# Perspectives of Social Justice Activists:

# Advocating Against Native-themed Mascots, Nicknames, and Logos

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Abstract

This study investigated perspectives of social justice activists who directly advocate for the elimination of Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos. Using Consensual Qualitative Research methodology, the research team analyzed transcripts of interviews conducted with eleven social justice activists to generate themes, categories, and domains within the data. Five domains emerged: (a) *deleterious impact of Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos*; (b) *components of identity preservation among supporters*; (c) *reasons why some American Indians might support Native-themed mascots, nicknames, logos*; (d) *frontline advocacy efforts;* and (e) *coping strategies for advocates.* Results provided insights into the sociopsychological processes which operate—among both non-Indians and Indians—to allow the misappropriation of American Indian culture, symbols, and imagery in sport to continue to exist in society. Findings can help counseling psychologists better understand the lived experience of social justice activists, while also highlighting ways that our field can support efforts to eliminate race-based mascots, nicknames, and logos.

*Keywords*: social justice advocacy; American Indian; Native American; race-based sports mascots, nicknames, and logos; multicultural competency

Perspectives of Social Justice Activists Who Advocate Against Native-themed Mascots, Nicknames, and Logos

Recognizing our field's commitment to social justice (e.g., Ratts, D'Andrea, & Arredondo, 2004; Vera & Speight, 2003), counseling psychologists need to become aware of the efforts of a wide array of social justice activists who fight against injustice and inequality in society. One such area of social justice activism that has not received adequate professional attention is the movement to eliminate Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos in sports (e.g., *Redskins, Indians, Fighting Sioux;* Davis-Delano, 2007). In order to become effective allies in these social justice efforts, counseling psychologists have to gain a clearer understanding of both the message (e.g., why Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos are harmful to society; why people support them so strongly) and the lived experience of these activists (e.g., advocacy strategies; successes, trials, and tribulations). This study sought to increase the knowledge and awareness of counseling psychologists about this issue by (a) conveying the perspectives and messages of frontline social justice activists (i.e., defined as people who are actively working in their communities and beyond to eliminate race-based mascots, nicknames, and logos), and (b) highlighting the experiences that these activists endure in their endeavors. Engaging in anti-racist social justice endeavors can be rewarding, but these efforts are often accompanied by professional obstacles and interpersonal conflicts (Smith & Redington, 2010). Thus, the purpose of this study was to give voice to the experiences of social justice activists who advocate for the elimination of race-based Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos—images that are omnipresent in sport and schools in American society (Baca, 2004; King, Davis-Delano, Staurowsky, & Baca, 2006).As a result, counseling psychologists can be better equipped to lend their social justice skills and services to the efforts to eradicate a racist and harmful

practice (e.g., Fryberg et al., 2008; Staurowsky, 2007) that has been hegemonically woven into the fabric of American society (Author, 2010a; Davis-Delano, 2007).

**Native-themed Mascots, Nicknames, and Logos**

Perhaps the most pervasive form of societal marginalization of American Indians is the use of American Indian names and imagery in sports (King et al., 2006). Sports-related representations of American Indians are considered problematic because they (a) misuse cultural practices and sacred symbols; (b) perpetuate racist stereotypes of American Indians (e.g., the *noble savage*, the *bloodthirsty savage*, a historic race that only exists in past-tense status, one singular pan-Indian culture); (c) deny American Indians control over societal definitions of themselves; and (d) create a racially hostile environment for all students (Author, 2010a; Author, 2010d; Baca, 2004; Davis-Delano, 2007; Farnell, 2004; Fenelon, 2004; King et al., 2006; King, Staurowsky, Baca, Davis, & Pewewardy, 2002; Pewewardy, 1991; Russel, 2003; Staurowsky, 1999, 2004, 2007; Vanderford, 1996; Williams, 2006, 2007). In 2005, the American Psychological Association (APA) supported these contentions by passing a resolution recommending the immediate retirement of American Indian mascots, symbols, images and personalities by schools, colleges, universities, athletic teams, and organizations because this practice: (a) undermines the educational experiences of members of all communities; (b) establishes an unwelcome and hostile learning environment for American Indian students; (c) has a negative impact on the self-esteem of American Indian children; (d) undermines the ability of American Indian Nations to portray accurate and respectful images of their culture; and (e) may represent a violation of the civil rights of American Indian people (APA, 2005). To date, over 115 other professional organizations (e.g., American Counseling Association, Society of Indian

Psychologists, United States Commission on Civil Rights) have also produced resolutions condemning this practice (American Indian Sports Team Mascots [AISTM], 2010).

In spite of this widespread institutional condemnation, the omnipresence of stereotypic images of American Indians in society (e.g., Merskin, 2001) creates the (mis)perception that these images must be acceptable (King et al., 2006). In addition to their visible presence within professional sports, Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos are present in thousands of public schools across the country (AISTM, 2010). The existence of these images in public schools is problematic because race-based mascotery is perceived to be an accepted and validated practice through government endorsement of these state-sanctioned public institutions (Baca, 2004). Although organized resistance to race-based mascots has been occurring over the past few decades (Muir, 1999), recent attention to the issue has seen an increase in schools and teams retiring their Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos. Thus, recent social justice efforts have been somewhat effective, even though this process is often slow, arduous, and difficult (Author, 2010c). Emerging psychological research (e.g., Author, 2010a; Author, 2010d; Fryberg, Markus, Oyserman, & Stone, 2008; Kim-Prieto, Goldstein, Okazaki, & Kirschner, 2010) has aided these efforts by providing empirical legitimacy to strengthen the message of social justice activists.

**Psychological Research on Native-themed Mascots, Nicknames, and Logos**

In the first study on Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos published in the psychological literature, Fryberg et al. (2008) examined the impact of these race-based sports mascots on the psychological well-being of both American Indian and European American students. In their study, American Indian high school and college students who were exposed to images of Native-themed sports mascots 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. Additionally, non-Indian students have reported significantly higher levels of self-esteem after viewing images of Native-themed mascots when compared to their control group (Fryberg, 2003). The authors suggested that the images conveyed by the race-based mascots remind American Indians of the narrow view society has of them, limits the possibilities they see for themselves, and effectively threatens their psychological functioning. Furthermore, the higher levels of self-esteem reported among non-Indian participants suggests a subtle yet perilous level of privilege enjoyed by those whose culture is not subjected to the marginalizing and dehumanizing process of race-based mascotery. As a result, the presence of Native-themed mascots can have negative consequences for all members of society, not just American Indians (Fryberg, 2003; Fryberg et al., 2008).

