euro White model (Fish & Syed, 2018). Fish and Syed (2018) made the powerful statement that “the legacy of boarding schools can most readily be seen in the current educational disparities of Native Americans in higher education, the implications of which are devastating for Native American peoples” (p. 387). This Euro White model is built from the power and privilege that comes with being “White,” which causes additional trauma and barriers for AIAN students who are attending public schools, including higher education (Burk, 2007). Curriculum, textbooks, and the overall educational structure and policies are framed around this model (Burk, 2007). The Burk (2007) study found that the issues in higher education not only exclude AIAN in curriculum design and other educational factors but that this exclusion causes additional trauma.

Burk (2007) stated, “individuals’ cultural identities are negotiated in an academic contract when evidence of power or privilege makes demands on subordinated individuals” (p.2).

AIAN students are the most underrepresented student population on college campuses and the most understudied (Fish & Syed, 2018). These issues can impact a student’s success on campus. Advisors, faculty, and staff may be unaware of any potential barriers or roadblocks when working with this student population due to limited awareness or understanding of AIAN student populations. AIAN students leave college earlier and have lower educational attainment than another other group on campus (Fish & Syed, 2018). Poor educational attainment can lead to lower income and reduced access to healthcare, including mental health (Fish & Syed, 2018). Higher education leaders must acknowledge that higher education has little understanding of ways to improve educational outcomes for AIAN students and then start the process of changing policies, procedures, and even course curriculum (Brayboy et al., 2015).

AIAN students feel a close tie to family and community, which can lead to a struggle to make the transition to college (Guillory & Wolverton, 2008). Research has found that parent and family ties are the most important factor in determining an AIAN student’s success (Guillory & Wolverton, 1998). Other factors that can impact an AIAN student’s college success include high school academics, college preparedness, faculty involvement, institutional commitment as well as maintaining a strong connection to home (Guillory & Wolverton, 1998). AIAN students’ cultural capital is different from the dominant cultural capital but is still of equal value. AIAN students’ cultural capital is devalued within the educational setting. Brayboy et al. (2015) stated that “administrators should not assume students inherently possess these skills” (p. 159) that are needed to be successful in the classroom and in college.

AIAN students have the lowest high school graduation and college entrance rates in the nation (Brayboy et al., 2015). AIAN students make up only 1.1% of the students enrolled in college (Brayboy et al., 2015). This student population has been left out of the "decades of national, state, and institutional level initiatives to increase access to higher education" (p.1). Dewees and Marks (2017) stated that "American Indian and Alaska Native communities are an important part of the diverse fabric of the U.S. population, but they remain misunderstood or forgotten because they are often left out of major data-collection" (p. 2). This population is underrepresented and often completely left out of the conversations and research surrounding rural communities, including policy development, funding, and other institutional structural areas (Dewees & Marks, 2017). Underfunding and limited research leads to misconceptions, isolation, and funding/policy issues (Dewees & Marks, 2017). All of these issues lead to the AIAN population being invisible in terms of educational policies, funding/aid issues, government policies, and other areas (Dewees & Marks, 2017).

**Rural School Counselors and Advising**

Students who attend rural schools often have limited access to school counselors, resulting in less support to navigate the college processes (Gagnon & Mattingly, 2016). Rural schools present challenges for students in gaining access to high school counselors, which are considered one of the most important connections in high school for gaining access to college information (Gagnon & Mattingly, 2016). Gagnon and Mattingly (2016) found that "greater access to school counselors is associated with higher graduation rates, fewer disciplinary incidents, and other improved measures of academic, emotional, and social performance" (p.1). This statement indicates the important role school counselors have in a student's overall academic performance. School counselors have long been seen as the gatekeepers for the college process for high school students (Robinson & Roksa, 2016). The gatekeeping process starts in

freshman year of high school and continues all the way through the senior year, when students are selecting what college to attend, applying to colleges, and completing the financial aid process (Robinson & Roksa, 2016). However, little research has been done to address how high school advising or the lack thereof could impact a student's experiences with college advising. On average, across high schools in the United States, there is one school counselor for every 482 students (Bray, 2017). With this large number of students assigned to one counselor it is easy to see one-on-one interaction with counselors can be limited. In addition to serving a large number of students, school counselors are also in charge of state and federal testing, class scheduling, graduation tracking, individual guidance issues, some teach courses, and others have to take on an administration role. Research has found that it is not uncommon for rural schools to not employ a school counselor (Gagnon & Mattingly, 2016). In rural schools it is not unusual to see one school counselor for all grades PK-12, which results in the counselor having restricted time with each student. This issue can result in high school students being left to navigate the college process themselves, often with little knowledge of how to go about this and little parental help. Research has found that "students who attend high schools with less resources may not benefit from their interactions with counselors who have larger caseloads and a wider set of responsibilities" (Robinson & Roksa, 2016, p. 850). School counselors do not just aid students in applying for college and assist in exploring financial sources, but also provide a variety of other assistance as well. King (2012) found that school counselors must also ensure that students are taking the correct courses to graduate and prepare them academically for college and guide them through the entire application process. Studies have shown that students provided with guidance on the entire college process, including what courses to take in high school, how to apply to

college, and how to locate sources of financial aid are more likely to enroll and attend than those who do not have assistance from a school counselor (King, 2012).

**Rural Student Characteristics**

In addition to understanding how to define rural, rural communities, and rural schools, it is important to explore the characteristics of rural students. Rural students are largely White, about 78% of the rural population (Provasnik et al., 2007). While there is a large body of research on gender, class, race, and disability in an urban setting there is little to none within the rural setting (Pini & Bhopal, 2017). This lack of study makes it difficult to address issues within the rural educational setting, since urban and rural communities, schools, and students have different characteristics (Pini & Bhopal, 2017). This has led to a misconception that race is not a factor that is considered within the rural framework (Pini & Bhopal, 2017). Pini and Bhopal (2017) stated that research about rural communities is approached with the attitude that there is not an issue of racism within these communities and there is no need to study any issues related to race in regard to education or any other concerning area. Pini and Bhopal (2017) found that "Whiteness" is the lens that is often applied to research on rural communities. Minority students who attend rural public schools scored lower on standard tests, had higher dropout rates, were less likely to enroll in college, and were more likely to be low-income than their White peers (Khattri et al., 1997). This can be attributed to coming from a low-income family with reduced access to resources and the overall "Whiteness" of the educational structure (Khattri et al., 1997). The study found several areas of concern with the structures of rural schools: an absence of research addressing race with a rural setting, including research addressing community and education, and that race is absent from the rural educational structure, including curriculum, teaching staff, and overall school environment. This research is supported by the research of Probst et al. (2004) who found that the "aggregate rural statistic trend to reflect the White

population" (p. 1695). This study found that older minorities have lowest educational attainment in rural communities, and this is attributed to the political and educational systems that were in place when they were in school (Probst et al., 2004). This statement shows there is still an impact on rural communities and schools from segregation laws and policies that have been in place for decades (Probst et al., 2004). While educational structures have changed, there is still a far-reaching impact.

Males and minorities who live in rural communities across the nation have a lower rate of educational attainment than their urban counterparts, however women in rural communities tend to have a higher rate of educational attainment than males and minorities (Nicosia, 2017). Nicosia (2017) stated that "the gender divide around college may be related to a resistance among some men to uproot themselves or their families in rural communities where geographic place is often closely associated with identity for generations of people" (p. 6).

***Oklahoma Rural Schools***

Students who attend rural Oklahoma schools are faced with many challenges (Squire & Robson, 2017). Oklahoma has been struggling with limited funding for education and years of on-going cuts (Squire & Robson, 2017). Oklahoma is ranked 47$^{th}$ in the nation on spending for public education (Squire & Robson, 2017). Issues in funding are changing the face of Oklahoma schools with ongoing teacher and budget cuts, creation of more charter schools/schools of choice, additional online high school options, talks of school consolidations, and four-day school weeks (Squire & Robson, 2017). This lack of funding reduces the resources available to the schools, resulting in less resources and academic preparedness of the students (Squire & Robson, 2017). Rural communities and schools often have limited social capital that can greatly impact the students who attend them (Bryan, 2017). Social capital within schools can be understood as "social networks of students, teachers, counselors, and administrators who interact around

curricular content, guidance, resources, and values" (Bryan, 2017, p. 96). Funding issues are at the heart of current political platforms in Oklahoma. Policies, procedures, and the overall government structure within Oklahoma has been working against public education with the end result hurting the students. These issues greatly impact the social capital that rural Oklahoma students have access to that can improve their overall educational attainment from PK through higher education (Squire & Robson, 2017).

The Squire and Robson (2017) study found that school staff, parents, community members, and students feel that rural schools are not preparing students academically to attend college. By 8th grade, Oklahoma rural students lag behind the national average in reading and math (Squire & Robson, 2017). This is evident in the fact that Oklahoma rural students score lower in Math and English on state-required yearly assessments and ACT when compared to the national average (Squire & Robson, 2017). In addition, Oklahoma rural seniors are less likely to enroll in two or four-year institutions of higher education and when they do, they are more likely to drop out (Squire & Robson, 2017). This is concerning since the Squire and Robson (2017) study found that "of approximately 30 occupations projected to decline the most in Oklahoma over the next ten years, 27 of these require a high school degree or less" (p. 8). Another important factor that impacts education for Oklahoma's rural students is that one in five students in rural Oklahoma lives below the poverty line (Squire & Robson, 2017). Students who live in poverty have poorer health, fewer resources, and lower educational attainment (Squire & Robson, 2017). Squire and Robson (2017) stated that "children who grow up in poverty complete fewer years of school, earn less money, work fewer hours, receive more government aid, and are more likely to have chronic poor health than their more affluent peers" (p. 14). These concerns greatly impact rural Oklahoma students' chances of enrolling in college and graduating.

Oklahoma will be used for my study due to the high number of rural communities, rural schools, and students. In addition, Oklahoma rural communities and schools closely match the previous research on rural schools across the nation, however there is little research that centers on the impact of living in a rural Oklahoma community and attending rural schools on the overall advising process in college. Oklahoma has “513 school districts and half of the state’s 1,789 school are in rural communities” (Squire & Robson, 2017, p. 5). There needs to be additional research in this area due to the large number of students in the state that are rural (Squire & Robson, 2017). The study by Squire and Robson (2017) found in the State of Oklahoma there are 205,000 PK-12 rural students, which means that three out of four students attend a rural school. Rural schools provide education for a large portion of the state’s students, meaning that Oklahoma colleges have the opportunity to provide higher education for large number of these students, however little to no research is done on this population in Oklahoma. The lack of research impacts policies and procedures that can impact the students’ success. The Squire and Robson (2017) study found rural students report issues with having access to school counselors who provide information and support for students in developing knowledge of the college processes and lack of advising prior to college (Squire & Robson, 2017). In particular, there is a gap in research on how to provide the best college advising for this rural student population.

**Academic Advising**

Academic advisors are often the first contact a student has on campus. A good definition for academic advising “refers to the intentional interactions between students and higher education representatives that support students’ growth and success” (He & Hutson, 2016, p. 213). Academic advising is considered one of the most important connections for a student on campus, however, there is little research exploring the ways advisors address the issues of students from rural communities. Research has shown one of the most important predictors of

student success and retention is academic advising (Kuh, 2008). Kim and Feldman (2011) expressed the importance of academic advising by describing these services as a source to help students cope with the stress of the college process, including course selection and registration. College advising is the one sure connection a student can make on campus (Hatch & Garcia, 2017). “Academic advising and support services available on the campus are critical elements in a retention strategy, the academic advisement process has been called the cornerstone of student retention” (Habley, 1981, p.45). This statement stresses the importance of the academic advising relationship. Habely (1981) described the importance of academic advising with the statement:

> Academic advisement is defined as providing assistance in the mediation of dissonance between student expectations and the actualities of the educational environment. This dissonance occurs on two levels. First, students may have inaccurate or undefined expectations concerning their own educational goals and intellectual abilities. Students who are unable to define these elements will also experience difficulty in defining the value of the higher educational experience. Second, students may experience dissonance regarding the purpose of higher education. This dissonance may stem from parental, sibling, or peer pressure, or it may derive from vocational or economic consideration. (p.46)

This statement applies to the advising process with students from rural communities who often place little value on higher education (Habley, 1981). This section will include a literature review of academic advising, including terminology, and the most popular advising styles/models. Academic advising will be explored as a structural process that can have a negative impact on marginalized student populations, including the concerns of power, privilege, and oppression that can impact a successful advising relationship.

Academic advising on college campuses has changed and developed into the advising we know today as understanding college students and how their needs have grown. The first colleges within the United States looked vastly different from today (Gordon et al., 2008). Faculty were the main staff on campus and provided almost all of the services to students, including advising and instruction (Gordon et al., 2008). The student services departments we know of today did not exist. As structure and staff in institutions of higher education developed so did the services provided to students. It was not until around the 1970s that the student services departments, including academic advising, started to look like what we know today (Gordon et al., 2008). Academic advising in colleges and universities today is influenced heavily by the need to improve enrollment, retention, and graduation rates (Gordon et al., 2008). Academic advising has started to focus on the student as a whole not just the degree program the student enrolls in. Academic advising has become far more than providing just academic advising related to degrees and course selection, but now includes providing a supportive environment for the student to thrive and succeed (Gordon et al., 2008).

Creating a quality advising program "can assist students in the exploration of goals and abilities which, in turn, provides students with a firm basis for the selection of appropriate academic programs" (Habley, 1981, p. 49). Appropriate course selection that is guided by academic advising can increase a student's likelihood to persist. Academic advisors play an important role in the overall academic success of students, retention of students, career selection, retention, and even recruitment (Baer & Carr, 1985). Baer and Carr's (1985) academic advising philosophy gives four areas to guide advisors: recruit ethically, orient honestly, inform continuously, and advise developmentally. Recruitment ethically includes helping students make appropriate degree and career choices (Baer & Carr, 1985). Being an ethical recruiter also

includes appropriate recruiting practices (Baer & Carr, 1985). Baer and Carr (1985) described orient honestly as “helping students to understand and plan for the realities of their academic achievement” (p. 40). Lastly, advisors are encouraged to inform continuously, which involves open communication with students that is honest, personalized, and efficient (Baer & Carr, 1985).

It is important for advisors to understand past social movements because they demonstrate the importance and value of the diverse populations on the college campus and the impact they can have on the advising process (Patton et al., 2016). Patton et al. (2016) “advocate for its use as a lens for understanding how the intersecting identities of the individuals contribute to development and how development unfolds within the broader societal context of interlocking systems of privilege and oppression” (p. 74). Advisors benefit from using these lenses to understand the student as an individual with all of the intertwining influences that play a role in a student’s overall development and college experiences. Each student brings unique individual characteristics and background to the advising relationship. It is also vital for the advisor to acknowledge the same in themselves for there to be a beneficial and productive advising relationship.

Academic advisors must understand that the higher education process, including the advising process, reflects the cultural capital, power, privilege, and oppression structures of dominant society (Patton et al., 2016). The advisor and advisee relationship can mirror these concerns and, therefore, impact the advising relationship. Kimberle Crenshaw’s (1991) intersectionality “covers intersections of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, and other identities that locate power and privilege in some categories at the expense of members of other categories” (Patton et al., 2016, p. 74). Intersectionality assists advisors in understanding

the impact of oppression and privilege on the advising relationship. Oppression can be defined as "those attitudes, behaviors, and pervasive and systemic social arrangements by which members of one group are exploited and subordinated while members of another group are granted privileges" (Bohmer & Briggs, 1991, p. 55). Patton et al. (2016) pointed out this oppression can be intentional or unconscious and unintentional. It is also important to remember that an individual can be oppressed as a member of one group and be privileged as a member of another group (Patton et al., 2016). This issue is why it is important to understand intersectionality, including the "visible and invisible interaction of privilege and oppression" (Patton et al., 2016, p. 76). Student service personnel, including advisors, must understand the importance and impact of the systemic issues of oppression to develop an understanding of how to best serve college students. Patton et al. (2016) stated that "oppression involves institutional control, ideological domination and the impositions of the dominant group's culture on the minoritized group" (p. 76). Oppression is often not visible and is woven into the fabric of the dominant culture's society, and therefore often goes unnoticed by the dominant culture (Patton et al., 2016). Institutions of education are designed with policies and procedures that are reflective of the dominant society, including in students' services, such as advising (Patton et al., 2016).

The discussion of oppression cannot be complete without reviewing the impact of privilege on the college experience. Patton et al. (2016) described privilege as "defined in relational terms and in reference to social groups, and involves unearned benefits afforded to powerful social groups within systems of oppression" (p. 77). Patton et al. (2016) reported often the privileged class are unaware of their privileges and the advantage they have as a result of the privileges. This imbalance of power can impact the relationships between those with power and those without power, including the advising relationship. There are several types of privilege that

give one individual an advantage over another individual, such as White privilege, social class privilege, gender privilege, heterosexual privilege, ability privilege, and Christian privilege (Patton et al., 2016). Intersectionality and the impact of power and privilege can be a lens that advisors can use to understand students from rural communities who bring a variety of backgrounds and characteristics to the advising process.

### *Academic Advising Styles*

In addition to understanding issues or concerns surrounding advising college students from rural communities it is also important to understand what style of advising works best. There are two main types of academic relationships or styles: prescriptive and developmental (Fielstein, 1989). Prescriptive style is seen as the more traditional approach, which provides academic information, such as degree requirements and coursework (Fielstein, 1989). Fielstein's (1989) article defined the prescriptive approach as the "relationship between an advisor and advisee, where the advisor was seen as a kind of teacher who instructs students in academic advising matters such as registration, deciding upon a major, etc." (Fielstein, 1989, p. 33). This type of advising is more of a one-way relationship with the advisor providing information to the student and the student not actively involved in the conversation. Prescriptive advising does not lend itself to a supportive relationship that extends beyond just degree and course selection (Fielstein, 1989). This form of advising can contribute to the imbalance of power between the advisor and advisee. Due to this fact, this form of advising would not be the best fit to use with college students from rural communities.

Advisors in college can provide additional support for students outside of academic advising, such as helping to address personal issues that impact the student's life (DeLaRosby, 2017). This type of advising requires a relationship between the advisor and student. Developmental advising allows for a more personal relationship to be developed with the student

that can help counteract the factors that can have a negative impact on the advising relationship (DeLaRosby, 2017). The benefit of using developmental style of advising is that this style addresses educational and personal goals supported by the relationship between the advisor and student (Frost, 2000). Developmental advising has become the most popular advising style due to the fact that this style allows students to be viewed holistically (Creamer, 2000). This style allows the advisor to consider the student as a whole, not just the degree that they are advising towards (Creamer, 2000). Developmental advising "is a more holistic approach where a relationship is developed between student and advisor, whereas a prescriptive relationship is largely based on an advisor giving answers to academic questions" (DeLaRosby, 2017, p. 146). Developmental advising has been shown through research to be more successful with students from varying backgrounds due to the supportive relationship that can develop (DeLaRosby, 2017). This relationship is at the heart of developmental advising. This relationship of "advising developmentally means advising in a way that recognizes the unique characteristics of each student and encourages student growth" (Baer & Carr, 1985, p. 42). An additional benefit of using developmental advising is that it allows for a supportive and holistic process of advising which can be a more productive style to use when advising with rural students, who often are not familiar with the advising process. According to Fielstein (1989), the developmental approach "assists students in achieving educational as well as personal goals" (p. 34). In addition, advisors must acknowledge the individual differences of each student, including their overall goals, educational plan, and path to complete this plan (Creamer, 2000). Consideration must be given to the student's goals, dreams, and reason for seeking out academic advising (Creamer, 2000). Developmental advising is seen as the most effective form of advising to promote persistence and graduation (Daller et al., 1997). Intrusive advising is often used in conjunction with

developmental advising. Intrusive advising “requires structured strategies of interventions by advisers at specified times throughout the students’ semester in college” (Garing, 2000). This requires students to have more contact with their advisor outside of the time to enroll in classes. This developmental and intrusive advising could be beneficial to rural students by providing advising support and contact throughout the semester.

Understanding ways to improve academic advising is vital to the success of students and the institution due to the fact that “retention research suggest that an estimated 75% of college students who leave higher education institutions without obtaining a degree do so within their first two years of college” (DeLaRosby, 2017, p.146). Additionally, students who fail to persist have lower earning potential (Leppel, 2002). Students’ failure to persist impacts institutions of higher education and, according to Leppel (2002), “it takes four students who leave prior to their sophomore year to produce as much tuition revenue as one student who stays for four years” (p. 433). Students’ failure to persist wastes their time and talent, as well as resources of the institution (Terenzini et al., 2001). Research has shown that college graduates have better jobs with higher pay and benefits (Leppel, 2002). Students who persist to graduation earn a higher wage on average than students who do not persist. Institutions of higher education lose revenue in the form of tuition from students that fail to persist, and funding tied to graduation and retention rates (Leppel, 2002). Students who do not persist affect the institution's bottom line as well as graduation and retention rates. Additionally, college graduates are more likely to give back to and invest in their communities.

## Conclusion

Rural students have different characteristics and cultural capital than students from urban communities and schools. These students bring a variety of experiences to the college

environment that can be beneficial to the students in navigating the college process, including advising. However, rural students are often viewed as lacking cultural capital since the form they possess is not the dominant form of cultural capital. Rural schools and communities lack the resources of their larger counterparts, however the students attending these schools and living in these communities are often blamed for these limited resources, resulting in the student being viewed from a deficit model. The overall structure of PK-12 schools and higher education is structured around the dominant social group and their cultural capital. This results in students from the dominant social group being given an advantage based on social inequalities that educational institutions promote.

