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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
RIVERSIDE

Sovereign Identity: Alternative Measurements for Surveying Native Americans

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Political Science

by

John M. Burnett

June 2024

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Kim Yi Dionne, Chairperson

Dr. Daniel Biggers

Dr. Loren Collingwood

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2024

The Dissertation of John M. Burnett is approved:

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Committee Chairperson

University of California, Riverside

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## Dedication

To my grandfather John Cowart, my inspiration for the pursuit of knowledge.

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Sovereign Identity: Alternative Measurements for Surveying Native Americans

by

John M. Burnett

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Political Science  
University of California, Riverside, June 2024  
Dr. Kim Yi Dionne, Chairperson

National surveys often overlook Native American populations because they are a difficult and costly population to sample. Even when Native Americans are included in surveys, they are often treated as a monolithic race. Indigenous scholars argue that Native American identity is generally composed of many characteristics, including tribal citizenship, connections to a tribal community and culture, and the recognition of tribes as legal entities with unique cultures and histories. This dissertation develops a theoretical framework for surveying Indigenous populations and develops an argument for operationalizing an existing theory of Indigenous identity developed by Kiowa scholar Perry G Horse. I find that controlling for ancestry and citizenship captures a diverse population of Native Americans, allowing researchers to effectively observe behavior and identity formation among all who identify having Native American ancestry.

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## **Preface**

As with most Native Americans in the United States, my relationship to my indigeneity is complex. Forced adoptions several generations back severed our documented ties to the Cherokee Nation, but my family remained on tribal lands for generations. We have since rectified those situations and are documented citizens of our tribe, but the lingering traumas of colonization can span generations.

My brothers and I were the first generation of my father's family born away from tribal lands in Oklahoma. Our ancestry is mixed between European and Cherokee. My fair skinned, blonde-haired, blue-eyed younger brother physically appears as a poster child of Whiteness. While I too am White, I have darker features, darker hair, brown eyes, and have often been confused for being Latino. However, growing up, we were constantly told "you do not look Indian" by adults and children alike. We grew up in a relatively White and Latino community, and Native Americans were generally few and far between. We were too poor to travel to Oklahoma and visit our tribal lands.

Luckily for us, there is a small community of Cherokee in San Diego California. They are the descendants of Cherokee who, like many Oklahomans, moved to California during the Great Depression. Our father would take us to powwows in San Diego, giving us the chance to socialize with other Native Americans and Cherokee.

My experiences of indigeneity are uniquely my own but are also representative of how diverse the Indigenous experience can be in the modern world. The U.S. Census in 2020 shows that two-thirds of Native Americans do not reside on tribal lands, rather like most U.S. citizens, live in major metropolitan areas. My personal experiences have illustrated to me how much Native Americans are viewed through racial and ethnic lenses, rather than seen as citizens of our tribes, or descendants of Indigenous ancestors, doing our best to honor our ancestors.

I hope that the reader will consider the following work as informed through my own Indigenous experiences. There are many Native Americans and other people Indigenous to the United States and Americas, all of whom may have different experiences and different opinions on how our identity is constructed and operationalized. This research is not intended to be the definitive work on Indigenous identity. Rather, it is intended to open a dialogue, so that academics can hear how our experiences may differ from the narratives that are imposed on us.

## **Chapter 1: Sovereign Identity: Native Identity and Theory**

### **Introduction**

The Gabrielino-Tongva Indian Tribe,<sup>1</sup> also known as the San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians, are Indigenous to the Los Angeles Basin and Southern Channel Islands area, and though there is debate as to when they settled in the area, some records point their first settlements to as early as 3500 years ago (Kerr & Hawley, 2002). Their first recorded encounter with Europeans was on October 7, 1542, when Spanish explorer Juan Cabrillo landed on their shores. The Gabrielino-Tongva were early targets for Spanish Missions as both Mission San Gabriel and Mission San Fernando were targeted for converting their people to a “civilized Christian society,” which began an era of forced relocation and enslavement, as well as widespread death from the introduction of European diseases and rebellions (Castillo, 1994; Singleton, 2004).

Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1821 and sold the mission lands to ranchers and forced the Gabrielino-Tongva to again relocate and assimilate. In 1848, California was ceded to the United States following the Mexican American War. The U.S. government signed 18 treaties between 1851 and 1852 promising to

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<sup>1</sup> The Gabrielino-Tongva are a collection of several related Bands. Many tribes in the southwestern United States did not have a pantribal name but had various Band names. Many Bands who lived in the precolonial greater Los Angeles region identified with names such as the Kizh and the Tongva (Kroeber, de Paula Seán, & Sarria, 1910; Stickel, 2016). The Spanish gave these peoples names such as the Gabrieleño and the Fernandeño. While there has been a lot of debate over the proper name, the different groups came to an agreement over the name Gabrielino-Tongva. Out of respect for this agreement, I will use this agreed to name.

recognize the sovereignty of tribes in the newly acquired California territory and to set aside 8.5 million acres of land for reservations. These treaties were never ratified and were negotiated with people who did not represent the Gabrielino-Tongva and had no authority to cede their land (Heizer, 1972).

After centuries of occupation, relocation, and assimilation, Gabrielino-Tongva identity had already greatly been altered. Without legally recognized land of their own, many of the Gabrielino-Tongva were targeted with arrest and used as convict laborers in a system of legalized slavery to expand the city of Los Angeles for Anglo-American settlers (Hernández, 2017). Children were often removed by U.S. federal agents and forced to relocate to and attend Sherman Indian School in Riverside, California, about 50 miles southeast of Los Angeles. Because the punishments were so severe, most Gabrielino-Tongva publicly identified as Mexican American or Chicano, rather than Indian (García, 2015). Because of the public denial of their identity, the public began to believe that the Gabrielino-Tongva had become extinct. However, the Gabrielino-Tongva continue to live in the Los Angeles Basin to this day and currently have about 4000 members. The Gabrielino-Tongva Indian Tribe was recognized by California in 1994, and although they continue to struggle for federal recognition, no tribe related to the Tongva have been recognized by the federal government.

The Gabrielino-Tongva are but one example of how Indigenous identity is rooted in a history of cultural erasure, forced assimilation, and genocide. External governments have often attempted to apply labels to who qualifies as Native

American, removing the power of identification from tribes and individual. The experience of the Gabrielino-Tongva shows how individuals have chosen to keep their Indigenous identity secret and private. Reclaiming that identity is a personal process for individuals as well as a communal process for the tribe. Other tribes have similar experiences of having to hide their identity to protect themselves from colonizing institutions. Assimilation policy outlawed traditional tribal medicine, religious practices, cultural practices, and forced children into boarding school programs to remove children from their tribal roots and assimilate them into the dominant American culture (*Rules Governing the Court of Indian Offenses* 1883; Strasser, 2010; Wenger, 2011).

## **Social Identity Theory, Political Behavior, and Native Americans**

To begin to understand identity among Native Americans, I situate my work within the social identity literature. Some of the earliest political behavior work focused on how social identity (Tajfel, 1982) as well as self-categorization (Turner, 2010; Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1994; Turner & Reynolds, 2011) can influence political attitudes (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954; Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960; Verba, Scholzman, & Brady, 1995). Later studies would focus on intergroup relations, which are of importance to studying minority communities. Scholars have argued that continuous oppression and discrimination has strengthened group identity, particularly among Black Americans (Chong &

Rogers, 2005; Dawson, 1995; Miller, Gurin, Gurin, & Malanchuk, 1981). This research was extended to attempt to explain political behaviors of Asian Americans as well as Latinos (Barreto & Pedraza, 2009; Junn & Masuoka, 2008; G. Sanchez, Masuoka, & Abrams, 2019; Sanchez & Masuoka, 2010; Sanchez & Vargas, 2016; Wong, Lien, & Conway, 2005).