In a study of counseling graduate students, Author (2010d) reported that an awareness of the offensiveness of Native-themed mascots was significantly inversely related to color-blind racial attitudes (Neville, Lily, Duran, Lee, & Browne, 2000). That is, the less a participant indicated that Native-themed mascots were offensive, the *more* likely (s)he was to endorse color-blind racial ideologies that support the belief that “race should not and does not matter” (Neville et al., 2000, p. 60). Similar to individuals who endorse color-blind racial attitudes, those who support Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos purport that honor and tradition—not race—are the main reasons for supporting this practice (Author, 2010a; King et al., 2002; Russel, 2003; Staurowsky, 2007). Thus, color blindness and supporting Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos both minimize and/or remove race from the discussion, which perpetuates the status quo and maintains the current oppressive power structure. The authors suggested that the belief that Native-themed mascots honor American Indians may serve as an ego defense that

helps preserve a sense of egalitarianism that simultaneously conceals the genocidal acts of European Americans toward American Indian communities (e.g., Grounds, 2001). Insomuch as the (mis)perception of "honoring" American Indians through the use of Native-themed mascots forges a false sense of unity between American Indians and European Americans (e.g., Black, 2002), Author (2010d) concluded that color-blind racial attitudes may serve as the glue that binds this false union.

Kim-Prieto et al. (2010) conducted two experimental studies to determine if stereotypes extended to other marginalized groups, even if the other group was not directly targeted by the stereotypic representation. The authors used a Native-themed sports logo (e.g. American Indians as bloodthirsty savage warriors) 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 Native-themed logo 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. These results suggest that exposure to stereotypic representations (i.e., a Native-themed logo) increases the likelihood that people will endorse stereotypes of other groups, even when the stereotypes are different. Kim-Prieto et al. (2010) suggested that the use of American Indian imagery in sports creates a racially hostile environment for all parties (i.e., Indian and non-Indian) who are exposed to stereotype-inducing race-based sports logos.

Lastly, Author (2010a) examined newspaper online forums to evaluate racial attitudes about American Indians that are electronically expressed in a community with a race-based sports team nickname and logo (i.e., *Fighting Sioux*). Results indicated that the presence of a Native-themed nickname and logo created an environment wherein American Indians are

subjected to societal ignorance and misinformation about their culture, and that this environment also actively excludes American Indian communities from prioritizing the issues they need to address. While some online forum comments found in the study did contain the words *honor* and *respect* in text, these comments instead expressed underlying themes of entitlement, privilege, power, subjugation, and oppression. Because contemporary electronic communication can effectively reach a large audience with relative ease, the daily ritual of reading the newspaper can subject American Indians to vituperative racist rhetoric that can negatively impact their psychological well-being. Author (2010a) concluded that the presence of a Native-themed nickname and logo can threaten the psychological functioning of American Indians by providing misinformation, by activating stereotypic representations, and by facilitating the expression of explicitly racist attitudes toward American Indians.

**Social Justice Efforts**

Emerging psychological research supports the resolutions by APA and other professional organizations, which when taken together, suggest that Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos can have a deleterious impact on society. However, these images are firmly entrenched into the natural order of society (Davis-Delano, 2007), and members of the dominant culture—particularly White Americans—are the most zealous defenders of this practice (Farnell, 2004). This support, combined with the small population of American Indians (i.e., less than 2% of the U.S. population; US Census Bureau, 2006) and the lack of resources available to American Indian communities (i.e., the rate of American Indians living below the poverty line is twice the rate found in the overall population; Merskin, 2001; National Center for Education Statistics, 2005), highlights how American Indians have lacked the power and privilege other minority

groups have exerted in removing comparable racist stereotypes (e.g., *Frito Bandito*, *Li'l Black Sambo*; Author, 2010c; Westerman, 1989).

In spite of this, Whitbeck, Adams, Hoyt, and Chen (2004) report that, "a grassroots movement is growing on reservations and among urban American Indians that seeks to understand the intergenerational psychological consequences of more than 400 years of genocide, 'ethnic cleansing,' and forced acculturation" (p. 119). However, successful social justice efforts require alliances with groups who have access to power structures that are necessary to effectuate societal change (Goodman et al., 2004). Social justice efforts often exact a toll on allies who are members of mainstream American society (e.g., Smith & Redington, 2010). However, members of racial minority groups face the added prospect of being oppressed not only as a member of a racial minority group, but also as the visible proponent of social justice change, particularly when that change runs counter to the status quo (Paloma, García-Ramírez, de la Mata, & Association AMAL-Andaluza, 2010; Walters, Evans-Campbell, Simoni, Ronquillo, & Bhuyan, 2006). However, there is a dearth of research that empirically supports this point, particularly among American Indian activists who advocate for social justice issues on behalf of American Indian communities. Thus, examining perspectives of people—both non-Indian and Indian —who advocate for removing Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos can provide a unique opportunity to do so.

**Current Study**

The 2005 APA resolution calls for psychologists to work toward eliminating stereotypic representations of American Indians in sport and society. As such, counseling psychologists have a professional obligation to become allies and help social justice movements address the psychological impact of the historical and ongoing marginalization of American Indians. As it

relates to examining 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 et al., 2002, p. 392). It is common for non-Indian members of society to minimize the importance of examining race-based mascots (e.g., Author, 2010a). However, if people cannot understand how this issue is related to the ongoing process of societal marginalization of American Indians, it is difficult for people to understand sovereignty or other issues affecting American Indians' quality of life (Davis, 2002).

Subsequently, this current study intends to provide readers with critical perspectives on a particular issue impacting American Indian communities (i.e., Native-themed mascots, nicknames, logos) in order to equip readers with the knowledge and awareness to assist them in becoming allies in these social justice efforts. By directly examining the perspectives of frontline social justice activists, this study can help readers better understand not only the content of the message these activists convey, but also the successes, trials, and tribulations that they experience in this difficult yet necessary social justice endeavor. Thus, the results of this study can provide insight into the social justice advocacy experiences of those who advocate on behalf of American Indian communities, as well as provide the impetus for considering how to use these perspectives to advance social justice endeavors with other marginalized groups (e.g., LGBT advocacy, disability advocacy).

## Method

### Participants

Participants were eleven social justice activists who have been actively involved in advocating for the removal of Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos in their home community, in their state, and/or on the national level. These five male and six female frontline

activists were recruited from a national sample with representation from diverse regions of the United States (i.e., Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Michigan, North Dakota, Ohio, Wisconsin). Three of the activists self-identified their race as White, and eight self-identified their race as American Indian, from a variety of different tribal affiliations (e.g., Cherokee, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, Menominee, Oneida, Seminole). The mean age of the activists was 52.73 (*SD* = 11.01), and the participants reported an average of 15.55 years of experience with activism in this specific area (*SD* = 9.33). Although many of the participants commented that the time they committed to their social justice efforts constituted full time status, none of the participants were employed full time in these endeavors. Instead, most were employed within their current careers (e.g., business owner, social worker, academic administrator, financial analyst) or were retired from previous careers (e.g., professor, educator, computer programmer, counselor).

