

Offensiveness of Native American Names, Mascots, and Logos in Sports: A Survey of Tribal Leaders and the General Population

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The pervasiveness of media coverage of sports teams with American Indian names and imagery has arguably supported stereotypical beliefs of those referenced. Past research investigating opinions on sports teams using American Indian themes has been inconsistent in findings and drawn criticism for lacking valid samples of Native Americans. Through a survey of National Congress of American Indians leaders ($n = 208$) and random U.S. adults ($n = 484$), results reveal that Native Americans are more offended by sports teams employing American Indian imagery, as well as more supportive of change, than is the general public. Investigation of how demographic characteristics influenced perceptions show that although age and education level have little influence, political party affiliation does correlate with opinions, with those voting Democrat viewing the teams with American Indian names, logos, and mascots as most offensive and in need of change.

Keywords: stereotype

Television is unquestionably the most powerful form of media in the world, in part because it effectively reaches a large, general audience. Sports programming is among the most popular television products, easily reaching millions of people each day (Hall, Nichols, Moynahan, & Taylor, 2007). The popularity of sports programming often lies in the drama of athletic competition and all the accompanying colorful information provided to these vast audiences by the television commentators (Raney, 2003).

Sport media, through the language of commentators and the framing of events and performers, has the power to both inform and persuade viewing audiences (Hall et al., 2007). It is this aspect of televised sport that might lead viewers to hold particular beliefs about various sports organizations, many of which are misguided and based on negative stereotypes. Furthermore, given the pervasiveness of not only television but all media, particularly in the coverage of sports, the audience's stereotypical views can become acculturated. This is of concern to

many who fear the normalization of such negative stereotypical beliefs, particularly among sports fans.

In 2005, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), one of several sport-governing bodies serving college and university athletic programs in the United States, announced the adoption of a new policy that prohibited NCAA member institutions from displaying hostile and abusive racial/ethnic/national origin mascots, nicknames, or imagery at any of its championships. It further addressed specifically its problems with Native American imagery and set an absolute compliance date of August 1, 2008 (NCAA, 2005). Well before this policy statement, institutions of higher education bowing to pressure had already changed their team names, including the St. Johns University Red Storm, Stanford University Cardinals, University of Miami (Ohio) RedHawks, and Marquette University Golden Eagles ("Burying the Mascot Hatchet," 2005). Behind the policy statement and the earlier name changes was the belief that American Indians are offended by sports entities that imitate or misuse American Indian symbols that have religious significance ("Burying the Mascot Hatchet"). Supporters of a movement to eliminate the use of American Indian symbols by sports teams have outlined how Native Americans view the use of Indian iconography and have determined that it stands to reason Native Americans would take an ill view of the practice. It appears, however, that those conclusions are often based on the supporters' own feelings, and little research has been done that polls the actual population in question. The few studies that have investigated Native Americans' opinion on the subject have been questioned in terms of methodology. The current study attempts to provide a more accurate picture of how Native Americans, asked directly, and compared with the general U.S. population, perceive the use of American Indian icons, names, and rituals in sports.

Literature Review

Previous observers have stated that American Indians are victims of stereotyping when they are used for sports teams' nicknames, mascots, and logos (Baca, 2004; Banks, 1993; Davis, 1993; Farnell, 2004; Fryberg, Markus, Oyserman, & Stone, 2008; Giago, 1994; Jensen, 1994; King, 2004; King & Springwood, 2000; King, Staurowsky, Baca, Davis, & Pewewardy, 2002; Sigelman, 1998; Strong, 2004). Rouse and Hanson (1991) summarized stereotypes of American Indians as displaying them as people "living in the past, clinging to tribal ways and having primitive beliefs ill-suited to success in modern society" (p. 3). Likewise, King et al. (2002) stated, "Stereotypes fail to recognize diversity among the people who are being stereotyped. So-called positive stereotypes such as the *Braves* often justify problematic practices" (p. 393).

Critics of race-based team mascots believe team nicknames such as *the Redskins* are part of the construction and maintenance of stereotypes, while less pointed names such as *Indians* become problematic when used in conjunction with stereotypical images and fan practices (Fryberg et al., 2008; Jensen, 1994; King, 2004; King & Springwood, 2000). Furthermore, King et al. (2002) pointed out that "mascots stereotype Native Americans as only existing in the past, having a single culture, and being aggressive fighters" (p. 392). Likewise, Staurowsky

(2004) said, "The end result is a U.S. populace wantonly undereducated and uninformed about who American Indians are" (p. 12).

It should also be noted that the misrepresentation of Native American culture through sports team mascots, names, and logos is of specific concern because Native Americans are underrepresented throughout the culture, in media, in schools, and in the U.S. political structure. In fact, Fryberg et al. (2008) concluded that American mascot representations "function as inordinately powerful communicators" (p. 216) to Native Americans and Non-Native Americans alike because they are presented in a context void of alternate imagery. In a four-part study, Fryberg et al. presented Native American students with mascot and popular media depictions of American Indians. They found that participants shown images of Cleveland Indians baseball team mascot Chief Wahoo and Disney's cartoon character Pocahontas reported lower self-esteem scores and decreased feelings of community worth than a control group seeing no such depictions. Likewise, participants who were primed with an image of an American Indian mascot later listed fewer positive expected achievements for themselves for the following year than participants primed with a positive Native American representation (American Indian College Fund advertisement) or those not primed at all.

