

Indigenizing Evaluation Research

How Lakota Methodologies Are Helping “Raise the Tipi” in the Oglala Sioux Nation

PAUL ROBERTSON, MIRIAM JORGENSEN, AND CARRIE GARROW

At a 1998 meeting of Elders and spiritual leaders convened to consider how best to meet the needs of children and families on the Pine Ridge Reservation, the late *wakan iyeska* (“spiritual interpreter”) Matthew Zack Bear Shield remarked, “When we followed the Lakota ways and spiritual laws of the universe, the people flourished. Because we went away from the Lakota spiritual calendar, our people suffer and are in chaos.”¹ The spirit of Bear Shield’s remark, that the knowledge and practice of *lakol wicohan* (“Lakota ways”) are a means of overcoming the colonial oppression the Oglala Lakota *oyate* (“people”) continue to experience, resonates with an increasingly large constituency in Lakota country. Efforts to recover and actively use traditional knowledge and practices are evident in ongoing work to, for example, advance treaty rights, design interventions for families and children, create more effective institutions of governance, and address conflict and crime. Critically, these efforts also include the recovery and use of Indigenous approaches to research and evaluation, processes of knowledge creation that were once under Indigenous control but have been supplanted by Western ways of knowing promoted by the “scientific community” and non-Native government bureaucracies.

This article documents a currently unfolding example of that reclamation, which originated from the desire of evaluators of the “Comprehensive Indian Resources for Community and Law Enforcement” (CIRCLE) Project to make the federally mandated evaluation as useful to the Oglala people as possible. Using the models of participatory action research and empowerment evaluation, the CIRCLE Project evaluation team has arrived at a way of working that mirrors the Lakota approach to

research and evaluation—an approach grounded in the ideas of *wopasi* (“inquiry”) and *tokata wasagle tunpi* (“something you set up to go to in the future”), which views research and evaluation as the process of creating knowledge in order to accomplish an end that is desired by the people.

By embracing this process the CIRCLE Project evaluation team, of which we are members, has found that the recovery of one set of traditions (concerning Indigenous approaches to evaluation) has become inextricably intertwined with the recovery of another set (concerning Indigenous governance). CIRCLE Project research and evaluation, guided by Lakota methodologies, have become vital supports in the “nation building” efforts undertaken through CIRCLE, in which Lakota people are seeking to improve the administration of criminal justice by rebuilding key justice institutions to reflect community needs and culture.

“Nation building” is a term used increasingly in the literature and by leaders in Indian Country to refer to the process of constructing effective institutions of self-governance that can provide a foundation for sustainable development, community health, and successful political action.² In other words, it is the process of promoting Indian self-determination, self-governance, and sovereignty—and, ultimately, of improving tribal citizens’ social and economic situations—through the creation of more capable, culturally legitimate institutions of governance. The term echoes the intentions in the treaties tribes signed with foreign sovereigns (including the United States) in the postcontact period and embraces Chief Justice John Marshall’s admission that American Indian tribes are “domestic dependent nations” and Vine Deloria and Clifford Lytle’s more palatable term, “the nations within.” By calling attention to tribes’ nationhood, the term emphasizes the fact that tribes are not vestigial elements of American society, but an enduring *yet separate* part of it. Additionally, the term acknowledges that Indian nations need governing institutions capable of dealing with contemporary issues—be they problems of crime, financial management, mental health, or international trade—and that tribes must make conscious efforts to build Indigenous institutions that are up to the task. Viewed through the powerful lens of nation building, research and evaluation, or *wopasi* and *tokata wasagle tunpi*, are also tools in service of the Oglala Lakota *oyate*’s even larger goals of decolonization and liberation.

On January 16, 2000, a group known as the Grassroots Oglala Lakota Oyate peacefully took control of the building that houses all executive and legislative offices (including the Tribal Council chambers) of the Oglala Sioux Tribe (OST). In occupying the Red Cloud Building, the Oyate was protesting what it considered the Tribal Council's misappropriation and misuse of funds. Through the takeover the Oyate sought the removal of the tribal treasurer, a full audit of tribal finances and land transactions, and a restructuring of the tribal constitution to reflect traditional Lakota governance processes. Indeed, many associated with the Oyate, either as members or supporters, noted that the heart of the takeover was the need to change the structure of government.³

Certainly there is a long history of opposition to the "IRA government" at Pine Ridge. While the Oglala Sioux Tribe accepted the provisions of the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) on October 27, 1934, by a vote of 1,169 to 1,095, this was a very slim margin for the passage of a "constitutional" vote.⁴ Moreover, some of the positive votes may have been based on the anticipation of material benefits—perhaps even the return of the Black Hills—rather than on informed opinions about the act.⁵ Work on the constitution itself began shortly thereafter, work that many members of the constitutional committees found frustrating; they were required to base their product on a model and checklist provided by the Office of Indian Affairs, the elements of which were promoted without regard for Indigenous governance traditions.⁶ From the moment the constitution was inked, the tension between effectively imposed Western-style institutions of governance and models more closely matched to Lakota culture has pervaded Oglala political life.

The Indigenously formed Treaty Councils on the Rosebud and Pine Ridge Reservations were early, prominent challengers to the tribes' IRA governments. Both refused to disband or to recognize the authority of the IRA Tribal Councils. The Treaty Council at Pine Ridge also registered its disapproval through protest votes and resolutions, including a 1937 resolution to "abolish the new Indian Reorganization" on the grounds of financial malfeasance by Tribal Council members. Similar sentiments underlay the Treaty Council's 1939 petition to the federal government for a tribal referendum on the repeal of the Oglala constitution; it was

never called, although the tribal president was impeached in 1941 for embezzlement.⁷

In 1973 the events now known as “Wounded Knee II” grabbed headlines when the U.S. government deployed federal marshals and the military against protestors occupying the historic village of Wounded Knee. While the occupation was part of a larger battle over American Indians’ civil and political rights, it was also a protest against the Oglala Lakota nation’s federally sanctioned government. Then tribal president Richard (Dick) Wilson was viewed by many as having violated the trust of the Lakota people by turning both Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) police and his own vigilante civilian supporters (the so-called goon squad) against community members and for engaging in the mismanagement of tribal funds, corruption, and nepotism. Lakota people who were part of the popular movement that supported the occupation advocated replacement of the IRA government with one based on Lakota tradition and the authority of the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty.⁸

For years after Wounded Knee II, quieter forms of protest and resistance boiled and sometimes prevailed. For example:

