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**Expert Report of**

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## Introduction

The use of Indigenous culture and images by sports teams is a practice that has a longstanding history and tradition in our society. The omnipresence of these Indigenous-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos (e.g., *Indians*, *Redskins*, *Fighting Sioux*) gives members of mainstream society the (mis)perception that this is an acceptable practice that honors and respects the Indigenous communities that are depicted. However, there is emerging evidence indicating that this is not the case. Because of this misperception, it is important to include scientific peer-reviewed research in order to provide empirical insight into this issue. An empirically informed perspective can help people have a productive and civil dialogue about a practice that is hegemonically woven into the fabric of our society, yet has the potential to negatively impact the psychological functioning of Indigenous people.

To provide context to this report, it is necessary to report that I have a dual professional identity as a psychologist and as an associate professor of Counseling Psychology at Indiana University. In addition to having experience providing psychological services to Indigenous communities, I have conducted empirical research that has been published in peer-reviewed scientific journals that addresses the psychological implications of Indigenous-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos. My research productivity in this area, combined with my clinical experiences and my knowledge of the psychological literature, allows me to provide informed perspectives on this issue. Furthermore, I am in a unique position to testify about how this practice impacts the psychological functioning of Indigenous people, as a biracial man of Oneida heritage. I am tribally recognized as Descendent status, and my father is an enrolled Tribal Member of the sovereign Oneida Nation of Wisconsin. My clinical work with Indigenous populations was conducted at the Oneida Behavioral Health Center on the Oneida Reservation in Wisconsin. As such, I have heard first-hand accounts of the impact that these stereotypic images can have on the psychological functioning of Indigenous patients in a mental health setting. This dynamic compounds an existing problem because Indigenous communities are disproportionately impacted by serious mental health issues (e.g., depression, anxiety, substance abuse, suicide). Subsequently, a racially hostile environment wherein Indigenous people are readily stereotyped can contribute to the onset and entrenchment of these mental health issues. In addition to the misinformation and stereotypes produced by Indigenous-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos, “an increase in accurate information about Native Americans is viewed as necessary for the achievement of other goals such as poverty reduction, educational advancements, and securing treaty rights” (King, Staurowsky, Baca, Davis, & Pewewardy, 2002, p. 392).

In 2005, my primary professional organization, the American Psychological Association (APA), produced a formal resolution recommending the immediate retirement of Indigenous-themed mascots, symbols, images and personalities by schools, colleges, universities, athletic teams, and organizations (APA, 2005). To date, over a hundred additional professional organizations (e.g., American Counseling Association, Society of Indian Psychologists, United States Commission on Civil Rights) have produced similar resolutions condemning this practice. These professional organizations—which represent groups that speak on behalf of large volumes of people and professionals—have based their resolutions on the categorical assertions that, among other reasons, Indigenous-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos:

- (a) misuse cultural practices and sacred spiritual symbols;
- (b) deny Indigenous people control over societal definitions of themselves;
- (c) perpetuate stereotypes of Indigenous people (e.g., the *noble savage*; the *bloodthirsty savage*; a historic race that only exists in past-tense status; one singular pan-Indian culture);
- (d) activate/create a racially hostile environment for students and others;
- (e) negatively impact the psychological functioning of Indigenous people.

These categorical assertions are situated within an emerging body of scientific research that has empirically demonstrated the existence of stereotyping and harassment that accompanies Indigenous-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos. Much has been written about this issue from a conceptual perspective across a variety of interdisciplinary fields (e.g., sociology of sport, indigenous philosophy, law, anthropology; Baca, 2004; Fenalon, 1999; King et al., 2002; King, 2004; Russel, 2003; Staurowsky, 2007; Vanderford, 1996; Williams, 2007), which provide valuable insight and context into the deleterious nature of Indigenous-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos. While I will include aspects of these conceptual pieces in my report, I will focus the attention primarily upon empirical research that has appeared in peer-reviewed scientific journals. Doing so can increase the validity of the emerging understanding of the negative psychological impact of Indigenous-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos in order to further demonstrate the applicability of these psychological research findings in the United States and in Canada.