However, an explanation for the influence of identity on the political behaviors of Native Americans in the U.S. is limited from this research. For example, a Web of Science search only found 56 political science articles when searching for Native Americans or American Indian. This compares to the 1,330 articles for African Americans, 497 for Asian Americans, 692 for Hispanics, and 5,947 for Whites.<sup>2</sup> Research on Native American communities is noticeably limited for several reasons: many of these communities are in rural isolated locations making surveying costly, histories of displacement and genocide have caused great distrust from outsiders, and academic institutions have misrepresented Indigenous cultures and left Indigenous voices out of research, further contributing to the distrust from non-tribal institutions. Research on political behavior among Native Americans is also limited due to a history of being misrepresented in research conducted by non-tribal individuals and institutions. These are important areas of study but must be done with care and in cooperation with Indigenous communities so as not to misrepresent Indigenous knowledge or ideas.

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<sup>2</sup> Calculated by author June 2022.

Existing research shows that turnout among American Indians has been low (Huyser, Sanchez, & Vargas, 2017; McCool, Olson, & Robinson, 2007; Peterson, 1957; Ritt, 1979; Wang, 2012). Some research however suggests that turnout largely depends on the election cycle (Huyser, Sanchez, & Vargas, 2017; Skopek & Garner, 2014). Voting models typically demonstrate that socioeconomic status (SES) is a strong predictor of voter turnout (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). It is unclear if this holds true for Native Americans, and whether it is a consistent predictor of participating in tribal and non-tribal elections. Early research argued that including sex, education, income, and age, does not diminish the voting gap between Native Americans and White voters (Peterson, 1957). However, recent research by Huyser, Sanchez, and Vargas, (2017) has demonstrated that Native Americans vote at similar levels to Whites once controlling for SES.

Party identification is also a strong predictor of voting behavior, and research demonstrates that Native Americans are likely to be registered as Democrats (Herrick & Mendez, 2018; McClain & Carew, 2018; Min & Savage, 2012, 2014). While Min and Savage (2012, 2014) argue that they are likely to be Democratic because of SES, others have argued that cultural ties and protection of political sovereignty are the biggest reason Native Americans tend to vote Democratic (Kunitz & Levy, 1970; McCool et al., 2007).

Voter participation in nontribal elections may fluctuate as some may see participating and voting in U.S. elections as “virtual acts of treason,” whereas others clearly see it as an important vehicle to expand, protect, and advocate for Native

American interests (D. E. Wilkins & Stark, 2017). Many Indigenous people see their tribal government as the only institution capable of representing them and they choose not to participate in non-tribal politics (Wang, 2012). Moreover, the most notable predictor of voting behavior among Native Americans is tribal identity (Herrick & Mendez, 2018; D. E. Wilkins & Stark, 2017).

Tribal identity is inseparable from the traumas Native Americans have faced. Tribes have been victims of oppressive policies, slavery, treaty violations leading to the theft of resources and land, or even outright genocide (Basso, 2016; Brown, 1970; Grossman, 2005; Smith, 2012). These traumas have been shown to have a large impact on modern tribal communities, shaping how they view the world, and can be exhibited in their political behavior (Brave Heart, Chase, Elkins, & Altschul, 2011; Heart & Horse, 2007; Orr, 2017; Gabriel R Sanchez, Foxworth, & Evans, 2020). This is further seen in non-tribal elections as many tribal citizens who participate are often less concerned about being a part of mainstream political society, meaning they are often not interested in the typical partisan squabbles and are more concerned about the maintenance of their tribal sovereignty (Huyser et al., 2017; Kahn, 1999, 2013; D. E. Wilkins & Stark, 2017). Research has shown a significant effect on voting decisions in non-tribal elections when tribes endorse candidates (Corntassel, 1997). This demonstrates a high level of institutional trust that many tribal citizens have in their tribal government and can possibly serve as a measure for tribal citizens' commitment to maintaining and exercising sovereignty.

Choosing not to vote is a political decision. Indigenous people may believe their needs are better met by the tribe than the U.S. government so they may be more active in tribal politics than in U.S. politics (Wang, 2012). Some tribal members have even expressed that participation in U.S. politics is a “virtual act of treason” while others view it as a significant way to benefit tribal interests (D. E. Wilkins & Stark, 2017). Indigenous political goals are often less about having their political and economic goals embraced by mainstream political movements and focused more on maintaining their own political sovereignty (Huysen et al., 2017; Kahn, 2013; D. E. Wilkins & Stark, 2017). Furthermore, many tribal leaders just do not trust the state to protect tribal interests (Wang, 2012).

