

HST 202: ONLINE U.S. History W19 (Escobar)

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Professional Sports, Data, & Images
by [Joe Escobar](#) - Saturday, March 2, 2019, 4:07 PM

This thread is for discussions on the Professional Sports, Data, & Images topic.

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Are we basing this off of real data?
by [Clifford Lyon](#) - Tuesday, March 5, 2019, 7:48 PM

My first thoughts on this forum are regarding the way in which the Washington Post poll from the second article "New poll finds 9 in 10 Native Americans aren't offended by Redskins name" was conducted. At first, I thought if 90% of Native Americans are not offended by this name, why should anyone else be? Then I read the way in which the study was conducted: randomly calling phone numbers and only questioning those who self-identified as Native American. This does not seem like an effective way to gather accurate data. First of all, I know many people who are eager to claim even miniscule Native American heritage, some of which have joined tribes in order to receive the various benefits which come with membership. I don't think that randomly calling people and then using the data gathered by people who profess to be Native Americans gives a good gauge of the overall opinions of Native Americans. I have never personally been offended by the Washington Redskins name—I fall in the category of miniscule Native American heritage which I have never claimed for any reason—but I certainly see how it could be considered offensive to Native Americans. I don't think it's my place to decide whether this team name should be changed, given my heritage. If another poll were done only involving people who were verified as having significant Native American heritage (I'm not sure how that delineation would be made), and the majority of Native Americans said that this name offended them, then I could see calling for a change. When we look at the images which go along with this forum involving the Cleveland Indians alongside fictitious images of teams like the "New York Jews" and the "San Francisco Chinamen," it certainly puts this issue into perspective. I have never felt strongly one way or another on this issue, but as I said it is not really my place to voice such opinions. The proud American within me believes that the majority should rule and that if enough people believe that this is an issue, it should be addressed. The other part of me though has grown very tired of a generation of Americans who have become what Glenn Beck calls "Addicted to Outrage." Are people genuinely concerned that this is sending a negative message regarding

Native Americans, or are the political correctness police simply looking for the next thing to cry out about? I don't mean to sound cynical about this issue, I am simply wondering if this is a genuine issue which a lot of Americans have a problem with or if it really is a few people trying to sway the opinion of the majority. As Judy Ann Joyner stated in the article referencing the Washington Post poll, "It's 100 people okay with the situation, and one person has a problem with it, and all of a sudden everyone has to conform." Is this the case, or is this really an issue which a lot of Native Americans feel strongly about? Given the way in which the data for this particular poll was gathered, I would say the jury is still out on that question. We know, of course, that the majority rule in this country has often produced results that are embarrassing to us today. We need to look no further than the Indian Removal Act of 1830, or the fact that on the eve of the Civil War, most Americans did not believe that slavery needed to be ended. These are instances in which majority rule was certainly wrong. This adds another layer of complication to an already complicated issue. Lincoln argued that the American people had a responsibility to do the right thing which supersedes the responsibility to majority rule. This is the reasoning which led to the end of slavery in this country, so perhaps it is apt here. Perhaps though, this is simply a situation in which a small percentage of hyper-sensitive people are trying to affect public opinion on an issue which really isn't an issue. Again, I don't want to sound callous to an issue which is genuinely affecting a large amount of the American public, I simply think that better data needs to be collected before we make that decision.

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Re: Are we basing this off of real data?
by [Jessica Cole](#) - Wednesday, March 6, 2019, 4:01 PM