**Procedure**

Research was conducted in accordance with Institutional Review Board standards to ensure ethical procedures in regard to contacting participants, conducting interviews, and securely storing data. In an effort to recruit possible participants, the first author contacted a colleague who is the administrator of an online social justice forum. This online forum has been in existence for eight years, and has posted over 4000 entries about current events regarding race-based nicknames, logos, and mascots. The approximately 240 members of this forum are engaged in social justice efforts across the United States concerning race-based mascots, nicknames, and logos. Potential participants were contacted on the listserv, and informal recruiting methods (e.g., word of mouth) resulted in interest from additional participants. The use of this snowball sampling method allowed us to access a relatively heterogeneous sample (in

terms of experiences as frontline activists) within a diverse population that might otherwise be difficult for outsiders to access (e.g., Mohatt, 2004).

Based on the first author's review of the literature and consultation with tribal members and counseling psychologists, a semi-structured interview protocol was designed (see Appendix A). The first author conducted and digitally recorded phone interviews with eleven social justice activists who expressed interest in participating in the study. Interviews lasted an average of 45 minutes. After two graduate students transcribed the recordings of the interviews, the four members of the research team analyzed these interview transcriptions using Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) methodology (Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997). CQR is considered a rigorous qualitative method that requires multiple researchers to reach consensus about the meaning of the data (Hill et al., 1997). Additionally, CQR was appealing for this study because it provides clarity and ease of use for graduate student researchers while simultaneously providing rigor and richness to more experienced qualitative researchers (Ponterotto, 2010). CQR has been widely used in counseling psychology research, and has recently been used in research exploring participants' experiences with racism (e.g., Author, 2010a; Spanierman et al., 2008; Sue et al., 2008). Finally, in his overview of qualitative research in multicultural psychology, Ponterotto (2010) stated, "The CQR method is being used increasingly in the study of multiculturalism in psychology, and the reports of these studies are being published in premier, high impact journals" (p. 585).

**Researchers and External Auditor**

There were four members on the research team. One member was a biracial (White and American Indian) male counseling psychology faculty member who has engaged extensively in social justice activism related to this issue, including conducting research, making presentations,

and providing testimony to state agencies in hearings concerning the psychological implications of race-based mascots, nicknames, and logos. The other three team members were counseling psychology doctoral students who also had familiarity with issues regarding Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos. These three members included a White male student, a Black female student, and a White female student. The second author has also conducted research on Native-themed mascots, while the third and fourth authors have engaged in curricular activities related to this issue in their graduate studies. All team members maintain personal and professional interests in multicultural psychology, and possess values that align with social justice principles. The external auditor, a male Asian American counseling psychology faculty member, was chosen due to his expertise in multicultural psychology in addition to his experience in conducting qualitative research and auditing CQR projects. Presenting relevant background information of researchers can allow readers to evaluate the prospect of bias on the part of the individual researchers (Hill et al., 1997).

**Data Analysis**

Research team members discussed journal articles describing the process of conducting CQR (Hill et al., 1997; Hill et al., 2005), as well as samples of articles that utilized CQR methodology (Knox, Hess, Williams, & Hill, 2003; Liu et al., 2009). Research team members also reviewed relevant research on Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos (e.g., Author, 2010a; Author, 2010d; Fryberg et al., 2008; Kim-Prieto et al., 2010). In attempting to prevent biases from unduly influencing the results, it is also recommended that researchers discuss potential assumptions, biases, and values prior to engaging in the CQR process (Fassinger, 2005; Hill et al., 1997). Assumptions of team members included beliefs that the activists might receive much opposition to their efforts from members of mainstream American society, and the

expectation that the level of advocates' racist experiences might be lessened when experienced in person (as opposed to more distant interactions such as email or online forum comments). In terms of potential biases, researchers also acknowledged that because they were aware of the literature highlighting the nature of race-based mascotery, their beliefs might align with the perspectives of the activists, which could result in potentially identifying with and becoming upset by their difficult experiences. These assumptions and biases were constantly checked and evaluated throughout the CQR process in an attempt to minimize bias in the data analysis process (Hill et al., 1997). For example, in order to address potential bias, research team members repeatedly challenged each other to consider whether proposed themes were reflected within the data or if they represented members' personal perceptions. Additionally, because the team consisted of one faculty member and three graduate students, the researchers explicitly acknowledged the power differential among team members, and continually monitored this dynamic throughout the process in order to address and minimize this potential bias. For example, the first author was mindful of allowing other members to take the lead in proposing themes, and conversation about these power dynamics occurred regularly when the first author proposed ideas for collapsing domains and categories.

The audio recorded interviews transcribed by two graduate students were reviewed by the first author for accuracy, and then research team members were provided with these transcripts. Research team members initially worked on their own to read the interview transcriptions, and independently coded the data in order to identify preliminary themes they found in the data. The research team then met on multiple occasions to discuss their independently-derived themes to develop a consensus on emergent categories and domains. Domains represent clusters of common notions (i.e., categories) derived from the independently created themes. Group

members clarified the domains by creating core ideas, which are intended to provide detail and integration to the data while remaining close to what the interviewees have said (Hill et al., 1997; Hill et al., 2005). In extracting categories, domains, and core ideas from the data, the research team members presented, discussed, and negotiated their own analytical impressions of the data until consensus was reached. These preliminary results (i.e., themes, domains, categories, core ideas) were then sent to the external auditor for his feedback in order to provide diverse perspectives and, most importantly to the process, to account for groupthink tendencies that may emerge in the consensus building process. After receiving the external auditor's feedback, the research team met to incorporate these perspectives and again used consensus to compile the preliminary categorization. In order to strengthen the methodological rigor of the study, the research team then employed a cross-analysis procedure in an effort to provide an account of the prevalence of each category within the data. In terms of articulating the prevalence of each category, "general" results apply to all (or all but one) cases, "typical" results apply to at least half (but not all) of the cases, and "variant" results apply to at least two (but fewer than half) of the cases (Hill et al., 2005).

Members of the team independently used the preliminary categorization structure to code the transcripts in order to conduct the cross-analysis procedure. Members then met to discuss their independent cross-analyses and reconciled the few differences they had. For example, this reconciliation process resulted in the collapsing of two potentially redundant domains (i.e., *Dehumanizing*, *Provides racist stereotypes*) into one domain (i.e., *Provides dehumanizing and racist stereotypes*). Finally, the group reconvened so the research team could collectively agree upon the final categorization structure. As a post hoc procedure, cross-case analyses were conducted, but these analyses did not yield differences in domains or categories based on gender

of the participants. While there were also no differences in domains based on race, American Indian advocates responded differently than White advocates on three categories (i.e., *lack of cultural literacy, reframe resistance, avoid escalating*).

## Results

Research team members' initial analyses of the interview transcripts with the social justice activists identified many themes that emerged from the data. Research team members produced 93 independently-derived themes that were eventually collapsed and synthesized into domains and categories through the consensus-building process of CQR. This consensus building process produced five domains and 22 categories from these individually-derived themes. The domains that emerged from the data included: (a) *deleterious impact of Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos*; (b) *components of identity preservation among supporters*; (c) *reasons why some American Indians might support Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos;* (d) *frontline advocacy efforts;* and (e) *coping strategies for advocates.* The cross-analysis procedure served the dual purpose of validating the domains generated while also indicating the frequency (i.e., general, typical, variant) of the categories in the data (see Table 1).

