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Unpacking the Mascot Debate: Native American Identification Predicts Opposition to Native Mascots

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Abstract

While major organizations representing Native Americans (e.g., National Congress of American Indians) contend that Native mascots are stereotypical and dehumanizing, sports teams with Native mascots cite polls claiming their mascots are not offensive to Native people. We conducted a large-scale, empirical study to provide a valid and generalizable understanding of Native Americans' ($N = 1,021$) attitudes toward Native mascots. Building on the identity centrality literature, we examined how multiple aspects of Native identification uniquely shaped attitudes toward mascots. While Native Americans in our sample generally opposed Native mascots, especially the Redskins, attitudes varied according to demographic characteristics (e.g., age, political orientation, education) and the strength of participants' racial-ethnic identification. Specifically, stronger Native identification (behavioral engagement and identity centrality) predicted greater opposition. Results highlight the importance of considering the unique and multifaceted aspects of identity, particularly when seeking to understand Native people's attitudes and experiences.

Keywords

Native Americans, ethnic identification, enculturation, mascots

After decades of debate, the two key stakeholders in the Native mascot controversy continue to stand their ground. On one side, Native people, tribes, and organizations (e.g., National Congress of American Indians, n.d.) point to psychological research demonstrating that Native mascots are stereotypical and undermine the well-being of Native Americans (Burkley et al., 2017; Chaney et al., 2011; Fryberg et al., 2008; LaRocque et al., 2011). Supporting this stance, Indian Country Today (ICT; the only national Native newspaper) has published convenience sample polls (e.g., comprising ICT readership, ICT journalist's Twitter followers, and powwow attendees), suggesting that 67%–87% of Native people find Native mascots and team names offensive (ICT, 2001, 2014; Schilling, 2016). On the other side, professional and collegiate teams who use Native mascots contend that Native mascots honor Native people and are not offensive (Cox et al., 2016; *The Washington Post*, 2013; Vargas, 2019). Opinion polls reported in influential mainstream news outlets, such as the *Washington Post*, appear to support this stance, suggesting that as many as 90% of Native Americans do not find Native mascots offensive (National Annenberg Election Survey, 2004; *The Washington Post*, 2016; Wolvereyes, 2019).

Despite the divergent conclusions about the offensiveness of Native mascots, the greater reach of mainstream news outlets (e.g., 86 million *Washington Post* readers/month; WashPostPR,

2019) compared to Native news sources (e.g., 500,000 ICT readers/month; Panne, 2019) afford mainstream sources more influence in the Native mascot debate. Indeed, recent articles (Schilken, 2016; Vargas, 2019) have claimed that the 2016 *Washington Post* poll provided conclusive evidence that Native people do not find the Redskins mascot offensive and effectively “killed the debate.” Accepting this conclusion, however, is tantamount to dismissing Native people's vocal opposition.

We contend that unpacking the mascot debate—and understanding how Native people feel about Native mascots—requires contending with two key issues. First, the data used to support both sides of the debate paint Native people in broad strokes, reducing the opinions of a diverse group of people to a single percentage. In reality, many factors (e.g., life experiences, demographics, and social identities) are likely to differentiate Native individuals' attitudes toward mascots. Second, the existing polls regarding Native Americans' opinions about mascots offer little methodological information, leaving

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questions about the validity and generalizability of their findings. For example, mainstream media often omit information regarding who was included or excluded during recruitment, creating uncertainty about how and whether these polls actually recruited representative samples of Native people. Furthermore, polls conducted by non-Native people, without the consultation of Native people, may be compromised by cultural barriers between pollsters and respondents. Polls developed by Native people or organizations may include fewer cultural barriers, but these polls, to date, rely on convenience samples (e.g., Twitter followers) that may differ markedly from national samples. Together, these factors cast doubt on the accuracy and generalizability of existing data regarding Native Americans' attitudes toward Native mascots.

To address these key issues, we conducted a large-scale, empirical study using a national sample of Native Americans to provide a valid and generalizable understanding of Native people's opinions regarding mascots. Furthermore, we examined variation in Native Americans' attitudes toward Native mascots according to demographic and identity characteristics. We theorize that accounting for the diversity of Native experiences and identification will shed light on the mascot issue and advance our theoretical understanding of the aspects of identity that shape individuals' attitudes. Far from being a monolithic group, Native Americans vary widely in terms of age, gender, education, political ideology, and experience living in Native communities. These demographic factors are likely to shape Native individuals' attitudes toward a range of social issues, including mascots (Fine, 1992). Additionally, Native people vary widely in terms of their legal, behavioral, and psychological identification. In the following sections, we discuss these different manifestations of identity and describe how differences along these dimensions may shape individuals' attitudes toward Native mascots.