Research on Native American political behavior has focused on different aspects of identity, such as cultural knowledge or participation within a tribal community. However, Indigenous identity is a combination of these concepts and experiences. Rather than focusing on any specific indicator of indigeneity, this dissertation attempts to operationalize an existing theory on Indigenous identity. Indigeneity as ethnicity alone cannot be a sufficient explanation for identity and group consciousness. Because of their unique status, Native American identity can be influenced by issues such as their tribal citizenship, cultural philosophies, racial attitudes, as well as their personal connections to their own tribe.

## **An Alternative Analytic Framework: Applying the Horse Model of Indigenous Identity**

Perry G Horse is a scholar from the Kiowa Tribe<sup>3</sup> who has spent his career attempting to make academia more inclusive for Indigenous students. While the need to categorize things is a western concept, Horse recognized that identity models can be helpful for academic affairs in better understanding Native American students. Drawing on years of personal experience and interactions, Horse developed an Indigenous Identity model to help explain identity as Native Americans culturally assimilate into the dominant culture (Horse, 2005).

Horse's model appreciates the unique status that Native Americans hold as citizens of sovereign societies. He classifies the contours of American Indian identity into five themes: ethnic nomenclature, racial attitudes, legal and political status, cultural change, and personal sensibility. Because I rely on Horse's model to build an index measure for Indigenous identity, I describe each component below.

### **Horse Model of American Indian Identity**

1. Ethnic Nomenclature
2. Racial Attitudes
3. Legal and Political Status
4. Cultural Change
5. Personal Sensibility

Preferred *ethnic nomenclature* amongst Native Americans varies and labels such as American Indian, Indian, and Native American are often used as ethnic

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<sup>3</sup> The Kiowa are Indigenous to the Great Plains of the United States and have lived in what is now considered Montana and Colorado. However, in 1867 they were moved to a Reservation in Oklahoma, where their tribe remains.

descriptors for descendants of the original inhabitants of the Americas. In the chapters ahead, I will primarily use the word Native American as a broad ethnic descriptor, unless I am citing members of a specific tribe or another author. Native American comes with the implied official relationship between tribes and the U.S. government, whereas Indigenous carries implications beyond the borders of the United States. Furthermore, none of these words capture the citizenship status of individuals. One may prefer to identify with their tribe over any of these pantribal descriptors and capturing this will help us better understand the value of pantribal ethnic labels. I intend to capture this by asking survey respondents “What ethnic descriptor do you prefer to use?” with the option to select Native American, American Indian, Indigenous, or their tribal name.

On *racial attitudes*, Horse notes that American history in general is anti-Indian, starting with European colonization efforts, which are further extended by the American concept of manifest destiny. Native Americans have often been defined by the Euro-American racial hierarchy. Assimilation policies from the United States such as blood-quantum laws<sup>4</sup> have limited legal definitions of Indigeneity to specific biological indicators. While tribal governments are the only entity which may determine their own citizenship requirements, the blood quantum

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<sup>4</sup> Blood quantum laws refer to laws designed to determine how Indigenous a person may be. Initially these laws were designed by the U.S. as a means of deciding who was eligible to receive land when the government would seize tribal territories and redistribute portions of it to individual members. Someone with two parents who are full blooded Cherokee, would have a blood quantum of 100%. An individual with a 100% blood quantum and a non-Indigenous parent would have a blood quantum of 50% (Schmidt, 2011; Sturm, 2002). Many were denied their Indigeneity if they had lower than a 50% blood quantum, though they were also not considered white.

laws established by the U.S. have had a lasting impact on how people view Native Americans, as well as how Native Americans view themselves. While most Indigenous people do not care for blood quantum requirements, most mixed-race Indigenous people wish they looked more like their ancestors to avoid the legitimacy of their indigeneity being questioned (McKay, 2021). Recent research has demonstrated that perceived discrimination increased turnout in the 2020 amongst Native American voters in non-tribal elections (Sanchez, 2022). To capture racial attitudes, I use the measure developed by (Findling et al. 2019) designed to capture discrimination experienced by Native Americans.