### Domain 1: Deleterious Impact of Native-themed Mascots, Nicknames, Logos

The first domain addressed reasons why advocates believed that race-based mascots, nicknames, and logos were detrimental to society. Advocates described personal experiences related to their social justice efforts that they and their family members had endured, and provided examples that illustrated how Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos have a negative impact on all members of society, not just American Indians. This domain contained five categories: (a) *provides dehumanizing and racist stereotypes;* (b) *active oppression of American Indians;* (c) *spiritual misappropriation*; (d) *perpetuates violence/hostility*; and (e)

*psychological impact on kids.* The first category, *provides dehumanizing and racist stereotypes*, produced a general response from all eleven of the advocates in this sample. Advocates talked about how the presence of race-based mascots, logos, and nicknames contributes to the perpetuation of stereotypical and dehumanizing societal portrayals of American Indians. Participant 4 (White male) stated,

> I think that these mascots and nicknames help to dehumanize people and allow them to be seen as two-dimensional cartoon objects as opposed to being seen as people who have real interests, real concerns, real problems. In the end, real harm is placed upon them.

The second category in this domain, *active oppression of American Indians*, emerged from the transcripts of nine of the eleven advocates, producing a typical response. In this domain, advocates discussed how Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos perpetuate the ongoing discrimination against and oppression of American Indians. In conveying an anecdote that represents an intersection of discrimination against his race and his efforts to remove the race-based nickname in his local community, Participant 11 (American Indian male) stated,

> We've been refused service in stores. We went into a local hardware one time and this lady at the cash register wouldn't even wait on us. She walked right away from the cash register and told us she wasn't waiting on any Indians. We went into a restaurant we found that had just opened up, and they would not seat us. This was like [the year] 2000. We've had people tell us to go back where we belong.

The third category in this domain, *spiritual misappropriation*, emerged from the transcripts of five of the eleven advocates, producing a variant response. In this domain, advocates discussed how the imagery and practices of Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos in sporting events misuse, misrepresent, and misappropriate sacred American Indian

spiritual and cultural practices. In highlighting the nature of this practice, Participant 10 (American Indian female) stated,

> There is (sic) cultural violations. For example, some of the religious icons of the Native culture are being used for entertainment purposes. It's the same thing, some things like the eagle feather. You see a lot of those representatives on some of the mascot symbols, as one example. That's the equivalent to the crucifix, now, or the Jewish Star of David. You would not see those other symbols on a sports team helmet. As a result, that is a cultural and a religious violation.

The fourth category in this domain, *perpetuates violence/hostility*, emerged from the transcripts of eight of the eleven advocates, producing a typical response. In this domain, advocates discussed how friends and members of their family had been verbally harassed, physically assaulted, and had their personal property vandalized as a result of their advocacy against Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos. Participant 10 also stated,

> As a result of being an advocate for eliminating Indian mascots in general everywhere, I have been attacked not only personally, verbally but physically. We have been at demonstrations, I've been at demonstrations where things have been thrown at us, beer cans have been thrown at us. They have yelled racial epithets at us. Like, how dare you, going against our *'Indian'* mascot? We have these Native people speaking their feelings and talking about it, and they get upset at us. Calling us terms like prairie nigger. Go back to the reservation, get a life--I've heard that a million times.

The final category, *psychological impact on kids*, produced a general response and was found in the transcripts of all eleven advocates. Consistent with emerging psychological research (e.g., Fryberg, 2003; Fryberg et al., 2008), advocates discussed how the use of race-based

mascots, nicknames, and logos negatively effects the identity development and self-image of all children, not just American Indian children. Responses in this category highlighted what many advocates emphasized as the most deleterious impact of race-based mascots. To illustrate the impact of this practice on American Indian children, Participant 10 stated that, “There is the damage to the self esteem of our Native children, how it hurts their self imagery and how it hurts their self pride.” In regard to how this practice impacts all children, Participant 8 (American Indian female) stated,

> I think the impact it has on children in particular, being that a lot of these schools are junior high, high schools, even grade schools. But even the pro teams, you know, school-age kids are in the formative years and can certainly get the wrong impression, the wrong so-called ‘education’ on a people [American Indians].

Advocates also discussed how the psychological impact on children also manifests itself in the form of bullying, harassment, and physical violence, suggesting that race-based mascots, nicknames, and logos contribute to a racially hostile educational environment that can have long lasting effects on children. According to Participant 3 (American Indian female),

> I can tell you my son has gone through some psychological counseling and a lot of the racism he felt at school that was actually aimed at him. He had to deal with, ‘Oh you are an Indian, you can fight, let’s see how you fight,’ referring to the *Fighting [tribe name]* school logo. So he’s been called out on the school grounds to fight… his educational experience had been damaged for life because of the racism he experienced in the school. So now my son has not finished high school. He’s going to get his GED but hasn’t. He’s been procrastinating for 2 years on that. When he had high aspirations of going to college and majoring in music and all this. He just doesn’t have that motivation anymore.

**Domain 2: Components of Identity Preservation Among Supporters**

The second domain reflected reasons that advocates gave for mainstream society's support for Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos. The four categories within this domain included: (a) *lack of awareness*; (b) *dissonance*; (c) *tradition*; and (d) *sport environment.* The first category, *lack of awareness,* was found in the interviews of seven of the advocates, producing a typical response. In describing their view on why society supports the ongoing use of American Indian imagery, culture, and practices in sporting events, Participant 10 stated,

> Ignorance. It's a simple thing: Ignorance. They just, and not only is it just ignorance about the culture, but they are ignoring us as a people. They ignore how we feel about these mascots because they always tell us, 'You shouldn't feel that way.' Or they will say, 'I don't care how you feel, we are going to do it anyway.'

The second category, *dissonance*, produced a variant response from five of the advocates in this sample. Advocates talked about how awareness of the negative ramifications of race-based mascots, nicknames, and logos could challenge an individual's self perception as being inherently good and respectful of American Indian culture. Participant 4 illustrated this point:

> It's wrapped up in a White identity that is helpful for White people. It's better to think of yourself as someone who likes certain aspects of Native American culture than to think about yourself as a decedent or beneficiary of past genocide. If you actually thought about that, you'd feel pretty bad about yourself. It's nice to kind of think about you're honoring people and you know think about them as great warriors, or whatever else.

Participant 11 added additional perspective by stating,

> People believe that they are honoring you. And they just don't want to accept the fact that they are not because if they do, then that means they did something wrong. And I

> think that's what it boils down to. They don't want to admit to the fact that, 'Oh my god, look what we did. We did something very wrong. We've hurt all these people.' Because everyone always says, 'Well it wasn't our intention.' Okay, we understand that. But now you know what we're trying to do some education here, but now you know, so why not just make the change? But they can't because if they do then they are admitting to the fact that they did harm to somebody. And I think that's the biggest thing.