Despite mounting research evidence and growing public outcry against Native American-based sports team mascots, there seems to be some debate as to whether there is universal disdain for all names. Arguments have been made suggesting that the nicknames *Indians* and *Braves* are acceptable, whereas *Redskins* is not (McCraw, 1992; Sigelman, 1998; Smith, 1997). Activists remain adamant, however, that it is the imagery associated with *Indians* and *Braves*, such as tomahawks, red skin, and headdresses, that makes their use insensitive (Banks, 1993; Smith). To those agreeing, American Indians are stereotyped by the use of a variety of images including war paint and feathers. This practice, however, has been accepted as less offensive than would similar treatment of other ethnic minority groups (Farnell, 2004). In support of this claim, Fred Blue Fox of the Sicangu Lakota Tribe detailed his concerns in an interview with *Indian Country Today*:

Indian mascots, by today's standards, would be offensive to any other race if portrayed in a similar manner. Indian peoples are no different in regarding the depiction of eagle feathers, face paints and war objects such as tomahawks. These are all sacred to the people and therefore have no place in any sort of public display, let alone [as] mascots. ("American Indian Opinion Leaders," 2001)

In its 2005 report, the NCAA identified 18 universities that it would ban from postseason games if they did not replace their Native American mascots (NCAA, 2005). Among other examples of potentially offensive imagery, the NCAA took issue with the University of Illinois's Chief Illiniwek mascot, images, and regalia in that they appeared hostile and abusive. Despite the fact that the Fighting Illini press office had once contended that the performance of Chief Illiniwek at half-time was one of the most dramatic and dignified traditions in college athletics (Staurowsky, 2004), the university retired the chief after a basketball game on February 21, 2007 ("Illinois Trustees Vote," 2007).

University of Illinois board member Robert Sterling said of the shelving, "The time has come, [The Chief] bothered a whole lot of people for a long time" ("Illinois Trustees Vote," 2007). In addition, the story included an interview with Illinois graduate student Genevieve Tenoso, a Lakota Sioux American Indian, who said, "I haven't had one single day on this campus when something didn't remind [me] of the Indian you prefer me to be rather than the living, breathing [American Indian] person that I am" ("Illinois Trustees Vote").

The capitulation by the University of Illinois exemplifies the rapid change at the college level that has been prompted by the powerful governing body, the NCAA, which has effectively forced most of the remaining affected institutions to make what the institutions envision as monumental choices rather quickly. In fact, as of mid-2008, 12 of the remaining 18 institutions in question had already changed their names and associated imagery or had plans to do so. Five of the remaining six obtained what the NCAA terms as exemption from the rule because they were able to gain approval from local tribes (Trubow, 2007). The NCAA set up an appeals process that provided an avenue for institutions to retain their Native American mascots and still compete fully in NCAA-sanctioned activities. The standard of review was based in part on the understanding that some Native American groups support the use of mascots and imagery and some do not. As a result, schools such as Florida State University, Central Michigan University, and the University of Utah received exemptions to the policy because of the public support of the several affected tribes (Staurowsky, 2007). In fact, all three of those institutions currently offer information on their Web sites regarding the traditions of the names and imagery and rationales for their use. The University of Utah, for instance, explains what a "Ute" is and describes a cooperative relationship between the university and the Ute Tribe wherein the two "share in the tradition." It also indicates that the university asked the tribe both for permission to use the name and for its input as to its choice of an appropriate mascot symbol (University of Utah, 2008).

Central Michigan University (CMU) outlines the historical development of its Chippewa nickname, explaining its geographical significance and its "opportunities for pageantry and showmanship." The CMU Web site continues, however, to discuss the fact that the Michigan Civil Rights Commission recommended in the late 1980s that CMU drop the nickname and that in March 1989, an advisory committee to the president of the university recommended retaining the name under certain conditions. Those conditions included developing educational programs in conjunction with the local Saginaw Chippewa Tribal Council, sessions to familiarize CMU students and staff with traditional Native American culture, and dropping several Native American logos and traditions that could be construed as offensive (CMU, 2008).

Florida State University (FSU) offers perhaps the most well-known example of an NCAA member institution allowed to retain its Native American name and imagery. FSU goes to great lengths to explain its connection to the Seminole Indians of Florida and their history as a "noble, brave, courageous, strong and determined people who, against great odds, struggled successfully to preserve their heritage and live their lives according to their traditions and preferences" (FSU, 2008). FSU further addresses critics' concerns that their use of Indian symbolism is derogatory by explaining that it has over many years worked closely with the

Seminole Tribe of Florida to ensure the dignity and propriety of the various Seminole symbols it uses. It even highlights a 5-minute professional video on its university relations Web page, prefaced by Head Football Coach Bobby Bowden describing its connection to the Seminole Tribe of Florida as “an alliance of mutual respect and admiration,” encompassing “ancestral ties” and “a timeless legacy.” It explains a thoughtful academic connection, as well, relating that FSU actively recruits Seminole Indian students and offers scholarships to help them attend the university. The video ends with an affirmation of FSU’s commitment to treat the Seminole name with “boundless honor” and respect. It should be noted, however, that the FSU and Seminole collaboration, which is positioned as a respectful partnership, is not without a sordid history that calls into question the university’s use of the tribe’s imagery and the possible political nature of the tribe’s motivations. In fact, much of the modern Seminole imagery was first initiated without any tribal input, and rumors continue to swirl that the Seminole people only stood in support of FSU’s use of their symbols and imagery as a means of garnering support for Florida casino-gambling legislation (King & Springwood, 2001).

