

ALONG A MÖBIUS STRIP: A JOURNEY INTO POSTCOLONIAL THEORY,  
DECOLONIZATION, AND SOCIAL STUDIES WITH/IN INDIGENOUS  
CONTEXTS

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ABSTRACT

Utilizing scholarship related to postcolonial theory, decolonization, and critical pedagogy, this dissertation sought to deconstruct the traditions of qualitative academic research to open spaces for critical dialogue about social studies education with/in Indigenous contexts. Challenging the hegemonic structures embedded in the United States in relation to research, teaching, and learning for social studies, this work sought to place the voices of participants in one American Southwest school district as informing problems and possible solutions for social studies curriculum (in the form of state-level standards, textbooks, and teaching materials) with/in Indigenous contexts. The dissertation found social studies as a subject area in the district to be marginalized from larger education conversations about testing, teaching, and learning while simultaneously continuing a curricular tradition that neglected accurate and relevant content and contexts related to Indigenous histories and contexts. Unpacking the Eurocentric master narrative inherent in social studies curriculum and the history of research with/in Indigenous contexts were central to this work. Beginning the life-long process of deconstructing colonialist thinking through critical reflexivity was another major aspect taken up throughout the dissertation.