There is a large amount of research on advising in college. Advising is considered one of the most important contacts on campus and is often the first point of contact for students. However, there are gaps in the literature in viewing rural students from a non-deficit model when considering cultural capital. In addition, there is little to no research on advising college students from rural communities and the impact of cultural capital on the advising process. Also, there has been limited research on cultural reproduction and the advising process.

# Chapter 4: Research Design

This chapter discusses the qualitative inquiry methodology using the hermeneutic circle to analyze the data. Qualitative research allows the researcher freedoms not associated with other research traditions. The rigor of the research is created in the research design. Interviews were selected as the major source of data collection. This allows for the participates to fully share their experiences. I selected two universities, one urban and two rural community colleges to ensure I am representing all levels of high education in Oklahoma. The hermeneutic circle was used to analyze the data. This allowed me to spend time with the data until no new codes or themes were found. The chapter will start with a discussion of qualitative inquiry and the advantages and disadvantages to using qualitative inquiry. Next, there will be a discussion of the participants of the study, the data collection process, and data analyzes. Lastly, the chapter will include a discussion of researcher positionality, the credibility and dependability of the research, and the contribution to the field.

## Methodology

Qualitative inquiry allows for the exploration of a phenomenon through the experiences and stories of the participants (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Qualitative inquiry is an appropriate research method based on my ontological and epistemological approach that is grounded in social constructivism. Qualitative inquiry also supports the ontological position or nature of reality of the study. Ontology, epistemology, and methodology explain how I understand the world (worldview), how I interacted with participants, and how I approached writing and analyzing the data. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated that “stories are how we make sense of our experiences, how we communicate with others, and through which we understand the world around us” (p. 33-34). I explored the lived stories of academic advisors and their interactions with Native American and rural students. Using the hermeneutic approach to interpretation of the

interviews allowed me to reach a deeper understanding of the participants' stories by working through the hermeneutic circle, including allowing the participants to check their stories for accuracy. The qualitative interview process allows there to be collaboration between the researcher and participants (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Qualitative inquiry allowed me to live in the field with the participants, creating a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of interest (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The phenomenon under study was the experience of advising Native American and rural students from an advisor's lived experiences and story. The use of qualitative inquiry allowed the participants to share not only their life story but also allows for insight into how the dominant cultural, power structures, and institutional structures impact the advising process (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Qualitative inquiry epistemological assumptions center on the foundation that meaning is made from experiences as expressed through stories. My research was a qualitative inquiry ground in the epistemological approach of social constructivism theory. Qualitative inquiry allowed me to live the stories with the participants, considering the influence of the past on present and future experiences. Creswell (2014) defined social constructivism as "individuals seeking understanding of the world in which they live and work" (p. 24). Social constructivism allowed me to come to know with the participants, a co-creation of understanding and meaning between my participants and myself (Jones et al., 2014). Grounding my research in social constructivism allowed the participants and myself to co-construct meaning and understanding. Using social constructivism allowed for participants and researchers to work together to interpret the lived story and experience of the phenomenon being studied.

Ontology in qualitative inquiry is that reality is centered in the person's interactions with others and lived stories/experiences, and truth is understood from the individual's own

perspective (Jones et al., 2014). This ontological viewpoint is that there is not one reality but multiple realities that develop through individual experiences and interactions with others (Creswell, 2014). Reality is temporal with new experiences and interactions creating new realities and new ways of knowing (Jones et al., 2014). The ontology of my study is centered in the understanding that there are multiple realities that are specific to the individual, based on their past and current lived stories/experiences that can be changed by their interaction with others, creating new experiences, and new ways of knowing. The participants and I co-constructed understanding and knowledge, keeping in mind the importance of the context. Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction and Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth Model helped to guide this process. Cultural capital is an important part of the context of the lived experience of advisors in the advising process and relationship.

**Strengths and Weaknesses of Qualitative Inquiry**

It could be argued that there is no perfect methodology, one can only select what appears to be the best fit for the phenomenon under investigation and researcher style. Any methodology in qualitative research, including qualitative inquiry, has strengths and weaknesses. A weakness that I was very aware of while conducting qualitative inquiry was ethics. By saying that ethics is a weakness, I acknowledge the need to be extremely careful in how I interpreted the stories and experiences shared by my participants. I did not make assumptions about their stories but instead asked the participants to check the interpretations. Another weakness is my inability to bracket out or remove my experiences and assumptions from the research process. As mentioned above, I carefully acknowledged the role these experiences and assumptions play in my entire research process. Subjectivity has long been considered a weakness of qualitative research; however, acknowledgement and transparency can help address this area.

Data collection and analysis can appear messy and without structure. This could be a major weakness if a researcher is not deliberate, intentional, and transparent in data collection and analysis (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). A researcher must carefully design the research and note any changes that happen along the way. Data should be analyzed in an on-going process throughout the research study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The tendency to wait until the end to start organizing and analyzing data could result in information being lost or not being represented correctly, going back to the issue of ethics. Ravitch and Carl (2016) emphasized another weakness is the large amount of transcription needed to capture participants' lived experiences and stories and the labor-intensive process of converting that to data. However, this large amount of information can also be seen as a strength.

Finally, by using qualitative inquiry I carefully consider the population I worked with. Careful consideration is needed when working marginalized populations. A weakness of using qualitative inquiry is a tendency to try to give a voice to marginalized populations (Gallagher, 2008). I had to have an understanding that I am representing the meaning they give to their stories and experiences (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I had to acknowledge the power I have in the relationship as the researcher and in the relationship developed with the participant (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). It was also important to understand that my participants can be a member of one or more social groups (Gallagher, 2008). Intersectionality, race, gender, and class of each participant must be considered, including the various power structures of oppression and privilege within the institutions of higher education (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Qualitative inquiry allowed me to co-author with my participants meaning from their experiences/stories and my own. Qualitative inquiry allowed me to dig deeper into the story to develop a better understanding and knowledge about the phenomenon. Qualitative inquiry

allowed participants to give meaning to their experiences and stories. This process allowed them to connect the past and understand that the meaning is temporal, and that new experiences will change the knowing. Qualitative inquiry provided the flexibility to allow the participants to share their individual stories without attempting to control for other factors (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

There are additional limitations to this study. One limitation to the study is that only advisors in institutions located in Oklahoma were interviewed. This led to the study being limited to the demographics of the advisors and institutions of the study. If additional institutions and advisors were included there is a possibility the results could be different.

There was a total of 17 advisors who responded to the recruitment email, however I was only able to interview 15. Another weakness is that only one of these 15 advisors were male. In addition, another concern is the limited diversity among the advisors, 8 of the 15 identify as "White". Another potential limitation is that I did not look directly at advising practices but relied on the participants self-reporting. The findings to the study might differ if advising practices were addressed specifically by the advisors or director.

## Methods

### Participants

I interviewed college advisors in three Oklahoma community colleges, a regional university, and a research university. I interviewed at least two advisors at each institution. OCC1 is an urban community college but still serves rural students. OCC2 is a community college located in a rural community and serves a large number of rural students. OCC3 is another rural community college serving a large number of rural students. Interviewing advisors at each of these three community colleges gives a broader understanding of advising college students from rural communities in a community college setting. I also interviewed advisors at U1, a large research university. In addition, I interviewed advisors at another university, U2.

Interviewing advisors at the two universities allowed me to investigate the different advising practices with college students from rural communities. Interviewing advisors at different sizes of institutions allowed me to gain an understanding of the institutional difference in advising Native American and rural college students and what forms of cultural capital are valued. I interviewed 15 advisors. The participants were sampled using purposive sampling (Creswell, 2014). This sampling procedure allowed me to find participants that would find the questions interesting and relevant. There is no set protocol for sampling college advisors, therefore purposive sampling was used to ensure appropriate participants were selected.

**Data Collection**

Data was gathered from qualitative interviews with the participants. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) encourage the researcher to start data collection and analysis from the start of the research process. The data was qualitative in nature, coming from the words of the participants about their lived experiences. Interviews were the main form of data collection, however memos, contact summaries, field notes (including observation notes), and researcher journals were used to develop a richer and thicker description of the phenomenon.

Using interviews with qualitative inquiry allowed me to "gain focused insight into individuals' lived experiences: understand how participants make sense of and construct reality in relation to the phenomenon, events, engagement, or experiences in focus: and explore how individuals' experiences and perspectives relate to other study participants and perhaps prior research on similar topics" (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 146). Semi-structured interview questions were prepared in advance to guide the interviews, however additional open-ended questions allowed the participants to openly share their stories and experiences (Chan & Fung, 2013). This type of interview required the researcher to listen carefully and ask probing questions, if

warranted, to encourage the participant to expand on their experiences, going as deep into the experience as the participant was willing. This also allowed for the researcher to reach a deeper understanding of the meaning of the experiences. This type of interview style allowed the researcher and participants to reach a deeper level of conversation, thereby revealing deeper meaning and thicker descriptions of the experience. This type of interview process allowed for a relationship and open conversation to develop between the researcher and participants.

Careful consideration was given to the development of the interview questions. Ravitch and Carl (2016) gave eight characteristics and values of interview questions: relational (relationship with the participant), contextual/contextualized (multiple contexts), non-evaluative of participant's experiences/stories, person-centered, temporal, partial, subjective, and non-natural. These characteristics and values guided the development of the interview questions and analysis of the transcripts. Follow-up interviews were determined not to be needed. The participants were asked to member check, or review, the text to ensure that it accurately reflected their experience and what they were trying to say, which also supports trustworthiness of the data. Member checking refers to allowing the participants to check what was written about them, their statements, and experiences (Jones et al., 2014).

**Data Analysis**

The hermeneutic circle was used to analyze the data. The hermeneutic circle is an interpretive way to examine the data (Laverty, 2003). This process circles back and forth between the data looking at the individual parts of the experience and then looking at the parts together as a whole until no new themes, codes, or ideas are found (Laverty, 2003). Van Manen's (1990) six steps of activities for hermeneutic interpretation were followed. Step one is studying a phenomenon that is interesting to you to create commitment to the phenomenon. The second step is researching the phenomenon as it is lived, the experience of the phenomenon, reflecting as you

go. The third step is keeping focused on the essential themes of the phenomenon, not losing focus to other areas. The fourth step is writing, rewriting, and reflecting to describe the phenomenon. The fifth step is to stay oriented to the phenomenon and the lived experience. The final step is to keep balance, looking not only at the parts but the whole phenomenon and lived experience. These steps along with the hermeneutic circle guided the research from start to finish, including data collection and analysis. The interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed word for word by the researcher. This was done in an attempt to allow the researcher to capture all relevant codes and themes. Notes and memos taken during the interviews were coded and themed to add more data and trustworthiness. Transcripts were read and notes made in the margins to capture ideas and initial thoughts. The transcripts were coded and themed to highlight key concepts, reoccurring themes, and relationships. Each interview was transcribed, coded, and themed separately. The first level of coding, open coding was conducted to look for concepts or categories in the data, focusing just on the text of the interview (Yin, 2016). The next level of coding was axial coding. During this phase the open codes were placed into related categories (Jones et al., 2014). Once the related categories were found, overriding themes and relationships were interpreted using the hermeneutic circle. Max van Manen's (2007) lifeworld existential were used to guide the hermeneutic circle; these existential are spatiality (lived spaced), corporality (lived body), temporality (lived time), and relationality (lived human relation) (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) theory was used as a guide to this analyzation process. The hermeneutic circle allowed cultural capital to be considered at each stage of the analyzation process. Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth Model ensured that all forms of cultural capital were addressed. The researcher used critical challenges to constantly self-reflect on the data, reviewing and critically thinking about it until no new

information emerged (Elliott & Timulak, 2005). The data was systematically reviewed through each step of the analysis. The goal was to constantly compare the data to each other as coding and theming took place, until no more codes or themes appeared.

Memos and field notes were used to capture the researcher's thoughts and reflections. Memos are defined as notes about the researcher's thoughts during the data analysis and should be started from day one of the research process (Yin, 2016). Memos, field notes, contact summaries, and researcher journals were used to develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and to help establish trustworthiness of the study. Field notes were descriptive and emic in nature, which allowed me to capture the intended meaning of the participants from the participant's description of the phenomenon (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Bracketing was not appropriate for this study, due to the life and work experiences of the researcher, which are impossible to bracket out. Martin Heidegger (1927/1962), a theorist, found it to be impossible to leave out one's own understanding and experiences. As it was not possible for, me as the researcher, to completely bracket out my experiences and understanding of the phenomenon, every attempt was made to acknowledge these pre-understandings, experiences, and judgements prior to the research. This was done with the understanding that one cannot fully remove themselves or their experiences from the study. Another way to address pre-understanding is to use imaginative variation of meaning, which is defined as "the refusal to accept the first meaning that emerges from the data until all possible meanings have been explored" (Beech, 1999, p. 42). The data was analyzed until there were no other meanings to be found. This analysis allowed the researcher to see the patterns that emerged from the data.

In addition to establishing procedures for trustworthiness, ethical issues and concerns were also addressed. The following procedures were used to guarantee the study is ethical:

aliases were assigned to participants to ensure confidentiality; the research purpose, intent, and procedures were explicitly explained prior to starting; informed consent was obtained in writing; and all documents pertaining to participants will be kept under lock and key with only the researcher having access (Creswell, 2007).

**Researcher Positionality**

Qualitative inquiry allowed me to address the relationship between myself and the participants. Understanding and acknowledging researcher positionality and reflexivity is an important process of qualitative inquiry. Jones et al. (2014) defined positionality as "the relationship between the researcher and his or her participants and the researcher and his or her topic" (p. 26). This positionality influences the way I think about my research, my interactions with my participants, with my data, and my writing. Positionality could have a major impact on relationships with my participants. My positionality is as follows: I am a doctoral student at the University of Oklahoma in the Adult and Higher Education Program. I am from a small rural community in Eastern Oklahoma. I attended a small rural public school. I attended a rural community college, Seminole State College, and graduated with my bachelor's from the University of Central Oklahoma. My struggles with accessing appropriate advising in high school and at college, while working towards my bachelor's and master's, have influenced my desire to dig deeper into this area of interest. In addition to my personal experiences in advising, I have spent my professional career working with PK-12 students and higher education students as a counselor and advisor. I have worked extensively with students from rural and urban communities from a variety of backgrounds. The students I have worked with in PK-12 and higher education were often from underrepresented or marginalized populations.

Being from a rural community and working with rural students in PK-12 and higher education as an advisor, I cannot separate myself from my participants. These experiences have developed my interest in exploring ways to improve the advising process and overall college experiences for rural college students. I have seen first-hand the challenges facing rural college students in the advising process. For example, I worked with a student at a community college who was fearful of transferring to a larger four-year institution. The student was afraid of being able to successfully navigate the university landscape and even driving in the larger community. I can relate to this fear; I had this fear when I transferred from Seminole State College to the University of Central Oklahoma. I was afraid of getting from class to class on time, finding help when needed, and even driving around the city of Edmond.

Therefore, I situate myself in the study as a researcher, a rural college student, and an advisor. I cannot separate myself from my experiences, the research topic, or my participants. Creswell (2005) stated that a researcher should include their personal experiences in the writing process, as this adds depth and thick descriptions.

**Credibility and Dependability of Research**

Triangulation allowed for the establishment of the validity of the research (Yin, 2016). Triangulation was defined by Jones, Torres, and Arminio (2014) as “a means of confirming findings through several data collections methods” (p. 38). Memos, field journals, transcripts, and member checking were the multiple sources used as evidence to support the findings. Triangulation allowed for the research to be given credibility.

Trustworthiness was established by using the hermeneutic circle to reach complete interpretation of the data. Max van Manen (1990) gave four areas to ensure the trustworthiness of the study: orientation, strength, richness, and depth. Orientation is concerned with the immersion

of the research in the stories of the participants. Strength is accomplished when the meaning of the participants is accurately represented and portrayed. Richness is the quality of the narration of what the participants said and meant. Depth refers to how completely the text expresses the meaning of the experiences of the participants. These four areas were accounted for by allowing the participants to member check, or review, the text to ensure that it accurately reflected their experience and what they were trying to say. Member checking refers to allowing the participants to check what was written about them, their statements, and experiences (Jones et al., 2014).

**Intervention and Contribution to the Field**

College students from rural communities and Native American peoples have unique characteristics that can impact the advising process, experiences, and overall outcomes. Given the pivotal role that academic advising has on student success, it is important to explore advising of college students from rural communities. The purpose of my study was to explore the issues surrounding advising Native American and rural students from an advisor's perspective, including the role/impact of cultural reproduction and cultural capital. I interviewed college advisors to understand what areas they saw as issues in advising Native American and rural students and approaches they have used with this population. In addition, I was interested in what forms of cultural capital were given value and influenced the advising process. I explored the lived stories of academic advisors and their interactions with students from rural community schools using qualitative inquiry.

Advising has been the focus of many studies. These studies have repeatedly shown the important role of advising but there has been little research on advising college students from rural communities or the role/impact of cultural capital. Extensive research has yielded no

research from an advisor perspective on best practices and effective strategies for working with this student population. Hopefully, my study gives insight into this area of advising and assists with new ideas and strategies to improve advising services for college students from rural communities. Furthermore, this study identified what cultural capital is valued in different sizes of institutions of higher education across the state and within the advising process. I also hoped to find what forms of cultural capital rural students bring to the college experience and advising process. In addition, this study addressed these above listed gaps in research and expands understanding and knowledge of advising with this student population. I hope this study will not only lead to the creation of new practices but also lead to new areas of research to broaden the understanding of the advising processes and procedures for Native American and rural college students and the role/impact of cultural capital.

# Chapter 5: Academic Advising: Advisors' Perspective on Advising and the Role of the Institution in Advising

Academic advising is a critical piece of the college experience for students. Academic advisors are one of the first contacts a student has on campus and one of the constant contacts they have throughout the semester (Habley, 1981). Habley (1981) viewed advising as having a direct impact on the overall success of the student. Habley (1981) stated the building blocks of a successful advising session were the one-on-one relationship with the student. This relationship focuses on the student's academics, work goals, and the advisor's advising style based on student development and learning theories (Habley, 1981). This relationship can help to create a positive environment that helps to foster student success. Given the fact that an advisor can have a direct impact on a college student's success, it is important to understand the advisor's positionality, past experiences, education/training, and roles that shape their advising. Additionally, it is important to understand the institutional factors that impact the advising process.

Advising is affected by institutional conditions, policies, and procedures. Higher education is organized and structured based on the dominant cultural group, the White male model (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Yosso's (2005) research found that the "White, middle class culture" is the standard that other cultures are measured against (p. 76). As a result, the cultural capital of the White, middle class is elevated over all other forms within educational systems (Yosso, 2005). The White, middle-class cultural capital "refers to an accumulation of specific forms of knowledge, skills, and abilities that are valued by privileged groups in society" (Yosso, 2005, p. 76). This privileged group in society is the White, middle-class group. Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction of the White, middle-class groups' cultural capital places these students at an advantage and grants them the "right" to be in college (Sullivan &

Bozman, 2020). As a result, higher education contributes to the overall cultural reproduction of the dominant group by excluding those who do not have membership in the dominant group. Cultural reproduction in education refers to social assets, such as skills, norms, and educational access, which gives one an advantage and create social inequalities for those without (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Cultural capital provides access to status attainment through education (Lareau & Weininger, 2003). Advising is a part of this institutional structure and, therefore, also a part of cultural reproduction.

This chapter explores the themes surrounding advisors' roles and responsibilities, institutional conditions that shape/impact advising, and how advisors design their student support interventions around the dominant cultural capital. There is little research on understanding the advisors' roles and responsibilities of advisors from their perspective. These perspectives can influence an advisor's interaction with students. Advisors work closely with students and develop a relationship through this process (Gordon et al., 2002). Advisors can have a major impact on a student's overall success in college (Gordon et al., 2002). Additionally, advising is a part of the larger institution. The institutional conditions and structure impact advising. Patton et al. (2016) reminded us that advisors are part of higher education, which is a mirror of the ongoing cultural reproduction on campuses that contribute to the granting of power to one group over another, giving privilege to the dominant group on campus and denying access and oppressing other groups. Institutional policies and procedures work against the advisors. Advisors are made to feel responsible for graduation and retention, but there is no institutional support given to the advisors to achieve this. Lastly, the ongoing cultural reproduction that advisors are a part of results in deficit thinking and practices about students who lack these dominant forms of cultural capital.

**Advisors' Role in Student Success**

Retention and graduation rates are used to attract students and stakeholders (Higher Learning Commission, 2018). This allows institutions to increase revenue through increased student enrollment and donations from stakeholders. Graduation and retention rates are often viewed as measures of student success. College student success is broadly defined to "student success represents academic achievement, engagement in educationally purposeful activities, satisfaction, acquisitions of desired knowledge, skills, and competencies, persistence, and attainment of educational objectives"(Gordon et al., 2008, p. 68). I selected this definition because it covers all student success in college, not just academics. Student success can be hard to define, but graduation and retention rates are often considered the sign of student success as defined by the institution. Students who graduate on time are considered to be successful. Institutions of higher education value retention and graduation, particularly, a student graduating on time over a student stopping out or taking longer than four years to complete a degree (Pidgeon, 2008-2009). Graduation does not equate to job placement and job placement after graduation is not often tracked in higher education (Higher Learning Commission, 2018). Student success is defined by the dominant society, which is "measured by financial gains, which are inherently linked to educational attainment and social status" (Pidgeon, 2008-2009, p. 339). The concept of earning a degree equaling student success contributes to the reproduction of the dominant White, culture within higher education (Lareau & Weininger, 2003). It is important to keep in mind that institutions of higher education are structured off the White male model, the dominant society on college campuses (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). This results in student satisfaction being a reproduction of the dominant society and the only value given to student success is graduation, in particular, on-time graduation.