As of 2007, there remained one institution, the University of North Dakota, that had yet to comply with the NCAA’s policy or receive an exemption. The university sued the NCAA and recently settled its litigation over the requirements. The terms of the settlement allow the university 3 years to obtain support for the continued use of the Fighting Sioux name and associated imagery by at least two Sioux tribes in the state of North Dakota, or it then agrees to permanently discontinue use of the name and imagery (D. Dodds, personal communication, May 27, 2008).

Despite numerous changes away from American Indian names and associated imagery among NCAA member institutions, change has taken place more slowly outside the reach of the NCAA. Although in the United States between 1969 and 2002 more than 600 elementary, middle, and high schools and minor league professional clubs dropped nicknames deemed offensive by American Indian groups (King et al., 2002), as of 2004 there were still as many as 1,400 high schools employing Native American mascots (Staurowsky, 2004).

Many who resist changing from the use of American Indian imagery by sports teams argue that some American Indians themselves do not care about such use, shoring up their argument with vocal supporters of the use of Native American imagery. For supporters of a promascot position, the opinion of athletes of color and American Indians who do not oppose these mascots is commonly used to argue that change is not necessary (Davis, 1993). In fact, a more recent study highlighted opinions holding that change should not occur unless a coherent American Indian majority opinion in opposition to the use of such imagery could be gained and that there appears to as yet be no such clear majority American Indian opinion (Davis-Delano, 2007).

In 2002, *Sports Illustrated* published an article titled “The Indian Wars” written by S.L. Price that drew conclusions based on a public opinion poll involving American Indian respondents and publication readers. Results of the Peter Harris poll commissioned by *Sports Illustrated* were reported as follows: 81% of Native American respondents disagreed that high school and college teams should cease the use of Native American names, and 83% of Native American respondents said

professional sports teams should not stop using Indian nicknames, mascots, and imagery. Ultimately, based on the survey, Price (2002) reported that most Native Americans do not oppose sports teams using Native American names and mascots.

Within 9 months of the *Sports Illustrated* article's appearing on newsstands, a group of researchers published a critique of the study in the *Journal of Sport & Social Issues* (see King et al., 2002). The authors argued that the *Sports Illustrated* article be dismissed based on methodological errors. King et al. (2002) contended that the article never explained how poll participants were chosen, how they were contacted, in what geographical regions the poll occurred, or whether one ethnic group was overrepresented or laid out the exact wording and order of the questions. King et al. (2002) stated that *Sports Illustrated* refused to reveal its methodology after claiming that the survey and details of how it was conducted were the magazine's exclusive property.

A focal point of contention for King et al. (2002) centered on the *Sports Illustrated* article's not clearly defining how survey participants were categorized as Native Americans. If Price's (2002) piece was to outline the opinions of Native Americans, then the survey participants must have irrefutable and clear Native American heritage, King et al. (2002) contended. The ability of the Harris sample to represent the intended demographic, however, is questionable. No universal means of defining what characteristics or genetic history constitutes Native American heritage has been achieved (Nagel, 1995). In the absence of any widely accepted criteria on which to base racial or ethnic determinations, individuals have cited tribal affiliations, residence, or self-proclaimed ethnicity when establishing Native American racial status (King et al., 2002). Clearly, a problem emerges if those surveyed by the Harris Group to represent Native Americans and speak for their plight could not be systematically linked to the racial group for which they proclaimed that Native American imagery in sports did not offend.

Lending support to King et al.'s (2002) concern that surveying the Native American population requires overcoming the sampling hurdle, some scholars contend that there is a tendency for people to falsely identify with Native American ethnicity. Springwood (2004) does not debate that some non-Indians might claim Native American heritage for nonnefarious purposes, skewing demographics. His article, however, focuses on his belief that "white people are now rhetorically fabricating Indianness in debates, not to realign themselves psychically or sympathetically with Native Americans but rather to obscure, if not dissolve, Native voices" (Springwood, p. 56). Ultimately, Springwood argues that non-Indians attempt to trivialize possible racial injustices practiced on Native Americans by announcing that they themselves (with some proclaimed but false or greatly exaggerated Native American heritage, who in truth have essentially no cultural differences from the dominant culture and no tribal connections) are not offended by the practices and neither are their peers. Speaking for "their people," these false Native Americans enter the debate on issues such as Native American mascots in sports and soften, if not quell, the voices of true American Indians. Given the opportunity to register an opinion supporting their own beliefs, which might run counter to those held by true American Indians, these opportunistic activists claim Indianness and enter the public debate (Springwood). In light of the ongoing controversy surrounding Native American mascots, a public opinion

survey conducted by phone or e-mail or on the Web might provide just such an opportunity for these non-Indians to rebut what they personally oppose (Springwood).