- The nine districts throughout the reservation retained their own active governments, and many Lakota citizens viewed them as institutions much closer to the pre-reservation model, which operated at the *tiospaye* (roughly, “extended family”) level. These governments sometimes functioned as “shadow governments” to the official government in Pine Ridge Village and were a frequent locus of protest against IRA government action.
- From the mid-1970s onward, several younger, educated Oglala leaders (including Gerald Clifford, Gerald One Feather, and Birgil Kills Straight), applied their energies and talents to support the agendas of Elders (like Frank Fools Crow, Matthew King, and Frank Kills Enemy), who advocated an explicit recovery of Lakota models of governance. Described in English as “flat organization,” the idea was promoted in direct opposition to the centralization of resources that characterized the Wilson administration. Seizing the opportunity provided by P.L. 93-638, the tribe contracted its Department of Public Safety and partially achieved this end. The tribally managed department was made subject to district review boards with the power to hire and fire police officers and their lieutenants, and thus for a

time the community was able to bring law enforcement under substantial local control.⁹

- The American Indian Movement and local supporters established KILI Radio in 1983 with the avowed goal of using the airwaves to fight oppression and create social change. Since then its microphones have been open to those willing to engage the broader Oglala community in discussions of governmental actions and institutional appropriateness. In the words of the late Edward Iron Cloud Jr., descendant of Knife Chief who rode with Crazy Horse: “All along I say that people power is our hope . . . This government is over 50 years old. Is it time to change it? IRA placed all this as it is today. We can say we don’t want the IRA. Go to the radio and talk because people need to hear these things.”¹⁰

In sum, the Grassroots Oyate’s actions in 2000 were one more brick in the wall of dissatisfaction with the IRA government and its institutions. Like the Wounded Knee protest before it, the Oyate protest reflected the enduring aim of establishing a sovereign government based on a Lakota foundation. Also like the Wounded Knee protest, law enforcement and the power of the tribe’s IRA government to direct justice institutions to their own purposes were particularly worrisome to the protestors: the Tribal Council removed supervisory authority over law enforcement from the tribal Department of Public Safety (and from its commissioners and community-based review boards) and placed this supervisory authority with the Council’s Judiciary Committee. Despite twenty-two years of tribal management the council retroceded tribal criminal investigation responsibilities back to the BIA, and prosecutions in tribal court slowed to a crawl (a slowdown variously attributed to a lack of police officer testimony, poor record keeping, and political machinations).¹¹

By the time the last Grassroots Oyate members left the Red Cloud Building over a year after the occupation began, there was a clear sense that while small victories had been won—for example, the recently elected administration and council had pledged to support many of the Oyate’s goals—much work remained. The Oyate and their supporters saw the need to continue to challenge inappropriate exercises of government and to work from the grassroots to rebuild the tribe’s government, especially its justice institutions.

The Comprehensive Indian Resources for Community and Law Enforcement Project

In late 1999 the United States Department of Justice (USDOJ) began funding the “Comprehensive Indian Resources for Community and Law Enforcement” (CIRCLE) Project at Oglala Sioux.¹² CIRCLE’s purpose was to provide tribal justice program planners with incentives and opportunities to consider how the individual components of their justice system (courts, police, corrections, and other programs) might better work together to strengthen responses to pressing crime problems and related social issues. Washington-based project planners hoped that with three years of guaranteed grant assistance and a simpler federal funding process, the local challenge could shift away from finding funding for specific justice programs (“here’s a grant that will give us some money for probation”) to consideration of justice system design. In other words, it was hoped that tribal justice planners would, through CIRCLE, have the breathing room to ask, “How might all the functions within the justice system (as well as available cultural, social, and financial resources) be leveraged to address crime and related concerns?”

Operationally, CIRCLE created a funding collaboration at the federal level between six USDOJ offices/bureaus (the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Corrections Program Office, the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office of Victims of Crime, and the Violence Against Women Office) and nine grant programs.¹³ The collaboration did not commit new funds to Indian Country; rather, it worked to streamline the process by which tribes receive USDOJ money for corrections programs, domestic violence, victim services, youth services, tribal courts, and law enforcement and encouraged the participating Indian nations to develop a single “strategy” for using these funds. (“Strategy” is a specific term used by the CIRCLE Project to capture the idea of using grant funds in coordinated programmatic efforts toward a specific goal.)

At Oglala Sioux the project provided funding to existing and critical new justice functions and programs, including the Department of Public Safety (for both additional police officers and a new correctional facility), the Tribal Court (especially to create probation programs), the

Court Appointed Special Advocates Program, the Runaway and Homeless Youth Program, the SuAnne Boys and Girls Club, the Victims of Crime Office, the Tribal Youth Program, and Cangleska (a nonprofit agency that addresses domestic violence and sexual assault issues). Additional funding was provided for the duration of the project for a CIRCLE coordinator, who was to be responsible for project administration, for spurring collaboration between programs, and for keeping program directors, staff, and supporters focused on the tribe's CIRCLE "strategy."

In providing CIRCLE funding, USDOJ also mandated that the project be evaluated. The National Institute of Justice solicited proposals for a two-phase evaluation, first of the process of CIRCLE implementation at both the federal and tribal levels and second of the impact of the CIRCLE Project within the demonstration communities.

CIRCLE's Demands and Possibilities

Given the great turmoil in the Oglala Lakota nation during the implementation of the CIRCLE Project—turmoil that, in particular, called into question the efficacy of justice and related governmental systems—one may wonder what possibilities there really were to answer CIRCLE's call for more coordinated tribal justice efforts, greater effectiveness from those efforts, and productive evaluation. These questions become even more pointed through close scrutiny of the funding provided by USDOJ. Rather than block grant funds that might be used to fill the gaps wherever they occurred or, more ambitiously, fully reinvent the justice system at Pine Ridge, the funding was tied to particular USDOJ grant programs.

Indeed, the initial CIRCLE strategy and goal submitted to USDOJ by the OST CIRCLE Project reflects a fairly limited vision for the project at Pine Ridge. Tribal CIRCLE planners, working under the close direction of an assistant U.S. attorney for South Dakota, created a plan that set a 20 percent reduction in reservation crime (measured by arrests) as its goal, to be achieved simply by increasing the funding of certain existing programs and starting other programs that fit within the guidelines of the proffered USDOJ grants. A cynical reading of this document might be that, given the very difficult environment in which the project was to be implemented and the relatively weak set of tools implementers were given to work with, CIRCLE was viewed at the tribal level as little more

than a three-year guarantee of a particular pot of funds and set of jobs; if a reduction in crime was what USDOJ wanted to hear about, the tribe would set that as its goal and garner the funds and jobs while it could.

This interpretation proved false. Especially after the tribe hired a well-known community activist and facilitator as the project coordinator, who then drew the directors and key staff of the various programs funded by CIRCLE together for regular “CIRCLE meetings,” these local partners began to see great possibilities in the project. Rather than viewing CIRCLE as one more federal government funding fad from which the tribe could draw economic benefit for three years and then move on, tribal partners began to view the project as an opportunity to address justice system rebuilding needs that had been laid bare by the Oyate occupation. Local ownership of the project began to generate a sense of greater possibility.