As I begin this report, it is also important to clarify terminology. The terms *mascots*, *nicknames*, and *logos* are often used interchangeably to describe the Indigenous-themed images used by sports teams. These terms generally describe a similar dynamic, but there are subtle differences. While the term *mascot* more specifically refers to a costumed character that parades along the sideline or in the audience (e.g., University of Illinois now retired mascot, Chief Illiniwik), the term *mascot* has been generally used as the default term for Indigenous-themed images used in sport, and the term *mascot* is often attached to a logo (i.e., *mascot logo*) or a nickname (i.e., *mascot nickname*). The term *logo* generally refers to the image of a team that appears on uniforms, walls, programs and other places (e.g., see Figure 1 for examples of *mascot logos* in Mississauga; see Figure 2 for examples of *mascot logos* that were used in scientific studies cited in this report), and the term *nicknames* refers to the verbal terms used to identify teams (e.g., *Redskins*, *Indians*, *Warriors*; e.g., see Figure 1 for examples of *mascot nicknames* in Mississauga; see Figure 2 for examples of *mascot nicknames* that were used in scientific studies cited in this report). While much of the research has indicated that overall, the use of Indigenous-themed images in sport impacts the psychological functioning of Indigenous people, in this report, I will attempt to provide the reader with clarity by using the definitions outlined above in regard to which type of term was used in each study, largely based on stimuli images (i.e., *mascot logo*) or stimuli words (i.e., *mascot nickname*) that were evaluated in the study.

### **Misusing Cultural Practices and Sacred Spiritual Symbols; Denying Indigenous People Control over Social Representations of Themselves**

Popular culture is inundated with stereotypic representations that appropriate Indigenous culture. One need not look further than the aisles of a grocery store (e.g., Land o' Lakes Butter), the local YMCA (e.g., Y-Princess camps), Halloween costumes (e.g., Indian warriors), cars on the street (e.g., Jeep Cherokee), the floor under one's feet (e.g., Mohawk carpet), or on

television, to see the highlights of the Washington *Redskins* or Cleveland *Indians* games. This use of cultural and spiritual iconography is largely done without compensation to or consent from Indigenous communities (Merskin, 2001). To this point, the eagle feather is a considered a sacred spiritual item to many Indigenous people, so its presence on a football helmet is out of place and potentially problematic. According to Steinfeldt and Steinfeldt (2012), this practice would be analogous to having rosary beads or a crucifix used in a sporting context (e.g., a mascot named Father Guido dancing and genuflecting on the sidelines of a football game for a team named the East High School *Catholics*), something that Christians would likely protest and advocate for its removal because using these sacred images in this manner would constitute appropriating and misusing sacred spiritual iconography.

The misuse of these images not only prevent Indigenous people from having effective control over how they are societally portrayed, but these omnipresent images also perpetuate misinformation and stereotypes about Indigenous people, particularly because there is an imbalance of presentation of images. That is, for many people, sports mascots and other comparable stereotypic representations of Indigenous people are often the only images they have of Indigenous people. Empirical research (e.g., Fryberg et al., 2008) suggests that Indigenous-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos have a negative psychological impact not only because they are inherently stereotypic in nature, but also because there are relatively few alternative characterizations of Indigenous people in the contexts in which these images appear. As such, these mascots, nicknames, and logos become powerful communicators of what Indigenous people should look like and how they should behave. And concurrently, these stereotypic images remind Indigenous people of the limited way in which others see them, which in turn has the internalizing impact of limiting the number of ways in which Indigenous people can see themselves (Fryberg et al., 2008).

In an empirical research study examining implicit attitudes on this subject, Chaney, Burke and Burkley (2011) assessed whether people could differentiate between Indigenous-themed mascot nicknames and actual Indigenous people. Using the Implicit Attitudes Test (IAT) to control for social desirability and to assess implicit beliefs that people hold toward subjects, results demonstrated that participants not only held implicitly negative biases against Indigenous-themed mascots, but study participants also perceived Indigenous-themed mascot nicknames to be effectively interchangeable with Indigenous people. This result indicates that stereotypic images of Indigenous people in society may serve as de facto sources of information about how Indigenous people should look and act. This is potentially problematic given the presence of the caricatured image of the Cleveland *Indian's* Chief Wahoo (i.e., big nosed, red faced, caricatured stereotypic image), when watching the half time dance of the University of Illinois' former mascot, Chief Illiniwik (i.e., perpetuating the stereotype of the noble savage), or when listening to sport broadcasts (i.e., "the Indians are on the warpath"). When combined with the limited number of accurate portrayals of Indigenous people in popular culture, the results of this study indicate that not only do people have an implicitly negative view of Indigenous-themed mascot nicknames, but people may also have difficulties differentiating mascot nicknames from real Indigenous people, subsequently transferring these negative views toward mascot nicknames into negative biases toward real Indigenous people.