Two years after the *Sports Illustrated* article, the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania conducted an election poll that included a single question regarding feelings about the name of the NFL's Washington Redskins franchise: "The professional football team in Washington calls itself the Washington Redskins. As a Native American, do you find that name offensive or doesn't it bother you?" The poll findings revealed that 90% of those claiming Native American heritage stated they did not object to the Redskins name (Annenberg Public Policy Center, 2004). There were methodological concerns similar to those with the Peter Harris survey (Price, 2002), however, in that not only were large populations of American Indians not included in the sample but also non-Natives through self-identification were included in the American Indian sample (Clark, 2005). In a response to this poll, the data were questioned by a variety of academics based on methodology, and a claim of "misrepresentations of aggregated research findings [being allowed to] stand in to represent the views of actual human beings" was made, as well as the allegation that "these polls make it exceedingly more difficult for Natives to be heard as their results move through media to substitute for our many voices a shocking homogeneity" (Clark, p. 228).

Taking into account Springwood's claims, some doubt could be cast on any survey that simply asks respondents to state their association with Native American genetic heritage. In 2001, 81% of subscribers to the newspaper *Indian Country Today* who participated in an online survey indicated that the use of American Indian nicknames, symbols, and mascots is offensive and disparaging to American Indians ("American Indian Opinion Leaders," 2001). Because of the numerous flaws in assumption that could be made about subscribers to a Native American publication, the data that resulted are perhaps no more veridical than those outlined by Price (2002) in the *Sports Illustrated* piece, although it must be noted that likelihood of contacting a true Native American is higher when polling subscribers to *Indian Country Today* than it would be when randomly sampling the national populace.

Likewise, Springwood's (2004) concern that non-Native Americans might misrepresent themselves when given the opportunity to lend support to use of Native American imagery potentially plagues a survey conducted of students at one of the universities embroiled in the Native American sports-imagery controversy (Williams, 2007). In 2000, a University of North Dakota commission randomly sampled constituent audiences to determine attitudes held toward the *Fighting Sioux* nickname. The data were interpreted as revealing that Native American students were less supportive of the university's mascot and imagery than were White students (Williams). As with the *Indian Country Today* study, those surveyed were allowed to self-select their demographics. Although no claim is made here that either study resulted in data skewed by Whites posing as Native Americans, the methodologies of both cannot rule out Springwood's concern that people might misrepresent themselves to lend support to their positions. As stated previously, however, it is likely that both the *Indian Country Today* and the University of North Dakota polls reached a stronger sample of American Indians

because the publication is targeted specifically to that demographic and the university claims a significant American Indian population among its students. At least one researcher, though, has called into question the veracity of American Indian college and university student population numbers, again based on the problems with self-reporting of ethnicity (Baca, 2000).

There is a no lack of literature espousing the difficulties of surveying American Indians, including work that explains the difficulty based on tribal sovereignty, mistaken views as to American Indians having a collective and single ethnic identity (Caldwell et al., 2005), differences in the sociopolitical culture of reservation- and non-reservation-dwelling American Indians and the fact that most surveys of American Indians are conducted using reservation-dwelling populations (Nixon, Kayo, Jones-Saumty, Phillips, & Tivis, 2007), and logistical and financial problems of reaching an appropriate sample (Beals, Manson, Mitchell, Spicer, & the AI-SuperPFP Team, 2003).

In the end, research is needed that draws respondents from a pool of Native Americans whose racial attributes are less debatable. The current study attempts to measure how Native Americans of accepted heritage, as well as those of other racial groups, view the use of Native American imagery and mascots in sports. With reliable data, ruling bodies and individuals who act on the behalf of Native Americans can do so with a better understanding of just how the group they believe they are protecting feels.

Hypotheses and Research Question

In general, personal interviews with Native Americans have resulted in transcripts outlining how the participants opposed the use of Native American imagery and mascots in sports (see Davis, 1993; King et al., 2002; Williams, 2007). Survey research countering these claims can be questioned based on possible nonrepresentative samples (see "American Indian Opinion Leaders," 2001; Price, 2002; Williams) and even the use of single-item measures focusing on unique uses that are generalized to overall employment of Native American imagery in sports (Annenberg Public Policy Center, 2004; Woo, 2002). Lacking conclusive, broadly drawn survey data and basing predictions on past published transcribed interviews, the following hypotheses guided this research:

H1: American Indians will more strongly agree that sports teams employing American Indian nicknames and imagery are offensive than will the non-American Indian public.

H2: American Indians will more strongly agree that sports teams should stop using American Indian nicknames and imagery than will the non-American Indian public.

Research that surveys diverse populations and gathers personal characteristics results in data that can be employed to explore the intricacies in demographics that correlate with opinions toward Native American mascots and imagery in sports. Because the current study measured a broad range of demographics and surveyed Native Americans, as well as members of other races, it is possible that

specific characteristics can be associated with opinions on the mascot issue. To do so, the following research question guided the work:

Does education, political affiliation, or age influence perceptions of sport teams' use of American Indian names and imagery?