I too feel that the "political correctness police" have deeply exhausted my ability to be concerned on issues lately. It is incredibly hard to differentiate between the minority being right versus when the minority seems out to find something to give an outcry against. The points you made about the earlier treatment of Indians and black people strongly indicate that there of course times when the majority are wrong. But there are other times when laws are made in the favor of the minority and then the majority suffer. When I was younger, I remember I wasn't really sure how to refer to a person of color. Black was a term that back then sometimes had a negative context and wasn't well received by a few. I personally had friends and family that preferred being referred to as black - but I remember there was a social outcry and it was claimed to be racist so I was afraid to use the term. "Person of color" was accepted, but not "colored" - and referring to someone as a person of color was incredibly awkward unless referring to a group of people. I'm so old that at that time we also referred to Native Americans as Indians - and that was the accepted term. Anyways, I remember in school we were approached and told that we now had to refer to black people as "African-Americans" and Indians as "Native American". I tried researching now online to see who campaigned for this change, and I can't find any information on who was behind the movement for the term "African-American". But it was obviously dictated by someone, or most likely a group who deemed that the phrase black was offensive. Obviously, the term Native American has stood as the politically correct term to use, but if you noticed - the term African-American has actually dropped out of use. So many of my friends found the term offensive because their lineage wasn't actually from Africa (some were of Jamaican descent, while in my family personally they are from France) and therefore denied their true heritage, while others, even with an African bloodline, felt that the term alienated them from being American. The term was a way to segregate them from other Americans and point out their slave ancestry. For both of those groups, the term was demeaning. I also had two friends that weren't even American and were here on Visas. Obviously the people I associated with were not the only ones who felt this way, because over the years the term "African-American", which was at one point the only acceptable term to use in my school when referring to people of color in America, is now hardly used at all. So my whole point is that the crusade for political correctness actually alienated many more than the group who initiated it. I am mostly white, so I feel awkward having an opinion on the issue of Native American mascots in sports - so that is why I feel it is something that Native American's themselves need to have the majority on. If the majority simply didn't care one way or another - then I think that the sway should be for removal. But many Native Americans are not simply neutral - the team mascots are a sense of pride for them and one of the only public reference to their culture in which they can personally feel more connected. So to remove these mascots would not simply be appeasing the few - it would again be alienating the majority. Like you I think better data needs to be collected. Random phone calls, and polls of smaller numbers do not accurately represent the true mass feeling for Native Americans as a whole.

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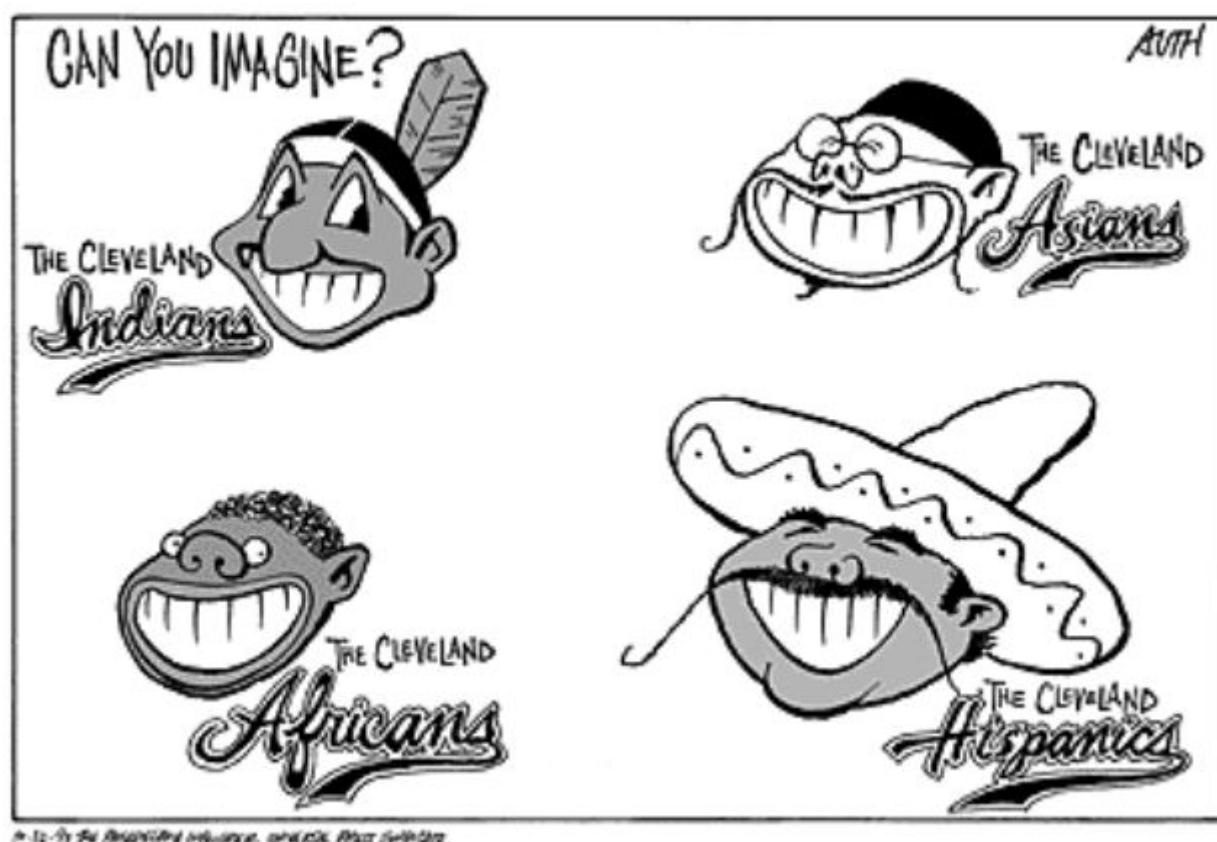
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Professional Sports Team Mascots
by [Jessica Cole](#) - Wednesday, March 6, 2019, 2:03 PM