## Perpetuating Stereotypes: Stereotype Activation and Stereotype Application

In addition to empirical evidence illustrating negative implicit beliefs that equate Indigenous mascots with Indigenous people, emerging scientific research has attempted to address the nature of the stereotype-generating process that Indigenous-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos can elicit. These studies have examined both stereotype activation (i.e., how accessible the stereotype is in a person's mind) and stereotype application (i.e., extent to which the person uses the stereotype to judge a member of a stereotyped group). Stereotype activation is considered an automatic cognitive process that is implicitly activated, whereas stereotype application is considered a more controllable cognitive process that involves people making judgments about an individual member of a stereotyped group. When a group of people is actively stereotyped, their psychological functioning is negatively impacted.

In assessing stereotype activation, Kim-Prieto, Goldstein, Okazaki, and Kirschner (2010) conducted two experimental studies to determine if stereotypes about Indigenous people that were potentially elicited by Indigenous-themed sport mascot logos would be extended to other marginalized groups, even if the other group was not directly targeted by the stereotypic representation. The authors used an Indigenous-themed mascot logo (e.g. Indigenous person portrayed as a bloodthirsty savage warrior) as a primer to determine if these images increased stereotyping of another racial group (e.g., Asian Americans as socially inept). Results indicated that participants who were exposed to the Indigenous-themed mascot logo (see Figure 2) endorsed significantly more stereotypes of Asian Americans than the control group. The results were consistent across two conditions—one condition used an unobtrusive prime, and the other condition used a more engaged exposure. In both conditions, simply seeing an Indigenous-themed mascot logo appeared to activate a stereotype-generating process about Asian-Americans among participants. These results suggest that exposure to stereotypic representations (i.e., an Indigenous-themed mascot logo) can increase the likelihood that people will endorse stereotypes of other groups, even when the stereotypes are different. Kim-Prieto et al. (2010) concluded that the use of American Indian images in sports serves to activate a stereotype-generating process within people, creating a racially hostile environment for all parties who are exposed to stereotype-inducing Indigenous-themed sport mascot logos.

Burkley, Burkley, Andronde, and Bell (2016) conducted a research study to assess dynamics related to stereotype application as it relates to exposure to Indigenous-themed sports mascot logos. The researchers found that the effect of exposure to an Indigenous-themed mascot logo existed, and that this effect was also moderated by participants' attitudes toward Indigenous people. That is, participants with more prejudicial attitudes toward Indigenous people were significantly more likely to judge an Indigenous person as more aggressive when exposed to an image of an Indigenous-themed mascot logo (e.g., *Fighting Sioux*, *Indians*, *Redskins*; see Figure 2 for illustrations of these logos). This same effect did not occur when participants were exposed to an image of a White mascot logo (e.g., *Fighting Irish*, *Vikings*, *Pirates*) or a neutral image (e.g., *carrot*, *cupcake*, *hamburger*). Additionally, this effect was not observed when participants were asked to judge the behavior of a non-Indigenous person engaging in the same behavior as an Indigenous person. As a result, the presence of Indigenous-themed mascot logos facilitates the stereotype application process by which people selectively make negative and harmful evaluations of Indigenous people, particularly when they hold pre-existing prejudicial attitudes. Taken together, the results of these empirical investigations indicate that Indigenous-themed sports mascots logos and nicknames can not only activate a stereotype generating process, it can

also facilitate the process by which people selectively apply pejorative judgments based on these stereotypes to Indigenous people, a process that creates a racially hostile environment and threatens their psychological functioning.

### **Creating a Racially Hostile Environment**

In conjunction with the psychological research of my colleagues on this issue, the results of empirical research studies that I have conducted and published in scientific peer-reviewed journals (e.g., Steinfeldt, Foltz, Kaladow, Carlson, Pagano, Benson, & Steinfeldt, 2010; Steinfeldt, Foltz, LaFollette, White, Wong, & Steinfeldt, 2012; Steinfeldt & Wong, 2010) indicate that the presence of Indigenous-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos not only perpetuates stereotypes, but its presence can also create a racially hostile environment that can threaten the psychological well-being of Indigenous people. This research attempts to identify domains wherein the racially hostile environments exist (e.g., online), while also attempting to provide explanatory theoretical frameworks to conceptualize the dynamics of racism and invalidation that flourish within these contexts.