More evidence that local implementers were developing a stake in CIRCLE can be found in the project’s changed goal. A critical shift in the CIRCLE partners’ thinking occurred in the second year of funding, when discussions began in earnest about something they had learned in developing and managing their CIRCLE-related programs: weakness in the tribe’s formal justice institutions and processes made all their jobs harder. Given this common concern, the partners felt it would make more sense to work toward system strengthening rather than focus narrowly on a 20 percent reduction in crime—a goal that, for many reasons, they also agreed was unattainable.¹⁴ Thus, the OST CIRCLE team revised its goal to focus more directly on the root problem the tribe faced. Their new goal was a nation building and Indigenous knowledge recovery goal: to rebuild the Tribal Court and its associated institutions to reflect community needs and culture.

Eventually, project partners came to describe this goal with several culturally resonant phrases: *oyate wolakota kagapi kte* (“to build a peaceful nation”), *tiwahe oaye yuwosla icupi* (“bringing up the family/home in a healthy way”), and *tiyuwosla icupi* (“raising a tipi”). In Oglala culture the phrase “raising the tipi” is particularly laden with symbolism and meaning, as it incorporates cultural teaching, family responsibility, and tribal duty. Raising the tipi—making a home—is accomplished with relatives. It is done with care and reverence, skill and teaching, and patience and knowledge. Once the tipi is raised, it provides shelter and a sense of place not only to the family who raise it but also to the commu-

nity with which the family shares space and resources. Much of the learning and sharing of culture and appropriate ways of life were taught in the tipi, and so the phrase additionally symbolizes the importance of education, boundaries, respect, family, living together peacefully, and love. “Raising the tipi” signals the CIRCLE partners’ goal of working together on justice system reform in order to build a better nation for all community members.

Today, while CIRCLE Project program funding is complete, the project itself has not died. Because local implementers took control of the CIRCLE, linked it to important community goals for tribal justice institutions, and worked to move those ideas forward, the project’s spirit lives on through groups such as the Task Force on Sexual Abuse, the Pine Ridge Area Chamber of Commerce, and *Oglala Oyate Iwicakiyapi Okolakiciye* (“the Society to Strengthen/Defend the People and Families”). For example, the former two organizations have picked up CIRCLE’s call for court system reform, and the latter (which preexisted CIRCLE but now includes many of the same players) works to improve the effectiveness of government action on a broad range of family-focused issues.

Yet the question remains whether the final demand of CIRCLE—evaluation—can similarly serve the Oglala Lakota nation’s needs. Federal demonstration programs often include an evaluation component, and typically these evaluation research grants are awarded to external organizations with high academic and professional qualifications but little stake in the communities in which change is to be studied. Lacking such stake, even the most insightful evaluation research becomes a form of “helicopter research,” which drops in for the study period and exits quickly afterward, leaving behind little or no work product that is directly useful to the community. Might there be a way to use evaluation research required by the CIRCLE grant to produce direct community benefits? In particular, considering the OST CIRCLE Project’s activist goals and the fertile environment at Pine Ridge for activism on justice issues, might there be a way to harness more of the resources and outputs of the evaluation to these purposes?

We believe the answer is yes. Through a partnership between the external evaluators and Oglala Lakota College forged in Phase I (process evaluation), it was possible to transfer a substantial portion of the evaluation funds to the local level and put local researchers in the driver’s seat for evaluation design and implementation in Phase II (outcomes

evaluation). This shift led to a move from a more passive “theories of change” evaluation methodology toward activism-oriented approaches in the tradition of “participatory action research” and “empowerment evaluation.”¹⁵

Since the advent of colonization, the Oglala Lakota, like other Indigenous peoples, have been the objects of research by outsiders (and continue to be).¹⁶ Frequently, such research is for the benefit of the researcher only; even when billed as in tribal interests (for the creation of better Indian policy, for instance), research has often served the interests of powerful others rather than the needs of the populations being studied. This was the point of Deloria’s scathing critique in the 1974 manifesto *Custer Died for Your Sins*: “Behind each policy and program with which Indians are plagued, if traced completely back to its origin, stands the anthropologist.”¹⁷

Deloria went on to challenge researchers to come down from ivory towers, divest themselves of agendas set by narrow academic interests, and use their talents to support American Indians’ struggles to improve their conditions. At the same time, but on another continent, in another culture, and working in a different discipline, the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire was developing a parallel political philosophy. Freire critiqued the predominant mode of discourse as *communiqué* and instead advocated *dialog*, a method of discourse, study, and research premised on being and working *with* a people in their struggle for liberation from oppressive social and economic conditions.¹⁸

The research methodologies of participatory action research and empowerment evaluation have grown out of these (and related) critiques and ideas and presuppose a radical reduction of the subject-object distinction between researcher and researched. They have formed the basis of successful basic and evaluation research with Indigenous peoples around the world and have been the focus of a required course for human service students at Oglala Lakota College since 1987. Thus, because of their appropriateness, promise, and local acceptance, these ideas became the epistemological basis for Phase II of the CIRCLE evaluation at Oglala Sioux. The evaluation team has designed a process that engages the community in research and action toward transformation of the tribal justice system—toward “building a peaceful nation” by “raising the tipi with love.” Succinctly, tribal control set the stage for local evaluators to use the evaluation as a means of activism for nation building.

Notably, however, the transition to empowerment evaluation was not effortless. Several factors facilitated the changed approach. Critical ones appear to include the support and encouragement of the outside/national evaluator organization, its ability to channel substantial CIRCLE evaluation funds to the tribal level, Oglala Lakota College's ability to partner with still other organizations to generate more resources for the effort, and the college's developing tradition of engaging in participatory action research projects in the community.¹⁹ Perhaps most significant of all was the evaluation team's realization that a participatory action research process and the Lakota model of research and evaluation are similar. Tribal spiritual leaders reminded the CIRCLE evaluation research team that the Oglala engaged in evaluation research historically, and they used the words *wopasi* ("inquiry") and *tokata wasagle tunpi* ("something you set up to go to in the future") to describe these historical activities. In combination, the phrases signal that Lakota evaluation research has the interests of the people in mind—an orientation that produces the participatory action research process and mirrors the libratory agenda of participatory action research.

EVALUATION FINDINGS AND EMPOWERMENT ACTION—
TWO EXAMPLES

Working from an outcomes evaluation template that identifies subgoals of the Oglala CIRCLE Project and possible evidence that these goals are being met, local evaluators are producing a variety of data describing system functioning, system change, and the results of change. As each finding is confirmed, the evaluators seek out ways to share the information with community members and encourage them to use it for action. The stories that follow provide two examples.