The institutional definition of student success gives privilege to "certain types of learners and behavioral norms for what a good student does" (Higher Learning Commission, 2018, p.3). These norms are set by the institution that is structured around the dominant group (Yosso, 2005). These norms are developed from the dominant group's cultural capital, which includes "cultural knowledge, skills, and abilities" that are held by the dominant group (Yosso, 2005, p. 76). Yosso (2005) stated that "the dominant groups with society are able to maintain power because access is limited to acquiring and learning strategies to use these forms of capital for social mobility" (p.76). The view of student success being reflected in graduation and retention rates is part of the White dominant culture, contributing to cultural reproduction across campus.

***Advisors' Role in Graduation and Retention Rates***

Campus administration pressures academic advisors to ensure the students they advise are retained and graduate on time. This places academic advisors in a difficult position where they are held accountable for students' success—defined as graduating on time. This definition of student success is not set by the student or the advisor but by the institution. Rachel, who identifies as Native American and female, has been an advisor at the university level for several years, stated the institution benefits from advising. She stated that "overall institutional gains are seeing graduation rates rise." But Rachel expressed that while she sees the same students for advising, there is no requirement for the student to return after the first 24 hours of successful advising. She stated that after those hours she loses contact with most students. Rachel shared that she feels graduation and retention rates are part of her job responsibilities but there is no institutional policy to help them with this responsibility. Rachel's feelings were echoed by every advisor I spoke with. The university and colleges place the burden of graduation and retention rates on the backs of the advisors, causing advisors to shift the advising sessions into staying on

track to graduation. This shift in the advising process can be harmful to the student. The students' concerns or needs may not be heard or taken into consideration if they could impact on-time graduation. All of the advisors I spoke with said they put the student first in the advising process; nevertheless, the institutions force the advisors to put the needs and wants of the institution over those of the student.

Graduation and retention rates are given a lot of attention in higher education. There is no clear indication of who is responsible for ensuring a student is retained or graduates on time. None of the advisors I spoke to reported that graduation or retention of the students they advise is part of their performance evaluation, meaning that they are not held accountable for students that are not retained or do not graduate. Yet, they seem to feel that this is a part of their job. A majority of the advisors mentioned they feel student graduation is directly tied to advising. In spite of how the advisors view their role in graduation and retention rates, after the freshman year of college or the first 24 hours of coursework, none of the institutions require that students see an advisor. The advisors feel responsible for student success and graduation but have no real connection to the majority of the students on their caseload after the freshman year. After the freshman year or 24 hours of successful course work, students are allowed to self-enroll for future semesters and there is no requirement to meet with advisors. This was found to be a standard practice at all institutions in the study. This means that advisors lose connection with a majority of students, who often do not return for future academic advising or return only if they run into a problem. Advisors are still available to students after the freshman year/first 24 hours; however, most students choose not to seek out meetings with their advisors. Several advisors mentioned that students return for advising because they want to by-pass prerequisites, want to change majors, or run into some other issue. The institutions seem to work against the advisors'

ability to impact graduation and retention rates by not requiring students to have advising past the first 24 hours of successful coursework. Fox (2008) stated that advising has the "the greatest contribution to retention" (p. 343), but little is done by the institutions to ensure students and advisors stay in contact past the first 24 hours of coursework.

Many factors can lead to students not graduating on time, such as taking unnecessary classes, changing majors, and personal issues. Ashlee, who identifies as a Black and White female, has been an advisor for two and half years. She was raised in Oklahoma and attended a community college in Oklahoma. She earned a master's degree from a university in Oklahoma, where she currently works. Ashlee stated that in her advising she has "seen students who didn't graduate on time. They were three or four semesters away from graduation because they did not seek out advising." Ashlee stated that students who do not seek out advising on a regular basis often take courses out of sequence. She also shared an experience of a student who was not enrolled in the program they were taking courses for, but this was not caught until it was time for a graduation degree check. Ashlee's statement lays responsibility on the student for not graduating on time. But, if students are not told why advising is important and how advisors can help them graduate on time, it is unfair to place all the blame on the student.

This is an example of deficit practices within higher education. Students are expected to know what they have not been exposed to. Some students might have prior knowledge and experiences in higher education, for example those who have a parent or sibling who attended college or even those who took concurrent classes in high school but others may not. The institution is designed in a way that this information is not readily available to those who do not have access. Ashlee stated that the information is out there for students to access on course sequencing, but she stated that it is not easy to locate. Again, this points to a structural flaw

within the institution that does not make information easy to access for students. Ashlee stated that most information is online now, which means a student does not have to come into the office to get that information, but she shared that it can be difficult to find that information and/or understand it. All institutions have degree sheets that show the course sequencing. These sheets are accessible to all students, but there are no descriptions of how to read them or that sometimes courses are only offered during certain semesters. This could lead to confusion for students.

Advisors are the gatekeepers of a lot of the information and can be a resource for this information to students. This places the advisors in a position of power over the student. Advising contributes to cultural reproduction by this imbalance of power and by denying students access that might not have the prior knowledge of college processes. Not graduating on time costs students time and money (Leppel, 2002). This can lead to students being discouraged and possibly lead to a student dropping out. Seeking out advising each semester is one way for a student to ensure they are taking the correct courses, meeting their personal and academic goals, and staying on track to graduate. Rose, who identifies as a White female, has been working in advising for eight years. She mentioned that students often do not know how college works but are expected to "figure it out". She shared that "students are often confused about how the college system works and they are unsure of what they need to do." For Rose, one of the major roles and responsibilities of advisors is to make sure the student is not confused and has the information they need. Rose believed one of these consequences was extending students' time on degree.

The institution's retention and graduation rates are impacted by a student's failure to graduate on time (Leppel, 2002). However, the institution does not have any requirements for students to have academic advising past the first successful 24 hours of coursework. The only

exception to this is if a student is on academic probation, meaning they have dropped out or failed several courses. Other than this exception, there is no institutional policy that promotes advising to students as a way to ensure the student is in the right degree program and making progression towards graduation.

**Advisors’ Views on Their Roles and Responsibilities to Students**

I asked advisors to share their thoughts on the role and responsibilities of advisors in the advising process. It is important to understand how advisors view their role and responsibilities in advising. Advisors can impact a student’s success in college and inform students of various resources they have access to. It is important to understand the advisor's perspective and how they function within the institution. Advisors bring personal experiences, backgrounds, degrees, and training to the advising relationship that influences advising styles and interactions with students. The advisor’s view of their role and responsibilities is influenced by these personal attributes and by the institutional policy, procedures, and demands. In later chapters, I connect advisors’ views of their role and responsibilities as a mitigating factor for successful advising of rural and Native American students.

The participants described their view of the roles and responsibilities as “advocating”, “guiding”, “helping”, “connecting”, “teaching", “intervening”, “support system”, “troubleshooting”, and “being a resource”. These terms are all related to helping the students navigate the college process. Higher education is structured in such a way that it can be difficult for some students to navigate (Higher Learning Commission, 2018). The structure contributes to culture reproduction and students without the knowledge are denied access to valuable resources. Advisors help students navigate or move through the college process in a variety of ways, such as helping them decide on a program, helping them enroll, assisting them in locating academic,

financial, and even outside resources. These services are especially important for students who are not familiar with college processes and various services available to them. For example, a student who has never been on a college campus or perhaps is a first-generation student might not know that each of these departments are separate.

Higher education contributes to the cultural reproduction of the dominant society and this reproduction is seen in the advising process (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). There seems to be an assumption that students arrive on campus knowing how to navigate college. This may be true of students who have parents or siblings that have attended college, but not all students have access to this form of capital. Advisors can be that bridge for these students, helping them gain access to this form of capital that can be useful on campus. Rachel, who has been an advisor at a large Oklahoma university for several years, stated that she views one of her roles as an "academic navigator so that the student understands how to both select classes and how to connect those right classes with their hopes and dreams and maybe suggest things that they hadn't thought of because they did not know it was a field of study. I can pick up a phone and help them with various processes." Rachel works mainly with students in their first semester. Additionally, Rachel is from a rural community in Oklahoma and identifies as Native American. She mentioned that her background makes her more sensitive to students feeling overwhelmed. Rachel's personal experiences seem to influence her interaction with students and drive to help them navigate the college process. She shared that she did not have a great experience in her undergraduate advising and that she wants to make sure her students have a better experience.

Advisors go above and beyond just providing academic advising on degrees and what courses to take. All the advisors talked about helping students navigate the college process that they believe helps students be successful. Yosso's (2005) acknowledges that advisors can be a

valuable source of navigational capital for students. Advisors who go above and beyond their advising duties become a source of capital for the student and can help the student access additional capital (Yosso, 2005). Sloan, who identifies as a White female, stated that she helps students navigate college by offering suggestions such as “have you reached out to your professor or sought out tutoring” for students who are having struggles. Sloan has been an advisor for four years. She graduated with a bachelor’s and works at a regional university in Oklahoma. She works at the university where she earned her degree. She stated she helps students make these contacts or guides them on how to have these conversations.

Kat, who identifies as a White female, had a little different view than some of the advisors. Kat’s background is a little different from the other advisors as well. She grew up in a large urban community. She attended a large university and is an adjunct professor for that university. Kat not only brings in an advisor's input but also a faculty input. She stated she helps students “move through the college process that is not a linear process.” She stated that many students come in wanting her to tell them how to get from “point A to point B,” not realizing that the college process is not that simple. From her experiences, she feels that students underestimate the degree process from first semester to graduation. She reported students do not realize classes have to be taken in sequence and that not all classes are offered each semester. She tries to “connect these dots for the student so they have a better understanding.” Advisors help students with academic related issues but also help students make connections on campus with other departments and off campus for additional needed resources.

Advisors from the study articulated their role not only as helping and guiding students in academic planning but also being a liaison for the student across campus. Rachel shared that “I am a liaison between the academic side and the student, and I help a student to plan for

academics and future." Advisors are a part of the larger educational community (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008). The educational community includes departments across campus and the student body. The advising department works with departments across campus. Advisors work closely with faculty and staff in other departments to ensure students are enrolling in the correct courses and making the needed connections on campus. All of the advisors in this study implied that the student is the center of their job and that the connections advisors can create on campus for students is invaluable. Ashlee shared that "we have over a thousand students in my area of advising." She discussed how the connections with faculty and staff allow her and her fellow advisors to better serve the students within the educational community. Ashlee's feelings of community involvement supported the idea that advisors are an important part of the overall educational community. Rachel gave further support and talked about how she feels the advising office has a "direct line" to other departments on campus. This direct line allows the advisor to help students make connections across campus. All of the advisors I interviewed reported they feel like they work well with other departments and can help students make connections with these departments as needed. Rachel stated that all she has to do is "pick up the phone and call" other departments for students. She stated this helps students know who they are going to see and helps them feel more comfortable when seeking help in other departments.

***Advisors Helping Students Make Connections on Campus***

Connections on campus has long been associated with positive student success in college. Students who make connections and build relationships are more likely to persist to graduation (Astin, 1984). At the heart of Astin's (1984) theory was the overall positive benefit of student involvement and engagement. Astin defined involvement as "the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (Astin, 1984, p. 297).

Students who feel a connection and involvement on the campus, including in the advising process, are more likely to persist (Astin, 1984).

Connections across campus play a vital role in the overall academic success of students. Helping students make connections and find resources was a responsibility shared by all advisors interviewed. Bobbi, who identifies as a Mexican and Black female, has been an academic advisor for five years, stated that “connecting students to resources and also helping them kind of take control of what it is they are doing.” Advisors find themselves placed in roles that go above academic advising. None of the advisors mentioned if they had any training to assist students with making connections or finding resources. All of the advisors I spoke with stated they tried to help students make connections with different departments as needed, but none mentioned connecting students to student activities on campus. Astin’s (1984) theory of student involvement reminds us of the importance of student involvement on campus, which includes student activities that help the student feel a part of the college community. As one of the first contacts a student has on campus this often thrusts advisors into roles outside of advising to help students make connections on campus.

It is unclear if the advisors I spoke with understand the importance of student involvement and connections on campus for students’ overall success. It appears to me that the advisors are seeing the connections as a way to improve degree completion rates. Robi, who identifies as a Native American and White female, is an advisor at a rural community college for 20 plus years, shared that she is “here to advocate for my students and be a support system.” She viewed support as a critical piece of the students’ success. All advisors mentioned the importance of an advisor helping a student graduate, seeming to imply that it is their responsibility to ensure students graduate on time. Sloan stated that her role was to “see a student

through gradation to make sure they are checking all the right boxes.” Sloan repeatedly said that her role was to help a student graduate, however checking the right boxes refers more to the institutional process of checking off classes and requirements put in place by the institution. This institutional process toward graduation refers back to the institutional definition of student success—graduating on time and “checking the boxes” along the way. Students who take a different path to graduation are seen as not being successful. The institution defines what is considered a successful student. A student who does not fit within this definition is often viewed as not being as successful (Higher Learning Commission, 2018). This deficit thinking is harmful to students who do not fall within the institution's definition. Sloan’s statement is another example of the institution placing demands on the advisors to ensure the student is checking all the boxes to graduate on time, even if it is not to the benefit of the students.

**Institutional Structure and Conditions That Shape Advising**

Institutional conditions play a role in shaping the advising process, including the advising relationship and overall services to the student. These conditions are the policies and procedures of the institution, current environment on campus, and even federal and state budget issues. The two universities used in the study are structured and organized similarly. The advising department is a department on its own. The advisors are assigned set programs to advise. The advisors do not have roles outside the advising office. The three community colleges’ structure and organization are similar to the university, just on a smaller scale. CC01 was the largest of the three community colleges. Like at the university level, the advisors were assigned specific programs to advise, however the advisors had additional responsibilities, such as participating in recruitment activities. At the other two community colleges, the advisors played many roles. The advisors in these two institutions were responsible for enrollment, advising, tracking, and helping

with recruiting efforts. At all institutions there was a department head, lead advisor, or head advisor. This person's role was similar at all institutions. The person in this position is responsible for advisor oversight, including program assignment, handling issues within the department, and coordination of training.

Advising structure and design mirrors that of the institution. Advisors must work within the constraints of the policies and procedures of the institution to serve students. Some of these policies and procedures are written and others are implied. Understanding institutional policies and procedures that impact advising is vital to successful advising. Institutions of education contribute to the reproduction of social inequalities, which in turn, allows the continuation of the power, privilege, and oppression across campuses of students who are viewed as lacking the dominant forms of capital (Patton et al., 2016). Understanding how this can impact advising and advising relationships is important because these inequalities can cause an imbalance of power between the advisor and student. This imbalance of power can have a negative impact on the advising process and relationship.

It was surprising that several advisors mentioned they had no idea about the policies and procedures of the institution and how they might relate to advising, given that advisors work under the institution's policies and procedures. Policies for this study are defined as outlining how the institutions conduct business and providing rules for the staff to follow (Paludi & Paludi, 2003). Procedures for this study are defined as the steps given by the institution for a staff member to complete their job (Paludi & Paludi, 2003). I found through conversations with the advisors and research of institutional documents that none of the institutions in the study have policies that directly relate to advising. None of the institutions’ advising departments had a set policy and procedures guide, but one institution was working on developing one. Given the

definitions of policies and procedures and the role they play in the process and structure of the institution, I would have assumed that advisors would have been at least aware of the ones that apply to the advising office. However, the majority of the advisors I spoke with had no idea. It is not clear if the institutions even have policies and procedures that are related to advising or if advisors are trained on institutional policy and procedures. All of the advisors were aware of the mission statement of the institutions they worked for, but again, none of these statements are directly related to advising. If there are institutional level policies and procedures that can shape all aspects of the advising process, such as office structure, advising sessions, and therefore overall outcomes, not knowing these guidelines could impact the advisor's job and students.

Advising offices might benefit from having policies and procedures that are tailored to the advising process. Only one of the advising offices had a mission statement in addition to the institutional ones. The mission statement stated the purpose and mission of the advising office. It is interesting that advising impacts the overall institution retention and graduation rates, but only one of the advising offices at the institutions in this study have an actual mission statement for the advising office. Without a mission statement or some type of policy and procedures guide, there might not be any alignment from advisor to advisor in how they advise or what information is typically shared with students. Another institution had a manual for the advisors to follow that gave them questions to ask the students. The advisor at this institution stated the manual is more for training purposes but does not have any standard practices, policies, and procedures of any kind. All advisors stated that they have easy access to the institution's mission statement, but not necessarily the policies and procedures. Those that did have knowledge of the institution's policies and procedures said that although they are governed by these policies and procedures, they are not sure how they apply to advising. Robi talked about an institutional policy that does

impact advising—the hours the campus is open for business. She stated that an issue is the "hours the college is open, for example a student working until five has to take off work to get here if they need to see any of the offices." She felt that this is a barrier for students to make it to campus for enrollment, advising, or any other business they need to take care of outside of attending evening classes. She also pointed out that her institution did not have many evening classes. She stated that being a community college, evening classes are just not something the college can offer many of, meaning students have fewer options if they cannot attend day classes. The fact that this small community college cannot offer many evening classes leaves students that do not fit the traditional day-model of school without options if day courses do not work for them. This continuously contributes to the reproduction of the dominant society on college campuses and creates a barrier for students who do not fit the traditional student model.

The experiences shared by the advisors I interviewed supports the idea of cultural reproduction that grants privilege to those who have membership in the dominant social group, the White, middle-class group (Yosso, 2005). The structure of higher education supports the norms of the dominant social group. This can be seen by the set office hours and with the majority of the courses being offered during the day. This practice limits access to students who do not fit within this norm and can deny them access to staff and courses if the hours they are offered do not work for the student.

Even without specific written policies and procedures, all advisors gave some procedures that impact the advising session and relationship. The first, and the one given by all advisors, is the time limit on the advising sessions and caseload. Advisors shared that advising session time limits means that advisors and their advisees might not be able to cover all concerns the student has in one advising session. Sarah, who identifies as a White female, discussed her frustration

about the following practices: “Time limits for sessions. Sometimes we have to sit down and talk about what we need to like graduation, not what the student wants to talk about, due to time limits.” Advisors are given time limits on advising sessions and a caseload, but no real direction on how to conduct the advising session. Advising session time limits were between 15-30 minutes, with the first-time advising session often being 30 minutes and additional sessions being 15 minutes. Advisors stated that it can be hard to get all of the questions answered and feel like there was a complete session in such a short amount of time. Several advisors stated that they feel pressured by administration to see as many students as possible a day, especially during the busy season. This pressure to see as many students as possible coupled with the short advising sessions left advisors feeling overwhelmed and concerned that students were not receiving all of the information they needed. In addition to the short time limits on advising, all advisors mentioned the large number of students on their caseload, making it impossible to spend much time with each student and even harder to see all students prior to the semester starting. For Sloan, the procedure of high caseload numbers and time limits impacts her interaction and how well she feels she can advise students. She shared the following thoughts:

> The time limits for sessions, especially during the first of the semester when we do walk-ins. Right now, we are scheduled appointments that are 30 mins long. It is a lot easier to take your time and prepare ahead of time if you have an appointment but that is often not the case. Being prepared allows you to understand the student's situation before they come in. Cannot do that during the walk-in time.

Sloan’s experiences with time limits and walk-in appointments is an example of the frustration shared by all of the advisors. Short advising session times was the top concern listed by the advisors as having an on impact on the advising session and relationship; this factor dramatically

shapes the overall advising experience for all students. Students without any knowledge or experience in higher education prior to college could be harmed by advisors having limited time for advising that can limit attention given to each student.

Research has shown that one-on-one contact with an advisor from the first day of enrollment until graduation improves the likelihood that a student will graduate (Gordon et al., 2008). One advisor mentioned these institutional policies result in a lot of students seeking out help only once they are in trouble, a situation that could have been avoided if there had been regular contact with an advisor. She also stated that if students would reach out before they are in trouble, they could work together to figure the situation out. However, none of the institutions in the study require contact with the advisor after the first two semesters. In addition, as mentioned above, the advisor feels responsible for student graduation but there is little contact after the first two semesters. All of the advisors mentioned that they reach out to students but the majority of students do not seek out advising after the first two required semesters unless they run into an issue with enrollment in courses, want to change majors, or if they run into a credit issue to graduate. The institutional policies do not require additional advising; therefore, advisors have no way to ensure contact with students. This limited requirement results in advisors not having a way to help students unless the student reaches out for help. This results in a student not being aware of the resources on campus they have access to. Advisors struggle with the high demands placed on them by the institution to see as many students as possible. The policy of shortened advising sessions and the pressure to see as many students as possible leaves the student at a disadvantage. While some students do not need a long advising session others might. Each student is an individual and brings individual differences and concerns to the advising session. This can result in a student leaving the advising session without receiving the information or

resources needed. For some students this might not be an issue but for some, especially those that have no prior knowledge of college, the student may not receive all the information they needed. This is another example of cultural reproduction within higher education. Students who do not fit into the dominant student model are often harmed by the institutional cultural reproduction of the dominant group.