In one study, Steinfeldt and Wong (2010) examined the relationship between color-blind racial attitudes and the awareness of Indigenous-themed mascot nicknames among a group of counseling graduate students. Similar to the later work of Neville, Yeung, Todd, Spanierman, and Reed (2011), this study attempted to link the rationale of mainstream society for maintaining racialized mascots to the beliefs underlying colorblind racial attitudes (Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, & Browne, 2000). Conceptualized as the denial, distortion, or minimization of race and racism (Neville, Spanierman, & Doan, 2006), the adoption of colorblind racial attitudes among White Americans reflects an attempt to reduce the dissonance associated with a sincere desire to believe in racial equality (Neville, Worthington, & Spanierman, 2001). While this contemporary ideology appears egalitarian on the surface, colorblindness ignores the role of power in society, it invalidates the experiences with racism that racial/ethnic minority group members endure, and it serves to maintain the societal status quo wherein members of racial/ethnic minority groups have inequitable access to societal resources. To this point, research has established significant relationships between colorblindness and a wide range of social attitude indexes, including negative attitudes toward affirmative action (Awad, Cokley, & Ratvich, 2005), increased racial prejudice (Neville et al., 2000), and lower multicultural counseling competencies (Neville et al., 2006).

The results of Steinfeldt and Wong's (2010) study demonstrated that awareness of the offensiveness of Indigenous-themed mascot nicknames was significantly inversely related to color-blind racial attitudes. That is, the more a person indicated that Indigenous-themed mascot nicknames were problematic, the less likely (s)he was to endorse color-blind racial ideologies. Individuals with color-blind racial attitudes endorse the belief that "race should not and does not matter" (Neville et al., 2000, p. 60), and supporters of Indigenous-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos suggest that tradition and honor—and not race—are the primary reasons for supporting this practice (King et al., 2002; Russel, 2003; Staurowsky, 2007). Thus, both colorblindness and supporting Indigenous-themed mascots nicknames serve to minimize the role of racism in society, a dynamic that can threaten the psychological functioning of members of racial minority groups. Furthermore, the authors asserted that the belief that Indigenous-themed mascots honor Indigenous people may serve as an ego defense that helps preserve an individual's sense of egalitarianism, while simultaneously masking the destructive and genocidal acts of White

Americans toward Indigenous communities, both in past and contemporary times (Grounds, 2001). In short, the use of Indigenous-themed mascot nicknames can invalidate the reality of Indigenous people, while giving White Americans the perception of a false sense of unity with Indigenous people (Black, 2002). Steinfeldt and Wong (2010) concluded that colorblind racial attitudes may serve as the glue that binds this false union, serving to facilitate resentment, disempowerment, and subjugation among Indigenous people who are exposed to a racially hostile environment.

Another study (Steinfeldt et al., 2010) analyzed 1699 online forum comments that appeared in newspapers in a community with a college team with an Indigenous-themed mascot nickname and logo. These comments were coded over a two-year period, and results indicated that the majority of these comments expressed negative attitudes toward Indigenous people. These online forum comments were categorically organized within themes of: (a) surprise about how the nickname/logo could be construed as negative; (b) power and privilege exerted in defending the nickname/logo; (c) trivialization of issues salient to Indigenous people; and (d) denigration and vilification of Indigenous communities. The results indicated that Indigenous people were subjected to not only continued societal ignorance and misinformation about their culture, but they are also being actively excluded from the process of prioritizing which issues needed to be addressed. Results also indicated that a critical mass of online forum comments represented ignorance about Indigenous culture and even disdain toward Indigenous people by providing misinformation, by perpetuating stereotypes, and by expressing explicitly racist attitudes toward Indigenous people. While some online forum comments examined in the study did contain the words *honor* and *respect*, the results indicated that the sentiment underlying and surrounding these comments did not reflect a genuine sense of honor or respect—instead, these comments expressed sentiments of entitlement, privilege, power, and even subjugation and oppression.

