

Native Mascots violate CERD, US Constitution

US sponsorship of Native mascots disadvantages all students by promoting the myth of European superiority and 'discovery' of the Americas. This US sponsorship of 'racial supremacy' mythology in schools handicaps all students who will have to work in an increasingly globalized society, which requires rejection of the myth of European superiority and discovery in order to function effectively. Additionally, the use of Native mascots incites violence against Indigenous Peoples and thus is a form of hate speech that the US should stop paying schools to promote. While the US subsidizes school eventsⁱ promoting violent acts against "the Indians" representing the opposing team, it also encourages all exposed to the image to see indigenous People, heritage, lands, and culture as something owned by the dominant non-Native culture, which has the right and authority to violently act on indigenous citizens, who threaten the US way of life. There is a disproportionately high rate of violence against indigenous citizens and the US has refused to work with Indigenous Peoples to see if eliminating the use of mascots might reduce this violence, including rape. US has failed all students by failing to follow through with recommendations to document the impact of Native mascots on non-Native students and CERD should recommend US follows through and studies impact on non-Native students as well.

<http://www.indianmascots.com/steinfeldtwong2010.pdf>

this study states that Native mascots may influence psychologists, other medical providers, and law-enforcement. This mascot-prejudice may be related to the high rates of incarceration and prejudice against indigenous spiritual and cultural constructs that Euro-centric psychologist deem 'inappropriate.' The involvement of such negatively influenced psychologists in removing indigenous children from homes and deeming indigenous extended family care systems 'inappropriate' could be mitigated if the US stopped sponsoring and subsidizing Native mascots. A recent case in point is that of a judge who adopted indigenous children out to non-indigenous based on the prejudice that is pervasive where he works, Tallahassee Florida.

Recentlyⁱⁱ, this US florida judge based in the town of the university that degrades Osceola, a biological ancestor of many Yamasi, decided that Yamasi who are also descendants of Osceola would not benefit from involvement with other Yamasi, also descendants of Osceola because our culture had no positive contributions to children's upbringing. This prejudice is undoubtedly related to the US culture, subsidized and directly promoted by the US federal government, which pays Florida State University, based in the town of this and many US judges, to degrade Osceola, a Muskogee biological ancestor of many Yamasi. Meanwhile the US promotes the abduction of Yamasi children through its federal child services program which tells judges, such as this one, that Yamasi culture has no positive impact on Yamasi children because Yamasi do not accept the 'dependent' status that US assigns to Indigenous Peoples who are part of the USBIA system. This denies Yamasi access to education, including opportunities to get education as Yamasi children from adult Yamasi, as well as access to education without prejudice.

Further, the use of Mascots in general, and specifically the use of a biological ancestor of many Yamasi has prejudiced the US legal community, which, in violation of international law, asserts its claim to authority to adjudicate Yamasi relations with our children. "The ultimate power is the ability to define reality for another group of people (Sue, 2005)". These legal people where florida has its capital, are defining reality for Yamasi by appropriating our ancestor's identity, renationalizing him, and then deciding that Osceola's descendants are better off not knowing about their own culture from their own People, but are better off being taught who they are by foreigners who they should identify with and accept information about

indigenous heritage and history. “Majority culture participants are defining the reality of [indigenous] American Indians by choosing to honor them on their terms, not on the terms of American Indians.”ⁱⁱⁱ

The US use of indigenous mascots, especially in US-subsidized institutions advertised as ‘higher learning’^{iv} is designed by with the US with the intent and result of inhibiting the political participation of Indigenous Peoples. For example, the US appropriates the identity of a Yamasi biological ancestor, who was ‘upper creek’ Muscogee (Osceola), renationalizes him as ‘Seminole’, and then tells Yamasi that we are Seminole because the US has decided that Yamasi cannot identify by our actual Indigenous name but must accept the European word and label, ‘Seminole.’ Then the US pays Florida State University to use our ancestor as a mascot and says that is his image on the football players’ buttocks and calls the team ‘Seminole.’ The reduction of Indigenous Peoples to a group of bloodthirsty warriors further politically disenfranchises as it alienates the settler communities from indigenous jurisprudence and the successful history of original nations’ governance. Meanwhile, Yamasi cannot attend college because we lack hard currency, the safety to learn about colonial society so that we are prepared for a colonial university, and our torn from the families of our birth by the US so that we cannot identify ourselves as Yamasi. The US does this to promote the myth that it owns and controls Indigenous Peoples and our natural blessings. The US uses mascots as a psychological technique in its continued war of aggression to take through fraud and force the blessings of Indigenous Peoples, including our children, instead of negotiating for use and access to these blessings or encouraging us to choose to involve ourselves with the colonial world through peaceful and respectful interaction.