Method

Individuals were contacted through a telephone survey center, and qualifying participants were asked to respond to a series of questions concerning perceptions of Native American mascots, icons, and imagery in sports. All respondents were promised confidentiality. Two sampling frames were employed for the study. One frame consisted of a list of 594 American Indians; the other consisted of 3,500 randomly generated U.S. residential telephone listings.

The list of American Indians was gathered from the National Congress of American Indians tribal directory. The list was composed of the names, telephone numbers, and tribal affiliations of all 594 presidents, chiefs, and chairpersons of recognized American Indian tribes in the United States. No effort was made to draw a sample from the list; callers attempted to reach each of the 594 potential Native American respondents. As past research surveys of Native Americans are questioned on the basis of the true racial identity of respondents, it was believed that registered tribal leaders would possess verifiable heritage.

Trained callers, none of whom were Native Americans themselves, contacted the Native American population from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Central Daylight Time (CDT) on weekdays from April 2 to April 17. This timeslot was selected based on the fact that the Native Americans' telephone numbers were identified as business numbers in the sampling frame. Of the 449 American Indian tribal leaders who were over the age of 18 and spoke English with whom callers made verbal contact, 208 eligible respondents agreed to participate and 243 declined. Of those declining to participate, most who offered a reason cited lack of time to complete the survey process. None cited the topic of the survey as a reason for declining participation. The rate of eligible, answering tribal leaders who responded to the survey was 45.87%.

The general population sample was limited to those who spoke English and were at least 18 years old. Trained callers dialed all numbers from the initial sampling frame of 3,500 telephone numbers. Because a large portion of the original dialing reached disconnected or business numbers, the sampling frame was doubled by adding a randomly generated digit to the numbers. For example, the random digit 5 was added to all initial numbers, transforming, for example, (214) 555-8231 to (214) 555-8236.

Trained callers attempted to contact the general public weekdays from March 27 to April 17 from 5:30 p.m. to 8:50 p.m. CDT. Central and Mountain time-zone numbers were called from 5:30 p.m. to 8:50 p.m. CDT. Eastern time-zone numbers were called from 5:30 p.m. to 7:50 p.m. CDT. Pacific time-zone numbers were called from 6:30 p.m. to 8:50 p.m. CDT.

Of the 1,794 households where a potential respondent answered the telephone, 484 eligible respondents agreed to participate in the study. A total of 1,298

people refused participation, and 16 did not meet the minimum age requirements. Basing calculations on number of eligible respondents contacted, the response rate was 26.98% for the general population sample.

Call disposition for both sampling fields was coded by callers who noted completed surveys, survey refusals, no answers, answering machines, fax numbers, and disconnected numbers. When calls resulted in answering machines, busy signals, or unanswered phones or when eligible respondents were not available, the number was recorded and called back a maximum of three times.

A computer data-entry system prompted callers through the questionnaire, and responses were entered directly into a computer data file. The questionnaire was composed of two parts: a section on the respondent's opinions toward the use of American Indian names and images by sports franchises and universities and a section on the respondent's demographics.

The section containing questions about opinions toward the use of American Indian names and images was split into two sets of questions. One set asked about the offensiveness of using American Indian names and images in sports; the second asked questions about teams changing from Native American names and images. Each question about offensiveness was accompanied by a 5-point scale anchored by *not offensive* at 1 and *very offensive* at 5. Each question asking if teams should change their names and images was accompanied by a 5-point scale anchored by *strongly disagree* at 1 and *strongly agree* at 5.

All callers were recruited from a research-methods course at a large southwestern university. The callers were instructed in telephone-survey techniques in a classroom environment and were then presented with a short rebriefing prior to their actual participation. The topic area was discussed with the callers before they began calling, and the importance of not interjecting caller bias was covered at length. Callers were asked to practice their delivery and progression through the instrument for several minutes before attempting participant contact. Callers were predominantly female; overwhelmingly White (no Native Americans), native English speakers; and between the ages of 19 and 22.

Results

Description of Sample

A cleaning of all data resulted in the responses of 692 individuals available for analysis. Of the Native American sample, 46.8% of respondents were men, and the mean age was 47.2 ($SD = 11.97$). A total of 43.9% of the Native American respondents reported graduating from college, and 48.6% indicated they had voted Democrat in the last election (13.5% Republican, 1.0% Green, 11.5% other, 25.4% refused to answer). For the general population sample, 60.0% were women, and the mean age was 49.86 ($SD = 16.60$). Of this sample, 44.8% reported being college graduates, and 26.7% reported voting Democrat in the last election (25.4% Republican, .4% Green, 8.7% other, 38.9% refused to answer). In the general population sample, 80.5% identified themselves as Caucasian, 7.1% Hispanic, and 4.8% African American. No other race category included more than 20 participants. Ten respondents in the general population sample self-identified as Native Americans/American Indians and were excluded from analyses.

Offensiveness-of-Use Hypothesis

H1 predicted that American Indians would more strongly agree that sports teams employing American Indian nicknames and imagery are offensive than would the non-American Indian public. This hypothesis was supported. Native Americans more strongly agreed than did the general public at large that American Indian sport team names are offensive, $t(660) = 11.30, p < .001$ ($M = 2.79, SD = 1.59$; $M = 1.57, SD = 1.12$, respectively); that American Indian team logos are offensive, $t(657) = 10.92, p < .001$ ($M = 2.86, SD = 1.61$; $M = 1.63, SD = 1.20$, respectively); and that American Indian mascots are offensive, $t(652) = 10.36, p < .001$ ($M = 3.02, SD = 1.69$; $M = 1.77, SD = 1.29$, respectively).