Even though I interviewed advisors at different institutions that vary dramatically in size of the campus, number of departments, number of advisors, and size of the surrounding community, all advisors reported the same concern about institutional policies, procedures, and structure of the institution's impact on advising. The similarities between institutions, regardless of size, supports the idea that institutions of higher education contribute to the continued cultural reproduction of the dominant, White society. All of the institutions are very similar in overall structure, just vary in size, number of departments, and staff.

***Oklahoma Budget Impacts on Advising***

The budget cuts for higher education in Oklahoma was addressed by advisors. Budget cuts are impacting the number of faculty; as a result, this impacts the courses offered, which can impact when a student can graduate. No money for raises results in a high turnover of student services staff, including advisors, financial aid workers, admissions staff, and other areas that provide direct services to students. Ashlee shared that the “lack of faculty, we cannot offer every class every semester.” Ashlee stated that “not all courses can be offered each semester, some are just offered for example in the fall and if you miss out because the class is full and you were to graduate in the spring, you now have to delay graduation.” When asked if she thinks this leads to students not graduating, she said she is not sure she has not seen that yet but feels it could. For her it is frustrating “when you are looking at delaying someone’s graduation because they did

everything they were supposed to but couldn't offer everything that they need." Institutional budget issues have led to reduced staff across campus, including faculty. In addition to concerns over being able to support walk-ins as effectively as the other students on their caseload, Randi, who identifies as a White female, shared her concerns on the high turnover in the advising office:

> There has been a lot of change, some good and some bad. I would say the caseload is probably the most difficult. Also, turnover, which it's kind of typical for this job but it makes it difficult because you are always constantly having to train somebody new. You have different roles temporarily and a larger caseload during the transition. So, then the caseload on top of our already pretty heavy caseload, it… it's difficult.

Institutional conditions and structure can have a negative impact on student success by placing heavy burdens on the advisors, thereby limiting their time and attention for each individual student. This leads to frustration for advisors and, they report, of the students they serve. Becky, who identifies as Caucasian female, discussed her experiences in her advising office:

> We are the stepchildren, but we are the gateway to the college. We have a high burnout rate, with caseload, time limits, and low pay. The caseload is heavy, but our director is great and knows that it is, she does what she can with the budget and resources given by the college. Sessions are 30 minutes; we cram as much in as we can into that 30 minutes. There are practices that hinder, but there are ethical ways to get around them, but not everyone knows how to work through them and some we cannot, like if a student gets an F and comes to us about it.

Becky appreciates that her director does what she can to support and access additional resources for the advising office, but she is hindered by institutional policies and procedures. Becky appears to feel that the advising office is one of the last to receive any sort of resources from

college administration, however they are one of the best supports and points of contact for students on campus needing help with academics. She also pointed out that the advising office has a direct impact on graduation rates but feels the office is largely ignored by upper administration. She did not feel comfortable sharing her ethical work-around of the institution's policies and procedures and spoke in a very quiet voice when discussing this area. She felt uncomfortable talking about this but seemed to feel it was important to share. When asked if she was uncomfortable with the topics we were discussing, she stated not at all, but it is not something we talk about. This makes me wonder if there are other advisors that have ways to work around the policies and procedures of the institutions but perhaps are not comfortable disclosing this practice.

Institutional policy and procedures are similar across the institutions of the study, regardless of the size. The result is that culture reproduction is similar on each campus. These conditions, policies, and procedures result in a similar cultural reproduction of conditions, policies, and procedures on higher education campuses no matter the size or location. A student who does not fit into the dominant culture's idea of what a college student looks like would face the same institutional barriers regardless of institution type. Rural and Native American students, who often do not fit this model, are placed at a disadvantage in the advising process.

**Deficit Practices in Academic Advising**

Advisors see themselves in the helping and guiding role when working with students, this role appears to lend itself to viewing students from a deficit frame of mind. None of the advisors addressed the imbalance of power that can be produced in the advising relationship. Advisors are placed in the role of power and authority by the institution. Bourdieu’s cultural reproduction tells us that institutions of higher education reflect the social inequalities of society (Bourdieu &

Passeron, 1977). The institutions of higher education decide who has the power and what cultural capital is valued (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) also stated this imbalance of power is often hidden within the structure of the institution. Advising is not immune to the institutional power structure. Advisors work under the policies and procedures of their institution. It is unclear if the advisors interviewed are aware of this imbalance of power that they have over students they advise. It would not be surprising if advisors are not aware of the imbalance of power. Gerwirtz and Cribb (2009) stated that institutions of education conceal the institution's role in social inequalities by "masquerading as natural and universal" (p.144). This is an area that warrants future investigations given the overall importance of power within relationships, including the advising relationship.

Academic advising is influenced by advisors' personal experiences and background, including education, both PK-12 and higher education. In addition, institutional policies and procedures impact how advising sessions are designed and carried out. These issues can lead to deficit practices and thinking. Many of the participants made reference to deficit thinking and practices, such as when Ann stated that she viewed a successful advising relationship as "when a student graduates and on time, our goal is to graduate in two years and then transfer to a four year or enter the job field," while there was no indication in her interview that would leave me to believe this was a deliberate dismissal of other students. This practice lends itself to deficit thinking by leaving out students who do not fit within this structure. This idea leaves out non-traditional students who might be returning to college in an attempt to complete their degree after an absence. Higher education is a reproduction of the dominant culture (Dalal, 2016). This reproduction is present in the policies and procedures of the institution, including the advising process. The participants all included graduation on time in their description of what is

considered a successful advising session. The institutions focus heavily on graduation on time and this has trickled down to the advising session. The institutions and advisors have assigned value to on time graduation, not considering the different situation of each student that could lead to not graduating in perceived on-time track but might be on time for the student. Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction reminds us that the dominant culture assigns value, including what is considered a successful advising session (Bourdieu's & Passeron, 1977). This can result in an advisor unintentionally viewing a student who does not fit within the dominant cultural guidelines and values as not being successful in pursuit of their college career.

An additional area that seems to have deficit thinking or practices is when the advisors spoke about the expectations they have for students coming into higher education. The advisors listed several expectations for students. Again, these expectations are developed and given value by the dominant culture and give no consideration to the individual students' culture. These students are viewed as not having the dominant cultural capital, which is then seen as limiting their access to resources needed to be successful in college. This train of thought also indicates the student might not be able to have a successful advising process, since they are viewed from a deficit model. Cultural reproduction and deficit practices in advising of Native American and rural students will be explored in the following chapters.

## Conclusion

Institutional structure, policies, and procedures have an impact on the advisors' ability to perform their job, thereby directly impacting students. Higher education is structured around the White, middle-class male model, including the advising office. Higher education contributes to the reproduction of the dominant culture and devaluing anyone who does not have access to this form of culture. This process strips away the individual students' culture and forms of capital

they bring to higher education and the advising process. This leads to these students being viewed from a deficit model that can hinder a student's academic and personal growth. Higher education also determines what student success is. Student success is defined by the dominant culture and is viewed as on-time graduation. Earning a degree is giving value as the means to increasing socioeconomic status and financial gains, again set by the dominant culture. This means that students' actual goals and views of what is successful for them are dismissed as not being important or of value. In the advising process a student who is not moving towards on-time graduation is not seen as being successful.

The study found that advisors are very frustrated by the large caseload and time limits for each advising session. These two factors appear to limit student access to advisors. The advisors mentioned that the large caseloads and short advising sessions result in not having enough time with each student to ensure the student has the information needed. This could result in a student leaving an advising session without all the information needed to make decisions on their academic path. The institutional pressure to see as many students as possible can have negative impacts on the students and the overall advising relationship. Several advisors mentioned the large caseloads and pressure to see as many students as possible leads to high turnover in the advising offices, resulting in students having to change advisors.

Advisors must work within the constraints of the institution they work at. These constraints give power to the advisor over the student. The dominant society's forms of capital are the only forms given value within higher education, leading to those without those particular forms of capital being viewed as lacking or at a disadvantage in college. This leads to students with other forms of capital that differ from the socially accepted forms being viewed from a deficit model. The advisors in the study did not directly address cultural capital but did mention

areas that are considered helpful for students, such as parental support, access to advanced academics in high school, leading to being academically prepared for college, and access to resources such as technology.

Additionally, advisors in the study feel responsible for student graduation rates, however the institution works against them in this area. At all of the institutions in the study, students were only required to see an advisor for the freshman year or the first 24 hours. After this requirement is met the student is allowed to self-enroll and not required to meet with an advisor. The advisors in this study all reported that even though they are not directly held accountable for the graduation of their students they feel they are by the pressure placed on them. However, they do not have the tools or continued required access to students to ensure this is happening.

Finally, there does not appear to be an understanding among the advisors I spoke with about the deficit practices in advising. While there is no evidence among the advisors in this study that they are intentionally viewing students from a deficit model, the overall institutional structure, policies, and procedures contribute to this practice. Higher education is structured on the White, middle-class male model that devalues any other form of culture. Advising is a product of this model as well. This power and privilege are often hidden within the structure of the institution (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Without knowing it, advisors in this study are contributing to the cultural reproduction of the dominant society. Most of the advisors of the study made statements about viewing students all the same or as a blank slate and believing that student success is on-time graduation. I believe this is unintentionally done by the advisors in this study, however, this still can harm the students with different forms of capital. This practice dismisses the individual student's culture, forms of capital, beliefs, and values. Yosso (2005)

gave us a model that advisors can use to give value to students' forms of capital that differ from the dominant form of capital.

# Chapter 6: Advisors' Practices that Contribute to Cultural Reproduction in Advising Rural Students

Rural students bring unique characteristics, experiences, and forms of capital, including cultural capital to the college experience. These forms of capital differ from the widely accepted dominant forms of capital. These characteristics, experiences, and forms of capital can play a role in the success of the advising relationship and of the overall student experiences in college.

The U.S. Census Bureau definition of rural communities is a community with 2,500 or fewer residents (U.S Census Bureau, 2006). In Oklahoma, residents of rural communities mainly identify as White or Native American, and sometimes both (Dewees & Marks, 2017). Over half of the students enrolled in PK-12 in Oklahoma are from rural communities (Squire & Robson, 2017). Yet, only 17% of students from rural communities earn a bachelor's degree (Aud et al., 2010). There is a large gap in research on rural students in college and none that look at advising and the impact of cultural reproduction.

Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction is used in this study to understand the role cultural reproduction plays in advising rural students (1977). Rural students are often viewed as lacking the dominant forms of capital simply because they are from a rural community. While this applies to some students, making this a universal assumption that applies to all rural students is incorrect. Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction implies that students are not able to be as successful in college if they lack the dominant forms of capital (1977). Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth model offsets the deficit practice of Bourdieu's theory by allowing non-dominant forms of capital to be given value in the college setting.

This chapter explores the advisor's perspective of advising rural students and the role of cultural reproduction in the advising process. This chapter will examine advisors' understanding

of rural students, advisors' role in cultural reproduction, and deficit practices when advising rural students.

**Advisors' Perceptions of Rural Community and Students**

Advisors were asked to define what "rural" means to them. This definition helps to understand how advisors view rural students and how that impacts their advising process. During the interviews, I asked the advisors to define, in their own words, what is a "rural community." Their self-definitions helped me better understand the assumptions they carry about rural college students. The participants described a rural community by using the words and/or phrases like "outside of a major metropolitan area," "small high schools," "scattered populations," "small town," "one stoplight and/or one grocery store," "small population," and "located a far distance from the city." These descriptors of rural community show that advisors only focus on the size of the town and seem to view the small size as a negative. These descriptors could be considered a negative way to describe a rural town, alluding that they are inferior to larger, more urban towns or that students from these communities are somehow inferior to their counterparts in large cities. Kat, who attended an urban high school, works at the university-level at U2, shared that from her perception rural students come from "small, tight-knit communities and college is overwhelming to the student." She went on to describe rural students as "being overwhelmed the minute they step on campus because they are uncomfortable with the size of the campus." The danger in this statement is that Kat is applying her limited experiences with rural students to all rural students. Making such generalizations is harmful to a student because this can lead to the advisor imposing misconceptions on the student. Rose, who attended a rural high school, shared her thoughts on rural students with the comment that the students from rural communities are not "exposed to college or college recruiters," which is a generalization that rural students have no

knowledge of college and unfairly places a student at a deficit. This results in students from rural communities being treated as inferior to their urban peers simply because they come from a rural community. Rachel, an advisor at U1 and who also graduated from a rural high school, indicated that rural students are not as prepared to transition to a large college campus. She said, “Big city students have access to more stuff within the community,” suggesting that these students have an advantage on a larger college campus. If an advisor views urban community as superior to rural communities, a student from a rural community is viewed as being at a disadvantage before even walking into the advising session.

***Different Advisors’ Perceptions of Rural Students Based on Institutional Size***

In Oklahoma, a large portion of the state is rural communities with 513 of the 1,789 school districts in the state being rural and about 205,000 students attending these rural schools (Squire & Robson, 2017). This is a large portion of students that are underrepresented in research in the state and a large number of students that have the potential to enter college. Advisors need to be knowledgeable of how to best serve these students. Advisors at different sizes of institutions have different perceptions of what rural is and rural students.

The advisors at the large institutions of the study struggled to define rural or share their experiences with rural students. Sarah grew up in a very large, urban community outside of Oklahoma. She has been an advisor for six years, about four of those in Oklahoma. She explained she knows little about rural areas in Oklahoma and is unaware of whether her students are from rural areas. She is an advisor at U1, a large university in the study. She said that her lack of knowledge about what is rural was not something she had really ever thought about. This speaks to the fact that as an advisor Sarah is not aware of any rural students she serves and therefore cannot consider any forms of capital the students might possess. She also mentioned

that she "treats all students alike". Treating all students alike is a dangerous practice and can result in the student being forced into a role that is harmful to them. This could impact her interaction with students and result in a compromised interaction with the rural student that does not meet the student's needs.

I also found that advisors at the large institutions, U1, U2, and OCC1, often reported that rural students are first-generation. While research does support that a high number of rural students are first-generation, not all rural students fall into this category (Pini & Bhopal, 2017). Randi, who identifies as a White female and attended an urban high school, is an advisor at U2 and shared that she "figures most rural students are first-generation." In addition to Randi's perceptions, Rachel, an advisor at U1, shared the same thoughts with her statement that "they are often first-generation with no one to turn to when in college for help." Rachel went on to say that rural students do not have parent support, even though research has upheld that rural students do have parental support (Provasnik et al., 2017). These examples show that advisors I spoke with that work at larger institutions have limited knowledge and experiences with rural students.

Advisors at the larger institutions in the study did not report knowing much about rural Oklahoma or rural students. This could result in rural students being underserved in the advising process. I found that institutional size appears to attract different types of advisors. The advisors I spoke with at the larger institutions were all from larger, urban high schools and lived in larger communities. While the advisors at the two smaller community colleges were more likely to have attended smaller high schools and lived in the community where they worked.

***Advisors' Knowledge of Student Demographics During Advising***

In addition, I found it important to know if the advisors I spoke with were even aware which students were from a rural community or any other demographic of the student.

Understanding where a student comes from can help guide advisors in the advising process to meet the needs of each individual student. Student demographics are an important piece of the advising process and relationship. I found that the advisors in this study do not access any student demographics to aid the advising process, even though they all report having access to this information. I asked the same advisors if they knew if the students they advised were from rural communities. Only the advisors at the OCC2 and OCC3, the two small community colleges had any idea about the number of rural students they serve. Robi, an advisor at OCC3, commented that she thought about "30% of their students were from rural schools but this number did not include the high school students they serve in concurrent courses that are mainly rural schools." Bobi, an advisor at OCC2, shared that she thought "about 80% of their students were from the surrounding rural communities." She also said that this was a guess as they did not really track that information in their student database.

Most advisors stated they did not have easy access to the students' demographic data that would indicate whether or not someone was from a rural community. My research of the available demographic data of the institutions of the study found this information is not tracked or, if it is, it is not shared publicly for advisors or stakeholders. As a result, advisors only found this information if they looked up the students' high school on the transcript (this would require the advisor to know if a town was considered rural) or if the student self-discloses. Advisors generally only learned about a student's community if the student disclosed this information during an advising section. Ashlee did share that she could find out if she wanted by looking at the high school transcript and enrollment information but chooses not to and relies solely on the student to disclose if this is important to them. Ashlee's statement shows that, intentional or not, advisors are dismissing rural students' capital as not being important or even being a hindrance to

the student since they do not possess the dominant forms of capital. Rose, who is from a rural community, said that she could find most of that information but "makes conversations to get their background." How Rose gains access to this information—conversation—is similar to how other advisors find out this information, only if it comes up in conversation. However, none of the advisors stated they make a point of trying to find out this information. These indifferences shown by advisors reflect how a student's prior residential experiences are ignored in the advising process.

Advisors did not seem concerned that they could not access this portion of a student's demographic record in order to properly serve their needs. Billie, who identifies as a Black female, is not from Oklahoma, and attended a large, urban high school. She has been an advisor for almost three years and has taught a few freshman-level courses. She said she has little knowledge of rural Oklahoma. She also shared she does not know any demographics of students she advises, unless they tell her. She did state that "I do not really have access to that information that is easy to access, it is there but I would have to dig for it and I do not really have time to do that." I do not think Billie was intentionally ignoring the importance of understanding a student's demographics, including if the student identifies as Native American or is a rural student. It seems that she just did not really understand why that piece of information would be important to the advising process. It appears that most advisors do not really understand that students from rural communities are a student population that could, depending on the student, need additional or differently tailored support.

There does not appear to be an easy way for advisors to access demographics information about students, even though the information is in the student database system. This could be due to time limits of the advising session or lack of understanding of the importance of the rural

culture by the advisor. This is an example of how the institution is designed to consider only the forms of capital that are valued, that of the White, middle-class society. The forms of educational attainment that the participants of the study gave value to were GPA's and other academic performance history. Advisors have easy access to this information. From my own experience as an advisor and the information shared by the advisors of this study, GPA's are clearly marked and accessible on the student databases. This is an example of how the forms of capital that are given higher values are easy to find for advisors, while other forms of capital are hidden away in the student database system.

***Advisors' Assumptions, Expectations, and Misconceptions of Rural Students***

In addition, the advisors I spoke with have assumptions and/or expectations for students entering college that are a product of cultural reproduction. Ann, who identifies as a Native American female from a rural community, shared her expectations for students in the statement of "expectations for how to behave in class, study skills, and some idea about their degree." This statement alludes to the idea that all students should have the access and opportunity to develop knowledge of higher education prior to entering college. This expectation is developed from the misunderstanding that all students have equal access to this information. Yosso (2005) reminded us that Bourdieu's theory exposed the "White, middle class culture as the standard, and therefore all other forms and expressions of "culture" are judged in comparison to this norm" (p. 76). Advisors are unintentionally comparing all students to the norms and standards set by the privileged group in society. This results in the advising process being tailored to this privileged group, setting other students up for perceived failure if they cannot become a part of the elite group. The process gives advisors a very small, narrow understanding of valuable forms of cultural capital, limiting the advisors' understanding of other forms of capital and their values.

This allows the advisors to assign value to the dominant forms of capital without really even being aware of it. In doing so, advisors devalue other forms of capital that can be used to improve the likelihood of college success. The advisors of this study reported not being aware if the students are from a rural community, identify as Native American, or any other cultural identification that might be of value to the student. While students from rural communities have different forms of capital, they still have capital that is of value. Advisors that do not understand these forms of capital can actually harm the student in the advising process. Students may feel they are not being understood or heard. Advisors may be making assumptions about the student, offering services a student does not need, or not offering services the student needs. An example of the assumptions made by advisors was shared by Sarah. Sarah shared that rural communities have “small high schools.” She went on to share that she thought that these small, high schools often have fewer resources for rural students. Her discussion on this topic seemed to place the burden on the student for any perceived lack of resources as a result of attending a small rural school. This is another example of an advisor's limited knowledge about rural communities and the different forms of capital rural students possess. This limited knowledge on part of the advisors is placed on the backs of the rural students, consequently the students are held responsible.

**Advisors’ Understanding of Rural Students’ Forms of Cultural Capital**

I found that advisors working in the smaller community colleges, OCC2 and OCC3, or advisors that come from a rural community seemed to have a better understanding of the benefits to the student. These benefits are forms of capital, the advisors just did not use that language, instead it was referred to as support or benefits. Advisors at the two rural community colleges, OCC2 and OCC3, had a better understanding of rural communities and students from these

communities. The advisors I spoke with that worked at the two rural community colleges often had a connection to that college and/or community. Most either graduated from the community college or lived in the community or sometimes both. These factors could be why advisors at these two institutions have a better understanding of what rural is and the students from these communities.

Not having a clear understanding of what rural is and whether students they advise are from rural communities can hinder advising. Advisors' lack of understanding of rural students could harm the student. If the student does not have the dominant forms of capital, the student is viewed as being at a disadvantage. This could result in advisors viewing students from rural communities as missing capital that can be useful in college. This process also punishes the students without dominant forms of capital that are given such high value in higher education. The advisors in the study appeared to believe that rural communities and students are lacking resources and, without directly saying it, they are implying these students do not have the dominant form of capital, therefore the student is viewed from a deficit model.