The third category in this domain, *tradition*, emerged from the transcripts of six of the eleven advocates, producing a typical response. In this domain, advocates discussed how many supporters of this practice cite historical use and tradition as reasons for their ownership of Native-themed imagery and culture in sport. Participant 2 (American Indian female) stated,

> I keep thinking generations of support. So I think a person today, a baby boomer today, would support [mascots] without a thorough understanding because their parents or grandparents supported that logo, that name, or that chant, or that [tomahawk] chop [used by sports fans]. So they don't think that anything is wrong with it because their grandparents, parents supported it.

The final category in this domain, *sport environment,* produced a variant response that was found in the transcripts of five advocates. Many advocates described how the fervor present within American sports culture greatly challenges efforts to change attitudes among Native-themed mascot, nickname, and logo supporters. Participant 4 said, "People kind of inter-weave it into their identity a lot. I mean they really like their sports teams. It's sort of an extension of nationalism in a way…I think that kind of brings out the worst in people's attitudes."

**Domain 3: Reasons Why Some American Indians Might Support Native-themed Mascots, Nicknames, Logos**

In addition to advocates describing reasons for mainstream American society's support for Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos, this next domain included reasons advocates provided for why some American Indians might support this practice. This domain contained four categories: (a) *self-preservation*; (b) *lack of cultural literacy*; (c) *societal indoctrination*; and (d) *resources and money.* The first category, *self-preservation,* was found in the interviews of five of the advocates, producing a variant response. In describing their perceptions about why more American Indians do not speak out against this practice, Participant 6 (American Indian female) stated,

> And I think there is certainly a benefit to not taking a stand. I think a lot of people on the mascot and logo issue, Indian people, just imagine if you're in a community and maybe there are two or three Indian families in the community. That's what happened in [city name removed]. You may want to take a stand on the issue, but you know that if you do, you're targeting [yourself and] those other two families.

The second category, *lack of cultural literacy*, produced a variant response from five of the advocates in this sample, all of whom self-identified their race as American Indian. Advocates talked about the possibility that American Indians who support race-based mascots, nicknames, and logos may not have grown up within American Indian communities, including but not limited to living on their reservation. Subsequently, they may lack the connection to cultural experiences necessary to understand the negative impact these mascots, nicknames, and logos can have. Participant 3 stated,

> I find that they haven't experienced the harm themselves or fail to recognize the harm that their loved ones have felt. Often times they are Indians who never lived or grew up on the reservation. There is a huge difference of people who have grown up and lived on

> a reservation and those who have not. Because they haven't experienced the same oppression that people who live and grew up on a reservation do.

The third category in this domain, *societal indoctrination,* emerged from the transcripts of only two of the eleven advocates, producing a variant response. In this domain, advocates discussed how the omnipresence of Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos has desensitized even American Indians to the possibility that this practice could have negative effects. Advocates discussed how media and other social institutions (e.g., school, sport) readily provide the mechanism for this indoctrination. Specifically, Participant 7 (White male) stated,

> I understand where they are coming from. They've been indoctrinated over decades of exposure to the media just as White people have been, and so just like all Caucasian European Americans that watch the ten o'clock news, you hear the sport, you hear about the Atlanta *Braves*, and about the Cleveland *Indians* every night on the sports. American Indians watch those same news broadcasts and therefore tend to become, and I think a very important word here is, desensitized. You know, because everybody has become desensitized to the use of one race of people in this role.

The final category in this domain, *resources and money,* produced a typical response that was found in the transcripts of six advocates. Many advocates described the manner in which the attitudes of American Indian communities and individuals regarding this practice may be compromised or influenced though financial means. Advocates discussed how this dynamic has emerged in instances where a community has faced the prospect of having their Native-themed mascot, nickname, or logo removed (e.g., Bisek, 2008). Because of high poverty rates among American Indian communities, this strategy can be difficult for advocates to combat.

Additionally, this dynamic can be manifest in the threat of cutting American Indian programs at a school if a mascot, nickname, or logo were to be removed (Author, 2010a). Participant 4 said,

> There has clearly been a history of payoffs and buyouts that have taken perhaps a more self-interested people aside and led them to support it. This might be more of the case, you'd say with the Florida State *Seminoles*, other places where there's been economic incentives and encouragement to accept it.

**Domain 4: Frontline Advocacy Efforts**

The fourth domain contained four categories: (a) *education;* (b) *form coalitions/organizations*; (c) *influence people in power*; and (d) *research for credibility*. The categories in this domain represented activities that the advocates had engaged in and recommended as effective strategies for others interested in participating in advocacy efforts to eliminate race-based mascots, nicknames, and logos. The first category, *education,* was found in the interviews of all eleven advocates, producing a general response. In describing efforts to educate people and raise awareness about the issue, Participant 1 (American Indian male) stated,

> Well, one thing I've done for years, is tell my story, what I went through being a [*Indian*] mascot at my high school. You know, I've written papers, I've written poems, I've been on diversity panels, I've been in debates, been interviewed on tv, radio, newspapers, magazines. I've probably done every phase of communication.

Although all advocates endorsed the need for education, there was also an acknowledgement among many advocates that education alone was not enough. For this reason, the additional categories in this domain are important accompanying components to facilitate the education of people about Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos. Participant 5 (White male) said,

> I would hope that the education of those in position to bring about change would serve us well, but it seems in this case it hasn't. The counseling center, student counseling center at the University [name removed] and the psychology department at the University [name removed] were among the first to vigorously try to inform and educate the administration and the board of trustees as to the negative psychological effects, that this was happening to students, who were coming in and seeing them, and the impact of this [Native-themed mascot] on the university student population. People didn't feel safe, people felt threatened. And all the education and what the counseling center and the department could bring to those who could bring about the change had no effect.

The second category, *form coalitions/organizations*, produced a general response from ten of the advocates in this sample. Advocates talked about the importance of not only taking leadership roles in organizing and developing partnerships with others who share the goal of eliminating race-based mascots, nicknames, and logos, but also actively teaching and developing leadership skills among students and the next generation of advocates. Participant 9 (American Indian female) stated,

> It's one of the most exciting things I've ever done and I guess that one of the most important things advocacy on this issue can do is work with the young people and help them develop leadership and advocacy skills so that they can carry this stuff on. Yeah, but it's also so that they get those leadership and advocacy skills and work together in coalitions and begin to understand that you have to reach out of your comfort zones sometimes and build these relationships.

The third category in this domain, *influence people in power*, emerged from the transcripts of all eleven advocates, producing a general response. In this domain, many advocates

indicated that one of the most arduous yet effective strategies they have utilized is appealing to organizational, local, state, and federal governing bodies. In discussing efforts to operate within power structures to effectuate change, Participant 5 stated,

> Perhaps what's coming up now, with the behavior of the board of trustees and past governors, will lead to a different way for the selection of the board of trustees to be more representative of people who have less of a *self* interest and more of a *real* interest in the governance of the university. There are ways, and we did use them to try to get people onto the board who have a broader perspective.