Native Americans are distinct from other groups in the U.S. in their communities' *legal and political status* as sovereign governments. Though the political sovereignty of tribal governments is inherent, treaties recognize an official relationship between the United States and Indigenous tribes (D. E. Wilkins & Stark, 2017). As of the writing of this dissertation, there are currently 574 federally recognized tribes. Additional tribes claim indigeneity and sovereignty but do not share recognition from the federal government.<sup>5</sup> Each tribe has their own unique cultures and experiences. Research has shown how varying historical traumas have shaped identity and behaviors (Orr, 2017). It is likely that if Indigenous identity

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<sup>5</sup> Sovereignty claims are controversial because many tribes that once existed no longer exist due to the lasting effects of genocide. Obtaining federal recognition of sovereign status now requires providing documentation that one is descended from the original inhabitants, as well as documentation for original occupancy of territory, cultural norms, etc. Many of these documents were never kept in a format for Western standards, and therefore are difficult if not impossible to prove in a Western society. Other groups that do not have any Indigenous background also attempt to gain federal recognition to legitimize their claims for various reasons.

influences political behavior, tribal experiences also influence political behavior as well. Considering the legal status of any individual's tribe is key to understanding Indigenous identity as it is a core component of being a citizen of a tribe.

***Cultural change*** is a significant struggle for many Native Americans, who wrestle with their ability to connect to their culture and the culture of their ancestors. Horse notes that many American Indians feel that they should pay more attention to their tribal teachings (Horse, 2005). Many of these teachings have been lost over time as tribes have fought for their right to exist and while many of these policies have relaxed since the civil rights movement and the era of Self-Determination policy,<sup>6</sup> a lot of culture has been lost. Because of this, many Native Americans feel deprived of a status of being a “real” Native American, and that their ancestors were the last “real” Native Americans. This concept looks at how the individual and tribe deal with cultural change, and whether “real Indians” are more “traditional” or “modern.”<sup>7</sup> My model includes a measure for a respondent to place themselves and “real Indians” on a scale defining their cultural practices from traditional to modern, giving us a better view of how relationship to culture may influence identity and behavior.

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<sup>6</sup> Self-Determination policy is an era of U.S. policy that allows tribal communities to restore their community and culture through self-government, educational control and equal or controlling input into federal government decisions concerning policies and programs (Wilkinson, 2005).

<sup>7</sup> Some evidence has shown that those who have stronger connections to their cultural identity will be more likely to succeed in scientific careers (Chow-Garcia et al., 2022). This is further emphasized in their work when they found that Native American students were more successful in the classroom when a tribal elder was involved in the classroom and their education process.

As with any model of identity, the experience of being Native American is a personal one. To capture the relevance of *personal sensibility*, Horse highlighted five influences on American Indian consciousness.

**Five influences on American Indian Personal Sensibility**

1. The extent to which one is grounded in one's Tribal language and culture
2. Validity of one's American Indian genealogy
3. The extent to which one holds a traditional philosophy or world view
4. One's self-concept as an American Indian
5. One's enrollment (or lack of) in a tribe<sup>8</sup>

Rather than relying on self-identification to determine Indigeneity, many scholars have relied on measures of personal sensibility. The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised (MEIM-R) was developed to measure the core components of ethnic identity across diverse ethnic groups (Kelly & Croucher, 2019; Phinney & Ong, 2007). The MEIM-R is a 6-item instrument designed to capture how much an individual interacts with their tribe.<sup>9</sup> While this instrument has not been used to predict political behavior of Native Americans, it has been used to

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<sup>8</sup> Citizenship in a tribe is an important indicator that a claim of Indigeneity is legitimate, however, it is not sufficient to measure identity. For instance, one can be a citizen of a tribe and several generations removed from their community and cultural practices. Other cases may have people who identify as Indigenous who may miss the blood quantum requirement cutoff but live in their tribal community. There have also been instances of tribes disenrolling members, removing entire generations of families from their rolls, even when those families have been connected to the community (D. E. Wilkins & Wilkins, 2017).

<sup>9</sup> MEIM-R Questions

1. I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.
2. I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.
3. I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.
4. I have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic background better.
5. I have often talked to other people in order to learn more about my ethnic group.
6. I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.

demonstrate a positive correlation between academic success and ethnic identity of Native American students (Jaramillo, Mello, & Worrell, 2016).