There appears to be a universally accepted view of what a college student is as defined by higher education (Gewirtz & Cribbs, 2006). This definition is hard to define but in general a college student is modeled after the White, middle-class male model, meaning a student with financial resources, good grades, who attended a prestigious high school, and/or with access to elite status culture (Lareau & Weiginger, 2003). This leads to students who do not fit this definition as being considered at a deficit. This deficit model led to advisors in this study to treat rural students “like all other students” and viewing the students as lacking for not fitting this preconceived role. This practice harms the student, which can result in the student being underserved. Yosso’s (2005) model of Community Cultural Wealth Model demonstrates that all

students have forms of capital that can be used to empower the student in the college process. The common practice of viewing these students from a deficit model strips away these forms of capital. Research has shown that deficit models of thinking can reproduce the dominant culture by ignoring the forms of capital that rural students possess that are different from the dominant forms (Yosso, 2005). This is also a representation of the reproduction of the dominant culture embedded in the culture of the institution. Advisors in the study did not give value to the forms of capital that rural students possess. The forms of capital valued by the advisors I spoke with were tied to academic achievement and prior knowledge of the college process before entering college. Rose's perception of rural students was that "they do not know what to expect of college and advising." Another example of misconception of rural students was shared by Sarah, an advisor at U1. From her experiences with rural students she shared that "they come from schools without resources and the students are not ready for college." The experiences shared by the advisors I interviewed show there is a perception that rural students are often first-generation, have no prior knowledge about college, and are not academically prepared to enter college. This is part of the issue of deficit practices in advising.

By not acknowledging that rural students have forms of capital that are of value, advisors may not be providing the services a rural student needs. It is unclear if most of the advisors are even aware that they are ignoring the forms of capital that rural students have or the role they can play in a student's college success. By understanding these forms of capital advisors can adjust advising practices to better serve rural students.

**Cultural Reproduction in Advising Rural Students**

The educational system is structured off the dominant society and gives power and value to the dominant society's forms of capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). According to Bourdieu

and Passeron (1977), higher education places value on the forms of cultural capital tied to status attainment. This status attainment includes educational attainment, such as high GPA's, attending prestigious high schools, financial status, and prior knowledge of college gained through one's network. Rose described how rural students are viewed as lacking the dominant forms of capital but stated that "rural students are often poor and not ready for college." This suggests that students who are low-income and are perceived to not be "ready for college" do not have the forms of cultural capital that could help them be successful in college. This is another example of the role of cultural reproduction in advising. Danna, who identifies as a White female who attended an urban high school, is an advisor at OCC2, commented that "rural students often lack financial resources." Again, this shows advisors seem to have the view that all rural students lack financial capital. Students without one or more of these academic attainments find themselves on the outside looking in on higher education. These students are placed in a position of being at fault (Yosso, 2005). Additionally, these students are viewed as not as likely to be as successful, which results in the student not receiving the same time and effort from staff (Yosso, 2005). Yosso (2005) told us that "educators most often assume that schools work and that students, parents, and community need to change to conform to this already effective and equitable system" (p. 75). Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) theory of cultural reproduction asserted students without the dominant forms of capital are automatically excluded from higher education. This practice requires a student to change factors they have no control over and often cannot change. This leads to advisors ignoring experiences and cultural capital that rural students have and creates an imbalance of power between the advisor and student. This process hinders the advising process and can leave students feeling like they are not heard or being forced into fitting into the dominant culture. This can also lead to the student

feeling devalued and possibly not seeking out advising. This can lead to advisors missing the opportunity to best serve rural students. By understanding that all forms of capital have value and can be used by the student to overcome the educational barriers placed before them by the institution, advisors can use this knowledge to help students activate their capital.

Yosso's (2005) model challenged Bourdieu's view of reproduction of cultural capital by acknowledging the various forms of other capital that are valuable to students. However, at this time, the advising process is currently structured around the White, middle-class male model that continues the cultural reproduction of the dominant society's cultural capital. This reproduction continues the oppression and devaluing of students who lack the dominant forms of capital. This practice leads to advisors viewing students who lack the dominant forms of capital as being at fault and being at a disadvantage in college. This view contributes to the deficit thinking that is common on campuses across higher education for students who do not have the dominant forms of capital. The result of cultural reproduction in advising is that rural students may succumb to the reproductive forces they feel they have no control over. This could lead to rural students leaving college all together.

Understanding the background, culture, and capital students from rural communities possess is important to the advising process and relationship. The advisors in this study reported not being aware if the students are from a rural community, identify as Native American, or any other cultural identification that might be of value to the student. Rural students have forms of capital that are beneficial to them in moving through college and can contribute to their success. But advisors that have no knowledge of this could harm students by being dismissive or assuming the student is lacking resources or skills. Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth Model reminds us that all students have some form of capital that is of value. As an advisor it is

important to understand and acknowledge that not all students possess the dominant form of capital, however they have their own forms that are just as important. Yosso's (2005) model counteracts Bourdieu's theory that contributes to the assumption that students without the dominant forms of capital are at a disadvantage. In addition, Yosso's theory challenges Bourdieu's theory that gives power to the White, middle-class culture as the one of value (Yosso, 2005). If advisors do not have the knowledge of the demographics of the students they serve, then they cannot consider the cultural differences and capital the student brings to the advising relationship and process. If advisors understand the demographics of these students, they can use this knowledge to help adjust the advising to that individual student. Advising practices in higher education need to move away from the one size fits all advising. All of the advisors of this study stated that they "treat all students the same" or "see all students the same." Instead of treating all students the same, advisors need to treat each student as an individual with individual needs and goals.

**Deficit Practices in Advising Rural Students**

Higher education is structured on and contributes to the reproduction of the dominant society's forms of capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Advisors are a part of the institution and the reproduction process, as a result a student with other forms of capital are devalued. This means that students are forced into a role that is not comfortable to them or if they refuse to conform to the dominant culture and values of the dominant culture, they may not seek out advising or, even worse, they may leave college altogether. The forms of capital that are valued are normed within the dominant culture (Yosso, 2005). Patton et al. (2016) stated that "Bourdieu's work mirrors an underlying assumption rooted in much of the literature on low-income and working-class students: that is, they enter college as disadvantaged or lacking in

some capacity" (p. 254). This statement highlights the practice of giving value to the dominant forms of capital over others. Additionally, this statement underlies the concern whether advisors are ignoring rural students' capital that they bring to college that can help them be successful.

Study participants did not see themselves as intentionally harming or marginalizing students. To the contrary, advisors all expressed how they cared about their students. In the process of "caring" for their students, advisors also harmed them. This harm, even though it was considered to be care, was expressed through advisors ignoring the importance of understanding an individual student's culture, cultural capital, beliefs, and values, which represents the workings of symbolic violence (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Elevating one form of culture over others, homogenizing a diverse group of students into one monolith with singular needs, or devaluing the unique experiences students from underrepresented backgrounds bring to the educational experiences are all indicative of cultural reproduction. When college advisors minimize the importance of a student's community, they uplift the dominant group.

Understanding a student's cultural capital and what a student values is information that could play a valuable role in the development and success of the advising relationship and process. Yosso (2005) told us that strong community support is a form of capital that students bring to college. Rural communities often have strong connections among the people that live there and strongly support the local school. Byun, Meece, and Irvin (2012) lend support to this notion with their statement that "rural communities often are characterized as high in social resources or capital due to their small size and strong connections among families, schools, and religious institutions" (p. 2). Small rural communities provide support that is a valuable resource to the students that attend the local schools and should be considered a form of capital (Byun et al., 2012). Advisors could be unknowingly harming their students by not appreciating the forms

of cultural capital that rural students have, instead trying to impose the dominant forms of capital on them. If the student does not have these dominant forms of capital, the student is viewed as being at a disadvantage.

Advisors from the two small rural communities, OCC2 and OCC3, were aware of the benefits associated with rural communities. Working in rural communities as advisors seemed to give them a stronger sense of how rural communities impact the college experience. Robi is an advisor at OCC2 and lives in a rural community. She also attended a small, rural public school. Robi reported "those from rural towns have different cultural factors." She shared these cultural factors as having a strong sense of community and, often, strong religious ties. Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth model gives value to these forms of capital. This allows students from rural communities that may not have the dominant forms of capital to activate their forms of capital as a resource to help them in college. Robi's personal and professional experiences play a role in her understanding of the culture and forms of capital that rural students bring to college. She does not view rural students as lacking due to the fact that they live in a rural community. While the advisors appear to understand some of the cultural capital associated with small rural communities, they most often do not translate that valuable forms of cultural capital for students.

There is evidence that some advisors are viewing rural students from a deficit mindset. Madison stated that coming to a large university where "you do not know anyone where the campus and community are huge can be scary." This idea lends itself to the idea that students from rural communities cannot adjust to the larger campus and may not be successful. This is evidence of the continual cultural reproduction of the dominant society's forms of capital. Madison's statement suggests rural students cannot adjust to a larger community and that they

have little experience in larger communities. This places a rural student in a position to be viewed differently than students from urban communities. This is an example of the dangerous practice of advisors making assumptions about a student and assigning roles that do not fit.

Another advisor mentioned rural students may not have experience with students that are not “like them.” Ashlee shared that, in her opinion, “the size of the campus can be overwhelming, also maybe the student has not been exposed to people who are not like them, that can be a challenge.” Ashlee’s statement suggests rural students cannot successfully interact with students that differ from the populations in their rural communities. This assumption seems to imply that all rural communities are the same. This simply is not true. Rural communities vary in size, economic resources, and community member’s demographics, such as race, ethnicity, religion, and economic status.

Cultural shock is another term many advisors assign to rural students. Kat shared her understanding of rural students with the statement, “I think there is some culture shock about everything, the size of the campus and community, it can be overwhelming.” Madison felt the culture shock for rural students may be an issue in the college and advising process. She stated that “they come from a really small town and may not have been around others from different backgrounds, such as international students.” Some of the advisors in this study appear to unknowingly contribute to the oppression of rural students who may not have access to the dominant forms of capital.

Yosso’s (2005) research has shown that students who live in small, rural communities and attend small, rural schools have several forms of capital that are of value. Yosso’s (2005) forms of capital included aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant. These forms of capital differ from the institutionally accepted dominant forms of capital, which

results in students from rural communities being viewed as entering college at a disadvantage. This practice dismisses the forms of capital rural students possess. The impact of this practice can be long reaching and even result in a rural student leaving college. Ashlee has experienced students from rural communities struggling with cultural shock. She stated,

> I think the size of the campus can be overwhelming, also the student may not have been exposed to people who aren't like them, that can be challenging. There are different races and religions they might not have encountered before. It can be a big shock.

There could be culture shock for some students who come to college, but not just for those from rural communities. This assumption is another example of cultural reproduction. The advisors that spoke about culture shock are assuming students from rural communities are not exposed to the more dominant group or even other cultures. Advisors assume that because they have had experience with one rural student, that all rural students must be the same and advise them as such. It is possible that rural students might feel overwhelmed by the larger community and campus when they go to college—an assumption that is assigned by those working within the institution—which is structured off the White, middle-class male model of education. These assumptions can lead to deficit thinking and practices in the advising process.

Even the advisors that are not aware of their students' demographics had thoughts of rural students being first-generation or being out of their comfort zone in college. Rose spoke with me about her fear that there is "stereotyping of rural students". Like, they are not as academically prepared, or they are not cut out for college." She stated that while it might be true that a lot of them are not academically prepared, she said you see that in a lot of students regardless of the size of the high school they attended or the community they are from. This is another example of advisors making assumptions about rural students. The term academically prepared refers to a

student taking rigorous coursework, such as AP courses, and maintaining a high GPA (Squire & Robson, 2017). This is a very popular term in education in preparing students to enter college. Students who are not academically prepared are at a higher risk for taking developmental courses in college. Advisors use this term to refer to a student's readiness to take a college-level course. This is another term that is defined by the educational structure using the norms and values of the dominant group, assumptions that lead to deficit practices and the continuation of cultural reproduction on campus. There is a deficit practice of assuming that rural students are not academically prepared for college.

Research supports that rural students have forms of capital that are highly valuable, but they are largely ignored in higher education (Byun et al., 2012). These forms of capital are of equal value to the dominant forms of capital, however students with the non-dominant forms of capital are viewed as having a disadvantage from a deficit mindset. These practices are harmful to students by dismissing their culture and forms of capital. Rural students are consistently viewed as entering college without any forms of capital that are considered valuable. This process strips away the capital rural students have, leaving them to be viewed from a deficit model and holding them accountable for the viewed lack of valued capital.

## Conclusion

Speaking with advisors at two universities, one large urban community college, and two small rural community colleges led to the discovery that it is not common practice to determine if a student is from a rural community or any other student demographic. All of the advisors I interviewed stated they only knew if a student self-disclosed through conversations. Not understanding what capital rural students bring to campus and the advising process leads to the students not being fully served.

The advisors I spoke with from the two small rural community colleges had a better understanding of how to define rural and the culture of small rural communities. This comprehension appears to be developed from personal experiences since the advisors at these two community colleges either attended the community college, live in the community, or both. These experiences seem to give the advisors a better understanding of the rural communities and students who live there. However, once the rural students are on campus, these same advisors seem to struggle to connect the cultural capital these students bring as being beneficial. This continues the reproduction of the dominant social group's cultural capital as the only forms that are given value. This gives evidence to the continual institutional reproduction of the dominant society's values, beliefs, and forms of capital, including what cultural capital is valued. This cultural reproduction in the advising process creates an imbalance of power between the advisor and student. This process also leads to students from rural communities being viewed from a deficit model that holds the student responsible for not having the dominant forms of capital. This leads to the student as being at a disadvantage in college.

## Chapter 7: Cultural Reproduction in the Advising of Native American Students

Although Native American peoples make up 54% of the rural population, they are often left out of the research and discussion of rural communities and students (Dewees & Marks, 2017). This is especially concerning for Oklahoma since roughly 66% of the Native American peoples of Oklahoma live in rural communities (Palmer, 2017). In addition to being largely ignored in research, Native American students are the most underrepresented student population on college campuses (Fish & Syed, 2018). Table 2 shows how Native American students are underrepresented in the institutions of the study. There is little research addressing academic advising of Native American students from the advisors' perspective or addressing what experiences or knowledge college advisors have of Native American students.

**Table 1**

***Native American Student Numbers vs. "White Student Numbers"***

| Institution | Native American | "White" |
|---|---|---|
| U1 | 3.7% | 60% |
| U2 | 3.4% | 54.2% |
| OCC1 | 5% | 57% |
| OCC2 | 25% | 60% |
| OCC3 | 11% | 64% |

Note: Retrieved from https://www.okhighered.org/state-system/colleges-universities/okc.shtml

This chapter will explore the themes of advising Native American students from the personal and professional experiences of the advisors interviewed. The first theme is advisors' understanding of Native American students. The advisors of this study struggled to connect the importance of a Native American student's identity and culture to the educational and advising

experience. This absence of understanding on the part of the advisors can lead to Native American students feeling unheard and marginalized in the advising process. Native American students bring different forms of cultural capital to the advising relationship. These forms are just as valuable as those that are considered “normal” (Yosso, 2005). The next theme explores advisors' understanding of the forms of cultural capital that Native American students possess. The next theme is focused around the advisors’ perspective and experiences advising Native American students. All of these themes lead to the final theme that addresses the deficit practices in advising Native American students. Advising is a product of the institution and as a result advisors are agents of cultural reproduction. Cultural reproduction in advising mirrors the oppression and forced assimilation of Native American peoples within the educational system.

**Do Advisors Know if they are Advising Native American Students?**

Few of the advisors I interviewed knew if a student they were advising identified as Native American. Similar to what was found with advising of rural students, most advisors did not have easy access to this information in the student database system. This information is hidden away in the student database. Advisors' limited understanding of the importance of this information leads them to not search it out. As a result, the advisors have no knowledge if a student identifies as Native American prior to or during the advising process. This could result in Native American students feeling as if they must assimilate into the role the advisor places them in. All of the advisors I spoke with reported they have access to the knowledge in the student database systems, but they do not access this information. Several advisors mentioned they thought if a student felt it was important to share that they identify as Native American, they would do so, and therefore the advisors did not ask. Based on my conversations with the advisors, they do not understand the importance of students identifying as Native American or

the values of their culture. This means the advisor only knows if a student identifies as Native American if the student tells them. Madison's statement of “not unless they self-disclose” was echoed by the majority of the advisors. Madison, who identifies as a White female, went on to say that she has not really ever thought about asking a student or looking in the student database to determine if they are Native American. She said, “I guess I assume they would share that information if they feel it is important.” Advisors not knowing how Native American culture can influence the students' life and life choices, including education, can be detrimental to students’ academic success. Several advisors stated they are Native American themselves, however they do not make it a practice to determine if a student identifies as Native American in the advising process. None of these advisors appeared to feel that identifying as Native American themselves played any role in their academic experience.

Institutional structure can be a hindrance to some students who do not fit into the dominant view of a “traditional student.” Institutional structure is designed around the dominant White, middle-class male model, and as a result, other cultures are largely ignored or dismissed, including Native Americans. When the advisors in the study, intentionally or unintentionally, ignore a Native American student's identity and culture, it reinforces the idea that only the White culture is of value. This idea continues the reproduction of the dominant culture within the institution and environment on campus. An example of this is shared by Becky. Becky is not from Oklahoma and attended what she considers a small high school. Becky stated that “I do not judge based on a student's background; I just treat them all equal.” This is an example of culture reproduction in the advising process. Treating all students as the “same” is treating all students based on the dominant culture, so treating them as “White.” While I do not believe that advisors are intending to harm Native American students, they are continuing the forced assimilation of

Native American peoples into the "White way or White world." The participants in my study view themselves as "helping" Native American students. However, their actions actually harm Native American students through symbolic violence (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Advisors are being agents of the reproduction of inequality. This process devalues the Native American student. Advisors assuming that all students are alike and treating them all the same are providing unequitable advising. This idea is very similar to assimilation that was forced on Native American peoples for generations. The historical trauma of Native American peoples is largely ignored within the higher educational setting—advising is no different (Minthorn, 2014). It is important to the success of the advising relationship for advisors to understand the historical trauma of Native American peoples and how it relates to education. Mistrust with the educational system was developed from assimilation and boarding schools that were forced on Native American peoples. Boarding schools resulted in the destruction of Native American culture, language, and families (Minthorn, 2014). The process of cultural reproduction continues the harm that has happened to Native American peoples since the "White man" came to this country. The educational system has and continues to contribute to the destruction of Native American cultures and heritage.

**How Native American Students Avoid Surveillance in Advising**

Research has shown that it is not uncommon for Native American students to not disclose they are Native American. Brayboy (2004) helps us understand why some Native American students do not disclose their heritage to advisors. Brayboy (2004) stated that "American Indian students use strategies to make themselves less visible to the dominant population, thus minimizing the surveillance and oppression they experience on a daily basis" (p. 126). Surveillance is one way in which the dominant society attempts to control the actions of the non-

dominant group (Brayboy, 2004). This can be conscious or unconscious actions by members of the dominant group (Brayboy, 2004). In advising, this surveillance can include asking questions Native American students feel are inappropriate or non-advising related questions about being "Indian," assuming that being Native American helps the student financially, or even in the admissions process. I would also add that ignoring a Native American student's culture and identity is another form of surveillance. By not disclosing if a Native American student identifies as Native American reduces the likelihood of this surveillance. I have been in classes where one of my peers, who was a Native American student, was asked to share his background and how his tribe and/or heritage played a role in his education. He was being placed in the "token Native American student role;" while his tribal connections were very important to him, it is unfair to place a student in this position simply because he is Native American. It seemed that the teacher was asking the student to represent all Native American students, even though there are many tribes and Native American cultures, and of course, individual student experiences.

In addition, research has found that Native American students feel isolated on college campuses (Jackson et al., 2003). None of the advisors I spoke with shared stories about why they think Native American students do not often share if they identify as Native American. Perhaps Native American students are trying to avoid surveillance and/or the structure of the institution may provide a setting that Native American students do not feel safe in sharing this information. Benjamin, Chambers, and Reiterman (1993) found that the overall structure of the institution is a "White campus" and that the campus is "hostile towards them" (p. 13). The overall structure of the institution, including the advising office, is not culturally sensitive to Native American peoples and does little to attempt to accommodate their culture within the institution, including advising, student services, and in the overall curriculum (Benjamin et al., 1993). This process

reinforces the power and value given to the dominant social group and continues the oppression of Native American students on campus, forcing Native American students into a “White role.” This process continues the generations of harm inflicted on Native American peoples by the educational system.

**Rural Community College Advisors Have a Better Connection**

Community college advisors reported having more knowledge of Native American students and resources to better assist them than the larger universities. Advisors at OCC2 and OCC3 had more knowledge of the number of Native American students they serve, and which students identify as Native American. Ann, who identifies as Native American, stated that her institution is “25-30% Native American and most of our Native American students are from the rural area.” Ann was one of the two advisors that had knowledge about the number of Native American students her institution serves. These two rural community colleges serve a large number of Native American students and even have federal grant programs aimed at increasing Native American student success. This may play a role in these advisors having a better understanding of whether they are advising Native American students and the importance of their culture and heritage.

The advisors at the other institutions claim they have limited knowledge about Native American students on campus or the needs they may have. In addition to the lack of knowledge about the number of Native American students on campus, these advisors admit they have limited knowledge about Native American cultures and what influence that has on Native American student success in college. Sarah, who identifies as White, stated that she admits there is a level of “ignorance about how to work with Native American students and the importance of

their culture." She reported that having a better understanding of Native American cultures might be beneficial to the advising relationship.