The findings of this study were interpreted within the tenets of Two-Faced Racism (Picca & Feagin, 2007), an established theoretical model for conceptualizing dynamics of contemporary racism. According to this framework, boundaries for the expression of racial attitudes exist within shifting social contexts. Subsequently, racial ideologies—particularly those about members outside of the dominant culture (e.g., Indigenous people)—exist, but the expression of these ideologies take place in private (i.e., backstage) settings rather than public (i.e., frontstage) settings. Because public opinion has shifted to condemn blatant racist attitudes and behaviors in public settings (Picca & Feagin, 2007), explicit expressions of racist attitudes have begun to find a home in electronic communication formats (Bargh & McKenna, 2004; Melican & Dixon, 2008). As it relates to the findings of the Steinfeldt et al. (2010) study, the relative anonymity afforded to online forum participants provided the privacy experienced in traditional backstage settings. Results suggested that expressing these ideas in contemporary backstage settings (e.g., weblogs, online forums) allowed people to avoid the scrutiny and negative social consequences that these attitudes might otherwise receive in physical frontstage settings. For example, an online forum commenter might more readily call an Indigenous person a derogatory name in an online forum comment, but it is likely that (s)he might not say the same thing aloud at a social gathering, for fear of social repercussions. Subsequently, due to the omnipresence and power of the internet, the presence of an Indigenous-themed nickname and logo can facilitate the posting of virulent racist rhetoric in online forums. And because these types of racist messages are able to electronically spread out with greater ease to a larger audience, the daily ritual of reading the newspaper can subject an Indigenous person to content that can negatively impact his/her

psychological well-being. The results of this study suggests that Indigenous-themed nicknames and logos can create a racially hostile environment wherein stereotypes are allowed to flourish. In conclusion, the presence of an Indigenous-themed nickname and logo can threaten the psychological functioning of Indigenous people by providing misinformation, by activating stereotypic representations, and by facilitating the expression of explicitly racist attitudes toward Indigenous people.

In assessing the impact of Indigenous -themed mascots, nicknames, and logos as it relates to stereotyping and creating a racially hostile environment, it is useful to examine how these images are used in the contexts in which they exist. Sports generate passionate responses from participants and fans, and rivalries generate heightened levels of passion. A few days ago, a headline about a story appeared online that illustrates this dynamic (Springer, 2016). The story describes how Dr. Dean Bresciani, President of the North Dakota State University *Bison*, wrote a letter in the NDSU campus newspaper asking his students to stop using “hateful” chants in football games against their rival, the University of North Dakota *Fighting Hawks*. UND had previously been the *Fighting Sioux*, but in 2012 they begrudgingly retired their Indigenous-based team nickname after fighting the NCAA’s 2005 mandate to remove their Indigenous -themed nickname and logo. Despite the change, *Bison* fans still routinely chant “Sioux Suck (expletive)!” when their *Bison* team makes a first down in the football game against the *Fighting Hawks*. Figure 3 shows additional ways that fans have taken to demeaning and dehumanizing uses of the Indigenous-themed mascot logo and nickname (e.g., T-shirts of a slovenly-looking Indigenous person sodomizing a Bison; T-shirts with an image of a severed head of a headdress wearing Indigenous “chief” drinking a beer bong underneath the phonetically altered Indigenous-themed nickname [and specific Tribal name] used as an adjective to describe inebriation [*Siouxper Drunk*]; T-shirts with a caricatured Indigenous person fellating a Bison; fans cheering and engaging Indigenous people in Red-face, an image that conjured comparisons to the racist practice of wearing Black-face). Being exposed to this use of Indigenous-themed sports nicknames and logos as a means to ridicule, mock, and dehumanize Indigenous people has a profoundly negative impact on their psychological functioning.

This phenomenon of harmful appropriation of imagery in sporting events at the expense of the psychological functioning of First -Nations individuals is widespread. The image in Figure 2 of cheerleaders holding a banner for a high school football game represents a common practice where the opponents of an Indigenous-themed team find creative ways to demean their opponent. However, using race-based mascots, nicknames, or logos creates the opportunity for a marginalized group to be exposed to a racially hostile environment that can negatively impact their psychological functioning. In this particular example depicted in Figure 3 that occurred prior to a high school football game in Ohio in 2016, the cheerleaders for the McLain *Tigers* created a banner for their football players to run through prior to their game against the Hillsboro *Indians*. The banner reads, “Hey Indians, Get Ready for a Trail of Tears Part 2”, which was intended to convey the message that their football team was going to be sad by the impending defeat in the game. However, the reference to the *Trail of Tears* represents an objectively horrific act of government-enacted genocide, a black mark on the history of the United States. The use of this reference trivializes this traumatic event and exposes Indigenous people to potential psychological harm. While the school (i.e., Hillsboro) can assert that they institute policies that attempt to prevent their students from misusing their Indigenous-themed nickname, they cannot fully control the ways that opponents and others may choose to use that Indigenous-themed

nickname, logo, or mascot, quite often in a negative manner and at the expense of Indigenous populations.