I just replied to the thread on Native American mascots in Oregon, and while I was reviewing my thoughts on the issue I started thinking if there should be a difference between high school teams versus professional teams. Moving on to this thread I think there definitely is a difference of standard that should be applied to professional sports teams that represent much larger areas of the country. My argument for local high schools being allowed to use Native American mascots was that they could work with local tribes to either remove the mascot or keep the mascot and educate the students on the culture. I personally know from growing up that friends who were of Native American descent in the public school system found pride in their school's mascot as it had personal meaning for them. In eliminating all obvious phrases of Native American lineage from American's society as a whole, it seems to in a way erasing any cultural pride that a Native American might feel in connecting to American society outside of their tribe. Barbara Bruce, a fan of the Washington Redskins and also of tribal descent stated that she wants "native imagery" to still be used in sports because it gives Native Americans "some measure of attention in society where they are seldom represented". While I think the comic regarding the different Cleveland titles makes a very good point that the name could indeed be interpreted in a demeaning way, the truth is that one of the ideals associated with Native Americans is their fierce warrior skills - both in offense and defense, which in turns makes sense for a sports team. I am of mainly white descent, so this is an issue I wouldn't normally chime in on. Not to pull the "I have friends card", but my husband and friends of Native American descent are the only people I know who have given me their input on the issue. I think those with Native American descent have a higher say in this matter than anyone else, as it is their culture that is being appropriated. Some obviously see this as demeaning, but there are so many others who have a sense of pride in the representation. My husband and friends didn't talk to me regarding the Redskins or Cleveland Indians in general - but we talked quite a bit when the Oregon school mascots were being debated. I didn't have one single friend out of at least 20 who had an issue with the local mascots other than one friend who didn't like the Roseburg Indians. She didn't see an issue with the teams named Warriors though.

When writing in the other thread, I actually commented on how I could see the Washington Redskins as being offensive versus just the general term Warriors being used at a high school - so it actually surprised me to read in this segment that polls actually showed that the majority of Native Americans didn't find the term offensive. As the article points out though, "Is it appropriate for the name of a professional sports team to insult any percentage of population that has historically been so mistreated by this country's majority?", and I think this is a very important part. While I argued for the mascots to remain in local schools, and for tribes to work with the schools in educating the students...I am not sure how this could be done with a professional sports team. It is hard to determine the importance of the minority who feel insulted versus the majority who are not insulted and especially the Native Americans who like the team having a mascot they can feel a personal connection to. Each side is valid and makes good points - however the largest argument I saw being used again and again for removing the mascots was that it was affecting Native American youth in a negative way. I think there should be studies done concerning the welfare of Native American teens and young adults and their response to the team mascots. Did the teams instill a sense of pride or a source of stigma concerning their background? So many Native Americans live in completely impoverished areas, that I think instead of spending so much time and money attacking mascots that most Native Americans themselves don't seem too concerned about - it would make more sense to spend time and resources working to combat the issues that Native Americans on reservations face, as well as educating the public and working on positive representation. I do not think that the majority should always win, but in this case by the minority winning they are in fact removing a standing sense of pride that so many Native Americans have associated with the teams.



