

Walter Williams' article, "United States Indian Policy and the Debate over Philippine Annexation: Implications for the Origins of American Imperialism" has been cited more times in other scholars' books and articles than any other article he ever wrote. In 1980 it was voted the first runner-up for the Binkley-Stephenson Award, which is chosen each year as the best article published in the Journal of American History. It has been cited not only in Native American scholarship, but it has also had a major impact in changing the dominant approach diplomatic historians take in explaining the rise of American imperialism. Before, most historians taught that U.S. imperialism suddenly sprang up in 1898 during the Spanish American War. After 1980, historians have come to accept that Indigenous peoples of North America had gradually lost their independence, and that by the 1890s they were de facto colonial subjects of the United States government.

In 1984 the University of the Philippines invited Williams to give a major address, "Philipinos and American Indians: The Common Roots of United States Colonial Subjugation," which was published in the Proceedings of the Ninth Conference of the International Association of Historians of Asia. (Manila: IAHA Press, 1985). In 1988 Williams' article was included in a book commissioned by the National Endowment for the Humanities and reprinted under the title "American Imperialism and the Indians," in Indians in American History. Edited by Frederick Hoxie (Arlington Heights, Ill.: Harlan Davidson). It continues to be cited by scholars today.