The advisors from OCC2 and OCC3 seemed to be more in touch with the Native American students on campus and had a better understanding of Native American cultures that can influence a Native American student's success in college. These cultural factors can have a direct impact on the advising process. It is important to note that students who identify as Native American have different ways in which "they follow and commit to various tribal beliefs, customs, language, family structure, and cultural practices and traditions" (Reynolds et al., 2012, p. 102). While the advisors at the community colleges seemed to be more likely to know if a student identifies as Native American, none implied they knew much about the different tribes, customs, languages, or other culturally important areas. This leads to the concerns that advisors in the study might be lumping all Native American students into one group, assuming that what applies to one Native American student applies to all Native American students. However, there are many different tribes across America, all with their own language, customs, and cultures.

**Advisors' Perspective of Advising Native American Students**

Native American students have the lowest graduation and retention rates in higher education (Fish & Syed, 2018). However, they are all but left out of the conversation on advising and how their culture can be seen as a benefit and positive influence on their college success. Instead, they are often viewed from a deficit model. It is important to understand what advisors know about working with Native American students, including how Native American cultures are understood, knowledge about important values in Native American cultures, and an overall understanding of various challenges in advising multicultural students. As mentioned before, Native American students are often left out of the conversation when working with multicultural

students. Native American cultures are just as unique and not understanding the importance of a Native American student's culture can lead to misunderstandings and a negative advising interaction. Robi has been an advisor at a small rural community college for over 20 years. She has an extensive background working with Native American students. She also identifies as Native American and attended a very small rural public school. Robi shares her experience and knowledge of working with Native American students. She shared that Native American culture does not impact just education but the work world as well. She stated,

> It is not just in education but in the job field as well. Understanding that a Native student might be gone for a month to a Powwow. That family is so important, more than school. That keeping their tradition alive is important to them and vital to the survival of their culture and way of life. They can feel isolated on campus. The cultural factors are absolutely huge, and family factors, for example how they care for their elders.

Robi appears in touch with the cultural aspects that are important to the Native American peoples and their culture. Advisors that do understand Native American culture and work with Native American students offered some advice or best practices to other advisors. This advice includes being respectful of the importance of family over education. It is important to understand the value placed on family and helping family above anything else. Kat, who identifies as White, stated that you must "understand the culture and how it impacts their decision making is vital." She went on to say that family values and responsibilities drive a lot of Native American students' decision making from her experiences. That trying to help them find a balance between the two is vital to their overall success. Another suggestion given by the advisor is to give time for the relationship to build between the advisor and student. Rose, who identifies as White, shared from her experiences as an advisor working with Native American students is to work on

“building a rapport, no matter what it is, make a connection with them.” Rose also shared that advisors must be respectful of the students' culture, including tribal and family obligations. Other suggestions were helping the student make connections with Native American groups on campus, creating a supportive environment, helping the student with tribal scholarships and other funding sources, and understanding that tribal and family obligations are the most important to the student. In addition, it was also mentioned to be aware of how Native American students view authority. Dana stated that beyond building rapport it is important “to listen to what they say because they tend to not tell you everything. You have to build trust first. They have to believe that you have their best interest in mind.” This goes back to the distrust in authority and the education system that has been long standing within the tribal communities. Ashlee shared an experience with a student that she felt like she failed due to mistrust and lack of relationship. She shared,

> One of my students didn’t really share his experiences and he was totally lost and over his head. He ended up dropping classes at the last minute, he lost his scholarship because his grades were low and so he had a lot of challenges and I felt like he was not receptive to my help. I didn’t feel like he knew that he could trust me to help.

She shared that she felt like she let him down but did not know where the advising relationship went bad. She reported that there were “no signs that he did not trust me.” This mistrust leads to students losing scholarships and other aid sources and the student dropping classes. This is just an example of how mistrust in authority can work against Native American students if there is not a strong advising relationship built. The long-standing mistrust of Native American peoples with the educational system is something that advisors must be sensitive to and realize that the advising relationship might take time to build. Patton et al. (2016) told us that “higher

education's dominant culture and discriminatory practices are at odds with the underlying cultural beliefs of American Indian students and may interfere with student's learning, development, and persistence towards achieving their educational goals" (p. 146). This statement also applies to the advising process and relationship. It is vital for advisors to understand that Native American students' cultural beliefs may differ from the culture established in the higher education system. It is also important for advisors to understand that Native American students are under pressure to "give up their distinct cultural identities, beliefs, and practices and adapt to the dominant culture" (Reynolds et al., 2012, p. 46).

I worked closely with many Native American students when I worked at a rural community college in Oklahoma. I had to be patient for the trust and relationship to build. Once it was established, the student would reach out to me for everything, including relaying information to faculty and other staff for them if they were going to be out for a family situation. Based on my experience as an advisor in higher education, working with Native American students, and my interviews with the advisors of this study, I believe that there is a need to provide information to advisors about working with Native American student populations.

**Advisors' Understanding of Native American Students Forms of Cultural Capital**

Native American students' culture and the capital they possess are dismissed by higher education as a whole as not being of value. Power is given to the dominant group and value to their forms of capital; any student without these forms of capital are viewed as being responsible for not having these forms of capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). These students are seen as not being prepared for college and at a disadvantage. Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth Model reminds us that a strong sense of family and community is a strength for these students. As mentioned before, many Native American students are also rural students,

especially in Oklahoma. Therefore, the forms of cultural capital discussed with rural students will also apply.

However, Native American students have additional forms of cultural capital. Yosso's familial capital is a strong form of cultural capital possessed by Native American students. Native American students have strong family ties, often with large extended families. These family ties provide a strong sense of belonging and support for Native American students that can help them in college. The importance of family in the Native American cultures was mentioned by several advisors. Ann shared that when working with Native American students it is important to remember that "family is inherently important; they prioritize their family to the detriment of themselves." She shared a story about a student she worked with that had a sick grandmother. The student felt as if she must stay with grandmother even though that meant missing classes. Rachel shared a story about one of her students who suddenly stopped attending classes. She stated that she reached out several times and found out that the student's father had passed away. The student stated, "that tribal funerals take longer than a White man's funeral" and that was why he was gone. Rachel, who identifies as Native American, stated she was able to help the student connect to the professors to help with the missed classes and assignments. She reported that her relationship with the student allowed her to help, but that it is important for all faculty and staff to understand that Native American students may need additional time off for family issues. Rachel's experience is an example of how cultural sensitivity can help Native American students be successful on campus without being forced into the "White man's world".

Dana attended a large, urban school and identifies as White. She has worked in a rural community college for eight years. She reports that she has extensive work with Native American students at the community college where she works. She shared that the Native

American students she works with place “a ton for importance on family.” She did caution that advisors and faculty need to be aware of the importance of family and tribal obligations to the student. She shared that one of her students was gone for a few weeks and was not responding to emails or phone calls. She stated that there were some issues within the family that the student needed to help address. Classes took a backseat and the student did not even think to call or email his advisors or professor. Advisors and others working within higher education could benefit by understanding the importance of family and tribal connections to Native American students.

Social capital is another strength for Native American students. Native American students' tribal connections provide the students not only with a sense of belonging to a larger group, but also connections and networks that can be an asset to the student in college and after graduation. A deficiency in training and understanding of these obligations and ties can impact the success of the advising relationship. Additionally, linguistic capital, the student’s language, social skills, and communication skills, is another source of capital for students (Yosso, 2005). Yosso’s model allows advisors to view the strong cultural, family, and community ties a Native American student has, as forms of capital that have great value, which includes Native American culture, heritage, and language (2005). Using a strengths-based model like Yosso’s Community Cultural Wealth Model (2005) acknowledges the cultural capital a student has, instead of viewing the student from a deficit model that places value on the dominant forms of capital.

**Deficit Practices Are Harmful to Native American Students**

Unfortunately, Native American students are often viewed from a deficit model that does not value the forms of capital they have and views them as being somewhat responsible for not

holding the forms of capital valued by the dominant group in society. This deficit view could lead to Native American students being denied access to successful advising and overall college experiences. Native American peoples were forced into assimilation for generations, unfortunately higher education continues to contribute to the assimilation process. Robbins et al. (2006) stated that "the assimilation of American Indians entails the replacement of tribal sets of beliefs and actions directly linked to the beliefs of distinct tribal groups with Western sets of beliefs and actions" (p. 69). This idea supports the continuation of the reproduction of the dominant White culture. Education has long been a platform used to colonize and assimilate Native peoples into the White culture. The perceived problem of educating Native American peoples in higher education is a part of the larger issue within higher education that is developed from the White model (Pidgeon, 2008-2009). Pidgeon (2008-2009) addressed the issue of the White system of privilege with the statement "one way of knowing and understanding individuals and groups, those who are predisposed to other values (i.e, Bourdieu's notion of habitus) and who possess less capital (social, cultural, and economic) are less likely to progress unharmed through the educational system" (p. 340-341). This statement strikes at the heart of the issue of advisors not knowing if the students they advise identifies as Native American and lumping all Native American students into one group.

Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction is widely used within the educational system and results in students without the dominant forms of capital being viewed as lacking or at a disadvantage. The tendency within education, including the advising process is simply to view all students the same. Several advisors mentioned they treat all students the same when asked if they have any experiences advising Native American students. Ann shared that if she knows she is advising a Native American student she "…does not see them different from any of our other

students." I believe Ann is trying to be fair to all students with her statement. Viewing all students, the same is forcing Native American students to assimilate into "a White student" and is then only viewed as successful if they assume this role. This process forces the dominant White culture on Native American students. While she does acknowledge that culture and family is important to Native American students and may impact attendance because the student might miss for one of these reasons, she really does not feel that it impacts the advising process. It is interesting that Ann feels that a Native American students' close ties to family and tribe might impact coursework but not the advising process. Ann had worked with Native American students for several years at a small Oklahoma rural community college. The practice by many advisors, including Ann, to view Native American students like "everyone else" in the advising process could be harmful. This process does not consider Native American people's ways of knowing that differ from the White way of knowing (Pidgeon, 2008-2009). These ways of knowing and understanding impact daily interaction with others.

It is important to remember from early discussion that Native American peoples have a long-standing mistrust of the educational system from the forced assimilation and boarding schools. While Ann seemed to have a little understanding of the importance of culture to Native American students, Bobbi had another experience. Bobbi has been an advisor for a little over five years and she also teaches a few courses at the community college where she works. She attended an urban school and graduated from a small regional university, close to her hometown. She identifies as Native American. She feels that this allows her to understand "tribal boundaries" on students. For her the tribal boundaries can be financial, family, and overall tribal support for a student to attend college. She feels that students who have all three tend be more successful and have better attendance. Few advisors that I spoke with mentioned tribal

connections and impact on education. Again, this ties back to having a better understanding of Native Americans' different ways of knowing that are directly impacted by their tribal customs and culture. Additionally, it is important to remember these customs and cultures vary between tribes. While it is important for advisors to have a basic understanding of this, it is just as important to remember that there are many Native American tribes and they cannot be lumped all into one category, just like we do not want to lump all Native American students into one category.

***Assumptions and Stereotyping of Native American Students by Advisors***

Advisors seem to have several assumptions about Native American students and their culture. Research suggests that this issue plays a role in Native American students' success in college (Pidgeon, 2008-2009). Two advisors mentioned that stereotyping may impact an advisor's interaction and relationship with Native American students. Rose and Rachel gave warning that stereotyping, and assumptions could impact the advising relationship with Native American students. Rachel, who identifies as Native American, has been an advisor for just over five years. She stated that when advising Native American students, "you should never make assumptions or stereotype any student. Each student is an individual and must be viewed as such." She shared that she had been stereotyped herself early in her educational journey and it left a lasting impact. For this reason, she tries to ensure that she "asks questions of Native American students to understand what is important to them and how she can best help them on their journey." She stated one of the best ways to provide successful advising to a Native American student is to work to "make that connection and listen to what they are saying." This stereotyping can lead to misconceptions about Native American students and negatively impact the advising process and relationship. Rose shared the same thoughts as Rachel. Rose has been

an advisor for around eight years. She cautioned that "stereotyping students, especially Native American students can lead to the student not returning for advising, or worse, even dropping out of college. Stereotyping is a form of deficit practices that are prevalent in higher education. Stereotyping forces students into a box that is built on misconceptions and assumptions. These misconceptions and assumptions are developed from the dominant society's values, another example of cultural reproduction in education and the advising process. Advisors at the two rural community colleges seemed to have a better understanding of the cultural importance of Native American students and appeared more sensitive to acknowledging these important aspects of the students' lives.

An additional deficit practice harmful for Native American students is for advisors to simply dismiss how a student identifies and/or the importance of their culture, and their forms of capital. Becky has been an advisor for three years. She is not from Oklahoma and attended a large high school and university in her home state. Becky stated that she did not "judge her students and treats them all the same and does not judge by color or background," when asked if she was aware if any of her students identified as Native American. While I do not think she meant this to be a negative, it lends itself to deficit practices, excluding the value and importance of the Native American students' culture and experiences. When asked if she thought that Native American cultures could impact the advising process, she stated that she "does not focus on that but focuses on the individual students." She stated that she sees no difference in advising "them" as she does other students. Ashlee, an advisor from the other university, stated she did not view Native American students any differently than other students, just like she does not treat international students differently. Again, this advisor did not consider the importance of a student's tribal ties or culture. This practice separates the student from their culture, a practice

that has long been used against Native American peoples. This implies that a Native American student cannot be successful if they hold onto their culture and background. This has long been an issue for Native American students, which can block their access to services, including advising. I do not think that any advisor was intentionally disregarding Native American students' culture, however this practice appears ingrained in the fabric of advising—to assume everyone is the same and treat them as such. Advisors are part of the overall institution of education that is a reproduction of the dominant White culture (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). The result of this social reproduction is the granting of power over the non-dominant group (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Advisors are granted the power to dismiss the important forms of capital a Native American student brings to the advising process. This power denies the Native American students' heritage and culture, forcing them into the role assigned by the advisor. The cultures of the various Native American tribes in the United States are ignored in the advising relationship. If Native American students do not fit within the norm of the White model, they are seen as lacking or having a deficit. This practice, intentional or not, gives power to a White supremacy point of view that Native American cultures are inferior to White culture.

***Advisors Viewing Native American Students as International Students***

When speaking to advisors at the university level it was alarming that Native American students were often mentioned with international students. Two of the advisors I spoke with stated that they advise Native American or international students differently than they do other students. It is concerning that they placed them into the same group. Madison, an advisor at U2, shared her thoughts on advising Native American students with this statement, "I think it is a lot like dealing with international students." Madison's statement shows she views Native American students as the same as international students. She does mention that with international students

she thinks they “value their culture.” This implies that she does not see the value in Native American culture and does not think Native American students value their own culture. While many Native American tribes each have their own languages, customs, and culture, Native Americans are in no way international students. Implying that Native American peoples are foreigners completely strips away Native American people’s rights to their customs, culture, and language. This speaks to the concern that advisors do not have any knowledge of Native American tribes and peoples.

Placing Native American students in the same category as an international student perpetuates the colonizing work higher education has done historically and continues to this day against Native American peoples. As Wright (1988) described, the history of higher education was in part developed to convert the “native heathens” to “Christianity” (p. 72). This was the start of the attempt at the assimilation of Native American peoples through education. This goal of conversion was one way to secure funds to support higher education in America and the overall mission at the time. Bobbi, an advisor at OCC2, says that she sees Native American and international students as the same. The practice of viewing Native American students as international students denies and erases the harm done to Native American peoples throughout the generations of attempted assimilation and converting the “heathens" to Christianity.

Considering Native American peoples as foreigners in their native lands enforces the idea of reproduction of the dominant culture and forced assimilation of Native American students in higher education. This idea takes away Native American people’s rights to their native lands and heritage. By viewing Native American students as “foreign” by advisors, they continue the process of stripping Native American people's identities, heritage, culture, and land rights. This is an example of an advisor's role in symbolic violence that allows the advisor to totally ignore

Native American students' entire culture and rights as the Native peoples of this country. This process strips away the Native American student’s heritage, culture, and identity, contributing to the trauma faced by generations of Native American students in education. Additionally, this process forces Native American students into a new form of assimilation, into that of an international student, even though they are living in their native country. Viewing Native American student as international continues the violence and harm caused by the land grab of the United States by taking the lands of Native American peoples through violence (Lackrone, 2020). This ignoring the land grab and Native American students right to the land and higher education is not acknowledge and continues the violence. This violence is not physical but continues the cycle of symbolic violence on Native American peoples. This practice results in a violence that Native American students will beware of and feel and can greatly impact the advising process. This process also applies fungibility to Native American students, replacing international students with Native American students. Lumping all Native American tribes’ category is another form of fungibility seen within higher education and the federal government (Prakash, 2004). Fungibility in this context is lumping a group of people into one category, for example federal policies that refer to all Indian tribes (Prakash, 2004). There has been a long-standing tradition in the United States of considering all Native American tribes as fungible, meaning they are all the same, that they are interchangeable and not individual tribes with unique and distinct heritage, culture, and traditions. By treating Native American students as international students, advisors are implying that Native American and international students are fungible, meaning they should be treated the same and are interchangeable.

## Conclusion

The advisors in the larger institutions of this study did not know if a student identifies as Native American, and no attempt is made by the advisors in this study to find out this valuable information. The advisors at the two rural community colleges report being more aware of the Native American students they advise. However, all of the advisors of the study report that the only way they know if a student identifies as Native American is if the student self-discloses. Additionally, all of the advisors stated they had access to this information in the student database, but it was not reported as being easily accessible or something they looked at. The fact that advisors do not have easy access to this vital information, unless a student tells them, is a product of the cultural reproduction happening in higher education. Native American students' identities are not seen as important and, therefore, not useful in the various processes and departments in higher education, including advising. This is evident in the two university advisors that mentioned Native American students when talking about international students. These advisors seem to view Native American students as the same as international students. This is very concerning since Native American students are living in their native country. This makes me wonder how many advisors may be doing this same thing, once again stripping Native American students' identities and forcing them to assimilate into where the advisors see them fitting. Brayboy's (2004) research found that Native American students often do not disclose if they identify to avoid surveillance. It is understandable that Native American students might not want to disclose if they identify as Native. The fact advisors do not ask if a student identifies results in Naive American students' cultural capital being ignored in the advising process.

Yosso's (2005) model gives value to the various forms of capital Native American students have. This model gives power to the forms of capital that Native American students have and allows advisors to move away from the deficit frame of mind. Unfortunately, it is the

norm for Native American students to be viewed from a deficit model that continues the reproduction of the dominant group's power and privilege. If a Native American student does not possess the dominant forms of capital, they are seen as lacking and often held responsible. This process completely devalues a Native American student and their valuable forms of capital. Additionally, this continues the oppression of the Native American student and forced assimilation into the White man's world.

The entire structure of higher education is based on the White model, giving power and control to the dominant group. This process legitimizes the power of White people and oppresses and strips the power from other groups on campus. The only forms of capital that are of value are those of the dominant group, all other forms of capital are devalued. Higher education, including the advising process, needs to strive to move towards an "anti-colonial framework that acknowledges the multiplicities and diversities of epistemologies outside of the dominant hegemony" (Pidgeon, 2008-2009, p. 341). This statement sums up the entire findings for this section. There must be a conscious effort to understand Native American students, including the various tribes they are part of, the various cultures and the importance this plays in the students' lives, and the different forms of capital, including cultural capital, they bring to the college that will help them be successful.

## Chapter Eight: Discussion

This research used qualitative inquiry methodology as a means of collecting data. The study was conducted by means of in-depth interviews, allowing the advisors to tell their experiences and the researcher participating as a participant-observer. Additional data was gained by exploring the various institutions' mission statements, departmental organizations, other publicly available documents, and the surrounding communities. Participants in the study included 15 unique participants working in higher education in Oklahoma, in addition to the researcher's own experiences and observations. The data was placed into groups based on the relevance to the research questions, then coded, analyzed, and organized for further analysis and comparison. Finally, themes were developed from the condensed data. The themes from this study are aligned to the research questions. My study found that academic advising continues the cycle of cultural reproduction in academic advising of rural and Native American students. This practice gives power and value to the dominant forms of capital, resulting in exclusion of students, such as rural or Native American, that have different forms of capital.

The purpose of this study was to explore the issues surrounding advising college students from rural communities and Native American students from an advisor's understanding and perception. This study addresses a research gap looking at advising from the advisors' perspective when advising rural and Native American students. The study provides a deeper understanding of the advisors' perspective, advising practices, and cultural reproduction that impacts how they advise and view Native American and rural students or students that often have other forms of valuable capital that differ from the widely accepted and valued dominant culture's capital. It was found through the experiences of the advisors in this study that advising contributes to the process of cultural reproduction in higher education. This study found that

advising follows a universalized understanding of what a college student is and how they should be treated that is developed using the norms and values of the dominant social group. The study found that these processes continue the oppression and marginalization of student populations without these dominant forms of capital. This study found that Native American and rural students are subjected to oppression and marginalization within the advising process.

The discussion in this chapter draws from literature on advising to understand advising of rural and Native American students from an advisors' perspective. Literature on Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) theory of cultural reproduction and Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth Model (2005) was used to develop clearer understanding of forms of cultural capital that rural and Native American students possess that are beneficial to the advising process but often ignored based on the cultural reproduction of the White male model that is so prevalent in higher education. The implications of these discussions are intended to contribute new knowledge to higher education on the practices of advising rural and Native American students and the impact of cultural reproduction. The findings will be discussed in this chapter, using relevant literature to provide interpretive insights. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an in-depth discussion of the findings supported by relevant literature, including limitations, applications, and future research.