The final category in this domain, *research for credibility,* produced a typical response that was found in the transcripts of eight advocates. Many advocates described the necessity to find and utilize valid scientific research to not only legitimize their advocacy efforts, but also to refute claims of those who support race-based mascots, nicknames, and logos. Participant 2 said,

> The resistance I get is someone across the table in their chair from me saying, 'Prove it.' You know, they want the science, they want the data because they have counter information through another biased source. So that's where we are now. We're trying to keep the dialogue going by giving some solid data, some good science.

**Domain 5: Coping Strategies for Advocates**

Advocates described a host of difficult experiences they endured in their social justice efforts. In describing coping mechanisms they employed to deal with these experiences, this last domain contained five categories: (a) *supportive sharing*; (b) *build alliances*; (c) *reframe resistance;* (d) *avoid escalation;* and (e) *use humor.* It is noteworthy that these categories produced four variant responses and only one typical response among advocates in the sample. This lack of consensus of responses suggests the heterogeneity of coping mechanisms employed

by advocates, and the multitude of possibilities that exist for social justice activists to use to cope with negative experiences. The first category, *supportive sharing*, was found in the interviews of four of the advocates, producing a variant response. In describing an effective method to process these often emotionally draining advocacy experiences, Participant 9 stated,

> Always do it together. Always after the process, go somewhere and sit down with the other advocates after the event and talk about your feelings. Talk about what happened. Get out as much as you can. If somebody needs to be held and nurtured, that's the time to do it, right away. Get as much of that out and taken care of as soon as possible.

The second category, *build alliances*, produced a variant response from three of the advocates in this sample. Advocates talked about utilizing support networks to not only mobilize advocacy efforts, but to also help cope with the stressors of social justice work. In describing ways to cope with negative reactions that inevitably arise in the process, Participant 7 stated,

> Well I think probably more so than anything else, it's to try to develop a type of support system and typically that's other advocates. Sometimes you can find people within your own community… And then the other thing, probably the biggest thing is support from other advocates elsewhere.

The third category in this domain, *reframe resistance,* emerged from the transcripts of six of the eleven advocates, producing a typical response. All six advocates whose responses fit into this category self-identified themselves as American Indian. In this domain, advocates indicated that the resistance they face often results in personal attacks. However, many advocates suggested that it is important to reframe this resistance not as something internal (e.g., something wrong with the advocate), but rather as something external (e.g., a process that mascot,

nickname, or logo supporters are going through). In discussing how to compartmentalize insensitive and hurtful reactions people often have to her advocacy efforts, Participant 9 stated,

> But I mean, you know, whatever they're saying, they're saying about themselves. It's not about me. I know who I am, and I know why I'm doing what I'm doing. That statement is about their fear, their lack of knowledge, lack of understanding, and their fear. And their fear that something is going to change in their society and in their world. If these stereotypes are removed and the barriers between Native people and non-Native people begin to fall down, what's going to happen to them?

The fourth category in this domain, *avoid escalation,* emerged from the transcripts of four of the eleven advocates, producing a variant response. All four advocates whose responses fit into this category self-identified themselves as American Indian. In this domain, advocates discussed how arguing and becoming confrontational with Native-themed mascot, nickname, and logo supporters can be counterproductive and often shuts down dialogue on the issue. In discussing experiences with individuals who respond to the message with anger, Participant 6 stated,

> But usually I don't like to escalate stuff because it just makes it worse. You know, I don't want to do a back-and-forth game of saying this thing so they can say that…. And so the way I did, I swallowed a lot of it, but then sometimes when I got pushed too far I would say something. But then when you say something that's negative it just shuts everything off and you can't get anywhere.

The final category in this domain, *use humor,* produced a variant response that was found in the transcripts of two advocates. In utilizing humor as a way to cope with the hurtful and negative responses often encountered in their social justice work, Participant 11 stated, "I mean

you've got to laugh about it. If you don't you are going to go insane…So you've got to laugh at some of that stuff just to get through it."

## Discussion

Taken together, the results of this study provided a greater understanding of the perspectives of frontline social justice activists who work in their communities and beyond in an effort to eliminate Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos. The results:
a) highlighted reasons why these race-based mascots, nicknames, and logos are harmful to society; b) provided reasons why people—both non-Indian and Indian—might support this practice; and c) described the experiences that social justice activists endure—both good and bad—in their efforts to advocate for the elimination of this practice from society. The first three domains provided clarification on the nuanced and complex nature of this issue, whereas the final two domains discussed specific experiences and strategies endorsed by the participants.

The first domain provided advocates' perspectives about why Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos are harmful to society. These perspectives supported and aligned with previous writings in the psychological literature (e.g., Author, 2010a; Author, 2010d; Fryberg et al., 2008; Kim-Prieto et al., 2010) and within other fields (e.g., law, sociology of sport, indigenous philosophy, anthropology). Prominent within the categories in this domain were the themes of violence, hostility, spiritual misappropriation, oppression, and the belief that Native-themed mascots provide dehumanizing racist stereotypes of American Indians that have a negative psychological impact on children. Not only do these themes suggest that the use of American Indian culture and imagery for use in sports might not be as honoring or respectful as supporters of Native-themed mascots purport it to be (Author, 2010a; Russel, 2003), but these themes also carry serious psychological implications. To this point, counseling psychologists

need to be aware of American Indian stereotypes in order to work effectively with American Indian clients (Sutton & Broken Nose, 2005). Thus, an enhanced awareness the marginalization of American Indians--particularly as it involves stereotyping brought about by race-based mascotery--can help psychologists gain a clearer understanding of the experiences of American Indians that contribute to their worldview and even their presenting concerns (Author, 2010d). This awareness can potentially translate into a more comprehensive understanding of larger psychological constructs (e.g., soul wound, historical trauma) and psychological processes (e.g., internalized oppression, internalized colonialism) relevant to American Indians that contribute to disparate levels of negative health outcomes (e.g., depression, alcoholism, suicide, diet-related diseases) that American Indian communities are currently facing (e.g., Alkon & Norgaard, 2009; Duran 2006; Duran, Firehammer, & Gonzalez, 2008; Indian Health Services [IHS], 2008).

The categories in the second domain, *components of identity preservation among supporters*, reflected the advocates' perspectives on why people, particularly members of mainstream American society, might support this practice (e.g., Farnell, 2004). The process of identity preservation, as fueled by dissonance or a lack of awareness, can be a powerful hindrance to social change. This becomes particularly apparent when the object of change (i.e., sports mascots, nicknames, and logos) operates within a prominent institution of socialization (i.e., sport) whose tradition, rituals, and history have afforded it a position of prominence within American society. Future research should examine how the societal prominence of the sport environment contributes to identity development, particularly as it relates to specific models of identity (e.g., racial identity) that might be salient to the issue of race-based mascotery.