Data analyses investigating races within the general public represented by a sufficient sample size and Native Americans simultaneously demonstrated the consistency of the opinions. American Indians stated that sports teams using American Indian nicknames were more offensive than did any of the non-American Indian races, $F(3, 594) = 47.90, p < .001, \eta^2 = .20$. A Student-Newman-Keuls (SNK) post hoc test confirmed that American Indians rated the use of Native American sports team names as more offensive ($M = 2.79, SD = 1.59$) than did Hispanics ($M = 1.37, SD = .81$), Caucasians ($M = 1.49, SD = 1.05$), and African Americans ($M = 1.76, SD = 1.22$). Likewise, analyses revealed that Native Americans viewed American Indian team logos as more offensive than did members of other races, $F(3, 594) = 45.72, p < .001, \eta^2 = .19$. Again, SNK post hoc tests showed that Native Americans evaluated American Indian logos as more offensive ($M = 2.86, SD = 1.61$) than did African Americans ($M = 2.00, SD = 1.58$), Caucasians ($M = 1.54, SD = 1.10$), and Hispanics ($M = 1.41, SD = .83$). Finally, American Indians ($M = 3.02, SD = 1.69$) found Native American sports mascots more offensive, $F(3, 591) = 41.34, p < .001, \eta^2 = .17$, than did Hispanics, Caucasians, and African Americans ($M = 1.55, SD = 1.03$; $M = 1.68, SD = 1.18$; and $M = 2.05, SD = 1.66$, respectively).

Cease-Use Hypothesis

H2 predicted that American Indians would more strongly agree that sports teams should stop using American Indian nicknames and imagery than would the non-American Indian public. H2 was supported. Native Americans more strongly agreed than did the general public at large that teams with American Indian sport team names, logos, and mascots should change names, $t(649) = 11.56, p < .001$ ($M = 3.07, SD = 1.70$; $M = 1.69, SD = 1.25$, respectively); change logos, $t(644) = 10.68, p < .001$ ($M = 3.18, SD = 1.69$; $M = 1.83, SD = 1.38$, respectively); and change mascots, $t(632) = 9.16, p < .001$ ($M = 3.15, SD = 1.77$; $M = 1.93, SD = 1.44$, respectively).

Further analysis of the opinions of the races composing the general public along with those of Native Americans revealed a caveat not present in the results of H1. Although not agreeing as strongly concerning changing names as did Native Americans, African Americans grouped with Native Americans according to SNK post hoc tests and differed from the opinions of Caucasians and Hispanics, $F(3, 595) = 53.57, p < .001, \eta^2 = .21$. A review of the associated means shows that Native Americans and African Americans ($M = 3.07, SD = 1.70$; $M = 2.71, SD = 1.77$, respectively) more strongly agreed that teams should change their American

Indian team names than did Caucasians and Hispanics ($M = 1.60$, $SD = 1.14$; $M = 1.35$, $SD = .80$, respectively). The same pattern emerged on the item asking agreement with teams changing away from American Indian logos, $F(3, 591) = 48.83$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .20$. Again, SNK post hoc tests revealed that Native Americans and African Americans more strongly agreed that logos should be changed ($M = 3.18$, $SD = 1.69$; $M = 3.05$, $SD = 1.83$, respectively) than did Caucasians and Hispanics ($M = 1.71$, $SD = 1.27$; $M = 1.45$, $SD = 1.06$, respectively). Finally, Native Americans and African Americans agreed more strongly that teams should change away from Native American mascots ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 1.77$; $M = 3.05$, $SD = 1.83$, respectively) than did Caucasians and Hispanics ($M = 1.81$, $SD = 1.35$; $M = 1.67$, $SD = 1.09$, respectively), $F(3, 582) = 35.53$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .16$.

Research Question: Demographic Influence on Perceptions

Our research question asked whether education, political affiliation, or age influenced perceptions of sports teams' use of American Indian names or imagery. After grouping respondents on the demographic variables (those with a high school degree or less vs. those attending some college or more, those who voted Republican in the last election vs. those who voted Democrat, people under the age of 50 vs. those 50 or older), comparisons were made between the demographic groups within each sample population on the six measures of team name, mascot, and logo offensiveness and need for change.

For the dependent variables measuring offensiveness of Native American sports team names, logos, and mascots, results were consistent across the two sample populations. Although Native Americans overall viewed American Indian team imagery in all its forms as more offensive than did the general population (see H1), only political party affiliation consistently influenced opinions within the groups. As outlined in Table 1, neither education level obtained nor age category led to any robust differentiation on opinions of the offensiveness of sports teams' use of Native American names, logos, or mascots, aside from Native Americans in the high education category viewing American Indian mascots as significantly more offensive than did their counterparts in the low education category. Differences by political party affiliation, however, were consistent across the Native American and general population samples. In fact, those voting Democrat in the last election viewed sports team use of American Indian names, logos, and mascots as significantly more offensive across the board than did those voting Republican, regardless of sample population.