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Honoring Native Americans

by [Katie Lauck](#) - Wednesday, March 6, 2019, 2:26 PM

I believe numbers do matter in this subject of polling. Researchers were justifying their claims that many Indians were indifferent to the topic of Native American slang terms as sports teams mascots. The articles seem to only focus on the fact that a large group said they were indifferent, and seemed to ignore the feelings of the other population that were offended by the name. Nothing was done to ease the discomfort of the group that wanted the team name changed, instead, the redskins owner celebrated the fact that 90% of Native Americans said they were not bothered, therefore being able to keep the team name. I believe something should be done even if only a small minority of people are offended by the mascot. It doesn't matter how small the group is, the fact that any number of Native Americans don't like the name is enough to promote a change. One Native American that was interviewed for the article voiced her opposition for the name because of the way it might affect Indian youth. "A tomahawk chop and a bunch of people wearing redface does not honor me in any sense of the word, and it certainly does not honor Native American children," said Houska, a member of the Couchiching First Nation. "To me, it doesn't matter if my feelings are hurt. Yes, it is offensive, and I don't like seeing it everywhere. But what really matters is how this affects our youth." (Professional Sports, Data & Images, pg 9) Native children can be negatively affected if they are constantly seeing derogatory slang aimed at the their own community, possibly making them insecure. Instead of 'honoring' the Native people by using a derogatory term for a sports team, maybe we should focus more on the fact that reservations are commonly riddled with poverty, [violence](#) and addiction. In the last cartoon professor Escobar provided us with, redskins owner Dan Snyder is shown with a shirt that says 'rich guy owner' and seen saying "Washington Redskins honors the Indians!". Next to him is a Native American saying "how about honoring our treaties first?". For me, this really solidified the fact that Dan Snyder and other officials involved with the team don't seem to really honor or respect the Native Americans, especially their feelings about the disrespectful name. Regarding the other photos provided containing pictures of fake sports teams named the New York Jews or the San Francisco Chinamen, I would bet that almost everyone considers these names disrespectful and wrong, so why is it okay for a team name to be called Indians and redskins?

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Re: Professional Sports, Data, & Images

by [Katie Lauck](#) - Wednesday, March 6, 2019, 2:55 PM



I thought I should share this magazine cover I coincidentally came across in my art class yesterday. It perfectly encapsulates what we are discussing right now, showing a white family watch a redskins football game, and a group of Native American people walk in. With what the Native Americans had to endure from the United States government in the 1800's and even beyond, being pushed off their own land multiple times for the benefit of the whites, having their sacred animals and a large source of food provided for the Native Americans taken off their land and killed for the benefit of the whites, I think it is a ridiculous argument that the team is honoring these people who they discriminated against for so long. The term redskin also seems very offensive to me as well. In the United States, blackface is very very offensive and wrong and can hold harsh consequences, so how could it be okay that so many people dress up in red face? They might say that it's just because they are supporting their professional sports team, but I think no matter what, it is still being aimed at the Indians and their heritage, therefore holding offensive meaning.