Much like other members of society, psychologists—who are often members of the majority culture—are also influenced by the sociopsychological processes articulated by the

categories within this second domain. The 2005 APA resolution recommending the immediate retirement of Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos was listed as an "ineffectively implemented policy" in the 2006 Annual Report of the APA Policy and Planning Board (APA, 2007). The authors noted that policy implementation is subject to a host of sociopsychological processes which contribute to difficulty in implementing broad sociopolitical resolutions. Because thousands of schools in the United States have race-based mascots (AISTM, 2010), it is likely that some psychologists may have attended a school with a Native-themed mascot, nickname, or logo. Thus, it is possible that a lack of awareness, dissonance, and potential involvement in the traditions of the prominent American sport culture could contribute to this issue being a 'blind spot' for them that requires active self-examination (e.g., APA, 2003, 2008), particularly because stereotypes of American Indians largely influence much of the clinical work conducted with American Indians (Duran, 2006).

The categories within the third domain demonstrated the complexity of the issue and the need for critical thought on the matter by articulating reasons why some American Indians might support Native-themed mascots, nicknames, logos. Subsequently, it is important to acknowledge the psychological mechanisms that operate within these categories. For example, the dynamic of American Indians supporting Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos that are valued among members of mainstream society resonates with the *Conformity* status of racial identity for persons of color (Helms, 1995). A related construct that might be more salient to American Indians, internalized colonialism (e.g., David, 2008; Duran, 2006; Freire, 1970), can similarly provide insight into this dynamic. Internalized colonialism addresses the process of colonization that can result in members of the oppressed group identifying with and supporting practices of the dominant group. Thus, the presence of internalized colonialism, resulting from generations of

cultural genocide and forced assimilation (e.g., Whitbeck et al., 2004), can provide explanatory insight into the dynamic of American Indians in contemporary times supporting Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos, although it may not be in their collective best interests to do so.

Additionally, beyond these dynamics of internalized psychological oppression, self-preservation may aptly explain why more American Indians do not speak out about this issue. Advocates in this study talked about physical and psychological harm enacted on themselves and their families as a result of speaking out, so it is reasonable to assume that for some, the costs of speaking out might be too much. However, although silence should not constitute tacit acquiescence or agreement, a confirmatory bias exists within mainstream society when an American Indian is perceived to support this practice. For example, an article in the popular magazine, *Sports Illustrated* (Price, 2002), cited the results of a telephone-based survey which purported that the majority of American Indians—including those living on reservations—actually supported Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos. A response article in a scientific peer-reviewed journal (e.g., *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*; King et al., 2002) pointed out the myriad methodological flaws with this *Sports Illustrated* survey (e.g., how was American Indian status among respondents defined and confirmed; without using a tribal roll, how did the surveyors gain access to this population; how many American Indians on reservations have access to phones to respond to this phone-based survey; despite requests to do so, why wouldn't the group that conducted the survey release their data or methodology for scientific examination and replication; King et al., 2002). However, as one of the advocates in this current study noted, members of the general public readily cite this unscientific *Sports Illustrated* study as evidence that American Indians support keeping Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos—in spite of contentions and evidence to the contrary, including legitimate

scientific research. Thus, the categories in this third domain reflect the complexities of this issue that require critical thought on the matter, and psychologists need to be at the forefront of the discussion to contribute their perspective on the complex psychological aspects of this issue.

The last two domains described the experiences of the advocates, and these descriptions included both a prescriptive component for engaging in successful advocacy (i.e., *frontline advocacy efforts*) and a prescriptive component for dealing with the inevitable backlash inherent in supporting a position that runs counter to societal hegemonic norms (i.e., *coping strategies for advocates*). These categories can not only help psychologists design interventions to help advocates address the difficult and even traumatic experiences they endure in their social justice work, the information contained within these categories can also be incorporated into existing social justice training models. For example, doctoral programs that incorporate social justice work into their training (e.g., Boston College; Goodman et al., 2004) can utilize both the content (e.g., recommendations of the social justice activists) and the process (e.g., experiences, strategies, and coping mechanisms of activists) articulated in these last two domains to train their students to more effectively address social justice issues salient to American Indians and other marginalized groups in society.

**Limitations**

There were several limitations to this study. First, although they were recruited from a national sample, there may be a selection bias among participants in this study based on the snowball method that contributed to their voluntary desire to participate. In addition to the listserv announcement, the word of mouth generated by participants increased participation numbers, but also served as a protective mechanism for the group (i.e., interviewer had to demonstrate trust and credibility to the members in order to gain access). This process allowed

the researchers to access a group that might otherwise be distrustful that their message would be misrepresented or minimized by an outsider. Distrust of outside researchers is a functional response among members of American Indian communities who have endured mistreatment by academic institutions in the name of psychological research (Mohatt et al., 2004). However, while this selective access could be considered a possible strength of this study, it could also be a limitation if it were to contribute to a potential selection bias dynamic among participants. Additionally, although the cross-case analyses yielded no gender or racial differences across domains, there were differences in three categories based on the race of the advocate. American Indian advocates endorsed the themes found in the categories of *lack of cultural literacy*, *reframe resistance*, and *avoid escalation*, but these themes were not found in the transcripts of the three White advocates. While these differences in perspective could be attributed to unique experiences that American Indian advocates bring to their advocacy efforts, future research should directly examine potential racial differences in social justice advocacy experiences.

Furthermore, the methodology of the current study is another limitation. Self-report interviews were the only source of data, which are subject to social desirability processes. More specifically, although the research team followed CQR recommendations (Hill et al., 1997) in reporting biases, assumptions, and expectations, the results of this study still reflect the worldviews and interpretations of the researchers. As noted throughout this manuscript, research team members took great care to monitor power dynamics and evaluate potential assumptions and biases. However, we also acknowledge that it is difficult to fully disengage the process of generating domains and categories from team members' past research experiences, their social justice activism efforts in this domain (i.e., Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos), and their anti-racist personal and professional worldviews. Accordingly, it is our intent to be as

transparent as possible about the potential role of these values and experiences so that readers can evaluate the merits of the results of this research project, given the constraints of *researcher as instrument* inherent in qualitative research. As such, results should be interpreted accordingly.

**Implications for Practice and Future Directions**

Near the end of the interview, interviewees were directly asked how they thought counseling psychologists could be of assistance in their social justice efforts. The responses of advocates were analyzed by research team members outside of the CQR process in an effort to provide readers with direct responses from frontline activists concerning how the field of counseling psychology can effectively become more involved in the process of advocating for the elimination of race-based mascots, nicknames, and logos. Respondents indicated that counseling psychologists could be most helpful in the areas of a) research and b) advocacy alliances. Specifically, the majority of advocates expressed the need for continued scientific psychological research to help them in their frontline advocacy efforts. Many of the advocates specifically cited the research of Fryberg et al. (2008), indicating that this research has already played a critical role in advancing the conversation regarding the psychological impact of race-based mascots on both American Indian children and European American children. The presence of scientific psychological research gives voice to their experiences, and this empirical evidence provides additional validity to their arguments.