The Complexities of Native American Identities and Social Attitudes

Native identification is as controversial as the Native mascot debate. Unlike other racial-ethnic groups in the United States, there are legal definitions of who is Native American. According to the U.S. government, Native Americans or Alaska Natives are members of federally recognized tribes (Indian Health Care Improvement Act of 1976, 2012). People who are members of state-recognized tribes and/or hold Certificates of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) may be legally Native American in some domains and are largely considered by Native Americans to be Native, but the federal government does not recognize these individuals as Native American. Similarly, people who claim Native heritage and/or self-define as Native American but do not meet legal criteria are not considered to be legally Native American. Legal definitions of Native American identity are problematic for a variety of reasons that are beyond the scope of this article (see Garrouette, 2003, for a comprehensive discussion). These definitions, however, have consequences for how Native Americans experience their Native

identities (Garrouette, 2001; Jacobs & Merolla, 2016). In particular, Native people who meet legal criteria are perceived to be more "legitimately" Native American and are less likely to have their Native identities questioned than those who do not meet these criteria (Garrouette, 2003).

Beyond the legal definitions of Native American identity, Native American people vary tremendously in terms of their behavioral engagement with Native communities and cultural practices (Winderowd et al., 2008). Part of this variation stems from the federal government's efforts to devalue and suppress Native ways of being, including removing Native children from their homes and placing them in federally run boarding schools (Gregg, 2018), relocating Native adults from their tribal communities to large cities (Furlan, 2017), and actively suppressing Native religions, languages, and spiritual practices (Kingston, 2015). Consequently, many Native Americans do not have opportunities to, or choose not to, engage in activities connected to their tribal affiliation.

Finally, there is a social psychological understanding of what it means to be Native American, referred to as *identity centrality*. Members of social groups (e.g., racial, gender, or sexual minority groups) differ in the extent to which belonging to these groups is central to their sense of self. For individuals high in identity centrality, group membership is more influential in how they understand their identities than for individuals low in identity centrality. Moreover, variation in identity centrality shapes how individuals understand and experience group-based treatment. Individuals who are high in racial-ethnic identity centrality are more likely to both perceive and experience group-based discrimination (Kaiser et al., 2011; Levin et al., 2006; Quintana & Verra, 1999; Sellers & Shelton, 2003), while individuals who are low in racial-ethnic identity centrality tend to overlook prejudice directed at their group (Operario & Fiske, 2001).

Native American Identification and Mascot Opposition

Much of the identity centrality literature focuses on how non-Native racial minorities' identities shape their social experiences. By and large, this literature suggests that highly identified group members are more attuned to prejudice and discrimination (Cokley & Helm, 2001; Kaiser & Wilkins, 2010; Schmader, Block, & Lickel, 2015; Schweigman et al., 2011; Wright & Littleford, 2002; Yasui et al., 2015). Although there is limited research examining identity centrality among Native Americans in particular (Adams et al., 2006; Yasui et al., 2015), we anticipate that a similar process occurs among Native people in regard to Native mascots. Given the accumulating evidence that Native mascots increase stereotyping of and discrimination against Native Americans (Burkley et al., 2017; Chaney et al., 2011; Steinfeldt et al., 2010), we conceptualize perceiving Native mascots as offensive as a manifestation of attunement to discrimination.

Building on this literature, we expect that higher identity centrality will predict greater opposition to Native mascots. However, given the complexity of Native identities, we also

anticipate that Native identification as indicated by legal status and behavioral engagement will play a similar role in shaping attitudes toward Native mascots. Specifically, we hypothesize that Native people who are higher in identification because they (1) meet a legal definition of being Native American or Alaska Native (i.e., hold legal or certificated identification as Native American), (2) more frequently engage in tribal activities, or (3) report higher Native American identity centrality will more strongly oppose Native mascots compared to Native people who do not meet a legal definition, do not engage in tribal activities, or report lower Native American identity centrality.