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Data, numbers, sports

by [Breanna Lindsey](#) - Sunday, March 10, 2019, 5:36 PM

When reading the articles addressing the Washington Redskins there were many polls and statistics. There were Native-Americans who were not bothered by the mascot at all, but there were Native-Americans who are deeply affected by the names and mascots. I think when looking at polls they may not be 100% accurate, but for the most part they are pretty close. I think statistics are important because they do survey a large number of random people (usually), so there is a wide variety of opinions. It was interesting to see in the Washington Poll post that the majority of Native-Americans are not bothered by the Washington Redskins name/mascot. I found it even more interesting that non Native-Americans took greater offense to the Redskins with a total of 23%. These racial slurs and mascots can affect an Native-American. There was a couple Rusty and Anita Whitworth. Rusty was not bothered by the Washington Redskins mascot all, but his wife Anita was very offended and wants the name to be changed. Everyone's opinion is very important and no one should feel attacked or uncomfortable. However, it is hard when the polls present Native-Americans are not bothered by the name/mascot. These polls make it very different to get anything changed, because people then assume that everything is okay because the data leans more towards not bothered.

I do however think if this was taken in a democracy vote that the majority of the vote rules. The cartoons bring up interesting points. The baseball caps say, "New York Jews, San Francisco Chinamen, Cleveland Indians." If a sports team was named after the Jews or Chinese, the American people would probably revolt. Those names are highly inappropriate. If a sports name can't be names after any other group of people then we probably shouldn't allow a team to be named the Indians. It's a double standard. People need to respect and honor the Native-Americans. They identify themselves in all sorts of ways, and they shouldn't be automatically paired with the stereotypical Indian. America should be working towards a compromise, to try and accommodate everyone.

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Re: When do we stop the negative?

by [Taylor Dotson](#) - Sunday, March 10, 2019, 9:22 PM

Data can be skewed at times and only if it is ultimately deliberated and facts checked can I believe the data may play a role in determining an outcome on the significance of a mascots name. Looking at statistics can be hard to fully comprehend because there is always a chance it can be skewed on the basis of people not being truthful. The topic on which American Indian voice to support should be left up to the discretions of the individually. Personally, I have family who are Native American, and I would never want to say or believe in something that would be disrespectful and hurtful to them. For me I see the strength behind the name. What some tribes had to fight for to survive shows the strength and integrity they had to make it through as a strong unit. In the article it talks about how the name is meant to honor Native Americans. It is not to degrade their beliefs it is a way of honoring the past and moving forward to the future. In the event of the high school, college, and professional team it should be dealt with as a community. We had a strong margin of people who said they did not believe the mascot and title were degrading. The mascots can be portrayed negatively and cartoonish which can take a tole on young children growing up in the community. The cartoons were definitely hard to look at. For me they are super negative, and it is cartoons like this that create the issue of having the mascots be changed. At what point does everything stop being seen as having such a negative impact on the world?

-Taylor

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Intent Matters

by [Alvin Iskender](#) - Sunday, March 10, 2019, 11:37 PM

In the other forum pertaining to Native American mascots, though I didn't endorse the mascots, I was willing to give them the benefit of the doubt. The contention of Native American opinion on these depictions as shown in the Washington Post poll seems to support at least giving the mascots fair consideration. But the second and third cartoons in the forum materials gave me pause, and I realized how my internal point of comparison differed. Consider a hypothetical team called the "Warriors". What would that mascot look like? Probably something like a knight or some other kind of warrior in historically European gear. From that perspective, using a mascot resembling an Indian warrior might more or less be the same thing: a depiction of a warrior, but rather than the generic European-inspired warrior, using a Native American-inspired warrior instead.

For this reason, I think the intent behind the usage of the mascot or the usage of the name really matters. I would take issue with the name of the "Redskins" moreso than the mascot itself, and there is at least some evidence that the term was offensive at the time the trademark for the name was registered (referred from [this article](#)). You could argue that as part of the previous analogy, "Redskins" is just the analogue for a name like "Knights" or "Vikings", but

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I think perhaps using that name is just *too* literal, and only enables accusations of stereotyping. The fact that many Native Americans don't seem too bothered by the word might seem to support the counterpoint, but were I the team owner, I might rather the name reflect what I intend rather than the possible foul intentions of its originator.

All that being said, perhaps the apathy reflected in polling might encourage creating more positive Native American images in our society rather than spending energy fighting a long and hard battle to change one negative image.

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