While research was highly valued, advocates indicated that research was only part of the role counseling psychologists could play. Participant 4 advocated for greater involvement by counseling psychologists by stating,

> Yeah, the APA condemns it. Okay, fine. I've read research on it. Fine. Well, to kind of step out of your professional role and to see those people, not as clients but, or not as

> people who you give advice or directives to, but as people who have inherent rights, who can bleed, who breathe, who can cry. That, on a very humanistic and personal level, that they deserve support, I think is a really valuable conclusion.

Thus, in addition to producing research, many advocates indicated that they wanted counseling psychologists who are ready to stand with them and fight to eliminate Native-themed mascots and other instances of oppressive and racist acts in our society. To this end, Vera and Speight (2003) suggested that psychologists need to move beyond awareness and understanding of disenfranchised groups and commit to actively engaging in the promotion of social justice on their behalf. However, in pointing out the additional awareness of the process that counseling psychologists must have in order to become truly effective allies, Participant 9 said,

> In order to be a good ally, you have to be willing to let the people who have the issue lead. You're going to want to be empowering the Native voice even if you're not an Indian person yourself, and that can be kind of tough for psychologists.

In order for social justice advocates to identify and combat systemic forms of oppression to become effective allies, they must develop a sense of critical consciousness (Duran et al., 2008; Freire, 1970; Goodman et al., 2004; Goodman & West-Olatunji, 2009). Furthermore, once the oppressed initiate a movement toward consciousness that acknowledges social-political-historical injustices, this awareness has the power to heal and transform both the oppressed and the perpetrators of oppression (Duran et al., 2008). By engaging in their own consciousness-raising processes, counseling psychologists can empower themselves to become allies in this movement by developing a more sophisticated understanding of the nuances and complexities of issues related to Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos. Our intention was to provide the beginnings of such an experience in this manuscript. Counseling psychologists can translate this

critical consciousness, knowledge, and awareness into social justice skills in order to be effective advocates for societal change at multiple systemic levels. For example, counseling psychologists can educate their colleagues and students about the psychological ramifications of Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos (i.e., professional level). They can speak out against this practice in schools and colleges where they are employed and elsewhere (i.e., organizational level), and they can advocate for non-stereotypic media representations of American Indians (i.e., societal level; Sue, 2001). Our field is uniquely positioned to give voice to the experience of the disenfranchised, to have the humility to walk alongside frontline social justice activists (rather than in front of them), and to be effective and supportive allies in these difficult yet necessary social justice efforts. Now is the time to do so.

## Closing

When asked for her final thoughts at the end of the interview, one advocate spoke in the Oneida language to eloquently sum up her motivation for these social justice efforts. We were honored and moved by her words, and wanted to share them in closing:

> When you say the opening prayer in the morning you get to a part about Grandmother Moon [speaking in Oneida (*translated into English*)]: Aweku uska tsi utwatwayuni yukwanikuhl (*All one that we will put together our minds*) T^hetwanuhelatu Yunki Sota Wenitale (*We will give thanks to our Grandmother the Moon*) T^kay^nawakuti tehatekusututi (*We work hand-in-hand with her for the future faces that are coming*). I am a woman, an Oneida woman, and am working in hand with Grandmother Moon for the future faces that are coming. That's why I'm doing it.

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*Table 1*
*Summary of domains, categories, and frequencies*

| Domains/Categories | Illustrative Core Idea | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| *Domain 1: Deleterious Impact of Native-themed Mascots, Nicknames, and Logos* | | |
| a) Provides dehumanizing and racist stereotypes | Provides misinformation and misrepresentation of American Indian culture | General |
| b) *Active oppression of American Indians* | Creates racially hostile environment and divides American Indian communities | Typical |
| c) Spiritual misappropriation | Similar to a crucifix on a helmet | Variant |
| d) Perpetuates violence and hostility | Indians and advocates and are subjected to violence (e.g., verbal, physical, property) | Typical |
| e) Psychological impact on kids | Effects the developmental trajectory and self-esteem of all children | General |
| *Domain 2: Components of Identity Preservation Among Supporters* | | |
| a) Lack of awareness | People don't understand that this practice does NOT honor American Indians | Typical |
| b) Dissonance | People avoid their own role in this racist practice by not admitting this is a problem | Variant |
| c) Tradition | People are attached to these images that have been around for a long time | Typical |
| d) Sport Environment | The power structure and financial aspects of sport support this practice | Variant |
| *Domain 3: Reasons Why Some American Indians Might Support Native-themed Mascots, Nicknames, Logos* | | |
| a) Self-preservation | The costs of speaking out are too much for minority group members, so silence is safer | Variant |
| b) Lack of cultural literacy | Decreased cultural awareness among supporters | Variant |
| c) Societal indoctrination | Inundated and desensitized by societal influences | Variant |
| d) Resources and money | Financial incentives serve to divide and conquer | Typical |
| *Domain 4: Frontline Advocacy Efforts* | | |
| a) Education | Education is necessary, but not enough | General |
| b) Form coalitions/organizations | Be a part of professional groups to organize/mobilize | General |
| c) Influence people in power | Find elite allies to effectuate change | General |
| d) Research for credibility | Need to use scientific research as evidence | Typical |
| *Domain 5: Coping Strategies for Advocates* | | |
| a) Supportive sharing | You must share to process your experiences | Variant |
| b) Build alliances | Loneliness and isolation can overwhelm you without the ability to connect to others | Variant |
| c) Reframe resistance | People may generally disagree with you, so don't take it personally | Typical |
| d) Avoid escalation | Don't engage in arguments, but educate instead | Variant |
| e) Use humor | You have to laugh at your experiences to get by | Variant |

*Note:* General = applicable to all (or all but one) of the cases; Typical = applicable to more than half of the cases; Variant = applicable to less than half of the cases.

*Appendix A*
*Interview Protocol*

1. From your perspective, why do you think Native-themed mascots/logos/nicknames should be retired?

2. How do you think American Indians (i.e., communities, individuals) are affected by Native-themed mascots/logos/nicknames?

3. What sorts of things have you done to advocate against Native-themed mascots/logos/nicknames? Please tell me about some personal experiences you've had with speaking out and being an advocate.

4. If applicable to your advocacy experiences, what do you do to deal with some of the negative experiences accompanying your advocacy efforts?

5. What are your thoughts about American Indians who support Native-themed mascots/nicknames/logos?

6. What is it about Native-themed mascots/logos/nicknames that elicit support from members of mainstream American society?

7. What sorts of things do you recommend doing to change attitudes of people who support Native-themed mascots/nicknames/logos?

8. What can Counseling Psychology as a field (and counseling psychologists individually) do to join in the advocacy efforts for the retirement of Native-themed mascots/logos/nicknames/imagery?

9. Is there anything else you would like to add that might help me better understand what we've discussed so far?