This Study

To date, this is the largest scientific study of the relationship between Native American identity and attitudes toward Native mascots. The study also extends prior reports by examining variation in Native Americans' attitudes along five demographic factors and three dimensions of Native American identification: legal/certificated status, behavioral engagement, and psychological identification. We measured opposition to the Redskins team name, specifically, and opposition to Native mascots, more generally. These data render a more nuanced understanding of Native Americans' attitudes toward Native mascots and extend the literature on identification by examining the unique contributions of three forms of identification (legal/certificated, behavioral, and psychological) on Native Americans' attitudes.

Method

Participants

Participants were recruited through Qualtrics Panels to participate in a short study regarding their attitudes and experiences with contemporary issues.¹ We aimed to recruit a sample of 1,000 Native American participants, which is twice the size of previous polls and would achieve sufficient variation in Native American demographics and identities to test our hypotheses. The final sample included 1,021 Native American participants ($M_{\text{age}} = 40.10$, $SD = 15.18$; see Table 1 for participant demographics).² Participants came from all 50 states, representing 148 tribes. A sensitivity analysis indicates that this sample size allows us to detect small effects ($r \geq .12$; $d \geq .22$) with 80% power (Faul et al., 2007).

Materials and Procedure

Participants reported their attitudes toward the Washington Redskins team name, attitudes toward the use of Native mascots in general, and three primary measures of Native American identification (legal/certificated status, engagement with Native American cultures, and identity centrality) before answering a series of demographic questions.³ We also assessed perceptions that Native Americans are invisible in

Table 1. Sample Demographics.

Demographics	Participants (<i>N</i> = 1,021)
Gender	
Cisgender men	31%
Cisgender women; transgender, nonbinary, and genderqueer people	69%
Reservation experience	
Not raised/living on a reservation	83%
Raised/living on a reservation	17%
Level of education	
Less than high school	3%
High school	20%
Some college	28%
Associates/technical degree	16%
Bachelors of arts/science	22%
Masters of arts/science	8%
Doctorate	2%
Age	
18–24	14%
25–34	33%
35–44	18%
45–54	13%
55–64	11%
65+	11%
Political orientation	
Extremely conservative	9%
Conservative	12%
Somewhat conservative	11%
Moderate	37%
Somewhat liberal	11%
Liberal	11%
Extremely liberal	9%

Note. Participants who indicated that they were raised on and/or currently live on the reservation were coded as having reservation experience.

mainstream U.S. society, but we do not report the results in this article. All Supplemental Appendices referenced in this article can be found at the following link: https://osf.io/n7dpz/?view_only=b6a148dd892e4619bf61fcd0ea2e8918. For full survey, see Supplemental Appendix A.

Attitudes toward Native mascots

Opposition to Redskins team name. To assess attitudes toward the Redskins team name, participants answered 5 items presented in a randomized order. One item came from the 2016 *Washington Post* poll: "The professional football team in Washington calls itself the Washington Redskins. As a Native American, I find the name offensive." We adapted a second item from the same poll ("I think the term 'Redskin' is respectful to Native Americans" [reverse coded]) and created 3 additional items: "I find the term Redskin offensive," "The term Redskin bothers me," and "It bothers me when fans of the rival team for the Redskins use insults about Native American culture."⁴ Participants responded to all items using a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *somewhat disagree*, 4 = *neither agree nor disagree*,

Table 2. Bivariate Correlations Between Demographic Variables and Identification.

	Demographic Variables					Identification	
	Age	Level of Education	Gender	Reservation Experience	Political Orientation	Legal Status	Engagement with Native American Cultures
	Older Age	Higher Education	Cis Men	Raised/Living on Reservation	Extremely Liberal	Legally Identified	Greater Engagement
Higher Values Indicate . . .							
Demographic variables							
Level of education	.01						
Gender	.00	.13**					
Reservation experience	-.17***	-.06	-.07*				
Political orientation	-.07*	.02	-.07*	.04			
Identification							
Legal status	-.37***	.07*	.00	.18***	.09**		
Engagement with Native American cultures	-.30***	.13***	.09**	.23***	.09**	.38***	
Identity centrality	.08*	.03	-.07*	.03	.14***	.07*	.19***

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

5 = *somewhat agree*, 6 = *agree*, and 7 = *strongly agree*). We averaged across items to create a composite ($\alpha = .82$), such that higher values indicate greater opposition to the Redskins team name (see Supplemental Materials Appendix B for endorsement of individual items).