Turnover Rate in the Department of Public Safety

Because of the cultural appropriateness of a "flat" organizational structure for law enforcement and of promoting connections between individual officers and local communities (*tiospaye*) within the Oglala Lakota nation, implementing community policing was an important element of the Oglala CIRCLE Project.²⁰ Thus, for the evaluation it was desirable to produce quantitative evidence of the tribe's movement toward

this ideal. Yet “success” at community policing is hard to measure; alternatively, the evaluation team reasoned that a high police officer turnover rate would be evidence that a transformation toward community policing had *not* occurred.

In order to collect data on turnover, the evaluation researcher working on CIRCLE for Oglala Lakota College sought out the clerk at the Oglala Sioux Tribe Department of Public Safety. The clerk was initially reluctant to provide the evaluation researcher with any information. But because the researcher worked nearby, he returned regularly, reestablishing a friendship with the clerk, whom he had known in high school. As trust between the researcher and Public Safety employee developed, she felt comfortable helping with the research task. The clerk ended up providing turnover-relevant (name-stripped) data on police officers who had worked for the department during and after CIRCLE implementation, and she continues to update this information for the evaluation.

The officer turnover data indicate that community policing has not been effectively implemented in the Oglala Sioux Tribe Department of Public Safety. In the eighteen-month period from April 2002 to September 2003, turnover among all personnel working for department headquarters was 80 percent. Among officers alone, the turnover rate had been 46 percent. Looking just at the twelve-month period from October 2002 to September 2003, the turnover rate for officers was 34 percent, rising to 52 percent when reassignment between districts is taken into account (this last rate is most relevant to community policing, as it takes account of officers who leave the department *and* of officers who stay with the department but leave a particular community).

Certainly these data were useful to the evaluation (despite the negative finding). They were also of immediate use to the tribal community. While they were being compiled, the Bureau of Indian Affairs Division of Law Enforcement Services unilaterally decided that, despite the tribe’s P.L. 93-638 contract for law enforcement, OST ought to relinquish management control of the department; the BIA essentially forced the tribe to sign a Memorandum of Agreement with the bureau outlining the tribe’s consent.²¹ One claim the bureau made in an attempt to justify its actions was that under tribal management very few law enforcement officers had been appropriately trained.

Data from the CIRCLE evaluation offered a clear explanation of why that was so and why it was not the tribe’s fault. A grant from the USDOJ

Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Office made available through CIRCLE had enabled the department to not only maintain sixty officer positions created through an earlier COPS grant but also increase the department's force size by approximately 15 percent. The larger force, combined with significant officer turnover and limited vacancies at the BIA law enforcement training academy in Artesia, New Mexico, meant there was always a substantial cadre of officers awaiting training. It was disingenuous of the BIA to imply that it could do better.

Armed with this information, the local CIRCLE evaluators prepared reports for community meetings and spoke about the implications of the data for the BIA's claims on their evaluation-related radio show, "Raising the Tipi." By invitation, they spoke at a meeting of the Oglala Nation Education Consortium (an organization that represents all schools on the Pine Ridge Reservation). The feedback received from each of these efforts was that the community found the information valuable in its struggle against the BIA's continued attempts at colonization. Most recently, the newly formed grassroots organization *Wowasake Ikikcupi* ("Take Back the Power") has used the information in its reservation-wide educational campaign for OST governmental reform, including reforms that would lead to a strengthened judiciary and Lakota-based interventions in crime.

Construction of a Criminal Cases Database

While the CIRCLE team had abandoned the explicit goal of reducing crime on the reservation by 20 percent, it nonetheless saw the *measurement* of arrest and prosecution rates as extremely important. Ultimately, the rates were signals of system functioning and strength. Local CIRCLE evaluators began their investigation of these signals with the creation of a database on cases filed in the Tribal Court.

As an aside, it is worth noting that the researcher who took on this task was not hired with CIRCLE evaluation funds. Instead, Fire on the Prairie, a local nongovernmental organization active in social justice issues, paid the researcher through a grant from the Angelina Fund, which was to be used for community action purposes. Thus, the coalescence of goals between the Angelina Fund grant and the CIRCLE evaluation research grant provided more resources for the evaluation effort.

It took approximately eight weeks for this researcher to compile a

database of all the cases filed in the Oglala Sioux Tribal Court in 2002. She describes the process in a memo to her direct supervisor:

It has been difficult getting the entire 2002 caseload. . . . The files aren't kept in one standard place, any of the court personnel has access to them so they [the files] leave the office and there is no way to locate them. The files aren't being put back where they are found, so you can find files all over the Clerk of Courts office, which is what I am doing now, basically looking everywhere for files.

Attached to the file there is supposed to be a paper trail . . . , i.e. court dates, bond receipt, a disposition, yet there [are] very few files that have any of these beyond papers on court dates and police reports. Some files are lacking names of complainants, birth dates, addresses, and any papers on what was done with them after they were arrested.

It is because of these obstructions that I am having a difficult time getting an accurate assessment of whom the court is actually prosecuting and whom it isn't. I don't know if files are really lacking, if they just aren't finished with their court process, or if they have slipped past the court process.²²

Another problem the researcher encountered was that files were kept by number and not by name. Hers would be the first work that would be able to identify frequent offenders within the system.

While the data generated remain plagued by the questions raised above (whether or not all the files for the year were found and whether some cases somehow “slipped past the court process”), they indicate that, in 2002, 73 percent of the arrestees were male and that a mere 281 individuals accounted for 46 percent of all arrests.

Again, the local evaluation team prepared these findings in a written report for the community and presented the information on its *KILI* radio show. Further discussion led the team to incorporate the data into a chart comparing the relatively well-functioning Rosebud Tribal Court with the less well-functioning Oglala Sioux court. Upon request, the team presented the comparison at a meeting called at the local offices of the Casey Family Foundation and to organizational partners in *Oglala Oyate Iwacakiyapi Okolakiciye* (“the Society to Strengthen/Defend the People and Families”). Subsequently, when arguing for increased court funding, even Tribal Council members have cited some of this informa-

tion. Finally, like the police turnover data, these offense data recently have contributed to *Wowasake Ikikcupi*'s campaign for a strengthened tribal court.

REFLECTIONS AND LESSONS

At the time of writing, the Oglala Sioux CIRCLE Project evaluation is ongoing, but already it has led to important lessons learned and valuable reflections on the implementation of an evaluation methodology influenced and guided by Lakota ideas. Positives and challenges uncovered thus far, as well as a more general discussion of the role that quality action-oriented research can play in helping Native nations decolonize and move toward greater self-determination and sovereignty, are presented below.