Furthermore, the impact of Indigenous-themed sports mascots, nicknames, and logos extends beyond sporting events. In an empirical study that appeared in a scientific peer-reviewed journal, Steinfeldt, Foltz, LaFollette, White, Wong, and Steinfeldt (2012) analyzed qualitative data obtained from social justice activists who advocated for the removal of Indigenous-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos. These people described harrowing situations where they were threatened, harassed, physically assaulted, and had their property vandalized as a result of proposing to change the Indigenous-themed sports nickname and logo in their community. The stories of the advocates illustrated the points highlighted in the Steinfeldt et al. (2010) study on online forums by demonstrating the potential for physical and psychological harm that exists in a racially hostile environment that can be created by the presence of Indigenous-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos in sport.

### **Impacting Psychological Functioning**

In addition to scientific research highlighting the impact of stereotypes and racially hostile environments, an emerging body of psychological research findings have demonstrated the direct psychological ramifications of Indigenous-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos. Fryberg et al. (2008) published a manuscript that addressed the four empirical studies they conducted that examined the impact of these Indigenous-themed mascot nicknames and logos on the psychological well-being of both Indigenous and White American participants. In their study, Indigenous high school and college students who were exposed to images of Indigenous-themed mascot logos reported significantly fewer achievement related possible selves, along with lower levels of self-esteem and community worth when compared to members of the control group who were not exposed to such images. So seeing these stereotypic representations (e.g., *noble savage*; *the caricatured image of Chief Wahoo*) can make Indigenous people feel worse about themselves and it can facilitate the internalization of negative views about their own community. Additionally, the presence of these images can contribute to Indigenous people reducing the number of future-related goals they have for themselves, thereby internalizing the narrow and prejudicial view society has of them. Doing so limits the possibilities they see for themselves. Across all of these findings, the authors concluded that these Indigenous-themed images effectively threaten the psychological functioning of Indigenous people in a variety of different ways (Fryberg et al., 2008).

In another peer-reviewed study that was also published in the scientific literature, LaRocque, McDonald, Weatherly, and Ferraro (2011) also attempted to empirically assess the direct psychological impact that Indigenous-themed sports images had on Indigenous people. The authors investigated the impact of two categories of on both White participants and Indigenous participants, with experimental and control groups for each racial group. The first category of images was referred to as *neutral*, based on societal expectations that these images are omnipresent and readily visible (e.g., team logos that are present on uniforms, shirts, and other areas on campus and beyond; Examples can be found in Table 2). The other category of images was referred to as *controversial* in that they represented images and logos that depicted caricatured or demeaning images of Indigenous people and misuse of tribal names (e.g., *Sioux-venirs*, caricatured images of Indigenous-themed logos; Examples can be found in Table 2).

Results indicated that Indigenous participants reported significantly higher levels of psychological distress and negative affect, compared to their baseline scores, after viewing both sets of images, when compared to the control group and to the group of White participants. When compared to their own control group, White participants did report higher levels of negative affect above their baseline scores, but only after viewing the controversial images, and they reported no significant differences on neutral images. The result that the Indigenous participants reported higher psychological distress and more negative affect on the neutral images contributed to the authors determining that the term *neutral* was not actually applicable to these images because these “neutral” images negatively impacted the psychological functioning of Indigenous people, as demonstrated in this study and in other studies in the psychological literature. Subsequently, Indigenous students can be negatively impacted by simply walking around campus and seeing the omnipresent “neutral” Indigenous-themed sport logo, a school-sanctioned image that appears on shirts, campus buildings, and elsewhere.