Opposition to Native mascot usage. Ten items assessed the extent to which participants supported/opposed the use of Native mascots in general (e.g., “I think sports teams’ use of Native mascots is ok.”; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *somewhat disagree*, 4 = *neither agree nor disagree*, 5 = *somewhat agree*, 6 = *agree*, and 7 = *strongly agree*). We present these items as a composite indexing opposition to the use of Native mascots ($\alpha = .89$; see Supplemental Appendix B for endorsement of individual items).

Native identification

Legal/certificated status. Participants indicated whether they were enrolled members of a federally recognized (“yes”/“no”) or state-recognized tribe (yes/no; participants were only asked this question if not enrolled in a federally recognized tribe) and whether they possessed CDIB Card (yes/no). If participants indicated yes to any one of these questions, they were coded as holding legal or certificated status as Native American (i.e., meeting a criteria for potential legal identification).⁵ If participants indicated no to all of these questions, they were coded as not being legally identified as Native American.

Engagement with Native American cultures. To assess behavioral manifestations of identification, participants responded to 17 items adapted from the American Indian Enculturation Scale (Winderowd et al., 2008). This scale measures the extent to which people engage in activities related to Native American cultures (e.g., attend Native ceremonies, sing Native American songs, eat or cook Native American food; 1 = *not at all*, 2 = *very rarely*, 3 = *rarely*, 4 = *occasionally*, 5 = *frequently*, 6

= *very frequently*, and 7 = *a great deal*; $\alpha = .96$; $M = 3.92$, $SD = 1.55$). One original item was omitted (“choose an Indian activity before others”) and another item was added (“vote in tribal elections”⁶). While the original scale uses the term “Indian,” we used “Native American.” Higher scores on this measure indicate greater Native American behavioral identification.

Identity centrality. To assess psychological identification with being Native American, participants completed Luhtanen and Crocker’s (1992) 4-item racial identity centrality measure in regard to their Native American identity (1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *somewhat disagree*, 4 = *neither agree nor disagree*, 5 = *somewhat agree*, 6 = *agree*, and 7 = *strongly agree*; $\alpha = .67$; $M = 5.15$, $SD = 1.25$). For correlations between demographic variables and measures of identification, see Table 2.

Analytic Plan

Our goal was to assess Native Americans’ attitudes toward the Redskins team name and Native American mascots in general and to explore how demographic factors and the strength of Native American identification shape these attitudes. Our two dependent variables were opposition to the Redskins team name (composite measure) and opposition to Native mascots (composite measure). For each dependent variable, we first ran five regression analyses examining how each of the demographic characteristics—age, level of education, gender, reservation experience, and political orientation—independently predicted Native Americans’ attitudes. We then ran three regression analyses examining how each measure of identification—legal/certificated, behavioral, and psychological—independently shaped these attitudes. Finally, using multiple regression, we estimated the simultaneous effects of the three identification measures on each of the dependent variables,

Table 3. Multiple Regression Predicting Opposition to the Redskins Team Name From Native American Identification, With (Model 2) and Without (Model 1) Demographic Covariates.

Opposition to Redskins Team Name										
	Model 1					Model 2				
	B (SE)	β	df	t	p	B (SE)	β	df	t	p
Demographic Variables										
Age	—	—	—	—	—	-.01 (.00)	-.10	1,008	-3.16	.002
Level of education	—	—	—	—	—	.08 (.03)	.07	1,008	2.48	.013
Gender	—	—	—	—	—	-.12 (.05)	-.07	1,008	-2.44	.015
Reservation experience	—	—	—	—	—	.03 (.06)	.01	1,008	0.495	.621
Political orientation	—	—	—	—	—	.23 (.03)	.24	1,008	8.26	<.001
Identification										
Legal status	.01 (.07)	.00	1,014	.12	.906	-.10 (.07)	-.05	1,008	-1.51	.131
Engagement with Native American cultures	.14 (.03)	.14	1,014	4.14	<.001	.11 (.00)	.10	1,008	3.12	.002
Identity centrality	.27 (.04)	.21	1,014	6.96	<.001	.24 (.04)	.19	1,008	6.30	<.001

Note. Although legal status and reservation experience were highly correlated, reservation experience did not account for the relationship between legal status and opposition to the Redskins team name. That is, although legal status was significant when predicting the opposition to the Redskins team name independently, it became insignificant in the multiple regression analyses, whether or not reservation experience was included in the model. *df* = degrees of freedom.

Table 4. Multiple Regression Predicting Opposition to Native Mascots From Native American Identification, With (Model 2) and Without (Model 1) Demographic Covariates.