On the Plus Side

One obvious advantage of the participatory action research and empowerment evaluation approaches, particularly over methods characterized earlier as "helicopter research," is the possibility of paying sustained attention to data collection so that data that might not otherwise be generated are compiled. The construction of the criminal offense database for 2002, accomplished by an intern over the course of nearly two months, is one example; the establishment of rapport by the CIRCLE evaluator with a Department of Public Safety clerk who, after several weeks, felt comfortable enough to provide statistics that were used to compute turnover rates is another.

But it would be a mistake to conclude from these stories that participatory action research and empowerment evaluation are about the manipulation of people in order to obtain data. Instead, the people providing the information, both in the Tribal Court and Department of Public Safety, were willing to help because they understood, through observation of the evaluation process, that the data would be used responsibly, would be shared with the public, and were being gathered as part of a process aimed at changing the system—they understood that this was an Indigenous, Lakota evaluation process.

Evaluation research is often conducted without the knowledge, let alone control, of those who have a critical interest in it. The courts and

law enforcement agencies at Oglala Sioux have been evaluated several times by outside entities in the past fifteen years. Reports from those evaluations provide information about the problems that the people are burdened with, but they are of no help filed away out of public view. The Oglala people, who have a direct interest in knowing the results, have in most cases never even learned of their existence. By contrast, the participatory action research process employed in Phase II of the OST CIRCLE Project evaluation puts a premium on informing people—so that they can deepen their understanding of the systems that frequently frustrate and fail them and use the information to work collectively for change, just as the ideas of *wopasi* and *tokata wasagle tunpi* suggest.

Encouragingly, the evaluation is beginning to involve the Oglala people in the process of changing their criminal justice system. Local evaluators are using a variety of approaches (including radio shows highlighting evaluation findings; written evaluation feedback reports to tribal officials and to the community; presentations to groups like the Oglala Nation Education Consortium; and meetings at which evaluation findings are discussed, interpreted, and used as a springboard for action) to disseminate research findings, and these efforts are making a difference, often in unforeseen ways—which illustrates both the richness of the participatory action research approach and its organic character.

For example, one meeting of grassroots people in Porcupine Community, called for the purpose of discussing evaluation findings, was interrupted by another group of community members who came in asking for help with incidents of gang violence and police brutality that had occurred in their housing cluster earlier in the evening. They had immediately contacted the OST attorney general, who, because she had been involved with the evaluation and had been attending CIRCLE meetings, then directed them to the meeting. The combined groups' response was to plan an emergency gathering of concerned community members, scheduled for the next day at the Porcupine Clinic. More than one hundred people attended, bearing witness to the police's failure to respond to their predicaments; many submitted written reports of police brutality to the Public Safety officers present.

Clearly, the research aided the community, but the community's efforts aided the research as well. While gaps in the needed connections between OST Public Safety, BIA Criminal Investigators, and the South Dakota U.S. Attorney's Office had been a concern during the implemen-

tation of the CIRCLE Project, community members' testimony at the Porcupine meeting underscored their seriousness. Now, because of public concern *and* because of the clear evidence they offer of system functioning or system failure, data on police brutality and reports of serious bodily harm for which there has been no response are part of the Phase II evaluation research effort.

In sum, situating the evaluation effort in the community and using a research and evaluation approach that has cultural resonance has provided some specific advantages to data collection. It also has led us to embrace a constantly evolving evaluation design, as we respond to community cues and direct community input. More notably, the evaluation methodology has promoted active collaboration between the evaluators and Oglala people inside and outside the criminal justice system who share a common interest in "Raising the Tipi," or participating in justice system change. And, instead of being passive objects of research, the individuals involved became "more aware, more critical, more assertive, more creative, and more active."²³ Indeed, this was a phenomenon of empowerment that Oglala organizers in attendance at the Porcupine Clinic meeting later remarked on in discussions about residents' willingness to confront Public Safety officers about police brutality.

Challenges

As it was originally conceived, Phase II of the Oglala CIRCLE Project evaluation was aimed at determining whether CIRCLE project funds had helped to increase collaboration among key components of the criminal justice system and whether such teamwork had positive effects on justice system outcomes. These objectives have been retained, but they also have been transcended by the effort to employ evaluation resources and outputs for the larger goal of system change. As described above, we think the broadened focus on the rebuilding of truly Indigenous institutions is a "plus," although it comes with attendant challenges. Some challenges of the Phase II evaluation are familiar. They are challenges to any evaluation research effort in Indian Country: evaluators must find a way to work with local resources without overtaxing their limited capacity, they must avoid funding dependency, and they must determine how to measure outcomes.

The strains put on Oglala Lakota College's resources are an example of

the burden evaluation research can put on local support structures. With regard to personnel resources, we note that the lead evaluator at the college has taken on the evaluation work as an extra duty, without release time from teaching duties. This is typical; even if the funding available to the local level was completely matched to the research task, it usually is not possible in the tribal college context for a faculty member to “buy” time off from teaching to do research and have another faculty member or adjunct take up the load. Other faculty members already carry full teaching loads, and even in the presence of “available” faculty time, the colleges’ small sizes make the overlap of faculty expertise necessary for redistributing the teaching burden unlikely. And of course, the funding available to the local level for such research efforts is usually *not* adequate, making the relative paucity of funding another limiting factor in tribal colleges’ ability to individually conduct or even partner in evaluation research. Oglala Lakota College has been able to engage in the empowerment research described above only because the lead local evaluator was able to supplement the CIRCLE evaluation resources provided by the University of Arizona with in-kind contributions from other non-profit organizations.²⁴

Funding dependency is a danger anywhere but especially in the context of extremely scarce resources. While it is certainly a benefit to the Oglala nation that both the CIRCLE Project and its evaluation have been more than a vehicle for short-term job creation, the task that the project and the evaluation have engaged—significant justice system change—is a long-term task. We do not want this work to be dependent on the funds the project brought to the community (funding that is now over) or those that the evaluation brought to the community (Phase II is funded for thirty months). The difficulty will be in continuing the participatory action research process past the grant-related evaluation period; the challenge is finding funding flexible enough to do so.

The third challenge is to measure progress toward the goal of institutional change, of “Raising the Tipi.” While the evaluation continues to chart the process of change and gather quantitative information on criminal justice system outputs that may be relevant indicators of change, measuring progress toward the goal remains problematic. Because the goal cannot be reduced to a timeline with objectives and activities (indeed, change within the Oglala Sioux justice system has tended to be nonlinear, ratcheting, and sometimes quite beyond the control of the

tribe and the Lakota people), it is necessary to constantly assess the usefulness of evaluation indicators, include better or different indicators as they present themselves, adjust if system changes make the data irrelevant, and guard the integrity of the data despite a politically charged environment.²⁵

In addition to these, the participatory action research and empowerment evaluation approach gives rise to a fourth challenge, one unlikely to be raised by more passive methodologies. This challenge is a direct product of the evaluation's empowerment goals: social and institutional change (here, criminal justice system change) are political propositions of some magnitude; accomplishing such change requires commitment, risk, and perhaps even confrontation.