On the measures concerning sports teams changing their names, logos, and mascots away from American Indian imagery, results mimicked those from the offensiveness measures (see Table 2). Once again, no differences emerged in either population based on respondent age. Education level had no influence in the general population, but Native Americans did differ significantly based on education. Native Americans in the high education category more strongly agreed than did their counterparts in the low education category that names, logos, and mascots based on Native American imagery should be changed. In addition and as on the offensiveness measures, those voting Democrat in the last election more strongly agreed than did Republicans, regardless of sample group, that teams with Native American names, logos, and mascots should change.

Table 1 Influence of Demographics on Perceptions of Offensiveness of American Indian Team Names, Logos, and Mascots, Separated by Sample Population

	Education			Politics			Age		
	Low	High	<i>t</i>	Dem.	Rep.	<i>t</i>	Low	High	<i>t</i>
General population									
names	1.45 (1.06)	1.59 (1.13)	<i>t</i> (433) = 1.16	1.78 (1.19)	1.42 (1.02)	<i>t</i> (241) = 2.56*	1.58 (1.12)	1.57 (1.15)	<i>t</i> (416) = 0.07
logos	1.63 (1.26)	1.61 (1.16)	<i>t</i> (434) = 0.14	1.91 (1.36)	1.39 (0.90)	<i>t</i> (243) = 3.56**	1.65 (1.17)	1.63 (1.24)	<i>t</i> (416) = 0.13
mascots	1.63 (1.19)	1.81 (1.30)	<i>t</i> (430) = 1.24	2.18 (1.47)	1.50 (0.95)	<i>t</i> (240) = 4.26**	1.74 (1.20)	1.81 (1.36)	<i>t</i> (413) = 0.53
Native Americans									
names	2.28 (1.59)	2.86 (1.56)	<i>t</i> (190) = 1.91	3.32 (1.58)	2.14 (1.35)	<i>t</i> (124) = 3.58**	2.77 (1.56)	2.82 (1.61)	<i>t</i> (182) = 0.22
logos	2.32 (1.54)	2.93 (1.60)	<i>t</i> (190) = 1.95	3.39 (1.54)	2.32 (1.54)	<i>t</i> (124) = 3.24**	2.86 (1.57)	2.89 (1.65)	<i>t</i> (182) = 0.14
mascots	2.41 (1.62)	3.15 (1.68)	<i>t</i> (193) = 2.34*	3.58 (1.58)	3.59 (1.58)	<i>t</i> (126) = 3.21**	2.94 (1.63)	3.20 (1.74)	<i>t</i> (185) = 1.05

Note. Education low = high school degree or less; education high = college courses or more; Dem. = voted Democratic party in last election; Rep. = voted Republican party in last election; age low = 49 or less; age high = 50 or more. Scale for all was 1 (*not offensive*) to 5 (*very offensive*).

p* < .05 two-tailed. *p* < .01 two tailed.

Table 2 Influence of Demographics on Agreement That Sports Teams Should Change Away From American Indian Team Names, Logos, and Mascots Separated by Sample Population

	Education			Politics			Age		
	Low	High	t	Dem.	Rep.	t	Low	High	t
General population									
names	1.66 (1.32)	1.68 (1.19)	t(438) = 0.11	2.07 (1.40)	1.33 (0.85)	t(247) = 5.05**	1.64 (1.09)	1.72 (1.36)	t(422) = 0.72
logos	1.76 (1.45)	1.84 (1.35)	t(434) = 0.51	2.31 (1.56)	1.39 (0.99)	t(244) = 5.57**	1.77 (1.24)	1.85 (1.48)	t(419) = 0.57
mascots	1.85 (1.51)	1.97 (1.42)	t(424) = 0.81	2.41 (1.57)	1.48 (1.06)	t(238) = 5.34**	1.93 (1.38)	1.90 (1.48)	t(408) = 0.26
Native Americans									
names	2.36 (1.54)	3.20 (1.69)	t(188) = 2.63**	3.59 (1.58)	2.39 (1.35)	t(123) = 3.24**	3.09 (1.64)	3.07 (1.76)	t(181) = 0.08
logos	2.42 (1.68)	3.34 (1.66)	t(188) = 2.88**	3.71 (1.63)	2.54 (1.45)	t(122) = 3.43**	3.16 (1.65)	3.25 (1.74)	t(181) = 0.35
mascots	2.50 (1.76)	3.28 (1.76)	t(187) = 2.29*	3.60 (1.73)	2.54 (1.60)	t(121) = 2.91**	3.32 (1.71)	3.10 (1.83)	t(179) = 0.86

Note. Education low = high school degree or less; education high = college courses or more; Dem. = voted Democratic party in last election; Rep. = voted Republican party in last election; age low = 49 or less; age high = 50 or more. Scale for all was 1 (*disagree with change*) to 5 (*agree with change*). **p < .05 two-tailed. *p < .01 two tailed.