Opposition to Native Mascot Usage										
	Model 1					Model 2				
	B (SE)	β	df	t	p	B (SE)	β	df	t	p
Demographic variables										
Age	—	—	—	—	—	-.01 (.00)	-.07	1,009	-2.34	.019
Level of education	—	—	—	—	—	.03 (.03)	.03	1,009	1.18	.234
Gender	—	—	—	—	—	-.18 (.04)	-.12	1,009	-4.04	<.001
Reservation experience	—	—	—	—	—	.13 (.06)	.07	1,009	2.28	.023
Political orientation	—	—	—	—	—	.21 (.02)	.25	1,009	8.58	<.001
Identification										
Legal status	.07 (.06)	.04	1,015	1.18	.237	-.03 (.05)	-.02	1,009	-.48	.631
Engagement with Native American cultures	.10 (.03)	.11	1,015	8.50	<.001	.08 (.03)	.09	1,009	2.60	.009
Identity centrality	.30 (.03)	.26	1,015	3.44	<.001	.26 (.03)	.23	1,009	7.68	<.001

Note. Although legal status and reservation experience were highly correlated, reservation experience did not account for the relationship between legal status and opposition to the Native mascot use. That is, although legal status was significant when predicting the opposition to the Redskins team name independently, it became insignificant in the multiple regression analyses, whether or not reservation experience was included in the model. *df* = degrees of freedom.

controlling for demographic characteristics. In all regression analyses, continuous predictors were mean-centered and categorical predictors were effect coded (i.e., using -1 and 1).

Results

Descriptive Results

On average, Native American participants significantly opposed the Redskins team name ($M = 4.69$; $SD = 1.59$; one-sample t test compared to the scale midpoint, $t(1,018) = 13.94$, $p < .001$, 95% confidence interval [CI] [4.59, 4.79], $d = .44$) and the use of Native mascots in general ($M = 4.51$; $SD = 1.43$; $t(1,019) = 11.37$, 95% CI [4.42, 4.60], $p < .001$, $d = .36$).

Demographic Variation

Three demographic characteristics—age, gender, and political identification—consistently predicted attitudes toward Native mascots (see Tables 3 and 4; Supplemental Appendix D). Specifically, younger individuals, more liberal individuals, and people who did not identify as cisgender men (i.e., cisgender women; transgender, nonbinary, and genderqueer people) were more opposed to the Redskins team name and the use of Native mascots in general compared to their counterparts. In addition, participants with higher levels of education more strongly opposed the Redskins team name (but not the use of Native mascots in general) than those with less education. Finally, although reservation status significantly predicted attitudes toward the Redskins