Much of the literature that attempts to engage Indigenous identity use a variety of the measures Horse uses to define identity. However, to my knowledge, no study has used all five measures to capture Indigenous identity. If Indigenous identity is as complex as Horse conveys, then we as scholars should do our best in capturing the entirety of experiences rather than one or two.

## **Discussion and Outline**

This dissertation makes an important contribution to understanding how Indigeneity and Indigenous identity should be measured, particularly for researchers and analysts studying Native American political behavior. The current conventional approach to rely on self-reported Indigeneity could be masking the extent to which it influences behavior. The purpose of this dissertation is to address the inadequacies of self-reporting of Indigenous identity and making inferences based off patterns exhibited at the pan-tribal level and offer Horse's model as a potential measurement of capturing indigeneity.

Chapter 2 starts the discussion by addressing how surveys can screen Native populations in a manner that is consistent with how they identify. Rather than relying on racial descriptors of Native Americans or self-identification, I argue for using ancestry and tribal citizenship. I then use data from the Native Voices Survey 2023-2024, an original survey in which I collected responses from attendees at

powwows in Southern California in 2023 to measure claims of ancestry, citizenship (legal and sovereign status), and relationships to tribal community and culture (personal sensibility). These cultural attachments may influence how individuals perceive what it means to be a “real Indian” and influence whether they view their culture as more modern or traditional (cultural change). Lastly, I look at how these elements of the Horse model predict pan-tribal and tribal identity.

Chapter 3 continues using the Horse model to predict attitudes. Horse argues that racial attitudes are an important element of Native identity. Having measured Native identity in the previous chapter, we can look at how these elements predict attitudes about race and discrimination in the United States. I see if the Horse model can predict opinions regarding how harmful Native mascots can be to Native Americans.

After having looked at identity and attitudes, I pivot my attention to political participation. Chapter 4 will look at voting behavior in tribal and non-tribal elections. Because national surveys generally do not ask for tribal citizenship status, they may struggle in observing political behavior at the tribal level. Furthermore, they will not be able to determine if there are variations in political behaviors between tribal and non-tribal citizens, in non-tribal elections. I use the data collected from powwows in Southern California in 2023 to test if elements of the Horse model can predict political behavior in tribal and non-tribal elections.

## **Chapter 2 Indigenous Identity: Surveying Native Americans Using the Horse Model**

### **Introduction**

The 2020 U.S. Census showed an unprecedented increase in those self-identifying as Native American & American Indian, with 9.7 million people reporting that they are American Indian in combination with another race – an 86.5% increase from the 5.2 million U.S. residents who did so in 2010. Even those reporting American Indian as their sole race increased from 2.9 to 3.7 million, showing a 27.5% increase in the Indigenous population over the last decade. Those self-identifying as Native American and American Indian far outpaced growth among other racial and minority groups in the United States, which grew somewhere between 4-15% over the last decade. The CDC records fertility rates in tribal communities at approximately 57 in every 1000 women, slightly lower than the national average of 59 out of every 1000 (Martin et al., 2019), and unlike other groups, tribal citizens do not have a source of immigration. However, Indigenous people migrating from Latin America may be likely to indicate their race as Native American. Furthermore, the National Congress of American Indians reports a problem of undercounting American Indians, particularly those who live in rural areas (NCAI, 2022). Native American identity is too complex for strictly relying on racial measurements.

Current national survey methods miss diverse populations of Native Americans by limiting measurements to racial and ethnic labels. However, Native Americans are citizens of sovereign governments, whose identity are tied to their

ancestry, land, and tribal communities. Racial and ethnic labels were imposed by western society, largely to remove their sovereign status and force Native Americans to assimilate into the dominant culture. For instance, blood quantum laws were created in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to limit civil rights claims to Native Americans who had one-half or more Native American ancestry (Forbes, 2008).<sup>10</sup> After hundreds of years of relocation, forced assimilation, and genocide, it is natural that a people would be more racially diverse than narrowly defined racial labels or blood quantum definitions.