Discussion

The goal of this study was to determine how the public in general and Native Americans in particular view the use of American Indian names, logos, and mascots in sports. Although past research efforts have explored the issue, sampling of Native Americans has been problematic. Data suggesting that Native Americans are not offended by American Indian imagery in sports (Price, 2002) have been questioned based on the fact that no clear outline was revealed of who represented Native Americans in the study (King et al., 2002). There are problems, however, even with a clearly outlined methodology for participant race selection. Scholars have suggested that non-Indians might label themselves as Native Americans either to grant themselves some self-perceived mystique they believe accompanies those belonging to Native American cultures or, for much more nefarious reasons, to falsely participate in survey research as Native Americans to dilute the strength of that group's opinions (Springwood, 2004). Non-Native Americans who might not want their alma mater to change team names, for example, might speak out as "Native Americans" who see no problem with sports teams employing American Indian names, logos, or mascots. Because of this possibility of clouded group representation, any survey that does not work from a valid researcher-selected sampling frame for Native Americans might result in data skewed from respondents speaking on behalf of a group to which they do not belong. The current study employed as Native American respondents presidents, chiefs, and chairpersons of recognized American Indian tribes in the United States. Although it could be argued that this sample of Native Americans possesses non-typical leadership qualities, this concern is offset by the benefit that racial identity of the group falls within a reasonable operational definition of people whom one could justifiably assume are in fact Native Americans.

As predicted, Native Americans more strongly agreed that sports teams employing American Indian names, logos, and mascots were offensive than did the general public. On the offensiveness measures, Native Americans consistently were more critical of American Indian imagery in sports, and the individual races that composed the general population category grouped together in their less critical perceptions. Clearly, this finding suggests that, counter to Price's (2002) conclusions, Native Americans are in fact offended by American Indian names, logos, and mascots and that this perception differs significantly from that held by the general population. It also suggests that any continued debate on American Indian imagery in sports should be informed in particular by representatives of the very group that the recommended alterations are meant to support.

In addition, as predicted, Native Americans more strongly agreed than did the general public that sports teams should cease use of American Indian names, logos, and mascots. Unlike on the offensiveness items, however, the general population's races were not unanimous in their opinions. African Americans were nearly equally as adamant as Native Americans that sports teams should stop the use of American Indian names, logos, and mascots. Caucasians and Hispanics were equally less supportive of changes. The fact that African Americans sided with Native Americans is perhaps not as surprising as the fact that Hispanics seemed less supportive of the cause. Based on minority status, it would make sense that any differences would be between Caucasians and the three primary

minority groups joined in agreement. Although the difference between Caucasians and Hispanics was not statistically significant, it should be noted that a review of the raw scores shows that Hispanics were the group that least agreed that changes should be made. These data suggest that on the issue of Native American iconography in sports, minorities are not united in their stand against perceived mistreatment of one particular minority group. The reason behind this fragmentation, however, is beyond the scope of this article.

Without previously established predictor demographic variables, researchers have investigated few influences on perceptions of Native American names, logos, and mascots in sports outside of race or cultural heritage. The current study asked respondents about their education level, political party preference, and age. Analyses revealed that perceptions of Native American imagery in sports did not vary across age categories. Differences did surface, however, based on education. Among the general population no differences emerged on the offensiveness measures or the need-for-change measures when education level was investigated, but Native Americans with higher levels of education did agree more strongly that changes away from American Indian names, logos, and mascots should be made than did less educated Native Americans. Again, it is outside the scope of this study to offer irrefutable evidence supporting why education level among Native Americans leads to different perceptions concerning the need to change away from American Indian imagery in sports, but it is plausible that college-educated Native Americans are more aware of the recent news focus on the issue and have a more developed sense of commitment to the issue, as well as a better developed barometer concerning official outcry for action.

The differences in perception of the offensiveness of American Indian names, logos, and mascots and the opinion of whether these should be changed were much more robust across political party preference. In both the Native American group and the general population sample, those voting Republican in the last election were consistently less offended by American Indian imagery in sports and disagreed more that changes should be made than did their counterparts who had voted Democrat. With racial issues and equality generally considered a higher priority among political liberals than among conservatives, this finding itself is not startling when investigating the general population. The fact that the difference between the two political leanings was consistent in the Native American sample does have interesting implications, however. Data collected in this study seem to suggest that political party preference has an influence on perceptions of offensiveness and need for activism even among those representing the race in question. No implication is made here that identity with one political party over another trumps identity with Native American heritage, but clearly Native Americans who vote Democrat are stronger in their convictions than their Republican counterparts.

Conclusion

Jensen (1994) said, "In the absence of a strong argument from [American Indians] for using the names, these teams should stop using the names" (p. 23). There is now evidence of a strong counterargument for teams to discontinue using American Indian names, logos, and mascots. The argument that American Indians dis-

miss this issue can be put to rest because this study details that Native Americans do believe the use of these racial names, images, and logos to be offensive. Likewise, the study sheds light on the demographics of those most offended and supportive of change.

Ultimately, the value of the current study might reside not in the fact that it finds Native Americans to be offended by American Indian imagery in sports. Despite previous arguments, this opposition seems somewhat logical. What this current study does offer, however, is a more methodologically sound foundation to the offensiveness and need-for-change claim by overcoming problems previous studies faced in sampling Native Americans. This study allowed Native Americans to speak for Native Americans and, with that, better informs any future arguments of whether sports teams employing American Indian imagery are offensive and whether these teams should consider change, especially as the pervasiveness of media coverage of such teams might help perpetuate negative stereotypes about American Indians.

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