

# Research shows Native American mascots and logos hurt all ethnic groups

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A University at Buffalo social psychologist who specializes in the study of prejudice and stigma says that American Indian nicknames and mascots are not neutral symbols, and that their continued use by schools, professional sports teams and other organizations has negative consequences for everyone, not just Native Americans.

Wendy Quinton, a clinical assistant professor of psychology at UB, says research with predominantly white participants has shown that American Indian mascots activate negative – but not positive – stereotypes.

"Studies show that regardless of their intention, these mascots do not honor American Indians, but instead bring to mind [negative thoughts](#) associated with them as a group of people," says Quinton. "Furthermore, other studies with mostly white samples have found that people exposed to American Indian mascots are more likely to negatively stereotype other ethnic groups as well."

Positive representations of American Indians in popular culture are scarce, says Quinton. And these mascots are among the most common depictions. In 2005, the American Psychological Association recommended that schools and other organizations stop using American Indian imagery of all kinds.

Consciousness-raising efforts across the country, meantime, have prompted schools and organizations to reconsider their allegiance to these mascots—efforts that Quinton says increase empathy and

sensitivity.

And though many schools have been identified with these images for decades, Quinton says that tradition shouldn't license their continued use.

"We now know better," she says. "The research documenting their negative effects is clear."

Provided by University at Buffalo

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