<http://www.indianmascots.com/fryberg--web-psychological .pdf>

In addressing the mascot controversy, we (a) suggest that the relative invisibility of American Indians in mainstream media gives inordinate communicative power to the few prevalent representations of American Indians in the media, (b) propose a working model of how American Indian mascots may influence psychological functioning, and (c) provide the first empirical assessment of whether the use of American Indian mascots by professional sports teams (e.g., Cleveland Indians) or academic institutions (e.g., University of Illinois Fighting Illini) has psychological consequences for American Indian students.

Further, the use of Mascots in general, and specifically the use of a biological ancestor of many Yamasi has prejudiced the US legal community, which, in violation of international law, asserts its claim to authority to adjudicate Yamasi relations with our children. Research show that those exposed to the mascots imagine that they ‘own’

http://www.indianmascots.com/ex-17---fryberg-final_disse.pdf

When European Americans are primed with the same images of American Indians, they may engage in downward social comparison. They see American Indians, a group that is substantially worse off socially, economically, and politically than European Americans, and they feel better because it is not their situation. Thus, the boost in self-esteem may merely reflect that European Americans were reminded of and benefited from their perceived higher status. . . .

Providing additional support for the positive memories theory, which holds

that European Americans' self-esteem improves as a result of positive associations with American Indian representations, is the prevalence of "playing Indian" (Strong, 1998). Playing Indian requires a set of social representations about what an Indian is and what an Indian does.

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Moreover, sports fans and students who are in favor of using Indians as mascots will claim "our mascot has nothing to do with American Indians," and yet every activity the fans engages in (e.g., putting on war paint, wearing feathers, wielding tomahawks) are stereotypically American Indian activities (Spindle, 2000). The fact that sports fans feel that they can own a representation of an American Indian and engage in activities at these sporting events that are equivalent to "playing Indian," but simultaneously deny that these events actually have anything to do with American Indians, suggests that these romantic images have been incorporated in such a way that they are now part of America's "own" historical past. Thus, playing Indian or being a member of "The Tribe" allows European Americans to bask in the reflected glory of their image of the American Indian. Studies 1 and 2 strongly suggest that American Indians' reactions to this very real example of "identity theft" are overwhelmingly negative.

A third possible mediator of the relationships between American Indian primes and psychological functioning for American Indians is an interesting species of stereotype threat. Rather than fearing that their behaviors might confirm existing stereotypes about American Indians, American Indians may fear that "not" confirming existing stereotypes may further endanger the scant social representations about their group. Being stereotyped, goes the reasoning, is better than being extinct. Of course, priming these representations may also elicit the more classic variety of stereotype threat, and its concomitant indicators of anxiety and expectancy effects.

<http://www.indianmascots.com/ex-15---fryberg-brown-v.pdf>

In general, we argued that members of ethnic or minority groups are more constrained in their identity formation process than those in the mainstream because they have less power to control the public representations of their group. This constraint on one's "freedom to be" is directly related to how one's group is publicly represented and is manifested in various factors of one's identity. In the present research three major findings are used to support these social constraints on one's identity. First, American Indian representations were relatively scarce and fairly limited in scope, with very few contemporary, progressive images. Second, American Indian social representation (i.e., Pocahontas, Chief Wahoo, or Negative Stereotypes) depressed how American Indian participants felt about themselves (self-esteem), their community (community

efficacy), and what they want to become or are able to become (possible selves). Third, in the case of European Americans, who were not the target of these social representations, they experienced a psychological boost (increased self-esteem) from these American Indian social representations.

Given the social nature of identities, this research suggests that teachers in schools and employers in work places must ensure that the existing or relevant social representations do not devalue or limit individual identity or potential. Moreover, in the case where particular groups are narrowly represented, teachers and employers can counter existing stereotypes or social representations by providing new and positive social representations of these groups. Without these new and positive representations, many individuals may under-perform and may come to redefine themselves in unnecessarily negative terms for reasons even they do not understand.

Finally, while research on self and identity often implies that individuals can choose their identities, this research suggests that this choice is constrained. Individuals can try to contest these prevalent images or try to invent or construct other representations, but 1) they cannot live outside the prevalent representations of their group and 2) they cannot make other people contest them either-well, they can try, but they will not be effective unless other people also use new representations and contest old representations. Moreover, the motivation to eliminate particular social representations such as American Indian mascots may be fraught with tacit difficulties.