To the point, the OST criminal justice system, like the IRA government itself, has very limited popular legitimacy, both because it lacks alignment with culturally acceptable forms of justice administration and because it is perceived (probably rightly) as nonresponsive and oppressive. At the same time, there are significant countervailing forces that act to maintain the imposed system, even to the extent of maintaining it in nonworking order. During the Grassroots Oyate's occupation of the Red Cloud Building in 2000, for example, the OST Court, which does not enjoy separation of powers, did not have any power to address the alleged illegal actions of the OST Council. Similarly, it has not been uncommon for council members who have been arrested for assault and other crimes to avoid prosecution and even be illegally freed from jail.

The goal of "Raising the Tipi" identified by the Oglala Lakota *oyate* transcends tinkering, strengthening, or reforming. In the words of Maori researcher Linda Tuhiwai Smith, "It necessarily involves the processes of transformation, of decolonization, of healing, and of mobilization as peoples."²⁶ The challenge to CIRCLE evaluation researchers is to support those ends.

*A Lakota Approach with Universal Themes: Evaluation Research,
Nation Building, and the Collective Struggle to Redress Wrongs*

The concurrence of the participatory action research/empowerment evaluation approach with Lakota ideas and traditions was an important reason we adopted the methodology for the CIRCLE evaluation. Intriguingly, there are reasons to believe that the methodology may have reso-

nance with not only the Lakota but with a wide spectrum of Indigenous cultures. For example, Budd Hall, an early academic practitioner of participatory action research, notes, “as far as we know, the first uses of the term itself, participatory research, came from Tanzania in the early 1970s. And much of the early momentum behind participatory research came from groups in the dominated nations, who seized upon the ideas as part of the resistance to colonial and neocolonial research practices.”²⁷ In other words, these may be broadly Indigenous approaches to research and evaluation. If this is true, there is even greater import to a question raised earlier—the answers and implications should apply not only in Lakota country, but to all of Indian Country.

Earlier in this article we asked, “Considering the OST CIRCLE Project’s activist goals and the fertile environment at Pine Ridge for activism on justice issues, might there be a way to harness more of the resources and outputs of the evaluation to these purposes?” Two assumptions behind the question are that locally controlled research is more ethical and will be more accurate. These ideas accord with a large body of literature in Indigenous studies.²⁸ But the question is motivated by another point as well, one relevant to nearly every evaluation research project we can think of—that there might (indeed, *ought* to) be a way for required evaluation research to be a resource for achieving community-desired ends.

Just as programs and projects have been designed by outsiders for Indian Country, the “imposition” continues in evaluation research: a funding organization requires an evaluation of how well a program it conceived promotes movement toward ends it desires. Where are the Indigenous people in this evaluation process? How are their understandings of progress and important goals for change incorporated into the evaluation? If Native ideas are not driving the program, how can the products of evaluation research possibly be helpful to the community?²⁹

Research conceived of and carried out by outsiders, no matter how well-intentioned, produces a one-way information flow; the parallel with colonial processes of exploitation is keenly appreciated by Indigenous peoples, as it should be by evaluation researchers. When the inherent power imbalance between external evaluators and Indigenous informants is not addressed, there is no opportunity for a virtuous cycle to arise, in which evaluation data are communicated, heard, compiled, returned, assessed, applied, and communicated again. And a one-way flow stands in stark contrast to the information flow that Native people have

relied upon for centuries: “Each generation understands its responsibility to remember stories for its children, and listeners are expected to repeat the stories with accuracy.”³⁰ In Native storytelling the listener and storyteller benefit from the recital of the story, time and again. Likewise, the community-based Native researcher will benefit from the story told by evaluation research data, as will the community itself as the information is used and retold.

We stress this point because we believe it is the crux of useful evaluation research in Indian Country. “Good” demonstration and pilot projects in Indian Country are explicitly part of a nation-building agenda—that is, local people have themselves planned the project and placed it within a larger vision of what they hope their nation will be. Project evaluation can contribute to these nation-building efforts by providing needed feedback to local implementers and activists about what the problems that plague their nations are, how the problems might be solved, and how well the solutions are working. Indeed, we would boldly argue that every evaluation research effort in Indian Country must promote nation building, otherwise it has not been responsible to the community that welcomed the work being evaluated.³¹

Smith makes a similar point when she criticizes outside researchers for assuming that they know what Indigenous communities want and need and that the outcomes of their research projects will help emancipate these oppressed peoples. The story as told by external evaluators is not what Native nations need. “Indigenous peoples across the world have other stories to tell which . . . question the assumed nature of those [external researchers’] ideals and the practices that they generate.”³² If a program or project is designed to benefit a tribe, it is only logical that the people who benefited or failed to benefit from the program or project tell and receive the story of the evaluation. The information gathered through such evaluations is not information “for mankind.” Although the data may be beneficial to outsiders, they are most beneficial to the Indigenous nation itself, to improve, refine, reform, or rethink the program or project within its nation-building process. (In fact, it is often the case that the data are truly useful to outsiders *only* after they have been interpreted and used by the Native nation itself to generate appropriate “lessons learned.”)

Turning again to the example of the CIRCLE evaluation at Oglala Sioux, the disjunction between insiders and outsiders in terms of data meaning

and usefulness is evident. The turnover rate data may only give outsiders a story about instability in the oST Department of Public Safety. The data told a different, more important story to the internal evaluators. In order to justify its resumption of control over the oST Department of Public Safety, the Bureau of Indian Affairs argued that poor tribal management led to the placement of untrained officers in frontline patrol positions. But the data showed that rapid officer turnover and limited slots at the BIA law enforcement training academy were the real culprits. The data allowed the tribe to challenge the BIA's claims and motives—especially after the BIA's resumption of management suddenly coincided with the opening of more training slots—and to make a firmer stand against U.S. encroachment.

Our finding from CIRCLE, one that we think is universal, is that an empowerment evaluation/participatory action research process provides a way for evaluation researchers, both internal and external to the society, to work together for such purposes. The approach is a blueprint for moving evaluation toward engagement of a people's deep yearning to decolonize and a way for researchers to actively support the work of nation building on Indigenous peoples' terms. Evaluation research becomes a liberating process oriented toward the rebuilding of sovereign, self-determined Native nations. In a participatory action research process, people cease being relatively passive objects of research and assume active control over the research process. They generate the questions, interpret data, and, importantly, use the results of research to develop action plans aimed at transforming their communities. The upending of a typical externally driven process opens a space for “a critical and spiritual form of research”³³ and for the recovery of Indigenous processes of research.