The problem with these measurements is that there is not a clear definition of who is Native American, and whether those claims are based off racial definitions, ancestral claims, or definitions established by sovereign tribal governments. Scholars have given various explanations for the surge in Native self-identification. Joane Nagel attributes this growth in self-identification to ethnic renewal. She argues that as civil rights laws changed and made it safer to practice Indigeneity openly, more Indigenous people felt comfortable openly identifying as Native (Nagel, 1995). Circe Sturm discussed the people who falsely claim Indigenous roots by labeling it racial shifting. Sturm argues that whites began identifying as Indigenous out of a search for culture and purpose, to seek tangible benefits, or even to deny the privileges granted by whiteness while denying white roots (Sturm,

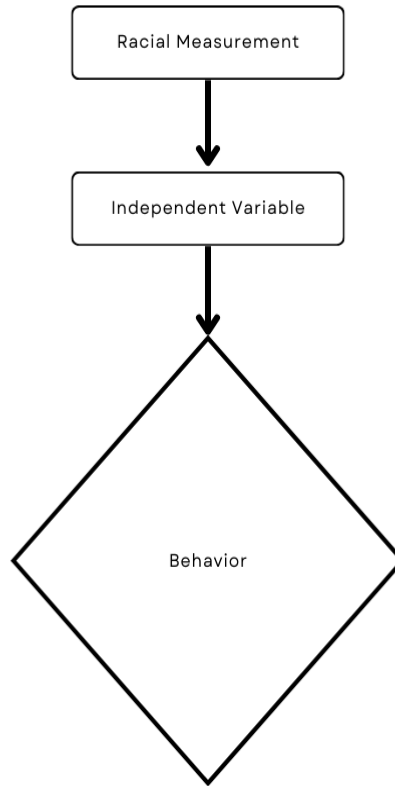
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<sup>10</sup> Blood quantum is determined by the ethnicity of both parents. For instance, if both parents are full blooded Cherokee, then the child is full blooded Cherokee. If only one parent is Cherokee and the other is not Cherokee, the child is ½ blooded.

2002, 2011). False claims of indigeneity are not uncommon, and without understanding who is claiming to be Native American on surveys, it may be difficult to measure Indigenous identity.

In this chapter I argue for using ancestral and tribal citizenship as methods to identify Native Americans rather than race. While tribal citizenship is a necessary condition for determining political behaviors in tribal politics, identifying Native Americans strictly using citizenship in a federally or state recognized tribe grants too much power to colonizing governments. Screening Native Americans through ancestry will give us a broader sample of people who may claim Indigenous roots but do not associate with a tribe. I advance the argument for measuring indigeneity and Indigenous identity by using a model developed by Kiowa scholar Perry G. Horse, designed to explain Indigenous identity. These measures include whether an individual is a citizen of their tribe and how connected they are to their community and culture. Using data from the Native Voices Survey 2023-2024, I find that tribal citizenship and connections to one's community and culture predict not just the likelihood of both pan-tribal and tribal identity, but also how the individual views their connection to their cultural traditions.

**Figure 1: Racial Survey Model**

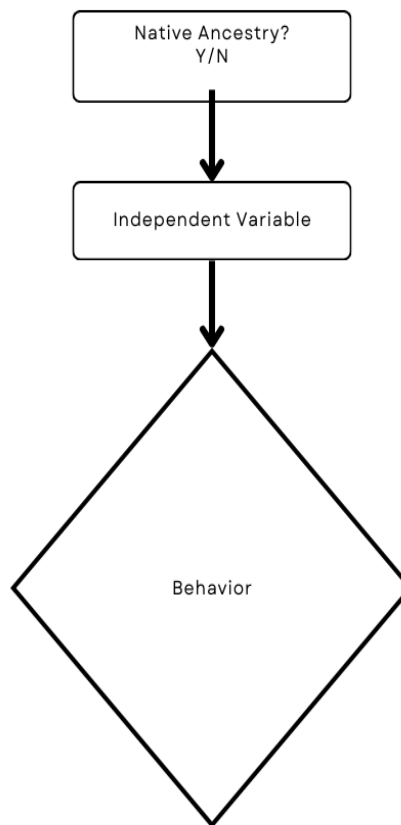


**Figure 1:** Traditionally national surveys rely on people to indicate their race as Native American to sample Native populations. However, this excludes the racially diverse Native populations and may include people who falsely identify as Native American.