The major findings of this study center on the lack of understanding of rural and Native American students by advisors. Institutional structures, policies, and procedures are structured off the norms and values of the dominant culture. Society, including higher education view Whiteness and the resulting dominant form of capital as superior to others (Gusa, 2010). Cabrera (2020) helps understand Whiteness as "being inherently superior to one where is became a social norm-an invisible standard against which all others are judged" (p. 38). Gusa (2010)

Whiteness and White privilege are interlocked. This contributes to the embedded polices and structure of Whiteness in higher education. Cabrera (2020) also points out that it is important to remember that “Whiteness does not equal White people; however, White people benefit from this from of social oppression” (p. 38). Whiteness also allows for social amnesia to happen, whereby the wrongs done in the past to other races are ignored (Cabrera, 2020). White people are not the only people that can enact Whiteness on others (Cabrera, et al., 2017). Advisors of Color can play a role in enacting Whiteness in higher education as a part of the higher education community. Culture reproduction plays a role in the advising process by dismissing the valuable forms of cultural capital that rural and Native American students possess. Advisors are able to practice social amnesia when advising Native American students, ignoring the harm done to them in the past. The advisors of this study do not acknowledge and/or understand these other forms of cultural capital. The very structure of the institution not only allows advisors to dismiss and ignore other forms of capital but also allows them to do the same to students without these forms. Yosso (2005) gives six forms of capital that students can possess that differ from the dominant forms of capital: cultural, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant. These additional forms of capital are why I chose Yosso’s community cultural wealth model to offset the deficit model produced by Bourdieu and Passeron’s (1977) theory of cultural reproduction. I used both of these theories to frame the study because it is important to understand the role of cultural reproduction and the resulting deficit practices in advising, and then, using Yosso (2005), to understand what valuable forms of capital Native American and rural students possess.

The themes of this study support the use of these theoretical frameworks as a way to view advising of rural and Native American students and to understand advising and institutional

practices that contribute to the continuation of cultural reproduction and oppression of students without the dominant forms of cultural capital in higher education. Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth Model acknowledges the different forms of capital that students can possess that differ from the dominant form. The data was broken into three areas: academic advising from the advisors' perspective, advisors' knowledge of advising rural students, and advisors' knowledge of advising Native American students. The major findings that were developed from the advisors' experiences in this study that connect to the theoretical framework and are centered on cultural reproduction in higher education and the advising process are (1) institutional conditions and structures that impact advising, (2) advisors' role in cultural reproduction, and (3) deficit practices in academic advising. Each of these findings were found to connect to the overall purpose of this study. Lastly, these findings correspond to the research questions of the study and are discussed in this chapter in relation to the literature and importance to the outcomes of the study. The research questions are addressed throughout the interpretations and conclusion section. The only research question that was not able to be directly addressed below is research question one, but the topic will be mentioned several times: "What cultural capital is valued at different institutions of higher education in Oklahoma? The study did not find that there was any difference in the forms of cultural capital that were valued from the different institutions in the study. The dominant forms of capital are the only ones that appear to be given value. Regarding the second part of research question one, "What cultural capital do Native American and rural students bring to college and the advising session?" The study found that the advisors did not acknowledge any forms of capital that Native American or rural students have that is equal to the dominant forms of capital.

## Interpretations and Conclusions

The study produced several conclusions from the experiences of advisors that center on the continual cycle of cultural reproduction in academic advising of rural and Native American students. The three main themes will be used as a framework for discussing the overall importance and conclusions of the study and how they correspond to the research questions. The evidence to support the conclusions of this study came from the experiences shared by the participating advisors about their knowledge and understanding of advising rural and Native American students. The major themes are ordered to help the reader understand how cultural reproduction is structured within academic advising.

**Institutional Conditions and Structures That Impact Advising**

Research question two "What are the financial, political, and institutional factors that shape advising?" was answered by the findings that advising is directly and indirectly impacted by the structure, policies, and procedures of the institution. It was found through the experiences with the advisors in this study that institutional structure, policy, and procedures impact how advisors conduct advising sessions and overall interactions with students. There was not one factor that was found to shape advising, but rather that all institutional factors contribute. Institutional policy and procedures are driven by the increasing need to improve enrollment, retention, and graduation rates (Gordon et al., 2008). Academic advising is, in turn, influenced by the same needs. This means that individual student needs are often pushed aside for the greater good of the institutional needs. The Higher Learning Commission (2018) found institutions focus on improving graduation and retention rates because that is what attracts stakeholders, who donate money, and students, which also increases revenue. Leppel (2002) stated institutional finances are directly impacted by student graduation and retention rates. This

drives the institution to focus on measurable gains, instead of true student success and satisfaction, as defined by the student.

A popular idea within higher education is improving student success and satisfaction. Again, this ties to keeping students enrolled and retained, hopefully, on-time graduation (High Learning Commission, 2018). The idea of student success and satisfaction is defined by the institution, not by the student. The Higher Learning Commission (2018) report stated that the institutional definition for student success gives privilege to "certain types of learners and behavioral norms for what a good student does" (p. 3). These norms are set by the institution, granting power and privilege to the students who hold these norms and oppressing those who do not. Individual student definition of success is ignored or dismissed by the institution. Unfortunately, academic advising is governed by the institution and advisors are placed under pressure to ensure students are retained and graduate on time.

Research question three "What are the expectations/demands placed upon advisors by institutions and how do those expectations/demands impact their job/interactions with students?" is addressed by the frustrations and concerns shared by the advisors. The advisors reported feeling pressured to ensure students are staying on track to graduate, forcing advisors to dismiss what a student wants. Every advisor I spoke to referred to the need to ensure students graduate on time, even though they all stated that this was not an actual part of their job description. Rachel shared through her experiences that she feels responsible for students graduating, even though there are no institutional policies or procedures that assist advisors in this role. None of the institutions in this study have any requirement for students to see their advisors after the first 24 hours of successful coursework. This hinders the advisor's ability to see a student through to graduation, unless the student wants to seek out advising.

The Higher Learning Commission (2018) found that the structure of higher education grants privilege to students who have prior knowledge of college. Advisors can help students without prior knowledge of college overcome this obstacle placed before them by the institution. Research has shown that academic advising can improve the likelihood that a student will graduate by being a resource for students to gain information about college and the college process as a whole (Kim & Feldman, 2011). A common thread through Rose's stories was trying to help students "figure it out." She shared that she tries to help them make connections across campus. Additionally, she shared that she tries to make sure a student "knows what they need to know about college." Rose's experiences supports the idea found in research that advisors can help students overcome gaps in knowledge about college, helping to level the playing field for students oppressed by the institutional structure. Research supports the overall important role academic advisors can play in helping students move through college and reach their individual goals. All of the advisors interviewed shared the common idea that they were advisors to help students and that is their main focus and goal.

The second part of research question two is "How do advisors articulate/come to understand how these forces impact their role/responsibilities in higher education?" The advisors in this study shared two common experiences that focused on their roles and responsibilities: helping students and ensuring students graduate on time. The advisors' view of their roles and responsibilities is supported by the literature. Habley (1981) stated that academic advising is critical in student support and retention. Even with research and data supporting the advisor's role in retention and graduation rates, none of the institutions of the study require students to have advising sessions after successful completion of 24 hours of coursework. Kuh (2008) found that academic advising is one of the most important predictors of student success and retention.

Ashlee's experiences supported the frustration shared by other advisors. She shared that many students do not seek out advising after the first 24 hours and end up not taking the right courses and do not graduate on time. This is an example of the institutional structure, policy, and procedures that are in place that work against advisors' ability to connect with students to maintain an advising relationship. Ashlee also shared that no one tells students why advising is important and the way college is designed makes it hard for some to find information on their own. Research has found that institutions of higher education are designed to grant an advantage to students who have prior knowledge about college, as a result students who do not have this knowledge are denied access (Higher Learning Commission, 2018). This process creates an environment where academic advising perpetuates the process of cultural reproduction and oppression of students without this prior knowledge. This could contribute to a hostile environment for students, which may be a reason they do not seek out academic advising.

Finally, advisors viewed their role and responsibilities as helping students. The words used by advisors were "advocating", "guiding", "helping", "connecting", "teaching", and "support systems". The advisors' view of their role and responsibilities to the students they advise is supported by the literature. DeLaRosby (2017) found that advisors provide support for students in other areas besides advising, such as helping to address personal issues that are impacting the educational experience. Connecting students to departments and resources on campuses was an experience shared by all of the advisors. This role is helpful since the advisors are part of the larger educational community and have access to these connections (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008).

Rachel stated that advisors have a direct line to other departments on campus, allowing the advisors to help students make the needed connections on campus. Academic advisors can be

the bridge to help students access knowledge and resources denied to them by the structure of the institution. Unfortunately, the institutional policies and procedures hinder this process by not requiring advising once a student successfully completes 24 hours of coursework.

**Advisors' Role in Cultural Reproduction**

Educational systems are structured around the dominant societal group—higher education is no different (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Whiteness is imbedded in the policies, procedures, and structure of higher education, including advising practices (Cabrera, Franklin, & Watson, 2017). Cabrera, et al., (2017) stated that "Whiteness is a normative structure in society that marginalizes People of Color and privileges White people (p. 18). There are three components of "Whiteness": "an unwillingness to name the contours of systemic racism, the avoidance of identifying with a racial experience or minority group, and the minimization of the U.S. history of racism" (p. 18). This view of Whiteness being superior impacts racial climate and culture of higher education, including the advising process (Cabrera et al., 2017). Colorblindness in higher education "informs a great deal of interpersonal interactions, policy, and even the way scholars conduct research" (Cabrera, et al., 2017, p. 21). Whiteness is an unmarked and superior set of knowledge, practices, dispositions, policies and procedures imposed upon students as though they were White. This is a working form of colorblindness and/or Whiteness in which by not recognizing differences and by instituting Whiteness way of being, advisors are imposing Whiteness in advising. If students do not conform to the norms of Whiteness in advising the student is harmed and underserved in the advising process. This process contributes to the cultural reproduction of the dominant group's capital, norms, and values. Culture reproduction within the educational system grants power and privilege to those with the dominant group's forms of capital and oppresses and denies those who do not (Patton et al., 2016).

Research question four "What skills, knowledge, and dispositions are students expected to possess when they arrive in higher education?" was supported by the advisors' thoughts about expectations that students have some prior knowledge of college and advising prior to entering college. Students who have prior knowledge of college and/or the forms of capital valued within the system are granted unearned benefits to access resources within higher education, including advising (Patton et al., 2016). Cultural reproduction within the advising relationship creates an imbalance of power between the advisor and advisee, who is viewed from a deficit model as being responsible for not having the forms of capital valued by the institution. Patton et al. (2016) told us that most are unaware of this power and privilege that gives one advantage over others. This study found that to be true with the advisors I spoke with. The second part of research question four is "Do these expectations differ across institution types? There were no findings to support that advisors at different types of institutions have any different expectations for students. Advisors all reported the same expectations, regardless if they work at a university or community college.

Research has demonstrated the importance of academic advising in student graduation, retention rate, student success, and overall satisfaction (Habley, 1981). With all of the importance placed on academic advising, I could not find any research that directly addressed advisors' role in cultural reproduction and any impact this could have on students. Graduation and retention rates are always a hot topic in higher education and often mentioned in the same conversation as student success. The advisors in the study all shared as part of their experiences that they feel responsible for student graduation and retention rates. This pressure causes the advisors to spend more time focusing on this issue rather than the individual student's wants and needs. Research by the Higher Learning Commission (2018) found that the institution defines

what student success is based on the norms of the dominant group, ignoring what individual students consider to be success. If a student's view of success differs, that student is viewed as being unsuccessful. The advisors I spoke to mentioned staying on track to graduate and on-time graduation as measures of student success. Without being aware of it the advisers are placing students that do not fit into this model at a disadvantage and viewing them as not being as successful as other students. None of the advisors I spoke with mentioned asking a student how the student defines success. With the constant pressure to increase graduation and retention rates, advisors are forced into playing a role in cultural reproduction without even being aware.

Research question five “What assumptions do advisors make about the skills, knowledge, and dispositions of rural and Native American students?” is partially addressed in this section and will be further addressed in the following sections. The study found that advisors make assumptions about students. Assumptions and expectations are another way that advisors in the study were unconsciously contributing to cultural reproduction. Several advisors stated they assume students have some knowledge of the college process, including advising. This is a dangerous assumption to make. Assuming can lead to students not receiving valuable information and could lead to a student feeling unheard. The same goes for having preconceived expectations for students prior to advising. These expectations could again leave students without the information they need to make the best decisions for their academic goals and careers. Almost all of the advisors of this study stated they expected students to ask if they have questions and to have some knowledge about the degree program, they are interested in. This expectation leads to the assumption that students know what advising is and where to find the information about the degree programs. A student who has never had academic advising may not know what services or help an advisor can give them, therefore they might not know what

questions to ask. Assuming that students know where to find information about various degree programs is unfair to students who might not be aware of where to find that information. The very structure of higher education is designed to limit access to those without prior knowledge of college or forms of capital that grant them access.

Based on the experiences shared by the advisors I interviewed, there seems to be a common practice of viewing students without the dominant forms of capital from a deficit model. Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) theory of cultural reproduction reminds us that education reflects the social inequalities and accepted norms based on the dominant social group. The way advising is structured places advisors in a role of power over the student. This power allows the advisor to decide what cultural capital, values, and norms are considered valuable in the advising process. This power structure allows the advisors to decide how to treat and interact with students. The advisors in this study all stated at some point in their experiences that they "treat students the same." While advisors view themselves as being fair to all students, this statement basically means everyone is treated like a White, middle-class student, which is ignoring any individual differences between students. This is an example of how colorblindness is applied in the advising process. Colorblindness appears to play a critical role in advising practices. Cabrera et al., (2017) define colorblindness as a practice that frames "racial inequality in terms of anything but racism" (p. 20). Colorblindness allows advisors to ignore any racial, cultural, and other differences that differ from the dominant forms. The study clearly found evidence that advisors are contributing to the imbalance of power in the advising relationship and the continuation of cultural reproduction on college campuses.

Advising is an example of how this imbalance of power and privilege can be hidden within the structure of higher education. This imbalance often goes unnoticed by those who are

in power or whom the imbalance benefits. Gerwirtz and Cribb (2009) stated that these inequalities are concealed by being presented as universal. As mentioned above, all advisors mentioned they “treat all students the same," which is a universal application of inequalities created by cultural reproduction in advising. Colorblindness allows advisors to inflict cultural racism on students who do not hold the dominant forms of cultural capital. Cultural racism uses “cultural differences as a way to interpret racial inequality” (Cabrera et al., 2017, p. 20). Colorblindness can impact the way an advisor advises Native American students or any student that do not have the dominant form of cultural capital. This can cause irrefutable harm to the student by the advisors. Cultural reproduction results in deficit thinking and practices within advising. Students who do not have the dominant forms of capital are viewed as having disadvantage, and they are not given credit for the forms of capital they do have. Weininger and Lareau (2007) stated that cultural capital is viewed by the dominant group as something that a student has a talent or ability for. This means that students without this “talent or ability” are viewed as being responsible for not having the talent or not as talented. Advisors’ shared experiences revealed that students are expected to enter college with some knowledge about the college process and/or structure. It would be more common for students with the dominant forms of capital to have access to this prior knowledge, through the high school they attend and/or family members who have attended college. Additionally, students with more financial resources (another form of highly valued capital) may have access to additional resources. All these forms of capital are valuable to the dominant group. Ashlee shared that as an advisor she has seen how hard it can be for students to access some of the information, such as course sequencing. She implied that it was the student’s fault for not asking where to locate this information. This is another example of the assumptions that students have some knowledge of the college process,

including who to ask for help. I found that cultural reproduction is ingrained in the everyday practices of advising, and in the assumptions and expectations advisors have of students.

Yosso (2005) developed the Community Cultural Wealth Model that acknowledges the different forms of capital students can bring to college that differ from the dominant groups. Yosso's model offsets Bourdieu's cultural reproduction model that views students from a deficit model. I found through my study that the common practice is to still view students from a deficit model if they lack the dominant forms of capital. Students are held accountable and given no credit for the forms of capital that they do possess. Yosso's model allows for the acknowledgment and understanding of other forms of capital. Two advisors did mention that some students have different cultures that help them in college, but in the next breath they mentioned how the student was lacking a dominant form. The dominant culture's values, norms, and cultural capital are so ingrained in the fabric of higher education, it can be difficult for advisors to see other forms. It is also important to note that no advisors used the term cultural capital, but it was alluded to.

**Deficit Practices in Academic Advising of Rural Students**

Research has found that one in five students in the United States is from a rural community (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2010). There is a high number of students in the United States that have the potential to enter higher education. However, there is little support in place for these students once they enter college and only about 17% of these students earn a bachelor's degree (Aud et al., 2010). Rural students can enter college with forms of capital that differ from the dominant group; as a result, these students are viewed from a deficit model in higher education, including advising. Rural students are held responsible for their lack of the dominant forms of capital and their forms of capital are ignored or dismissed. Most of the

advisors of the study were not aware if the student they were advising was from a rural community. I could find no research that focused on advisors' knowledge and/or understanding of rural students and the forms of cultural capital the students possess. This study found that advisors that are from rural communities are more likely to know if their student is from a rural community and understand the different forms of cultural capital. Additionally, advisors at the two rural community colleges of the study were more likely to have knowledge of which students were from rural communities and understand the sources of capital these students possess.

All of the advisors mentioned they had access to this information but never looked for it as part of the advising process. The structure of the institution places no value on advisors using this information in the advising process. These advisors shared they simply treat all students the same. In other words, the advisors treat all students based on the norm of the dominant social group. If a student falls outside this dominant group or does not possess the forms of cultural capital deemed valuable, they are seen as lacking or at a disadvantage. The forms of capital deemed valuable are set by the institution, which is based on the dominant White, middle-class male group. This process continues the cultural reproduction of the dominant group, oppressing those students who do not have these forms of capital. Other forms of capital are ignored or dismissed by advisors and others in higher education. Most of the advisors in this study implied that rural students are lacking resources when they come to college; these resources are forms of capital that the student is seen as responsible for not having. The advisors do not appear to understand that rural students have other forms of cultural capital that are just as valuable. This practice in advising harms rural students by viewing them from a deficit model. Research has found that the work of Bourdieu in fact mirrors the literature that students who do not belong to

the dominant social group are at a disadvantage or lacking when compared to their peers (Patton et. al, 2016). Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth model offers other forms of cultural capital that are just as valuable as the widely accepted dominant forms. The overall institutional structure is designed to favor those with the dominant forms of capital. Yosso's (2005) model gives power to different forms of capital, offsetting the continuation of cultural reproduction of the dominant group.

Research has shown that students from rural communities have valuable forms of cultural capital, such as strong community support and connections from family and friends (Byun et al., 2012). Advisors who are not aware of these forms of capital may harm students by dismissing their forms of capital and viewing the student from a deficit model. Advisors in the study that worked at the two rural community colleges were able to articulate their understanding of rural culture and the benefits to the students who live there. These advisors acknowledged that rural students have different forms of cultural capital. Robi shared in her experiences that "rural towns have different cultures and a strong sense of community and religious ties." Unfortunately, as seen by the experiences shared by the advisors at the rural community colleges, there still seems to be a tendency to view rural students as lacking. For example, Madison acknowledged that rural students have strong community connections, but she stated that these same students come to college with people different from them and this could be a shock for them. This implies that rural students do not have the knowledge or ability to interact with students who are not like them or the people within their community. Again, this is viewing rural students from a deficit model. The process of cultural reproduction within the advising process can bring an imbalance of power to the relationship, thereby placing the rural students in a situation where their voice may not be heard.

**Deficit Practices in Academic Advising of Native American Students**

About 54% of the rural population is Native American peoples, yet they are often left out of research and rarely mentioned in research on rural populations (Dewees & Marks, 2017). Within Oklahoma approximately 8.1% of the population identities as Native American and about 66% of those peoples live within rural communities. Even more concerning is that Native American peoples are the most underrepresented student population on college campuses at only about 1.1% (Brayboy et al., 2015). Research has shown that not only are Native American peoples left out of research in higher education, but they are also left out of initiatives to increase their access to higher education (Brayboy et al., 2015). Additionally, research by Dewees and Marks (2017) stated that Native American peoples "remain misunderstood or forgotten because they are often left out of major data-collection" (p. 2). The practice of leaving Native American peoples out of research and data collection leads to them being completely left out of conversations about policies, procedures, and practices that can lead to increasing Native American student access to higher education (Dewees & Marks, 2017). These practices negatively impact Native American students' access to resources in higher education, including the advising process.