NOTES

The CIRCLE Project evaluation was supported by the National Institute of Justice, Grant #2000MUMU0015. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the authors and do not represent the official position of the U.S. Department of Justice. The authors gratefully acknowledge the input and partnership in this participatory evaluation of Mary Baird, Joseph Flies Away, Eileen Iron Cloud, and Jake Little, among others affiliated with the Oglala Sioux Tribe CIRCLE Project, Oglala Lakota College, the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic

Development, and the Native Nations Institute (a unit of the Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy at the University of Arizona).

1. Richard Two Dogs, personal recollection of meeting in November 1998.
2. See, for example, Stephen Cornell and Joseph Kalt, "Sovereignty and Nation-Building: The Development Challenge in Indian Country Today," *American Culture and Research Journal* 22 (1998): 187–214.
3. Paul Robertson, *Power of the Land: Identity, Ethnicity and Class among the Oglala Lakota* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 199 and 241–46.
4. Specific numbers regarding the IRA's passage can be found in Thomas Biolsi, *Organizing the Lakota: The Political Economy of the New Deal on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992), 78; and in Robertson, *Power of the Land*, 172. While the referendum on the IRA was not a vote on a particular constitutional document, it was a "constitutional" vote in a more generic sense—by adopting the IRA, the tribe would be committing itself to an IRA regime and all that entailed, which for many tribes included the creation of a new tribal constitution. With reference to the margin for passage, we note that in the U.S. system, constitutional votes require a supermajority. Even for *day-to-day* decision making, the various Oglala treaty councils use a three-quarters approval rule. Also troubling is the fact that little more than one quarter (28.8 percent) of the Oglala Lakota electorate voted for reorganization.
5. Biolsi, *Organizing the Lakota*, 78–79.
6. Many students of Indian reorganization have pointed out a mismatch between the allowable constitutional forms under the IRA and various Native nations' culturally appropriate forms of government; see, among others, Eric Lemont, "Developing Effective Processes of American Indian Constitutional and Governmental Reform: Lessons from the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, Hualapai Nation, Navajo Nation, and Northern Cheyenne Tribe," *American Indian Law Review* 26, no. 2 (2002): 147–76; and Sharon O'Brien, *American Indian Tribal Governments* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989). With specific regard to the Oglala Lakota, see Robertson, *Power of the Land*, 191; Biolsi, *Organizing the Lakota*, 92–108; and Stephen Cornell and Joseph P. Kalt, "Where Does Economic Development Really Come From?: Constitutional Rule among the Contemporary Sioux and Apache," *Economic Inquiry* 33 (July 1995): 402–26.
7. These incidents, including the contents of the tribal resolution, are described in Biolsi, *Organizing the Lakota*, 156.
8. For more detail, see Mary Crow Dog and Richard Erdoes, *Lakota Woman* (New York: Gover Weidenfeld, 1990); Vine Deloria Jr., *Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties: An Indian Declaration of Independence* (New York: Delacorte, 1974); and Peter Matthiessen, *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse* (New York: Viking, 1983).
9. This recounting is based on interviews Paul Robertson conducted with Gerald One Feather, Matthew King, and Birgil Kills Straight.

10. Cited in Robertson, *Power of the Land*, 232. The Grassroots Oyate's January 2000 takeover of the Red Cloud Building provides an instructive example of the significant role KILI Radio plays in educating Oglala citizens and bringing them together for social and political ends. The takeover occurred in the afternoon. That evening, community members broadcast a call for supporters to join the seven Oyate members who initiated the protest. Within an hour, their number grew to well over two hundred.

11. Notably, these developments did not undermine all of the progress that had been made between 1973 and 2000 in the transformation of the Department of Public Safety to a more culturally appropriate form. During the Grassroots Oyate protest, the police force was divided, with many officers supporting the protestors in the Red Cloud Building. At one point, the Tribal Council ordered the police to remove the protestors, and they refused. When the council appointed another chief of police, officers sympathetic to the Grassroots Oyate staged their own takeover of Public Safety headquarters and arrested and jailed the hapless new appointee. After that, the Council's Judiciary Committee called upon the U.S. Bureau of Tobacco, Alcohol, and Firearms, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Federal Marshals for assistance in removing the protestors—all to no avail.

12. The Oglala Sioux Tribe was not the only CIRCLE Project site. The Northern Cheyenne Tribe and the Pueblo of Zuni also operated demonstration projects.

13. Due to reorganization within USDOJ since CIRCLE's implementation, not all of the CIRCLE funding agencies still exist; some offices' functions have been absorbed into other offices or newly named agencies.

14. There were many reasons to think the early goal was unattainable. For instance, no statistics on exactly what the crime rate was were being kept, and without this baseline, achieving a "20 percent reduction" was impossible. National reports suggested that the crime rate in Indian Country overall was rising at this time, and many CIRCLE partners felt it was unrealistic to think that the trend could be stopped at Oglala Sioux. Due to system weaknesses, few prosecutions were passing through the court, which created a disincentive for police officers to arrest, artificially lowering the "crime rate" as measured by arrests. Moreover, any justice system improvements would likely result in more arrests and make it appear that the crime rate was rising.

15. There are many sources of information on each of these research and evaluation methodologies. We provide a single canonical reference for each. For information on theory of change-based evaluation, see James P. Connell and Anne C. Kubisch, "Applying a Theory of Change Approach to the Evaluation of Comprehensive Community Initiatives: Progress, Prospects, and Problems," in *New Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives, volume 2: Theory, Measurement, and Analysis*, ed. Karen Fulbright-Anderson et al. (New York: Aspen Institute,

1999). For information on participatory action research, see Susan E. Smith and Dennis G. Willms, eds., *Nurtured by Knowledge: Learning to do Participatory Action-Research* (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 1997). For information on empowerment evaluations, see David Fetterman, "Empowerment Evaluation: Collaboration, Action Research, and a Case Example," <http://www.aepro.org/inprint/conference/fetterman.html> (retrieved February 26, 2004). Regarding empowerment evaluation, we additionally note that while we like the term, Fetterman's writing and overall approach appear oddly disconnected from the rich complementary literature on participatory action research, which grew out of the struggles of colonized and otherwise oppressed populations to change their situations, has been operational among activists and organizers for nearly thirty years, and is written from multiple disciplinary perspectives, including sociology, education, philosophy, and anthropology.

16. One current research initiative being carried out at Oglala Sioux by a major, out-of-state university seeks to determine how the Oglala would best like to be studied. Another seeks to determine what the quality of life is like on the reservation (although for years the Pine Ridge Reservation has been ranked as one of the poorest areas in the United States in terms of per capita income). It is possible that the results of these research efforts could be used for grant writing, but beyond that it is questionable whether the research, driven by questions developed from afar, will serve to engage people in the struggle to create a better life for themselves.