For example, given that the mascot image makes European Americans feel better about themselves, they may not be able to understand why this image makes the target of the representation feel bad and, for reasons they may not be able to calibrate, they may not be motivated to cease using the image. Thus, the power of these social representations is a societal problem, not an individual one, and the onus to change these representations lies within all of us not just within those who are the target of the representation.

http://www.indianmascots.com/kim-prieto---web-etal_effec.pdf

The results from Studies 1 and 2 indicate that exposure to an American Indian sports icon increased the tendency to endorse stereotypes about a different racial minority group. The increased tendency to endorse stereotypes was evident, regardless of whether the exposure was through an unobtrusive

prime (Study 1), or a more engaged exposure (Study 2).

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Future research should investigate the boundaries of this phenomenon.

For example, additional research might investigate whether this phenomenon of stereotype contagion is limited to racial or ethnic or racial minority groups, or whether it extends to all stereotyped categories (e.g., females, the elderly, lawyers).

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The current study provides much-needed evidence to empirically evaluate the effects of Native American mascots on creation of a hostile environment.

The evidence suggests that the effects of these mascots have negative implications not just for American Indians, but for all consumers of the stereotype.

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Yamasi People say: This mascot-prejudice may be related to the high rates of incarceration and prejudice against Native spiritual and cultural constructs that Euro-centric psychologist deem 'inappropriate.' The involvement of such negatively influenced psychologists in removing Native children from homes and deeming Native extended family care systems 'inappropriate' could be mitigated if the US stopped sponsoring and subsidizing Native mascots.

http://www.indianmascots.com/zeitler-web-geographies_of.pdf

As the group largely responsible for the near demise of an Indigenous presence on this continent and the continued subjection of Native Americans, European Americans must acknowledge the ideological symbolism inherent in Indigenous-based team names,

mascots, and imagery. The nineteenth century Native American warrior lives on in the white imagination through mascots and associated imagery. These images, along with many other factors, commemorate frontier conquest, help define whiteness, and assist the

maintenance of a racialized ideology.

Collectively, Indigenous-based team names are the most popular names used by American secondary schools, outnumbering the use of the *Eagles* nickname by 319. In 2005, 1,368 of 18,973 (7.2%) of the country's high schools used Indigenous-based nicknames. They were located in each state, but the Northeast and Mid-West regions contained almost half (48%) of all Native American nicknames. Nearly two-thirds of the schools were located in cities with less than 25,000 residents or in rural areas, and 80%

of the schools had a majority white student body. These data indicate that the current use of

Indigenous-based team names is done so in small, rural, and predominantly white communities and suggest that the names were originally selected by whites.

The use of Indigenous-based nicknames and associated iconography in secondary

schools produces a space in which impressionable adolescents observe and retain images of Native Americans that are primarily stereotypical in nature. Imagery that sexualizes Indian maidens is equally disparaging as the depiction of masculine warriors busting through walls and caricatured ignoble savages with a tomahawk in hand. While imagery in many schools is limited, the presence of stereotypical imagery in two-thirds (83 of 125) of schools visited and photographed suggests that such practices are widespread.

<http://www.indianmascots.com/steinfeldt-racism-in-electr.pdf>

When taken together, the results of this study indicate that American Indians are subjected to not only continued societal ignorance and misinformation about their culture, they are also being actively excluded from the process of prioritizing which issues they need to address. Furthermore, the presence of a Native-themed nickname and logo can facilitate the posting of virulent racist rhetoric in online forums, a practice which may flourish in a domain that exists between frontstage and backstage performances (Picca & Feagin, 2007). A daily ritual such as reading the newspaper can subject American Indians to distressing stereotypic representations of their culture. Contexts that activate stereotypic representations of racial groups are likely to threaten group members' psychological functioning (Fryberg et al., 2008). Thus, the results of this study provide support to the findings of Fryberg and colleagues (2008) and LaRocque (2004) that indicate the presence of a Native-themed nickname or logo (i.e., *Fighting Sioux*) can negatively affect the psychological well-being of American Indians on campus at UND, in the North Dakota community, and beyond. . . . The ultimate power is the ability to define reality for another group of people (Sue, 2005). Majority culture participants are defining the reality of American Indians by choosing to honor them on their terms, not on the terms of American Indians.

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ⁱ Landry, A., (November, 10, 2012). Offensive Banners Waved at Homecoming Game in New York. *Indian Country Today* Retrieved from <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2012/11/10/offensive-banners-waved-homecoming-game-new-york-145126>

ⁱⁱ Please email family@yamasi.org for case number and more details.

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.indianmascots.com/steinfeldt-racism-in-electr.pdf>

^{iv} <http://www.indianmascots.com/steinfeldt-racism-in-electr.pdf>