Excluding Native American students from research and data results in the students being largely ignored within higher education. The majority of the advisors of this study report they did not know if a student identifies as Native American and only do if the student discloses this information to them. All of the advisors I spoke with stated that they had access to this information in the student database system but did not access this information. Madison stated that she never really thought about asking a student or looking this information up. She stated that she felt that if this was important to the student, they would tell her. Research has shown that

this is often not true. Native American students often do not disclose this information. Brayboy (2004) found that by not disclosing a Native American student can make themselves less visible and thereby reduce the surveillance and oppression on campus. Surveillance can happen within the advising session even if the advisor is not aware of it and it can be unintentional and can have a major impact on the advising relationship. Surveillance can also be the dismissal of a Native American student's identity and culture by an advisor; this can be intentional or unintentional, and regardless, the impact is the same. Several of the advisors mentioned that they treat Native American students the same as other students. Becky shared in her experiences that she does not "judge based on a student's background; I just treat them all the same". While I believe this is an attempt to be fair to all students, it is another form of assimilation forced on Native American students. Treating all students, the same inflicts the violence of the white gaze upon Native American students (Yancy, 2017). White gaze is the process by where a white person ignores People of Color and/or react to a Person of Color differently than they would a White person (Yancy, 2017). In advising, the advisor participates in the white gaze, and therefore enacting violence on the student, by refusing to acknowledge Native American heritage, culture, beliefs, and values. While this goes unnoticed by the advisor the Native American student can be very aware of and feel the violence of the White gaze. Advisors that treat Native American students like all other students implies advisors are treating them White. Minthorn (2014) reminds us that the historical trauma of Native American peoples is ignored in higher education and results in the continuation of attempting to force Native American students into a White role, stripping the student of their culture and identity. Lastly, two advisors admitted that they do not know much about Native American peoples or culture; one even stated she was simply "ignorant" about Native American culture and students.

The very structure of institutions of higher education continues cultural reproduction and oppression of Native American peoples (Burk, 2007). As mentioned above, higher education is modeled on the White Euro model, which includes curriculum, textbooks, and institutional policies and procedures (Burk, 2007). This can result in Native American students feeling isolated on college campuses that tend to try to force them into the White man's role (Benjamin et al., 1993). This process ignores a Native American student's identity, culture, and cultural capital. Culture reproduction grants power and privilege to students who hold the dominant forms of capital and strips away the culture capital of Native American students. Ignoring Native American students' forms of cultural capital continues the oppression of Native American peoples in education. This study found that academic advisors contribute to this issue. Advisors are trained on the policies and procedures of higher education that oppress marginalized students. Advisors follow the institutional policies and procedures that harm Native American students. Cabrera et al., (2017) stated that "Whiteness is embedded in student affairs training" (p. 25). This is a practice that seems to be ingrained in the fabric of the institution that goes unnoticed. The impact on the advising relationship can be very damaging as Native American students may feel oppressed, ignored, and misunderstood. Even if the advisor is unintentionally contributing to the process of culture reproduction, they are part of the larger issue of viewing students with forms of cultural capital that differ from the dominant group on college campuses as deficient. Native American students on college campuses are still facing forced assimilation on campus, even within the academic advising department.

I also found in this study that some advisors are viewing Native American students as international students. Madison and Bobbi made statements about advising Native American students is a lot like advising international students. This viewpoint denies Native American

peoples their natural born right to the land in the United States. This strips away a Native American students heritage, cultural, values, and beliefs. Additional this process causes harm and continuing the oppression and forced assimilation of Native American peoples by the educational system. Education in American has a long-standing history of partaking in the violence on Native American peoples. The Morrill Act of 1862 "gave" lands taken from the Native American peoples to be used for education (Leckrone, 2020). Many universities and community colleges are built on these lands. This was a land-grab by the United States taking, by violence, the native lands of the Native American peoples (Leckrone, 2020). The process of viewing Native American students as international students once again inflicts this harm and violence on Native American peoples.

Finally, another deficit practice is advisors having assumptions about Native American students. Pidgeon (2008-2009) found that assumptions about Native American students have a negative impact on Native American student success. Rose and Rachel were the only two advisors that acknowledged within their experiences that stereotyping and assumptions made by advisors could impact the advising relationship and success of the overall advising process. Rachel, who identifies as Native American, was very passionate about this topic, stating that "you never make assumptions or stereotypes about any student." She went on to share that she had been stereotyped as a college student and knows how hurtful and damaging that can be. She also shared that assumptions and stereotyping can lead to Native American students not returning to advising. The tendency to make assumptions and stereotyping are a product of cultural reproduction and colorblindness in advising practices. Two advisors mentioned that they consider Native American students like international students. Again, I do not think this was done to be harmful to the student, yet that is exactly what it does, by stripping away the Native

American student’s identity as the native people of this country. Cultural reproduction grants advisors the power and privilege to dismiss Native American students' identity and culture and continue the forced assimilation and oppression.

## Future Research

As I reviewed literature on advisors' perspectives of advising Native American and rural students, I realized there is a noticeable gap in research from the advisors’ perspective. In addition, there is another gap in literature addressing cultural reproduction in advising and the impact it could have on the advising process. Additional research could explore programs such as TRIO or other programs that serve underrepresented student populations to determine the role of cultural reproduction in these programs and if they differ from other student programs in this aspect. Yet another gap exists in the literature addressing the forms of capital that Native American and/or rural students possess that is beneficial to college success. Future research needs to address other students of color who live in rural areas. Lastly, there is no research on the advisors’ perspective or knowledge of Native American and rural students. These topics demand further research to determine the effects on advising and student success. Further research is needed to explore the impacts of cultural reproduction in the advising relationship and institutional processes to understand and combat the deficit practices that are a result of cultural reproduction. Additional research is needed to address the unintentional way that advisors participate in cultural reproduction and reassert the dominant norms on students. This research should also address the policies, procedures, and structures of advising to address this issue at the institutional level. Additionally, research needs to address the role of ‘colorblindness” in the advising relationship and the harm this does to students of color. There needs to be research looking at how advisors in college can build a trusting, respectful relationship with Native

American students. An additional area that needs to be studies in regard to Native American students in the notion of survivance in the advising and higher education. Lastly, to fully understand the impact of cultural reproduction on the advising relationship future research needs to explore this from a Native American and rural student perspective through interviews. This research should explore what cultural capital these students view themselves as having, how they view the advising process, and the role of cultural reproduction on this relationship.

The current state of finances in Oklahoma and the impact of COVID deserve attention and research to understand what long-term impact these two issues might have on the advising process, cultural reproduction, and on Native American and rural students.

The state of education in Oklahoma has been in financial trouble for some time. Higher education in Oklahoma has seen many years of budget cuts. These cuts directly impact student services across the board. Budget cuts have led to few student service workers, including advisors, to help students. There has been reduction in faculty, impacting the courses offered and how often they are offered. Overall, the campus climate and environment are impacted by the reduction of budgets. At this time, there is a deep concern about budgets moving forward for the 2020-2021 school year and beyond. Covid-19 along with natural gas struggles in the state have resulted in a huge state budget deficit, which will impact educational budgets. What impact this will have is yet to be seen, however there is no doubt budgets will once again take a hit.

In addition to the budget concerns, students were forced to complete the spring semester of 2020 online. In person student services were not available and all contact had to be completed online. Students were required to move out of campus housing as campus shut down due to Covid-19 concerns. There are concerns for students who might not have the economic ability to access online education or might have limited access. Students could not have in person

meetings with faculty or advisors to discuss concerns. The fall semester is just as uncertain with some classes being online and in-person classes being impacted by social distancing requirements. What impact this will have on students' academic success, advising relationships, and future academic decisions, such as to return to campus, take only online courses, or not return at all, is yet to be seen. This is an area that will need attention and research in the very near future.

Finally, since late spring 2020, the nation has been under distress due to increasing racial tensions because of the death of another African American man at the hands of police officers. It remains to be seen how this will impact higher education. The hope is that the nation is moving towards a better understanding of systemic racism and positive change will be happening. I hope that, as a result, systemic racism will be addressed within the educational structures of higher and PK-12 education. Future research will be needed to determine the impact of these above-mentioned situations on higher education and advising.

## Limitations

All research has some form of limitations. This section discusses the possible limitations of this study. The first limitation is related to the use of qualitative inquiry, which is covered in depth in the method section. A critique of qualitative inquiry is the ability to generalize the findings outside of the research setting. The responsibility for the researcher is to interpret and accurately represent the experiences of the participants. Inaccurate representation is a possible limitation of the study, even with the safeguards in place. Another limitation is that as a researcher I cannot completely remove my own assumptions and experiences from the research process. Another important limitation to the study is the fact that as a researcher I am placed in a position of power that could contribute to cultural reproduction (Ravitch & Carl, 2012). Lastly,

as a qualitative inquiry researcher I had to be extremely careful not to try to give a voice to marginalized populations, which is a major critique of qualitative inquiry (Gallagher, 2008). Every attempt was made in this study to account for these limitations of qualitative inquiry and this study.

Additionally, this study was just a snapshot of institutions and advisors in Oklahoma. A larger study could produce further insights. This study included a research and regional university and three community colleges. A larger sample of advisors and institutions would be beneficial to provide additional information on the topics of this study. The findings of this study are limited to the demographics of the participants and the overall institution. None of the institutions in the study had official written policy, procedures, and practices.

There are possible limitations to the findings of the study. As mentioned above, there were only five institutions under study, a research university, a regional university, an urban community college and two rural community colleges. This is a limited look at the institutions of higher education in Oklahoma. The findings of the study found there are no major differences in the advising process within the institutions or advising practices. The study did not directly look at actual advising processes and only relied on participant reporting. The findings of this study related to advising practices might differ if written policies, procedures, and practices were given by a director.

Advisors were recruited from these institutions via email; 17 responded to participate and only 15 were able to actually participate. These 15 participants represent a small portion of advisors in higher education in Oklahoma. Additional research at more institutions and with more advisors might yield different findings. An additional limitation is that eight of the 15

participants identified as White. Also, there was also only one male participant, who was given a female identity to protect his identity in the writing process.

Another limitation of this study is that I only studied Native American and White students from rural areas. The study may not apply to other Peoples of Color that live in rural areas.

Lastly, research bias is another possible limitation. As a researcher it is important for me to be aware of my own position as a researcher and practitioner in the field, and as a former rural student. As a researcher it is critical that I examine my own assumptions, expectations, and experiences to understand and limit any research bias.

## Conclusion

The findings of my study revealed that cultural reproduction is ingrained in the fabric of the advising process. I found that, as a result, advising continues the cycle of cultural reproduction on Native American and rural student populations. Academic advising is a part of the institution and, therefore, impacted by the policies, procedures, and structure of the institution that has long played a role in cultural reproduction. I found that advisors unknowingly, and I believe unintentionally, play a critical role in cultural reproduction on college campuses. As one of the first points of contact for students on campus, advisors and the advising process starts out students' experience with cultural reproduction. This embedded process can directly impact the student from the first day of advising. The advisors in this study all stated they treat every student the same, however this means treating everyone based on the culture and norms of the dominant social group. It is clear that the dominant social group's norms and culture are the ones given the most value within the advising process and students

without these norms and culture are viewed from a deficit model, as being responsible for the "lack of," thereby perpetuating cultural reproduction.

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## Appendix A

## Description of the Universities in the Study

University Level Institutions

There were two large Oklahoma universities included in this study. Both of these institutions are located in central Oklahoma. All of the participants in the study that work at these institutions advise several degree programs and have a caseload of between 200-1500 students, depending on degrees. Both of these institutions are over 60% “White” in student populations.

Community College Level Institutions

There were three community colleges under study. One is a large community college in an urban setting and the other two are rural community colleges. The participants that work at the larger community college advise 200 plus students. While the participants at the rural community colleges advise 20-50 students. All three of these institutions are more than 50% “White” in the student population.

## Appendix B

## Participants of the Study

Ashlee-She identifies as "Black & White". She graduated from a large high school in Oklahoma with 2,000 plus students. She attended a community college. She earned a master's degree from a university in Oklahoma. She works at the university level. She advises 250 plus students.

Ann- She identifies as "Native American". She graduated from a small rural high school in Oklahoma with less than 500 students in the entire school. She graduated from a community college. She earned her bachelor's degree from an Oklahoma university. She works at the community college level. She advises about 80 students.

Becky- She identifies as "Caucasian". She graduated from a large high school out of state. She attended two semesters at a community college. She earned a master's degree out of state. She works at the university level. She advises over 1,000 students.

Billie- She identifies as "Black". She graduated from a large high school out of state. She graduated with about 1,000 students in her class. She attended a community college for two semesters. She earned a master's degree from a university in another state. She works at the university level and advises 300 plus students.

Bobbie-She identifies as "Mexican and Black". She graduated from a large high school in Oklahoma, with 1,100 students in her class. She earned a master's degree from a university in Oklahoma. She works at the community college level. She advises around 50 students.

Dana- She identifies as "White". She graduated from a large high school out of state with 2,000 plus students. She attended a community college. She earned a master's degree from a university in Oklahoma. She works at the community college level. She advises about 20 students.

Kat- She identifies as "White". She graduated from a large Oklahoma high school, with close to 500 students in her graduating class. She earned a master's degree from a university in Oklahoma. She works at the university level. She advises over 200 students.

Madison- She identifies as "White". She graduated from a large Oklahoma high school; she is not sure of the number of students in her graduating class. She earned a master's from a university in Oklahoma. She works at the university level. She advises about 250 students.

Megan-She identifies as "Native American". She attended a large high school. She is unsure of the number of students in her graduating class. She graduated from an Oklahoma community college. She earned her master's degree from a university in Oklahoma. She works at the community college level and advises around 200 students.

Rachel- She identifies as "Native American". She graduated from a medium size high school in Oklahoma with about 700 students in her class. She attended a community college for two years.

She earned a master's degree from a university in Oklahoma. She works at the university level. She advises 130 plus students.

Randi- She identifies as "White". She graduated from a large Oklahoma high school with 2,000 plus students. She earned a master's degree from an Oklahoma university. She works at the university level. She advises over 1,000 students.

Robi- She identifies as "White & Native". She graduated from a small rural high school, with less than 300 students in the entire school. She attended a community college. She earned a master's degree from a university in Oklahoma. She works at the community college level. She advises about 30 students weekly.

Rose- She identifies a "Caucasian". Graduated high school from a small Oklahoma town with 32 students in graduating class. She attended one semester at a local community college. She earned a master's degree from a college in Oklahoma. She works at a community college. She advises 300 plus students.

Sarah- She identifies as "White". She graduated from a large high school out of state. She earned a master's degree from a university out of state. She works at the university level. She advises about 300 students.

Sloan-She identifies as "Caucasian". She attended a large high school in Oklahoma. She is not sure of her class size, but the school is a 6A school, which is the largest school category in the state. She earned a bachelor's degree from a university in Oklahoma. She works at the university level and advises 400 students.

*Please note that all but one of the fifteen advisors I spoke with were female. All participants were assigned female names or spellings of names in an attempt to protect the identity of the one male participant.

## Appendix C

### Example of Themes and Codes

| **Theme**: Advisors' role in graduation and student retention. | **Theme**: Advisors' assumptions, expectations, and misconceptions of rural students. | **Theme:** Deficit practices in advising Native American students. |
|---|---|---|
| **Codes**: | **Codes:** | **Codes:** |
| Helping student's graduation on time | Expectations for how to behave in class | Not academically prepared |
| Student academic achievement | Expectations that they have some knowledge about degrees | Do not have valuable forms of capital |
| Degree equals success | No parental support | Treating all students, the same |
| Institutional gains if student graduates on time | Poor or lack finances | Do not know if a student identifies as Native American |
| Part of the advisor's job but not really part of the job description or evaluation | All 1st generation | Making assumptions about Native American students |
| Institution does not support advisors in this role | Lack dominant forms of capital | Stereotyping |
| Institution defines what is successful graduation and retention | Come from poor communities | Ignoring Native American culture |
| | | Viewing Native American students as international students |

## Appendix D

## Recruitment Email

June 2019

Hello,

My name is Stacy (Henson) Doyle and I am a researcher from the University of Oklahoma. I plan to conduct a study beginning in June 2019, concluding in May 2020 exploring advising college students from rural communities. I am interest in this topic from an advisor perspective. Since, you are an advisor in higher education I am reaching out to see if you would be interested in participating in the study. The study involves interviews with advisors at various locations of higher education in Oklahoma. I have obtained the permission of your supervisor to reach out to you. The purpose of the study is to explore the concerns surrounding advising of college students from rural public schools from an advisor's perspective and the role/impact of cultural capital on the advising process.

Participation is completely voluntary. Your employment at the university will not be affected if you choose to be part of the study or if you decline. Only I, the researcher, will know if you choose to participate or not. If you choose to participate, your responses will be kept as confidential as possible. If you choose to be part of the study, you can decline to answer any question(s) or to provide the researcher with any institutional materials and still remain part of the study. Results of the study will be presented to other researchers without individual identifiers.

If you are interested in being interviewed for the study, please respond to this email and provide me with your availability and we can set up a day and time for the interview. The interview should last about one hour.

Thank you so much for your time. If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at stacy.henson@ou.edu

Sincerely,

Stacy (Henson) Doyle, M.Ed.

PhD Candidate, University of Oklahoma Graduate School of Education, Educational Leadership and

Policy Studies

## Appendix E

## Participant Demographics Sheet

I will add a brief intro and remind them that no identifying info will be used.

1. What state and town do you consider yourself from?
    a. How large was the high school you attended?
2. Did you attend a community college, if so which one?
3. What university did you graduate from?
4. What is your job title?
    a. How long have you been an advisor?
    b. What department do you work for?
    c. What areas do you advise?
    d. Do you have any other job duties or roles other than advising?
5. What is your advising caseload?
    a. How many students do you advise?
    b. How many degree programs do you advise?
6. Does your institution have an advising mission policy or anything similar, if so can you share it with me?
7. How often do you advise a particular student?
    a. Does the student present with different issues each advising session?
8. Is there any other relevant information you would like to share prior to the interview?

## Appendix F

## Interview Script

Thank you for your participation today. My name is Stacy Doyle and I am a doctorate student in Adult and Higher Education program at the University of Oklahoma. Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research. I am interested in improving college advising for college students from rural communities from an advisors perspective. This interview process will take about an hour. I would like your permission to tape record this interview, so I may accurately document the information you share about your experiences. You may choose to discontinue the use of the recorder or the interview itself at any time, please just let me know. All of your responses are confidential and will remain confidential. Your responses will be used to develop a better of understanding advising college students from rural communities. The purpose of my study is to explore the concerns surrounding advising of college students from rural public schools from an advisor's perspective and the role/impact of cultural capital on the advising process.

Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. If at any time you need to stop or take a break, please let me know. You may decide to stop your participation at any time without consequence. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin? At this time with your permission we will begin the interview.

1. For what reasons did you decide to become an academic advisor?
2. What do you see as your role and responsibilities as an advisor?
3. How do you approach advising students?
4. From your perspective what do you see as the benefit of advising?
5. From your perspective what is successful advising?
    a. Could you tell me about a successful advising experience and one that was not?
6. Do you think your own experiences in advising influences your advising style?
    a. If so how?
7. Could you describe your institution?
8. How do institutional practices influence your advising sessions, such as time limits?
    a. Are there any institutional policies that impact the advising process?
    b. Any departmental policies that impact advising?
9. What college personnel or departments do you interact most in your job?
    a. What is the nature of this interaction?
    b. What is the benefit of this interaction in the advising process?
10. From your perspective are there any institutional practices that hinder the advising process?
11. Could you tell me about any challenges for you in your job?
    a. Within the department

b. Within the institution

c. With students

12. Are you aware of the demographics of your student population?

a. About what percentage is from a rural high school?

b. Do you advise many rural students or Native American students?

13. Could you describe your understanding of what rural is?

14. What is your understanding of any culture factors of rural students that impact may the advising process or relationship? Of Native American students?

a. If so, how does this impact does the student's culture have on the advising process or relationship?

15. Could you explain what skills and knowledge students are expected to possess when they arrive on campus?

a. And in the advising process?

16. What skills do you see as valuable skills and knowledge for students to have when they arrive on campus?

17. What strategies do you use with students who lack these skills and knowledge?

18. Could you tell me about your experiences with rural students?

a. With Native American students?

19. Could you tell me about your experiences advising college students from rural communities?

a. With Native American students?

20. Could you explain any barriers you face in advising students?

a. Do these barriers differ when advising rural students or Native American students?

21. Could you explain the obstacles you have found when advising this population?

22. Could you tell me any best practices for advising rural or Native American students?

23. Have you visited any of the rural high schools in Oklahoma for advising or recruiting efforts?

a. What have your experiences with high school counselors been like in rural high schools?

24. Could you tell me about your thoughts and perception on how high school advising could impact the college advising relationship based on your experiences?

25. Before we conclude this interview, is there anything else you would like to share, that we did not cover?

Thank you for your time and sharing your experiences

*** If participant wishes to discontinue study, ask if they would be willing to share why:

IRB NUMBER: 10792

IRB APPROVAL DATE: 05/29/2019

## Appendix G

### 39 Recognized Oklahoma Indian Tribes

Absentee Shawnee Tribe
Alabama Quassarte Tribal Town
Apache Tribe
Caddo Tribe
Cherokee Nation
Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes
Chickasaw Nation
Choctaw Nation
Citizen Potawatomi Nation
Comanche Nation
Delaware Nation
Delaware Tribe of Indians
Eastern Shawnee Tribe
Ft. Sill Apache Tribe
Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma
Kaw Nation of Oklahoma
Kialegee Tribal Town
Kickapoo Tribe of Oklahoma
Kiowa Tribe
Miami Nation
Modoc Tribe
Muscogee (Creek) Nation
Osage Tribe
Otoe-Missouria Tribe
Ottawa Tribe
Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma
Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma
Ponca Nation
Quapaw Tribe of Oklahoma
Sac & Fox Nation
Seminole Nation
Seneca-Cayuga Tribe of Oklahoma
Shawnee Tribe
Thlopthlocco Tribal Town
Tonkawa Tribe
United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma
Wichita and Affiliated Tribes
Wyandotte Nation
Yuchi (Euchee) Tribe of Indians