17. Vine Deloria Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (New York: Avon Books, 1969), 86. Chapter 4 presents the entirety of Deloria's critique. Oglala Sioux's adoption of the IRA provides an example of the point. The anthropologist Haviland Scudder-Mekeel, who served under John Collier as director of the BIA's Applied Anthropology Staff, played an important role in the creation of the IRA constitution at Oglala Sioux and was in telegraphic communication with Collier concerning the timing of the tribe's vote on the IRA, seeking to synchronize the referendum with the height of sentiment in its favor. See Thomas Biolsi, "The Anthropological Construction of 'Indians,'" in *Indians and Anthropologists: Vine Deloria, Jr., and the Critique of Anthropology*, ed. Thomas Biolsi and Larry J. Zimmerman (Tucson: University of Arizona, 1997), esp. 149–50; and Graham D. Taylor, *The New Deal and American Indian Tribalism: The Administration of the Indian Reorganization Act, 1934–1945* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980).

18. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1997).

19. This sentence highlights the fact that empowering local evaluators is not as simple as "give the evaluation research grant to local stakeholders." The CIRCLE evaluation is illustrative. The National Institute of Justice (NIJ), which funded the CIRCLE evaluation, advocated engagement with local partner organizations

yet remained committed to funding an academic and/or professional organization that would meet its perceptions of external reviewers' standards for evaluation outside Indian Country and wanted a product that would address CIRCLE's progress at all three demonstration sites (providing direct funding to three separate tribal organizations would not produce this result). Only through aggressive efforts to maximize funds available for onsite partners and to create a workable division of labor for the site-specific and cross-site reports were the external evaluation organizations (the Native Nations Institute at the University of Arizona and the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development at Harvard University) able to create a situation in which both national funder and local tribal interests may be served by the evaluation.

20. For a discussion of what "community policing" might mean in Native communities, see Stewart Wakeling, Miriam Jorgensen, Susan Michaelson, and Manley Begay, *Policing on American Indian Reservations* (Washington DC: National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, 2001), chap. 6.

21. The Memorandum of Agreement's impact on the OST Department of Public Safety was dramatic. Pursuant to the memorandum (which, at this writing, is intended to be effective for two years starting October 1, 2003), the BIA immediately appointed a new chief of police and financial officer. In addition, and echoing the actions of the Tribal Council Judiciary Committee during the Grassroots Oyate's occupation of the Red Cloud Building, it has, without public hearings or community consent, reorganized the department and done away with district assignments and review boards. As noted earlier in the text, these were components of the culturally appropriate "flat organization" embodied in the original P.L. 93-638 contract.

22. Mary Baird, "2002 Public Safety Database Report" (personal memo to Paul Robertson, July 30, 2003).

23. Peter Park, "What Is Participatory Research?" in *Voices of Change: Participatory Research in the United States and Canada*, ed. Peter Park et al. (Westport CT: Bergin and Garvey, 1993), 2.

24. As noted above, Fire on the Prairie, a local nongovernmental organization active in social justice issues, received a grant from the Angelina Fund, which was to be used for community action purposes. The coalescence of goals between the Angelina Fund grant and the CIRCLE evaluation research grant allowed the CIRCLE research effort to benefit from labor paid for by Fire on the Prairie. The Mennonite Central Committee provided a grant that enabled Oglala Lakota College to hire the local evaluator on a full-time basis for the first year of the thirty-month Phase II evaluation, rather than half-time, which is what the University of Arizona grant supports.

25. In other words, an evaluation that could not adapt to unpredicted system

change (system change away from or only obliquely toward the community-envisioned ideal) would not be useful. Already during the evaluation period, as noted in the text, there has been a virtual takeover of the OST Department of Public Safety by the BIA. Additionally, there has been some indication that the BIA would like to install a CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) Court at Oglala Sioux. It is challenging but necessary for the evaluation research to accommodate such changes.

26. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books, 2002), 116.

27. Budd Hall, introduction to *Voices of Change: Participatory Research in the United States and Canada*, ed. Peter Park et al. (Westport CT: Bergin and Garvey, 1993), xiii.

28. See, for example, Talal Asad, *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1974); Biolsi and Zimmerman, *Indians and Anthropologists*; Bea Medicine, "The Anthropologist as the Indian's Image Maker," in *The American Indian Reader: Anthropology*, ed. Jeanette Henry (San Francisco: Indian Historian Press, 1972), 23–28; Devon A. Mihesuah, ed., *Natives and Academics: Researching and Writing about American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998); and Haunani Kay Trask, *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawaii* (Monroe ME: Common Courage Press, 1993).

29. We hasten to note that we are making the argument as starkly as possible in order to make a point. We are not specifically criticizing the National Institute of Justice's approach to the CIRCLE evaluation. In fact, we think NIJ adopted a very good approach. From the beginning, NIJ and the external evaluators worked to redress the typical problems of research and evaluation in Indian Country. NIJ proposed a participatory evaluation, which meant the tribal partners would participate in constructing and implementing the evaluation. When the external evaluators were brought on board, they partnered with local tribal colleges and/or local grassroots organizations as well as the CIRCLE project coordinators. Each site's team (comprised of internal and external evaluators) together developed an evaluation template that reflected local CIRCLE goals and ideas of how best to assess progress. NIJ also convened an evaluation subcommittee of the project overall, and the tribes, along with the federal partners, continually met to assess and discuss the progress of the evaluations at all sites.

30. Devon A. Mihesuah, paraphrasing Angela C. Wilson in Mihesuah, *Natives and Academics*, 3. The complete article by Wilson is "Grandmother to Granddaughter: Generations of Oral History in a Dakota Family," in Mihesuah, *Natives and Academics*, 27–36.

31. Certainly, this paragraph is speaking of an ideal. Not all demonstration and pilot projects are conceived of in a nation-building framework. Indeed, it is un-

clear to us whether CIRCLE always was. See chapter 1, “Opportunities for Moving Forward,” in Stephen Brimley, Carrie Garrow, Miriam Jorgensen, and Stewart Wakeling, “Strengthening and Rebuilding Tribal Justice Systems: Learning from History and Looking Toward the Future (Phase I of the Comprehensive Indian Resources for Community and Law Enforcement Evaluation)” (unpublished report, Cambridge MA: The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2003). But even when projects and programs are imposed and, hence, merely endured, it may *still* be the case that evaluation research can contribute to nation building—it is difficult, yet possible.

32. L. Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 2.

33. S. Smith and Williams, *Nurtured by Knowledge*, 173.