### Conclusion

In this report, I have reviewed relevant empirical research in the scientific literature that addresses the psychological impact of Indigenous-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos in sport. This emerging body of research has produced results that indicate that this practice has a negative impact on the psychological functioning of Indigenous people in number of ways, both direct (e.g., lower self-esteem, higher levels of negative affect, higher psychological distress, less possible selves, lower community worth) and indirect (e.g., stereotype activation, stereotype application, creating a racially hostile environment; generating dehumanizing images of Indigenous people). Additionally, I included relevant theoretical frameworks from the psychological literature (e.g., Two-Faced Racism, Colorblind Racial Attitudes) to provide a context to help explain the results concerning racially hostile environments. While the majority of the research cited in this report has been conducted in the United States, I do not have any reason to believe that the impact would be drastically different in Canada. The Indigenous-themed mascot logos and nicknames used in the empirical research studies I reviewed in this report are similar--and in some cases even identical--to the logos and nicknames presented in the City of Mississauga complaint (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). Furthermore, the process by which people internalize stereotypes is similar in the United States and Canada (e.g., Schneider, 2003), so based on my best professional judgment, it is reasonable to assume that these Indigenous-themed images of stereotypic representations would have a comparable impact on the psychological functioning of Indigenous people in Canada.

Additionally, Indigenous people generally lack the social power and influence to effectively advocate for removal of these Indigenous-themed nicknames and logos. These images are firmly entrenched into the natural order of society (Davis-Delano, 2007), and members of the dominant culture are the most zealous defenders of this practice (Farnell, 2004). This ardent support, combined with the small population of Indigenous peoples (i.e., less than 2% of the U.S. population) and the lack of resources available to Indigenous communities (i.e., the rate of Indigenous people living below the poverty line is twice the rate found in the overall population; Merskin, 2001), help explain how Indigenous people in the United States have lacked the power that other minority groups have exerted in removing comparable racist stereotypes from the domain of social acceptability. Examples include the racist image of *Frito Bandito* as a stereotypic representation of Latinos and the racist image of *Li'l Black Sambo* as a stereotypic representation of African Americans (Steinfeldt, Hagen, & Steinfeldt, 2010; Westerman, 1989). Based on the Truth and Reconciliation Report (2015), a variety of parallels can be readily drawn

between the experience of Indigenous populations in Canada and the experience of Indigenous populations in the United States. Subsequently, it is reasonable to assume that the same level of disenfranchisement, marginalization, and invalidation experienced by Indigenous people in both countries contributes to comparably low levels of social influence, which in turn contributes to the omnipresence and entrenchment of Indigenous-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos in society. In the absence of empirical scientific evidence supporting the continuation of using Indigenous-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos in sport, the arguments of *history* and *tradition* remain the primary reasons given for maintaining a practice that has the potential to inflict psychological harm on a specific group of people (Steinfeldt et al., 2011). In sum, this is an issue that warrants serious consideration, and it is important that empirical evidence be included in the discussion so that a fully informed conversation can be had that includes the psychological impact of Indigenous-themed sport mascots, nicknames, and logos.

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Figure 1  
Mississauga Hockey League Team Nicknames and Logos:



**Figure 2**  
**Table of Indigenous-Themed Mascots, Nicknames, and Logos Used in Studies:**

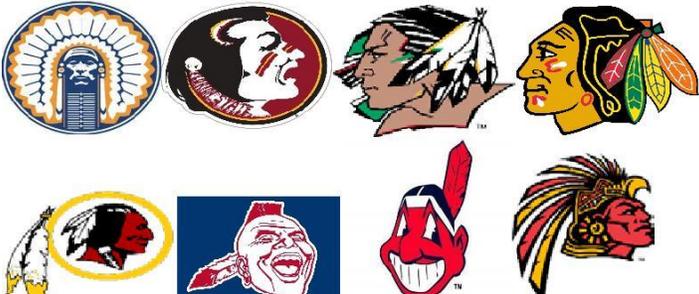
Study	Stimuli Type (Word/Image)	Indigenous-Themed Nicknames/Logos/Images Used (Examples, not necessarily a comprehensive list)
Fryberg et al. (2008)	Images (Mascot Logos)	
Kim-Prieto et al. (2010)	Images (Mascot Logos)	
Steinfeldt & Wong (2010)	Words (Mascot Nicknames)	Redskins, Chiefs, Seminoles, Fighting Sioux, Braves, Indians
Chaney et al. (2011)	Words (Mascot Nicknames)	Chiefs, Redskins, Indians, Warriors, Braves, Fighting Sioux
LaRocque et al. (2011) and Steinfeldt et al (2010)	Images (Mascot Logos)  Online Forum Words (Mascot Nicknames)	<p><b>Images of University of North Dakota Fighting Sioux</b></p>  <p><i>Neutral Images</i></p>  <p><i>Controversial Images</i></p>
Burkley et al. (2016)	Images (Mascot Logos)	

Figure 3

**Images of Fan Use of Indigenous-Themed Mascots, Nicknames, and Logos**