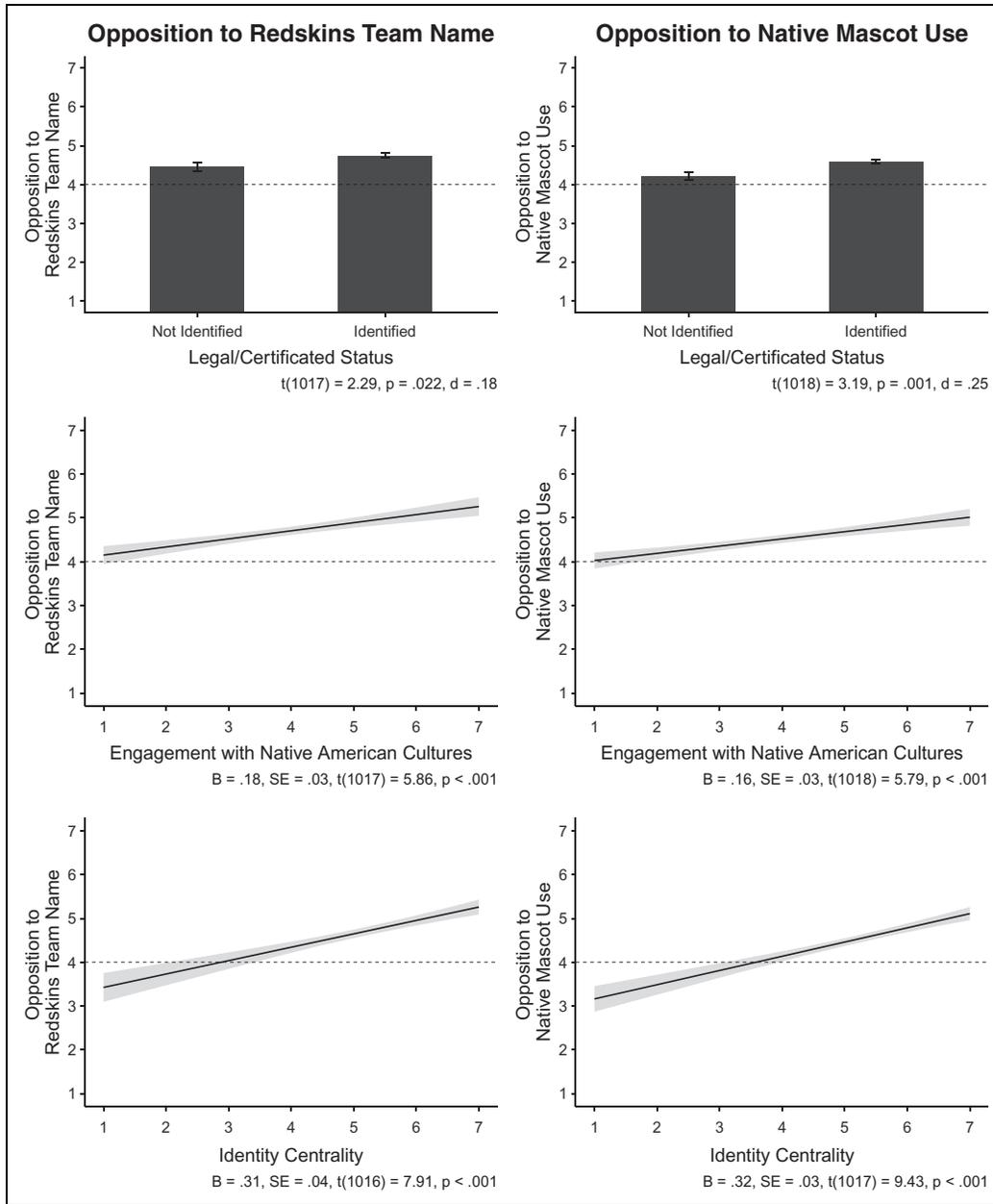


Figure 1. Opposition to the Redskins team name (left column) and opposition to Native mascots use in general (right column) by Native American identification. These graphs depict the results when each measure of Native American identification is considered independently. Error bars represent ± 1 SE, and confidence bands represent 95% confidence intervals.

team name and the use of Native mascots in isolation, the effect became nonsignificant when entered into the multiple regression models.

Influence of Native American Identification

As expected, in individual regression analyses, all three measures of Native American identification predicted opposition to Redskins team name and the use of Native mascots. Specifically, Native American individuals higher in identification because they (1) held legal or certificated status as Native

American or Alaska Native, (2) more frequently engaged with Native American cultures, or (3) were higher in Native American identity centrality reported greater opposition to the team name and Native mascot use (see Figure 1).

When these variables were entered into a regression model simultaneously (Model 1) and with demographic covariates (Model 2), two measures of Native American identification remained significant predictors of attitudes toward Native mascots: engagement with Native American cultures and identity centrality. Legal/certificated status was no longer significant in these models (see Tables 3 and 4).

Discussion

The largest scientific study to date regarding Native Americans' perceptions of Native mascots revealed that, overall, Natives opposed the Redskins team name in particular and the use of Native mascots in general. We also found significant variation in Native Americans' attitudes along the lines of age, gender, and political ideology, and, to a lesser extent, education. Furthermore, in line with our hypotheses, the strength of Native Americans' racial-ethnic identification consistently predicted attitudes toward mascots, above and beyond demographic characteristics. Across behavioral and psychological measures of identification, highly identified Native Americans expressed greater opposition to both the Redskins name and Native mascots compared to less identified Natives. Notably, legal/certificated identification predicted greater opposition to the team name and Native mascots in isolation but not when considered in the same analysis with measures of behavioral and psychological identification. These results suggest that legal definitions of Native identification do not capture unique variance in Native Americans' attitudes, above and beyond other measures of identification.

These findings suggest that prior claims that the majority of Native people are not offended by Native mascots (e.g., National Annenberg Election Survey, 2004; *The Washington Post*, 2016; Wolvereyes, 2019) oversimplify a diverse range of attitudes. Although we cannot directly compare our results to prior polling due to measurement differences and, in some cases, a lack of clarity about their methodological procedures, our data diverge greatly from the conclusion that Native people, by and large, are not offended by Native mascots. Indeed, an analysis using only the 2016 *Washington Post* poll item revealed high levels of opposition to the Redskins team name in our sample (49%) compared to the 2016 *Washington Post* poll (9%; see Figure 2). In line with our primary analyses, we also found significant variation in participants' responses to this item according to demographic characteristics and Native American identification (see Supplemental Appendix E). This suggests that prior reports may have underestimated Native Americans' opposition to mascots and overlooked important factors that differentiate Native Americans' attitudes toward these mascots.

Theoretical Contributions

Given the continued underrepresentation of Native Americans in psychological science (Fryberg & Eason, 2017), much of what psychologists know about Natives' attitudes toward issues, such as Native mascots, comes from polls that portray Natives as a monolithic group. These representations are insufficient and potentially detrimental for understanding Native people, an incredibly diverse group in terms of culture, history, and life experiences. By documenting variation, our data render a more nuanced portrayal of Native Americans' attitudes toward mascots. Such variation-focused approaches have the potential to improve our understanding of Native Americans.

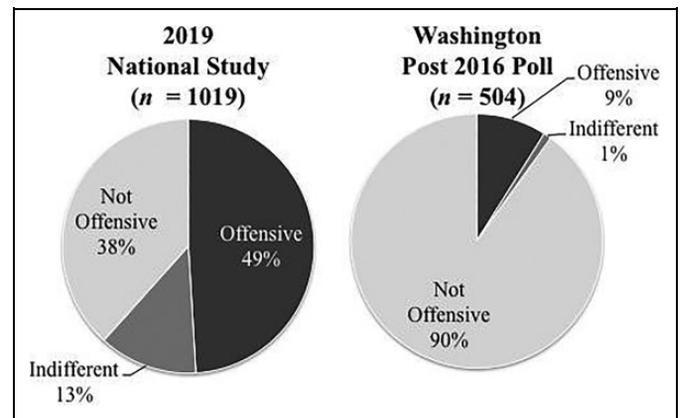


Figure 2. Perceptions of the Redskins team name in our study (labeled 2019 National Study) compared to the *Washington Post* 2016 poll. The *Washington Post* poll used a 3-point scale, whereas our survey used a 7-point scale. For ease of comparison, we converted responses to our 7-point scale into three categories. Specifically, participants were considered “offended” by the Redskins team name if they responded using 5 (*somewhat agree*), 6 (*agree*), or 7 (*strongly agree*). Participants were considered “not offended” if they responded using 3 (*somewhat disagree*), 2 (*disagree*), or 1 (*strongly disagree*). People who responded using 4 (*neither agree nor disagree*) were considered indifferent.

Furthermore, this article contributes to the literature on identification in two ways. First, this literature largely focuses on the function of identity centrality for non-Native racial minorities, showing, for example, that African American college students who are high (vs. low) in identity centrality report experiencing more discrimination, which in turn predicts greater psychological distress (Sellers & Shelton, 2003). To our knowledge, this is the first article to show that identity centrality plays a similar role in predicting Native Americans' attitudes and arguably their perceptions of discrimination (measured via opposition to Native mascots).

Second, the identification literature largely focuses on psychological identification. Our findings demonstrate that behavioral manifestations of identity function similarly to psychological identification. Although behavioral and psychological identification often correlate (Cokley & Helm, 2007; Quintana & Vera, 1999; Schweigman et al., 2011; Wright & Littleford, 2002; Yasui et al., 2015), these measures accounted for unique variance in Native Americans' attitudes. Our findings provide further support for the notion that researchers can better understand psychological processes by making informed decisions about which measures of identification are most appropriate for describing variation in a particular outcome or population (Helms, 2007). To this point, when all three measures of identification (legal/certificated, psychological, and behavioral) were considered simultaneously, legal/certificated identification no longer predicted attitudes. Although research often uses legal identification to categorize Native Americans, our findings indicate that psychological and behavioral manifestations may be more helpful in understanding the experiences of contemporary Native people and the implications of the continued use of Native mascots.

Methodological Considerations and Limitations

One reason Native Americans remain vastly underrepresented in the psychological literature (Fryberg & Eason, 2017) is that convenience samples commonly used in psychology (e.g., psychology undergraduate subject pools or MTurk) preclude the recruitment of sufficiently large samples of Native participants. To overcome this methodological barrier, we contracted a well-known company that recruits participants from multiple panels. The company assured us it could provide a large, national sample of Native participants stratified by age, legal identification (70%), and reservation residence (30%). Although the company met the majority of our requests, it fell short in sampling Native Americans with experience living on reservations (17% of the final sample). While our final sample was not a truly representative national sample (i.e., only 17% with reservation experience), our success in recruiting one of the largest scientific samples of Native participants in the psychological literature speaks to what is possible when researchers go beyond the typical convenience sampling approaches. As psychologists expand our understanding of intergroup relations, discrimination, and bias, we need to continue searching for effective, respectful, and mutually beneficial ways of connecting with Native communities to ensure their voices and experiences are accurately reflected in the literature (see Brady et al., 2018, for a related discussion).

Implications and Conclusions

Although the mascot debate continues, the psychological research is clear that the use of Native mascots is detrimental for Native people. These mascots decrease Native individuals' self-esteem, community worth, and achievement-related aspirations (Fryberg et al., 2008; Fryberg & Watts, 2010) and increase stress and depression (LaRocque et al., 2011). The use of Native mascots also increases stereotyping of (e.g., Burkley et al., 2017) and discrimination against Native Americans (e.g., Chaney et al., 2011; Clark & Witko, in press). Despite these robust findings, media coverage of polls conducted by non-Native organizations often argue that Natives' endorsement of these mascots is sufficient justification for their continued use (Cox et al., 2016; *The Washington Post*, 2013; Vargas, 2019). Yet, our data suggest that these estimates are inflated. To more accurately understand Native Americans' support for mascots and the psychological consequences of using Native mascots, we must move away from assuming that Natives are a monolithic group and that attitudes in isolation are sufficient to justify using imagery and logos that are harmful to a particular group.

Defenders of Native mascots also argue that contemporary Native people have "more important" issues to worry about than Native mascots (Cox & Vargas, 2016). Indeed, Native Americans currently face an unprecedented epidemic of missing and murdered women (Lucchesi & Echo-Hawk, 2018), life-threatening contamination of drinking water (Boyles & Wyss,

2018), disproportionately high rates of death at the hands of police (Millet, 2015), and suicide rates that far exceed the national average (O'Keefe et al., 2018). Yet, at the heart of all of these issues is the question of what it means to be Native American in contemporary society. Far from trivial, mascots are one of the many ways in which society dehumanizes Native people and silences Native voices. These representations not only shape how non-Natives see Native people but also how Native people understand themselves and what is possible for their communities (Fryberg & Watts, 2010). Solving the problems facing Native communities require both acknowledging Native people's existence and listening to their perspectives. As Native American activist Suzan Shown Harjo noted, "That non-Native folks think they get to measure or decide what offends us is adding insult to injury."

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Author Contribution

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Supplemental Material

All Supplemental Appendices referenced in this article can be found at the following link: https://osf.io/n7dpz/?view_only=b6a148dd892e4619bf61fcd0ea2e8918

Notes

1. To ensure data quality, Qualtrics replaced cases that were flagged because responses to open-ended questions included only nonsense letter strings or nonanswers (e.g., "I like sit in park. Call call I'm sorry"). We cannot analyze these cases, as Qualtrics did not retain their data.
2. Qualtrics initially included participants who indicated they had "Native heritage" but did not self-identify as Native American. Because we did not intend to recruit individuals who identified as having Native heritage but did not identify racially as Native American, we did not include these participants in our final sample.

For analyses including Native heritage subjects, see Appendix F in the Supplemental Material.

3. Given the limited research assessing identification among Native Americans, we included multiple identification measures in the survey. In the main text, we only report measures for identity centrality and cultural engagement, as these measures most closely assess the aspects of identification that are of theoretical interest in this article. See Supplemental Appendices C, E, and F for analyses with other measures of identification.
4. Although this item can be interpreted as focusing more on racial insults than on the mascot, we included it in the composite because (1) this behavior accompanies the use of Native mascots and is important to recognize as part of the phenomenon of Native mascots and (2) the significance and interpretation of results do not change when the item is omitted.
5. Seven hundred fifty-seven participants were enrolled members of federally recognized tribes. Of the remaining participants, 45 held a CDIB. Of the participants who were neither federally recognized nor CDIB holders, 20 were enrolled members of a state-recognized tribe. Although the small subsamples preclude formal statistical comparisons, the results and conclusions do not change if we compare federally recognized participants against all others.
6. To vote in tribal elections, individuals must be enrolled in a federally or state-recognized tribe. The results and interpretations do not change if this item is omitted from the scale.

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