While Native Americans are not always included in surveys, there is no consistent mechanism to qualify who is or is not a Native American when they are included. National surveys often rely on self-identification to measure race. However, the sudden increase in people who self-identify as Native American raises questions about the reliability of self-identification measures. Relying on self-identification is flawed if, as research suggests, the sudden increase in self-identifying Native Americans is due to people falsely claiming Indigeneity (Garrouette, 2003; Sturm,

2002, 2011). Research is limited as to why this is, though some research with the Cherokee Nation has indicated that some who falsely claim Indigeneity are attempting to repudiate their whiteness while keeping their white privilege (Sturm, 2011). Regardless of the cause, false claims of Indigenous identity pose a significant problem for accurately surveying Native Americans on a national scale, finding the reasons for falsely identifying as Indigenous are beyond the scope of this project.

**Figure 2: Ancestry Survey Model**



Respondents to the 2020 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey (CMPS) were given the opportunity to select multiple races with which they may

identify as well as their preferred primary racial identity. Respondents were also asked about their Native ancestry; “Do you consider yourself, or your family ancestry to be Native American or American Indian? [allow multiple] If you do not have any American Indian or Native ancestry, please click No.” Respondents could select; “1) No, not Native American, 2) Yes, myself, 3) Yes, one of my parents, 4) Yes, one of my grandparents, and 4) Yes, another more distant relative.” Note that the racial measurements and Native ancestry measurements are separate, and it is possible for people of any race to have Native ancestry.

Table 1 illustrates that Native Americans are a diverse population. We can see that less than half of those who claimed to be Native American when asked about their ancestry racially identified as Native American, even when given the opportunity to select multiple races.

**Table 1: Native Ancestry and Multi-Racial Identification Crosstab**

| Race                                   | Self-Identified Native American |             |        |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|--------|
|                                        | No Not Myself                   | Yes, Myself | Total  |
| White                                  | 3095                            | 105         | 3200   |
|                                        | 96.72                           | 3.28        | 100.00 |
| Hispanic or Latino                     | 3818                            | 301         | 4119   |
|                                        | 92.69                           | 7.31        | 100.00 |
| Black or African American              | 4357                            | 213         | 4570   |
|                                        | 95.34                           | 4.66        | 100.00 |
| Asian American                         | 3878                            | 57          | 3935   |
|                                        | 98.55                           | 1.45        | 100.00 |
| American Indian or Native American     | 352                             | 673         | 1025   |
|                                        | 34.34                           | 65.66       | 100.00 |
| Arab, Middle Eastern, or North African | 268                             | 14          | 282    |
|                                        | 95.04                           | 4.96        | 100.00 |
| Native Hawaiian                        | 110                             | 20          | 130    |
|                                        | 84.62                           | 15.38       | 100.00 |
| Pacific Islander                       | 273                             | 22          | 295    |
|                                        | 92.54                           | 7.46        | 100.00 |
| Total                                  | 16151                           | 1405        | 17556  |
|                                        | 92.00                           | 8.00        | 100.00 |

First row has *frequencies* and second row has *row percentages*

**Source:** 2020 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey

**Note:** When given the option to select multiple races, 34% of the people who claimed Native American as a race also indicated that they were not Native American themselves when asked about their ancestry.

Table 2 shows the complexity of racial identification for Native Americans. When asked about their Native ancestry, only 35% who claimed to be Native American selected Native American as their primary race. Furthermore, a third of those who indicated that Native American was their primary race would not consider themselves Native American when asked about ancestry, illustrating confusion about racial and ancestral identification.

**Table 2: Native Ancestry and Primary Racial Identification Crosstab**

| Primary Race                           | Native Self   |             |        |
|----------------------------------------|---------------|-------------|--------|
|                                        | No not myself | Yes, myself | Total  |
| White                                  | 3691          | 234         | 3925   |
|                                        | 94.04         | 5.96        | 100.00 |
| Hispanic or Latino                     | 3564          | 317         | 3881   |
|                                        | 91.83         | 8.17        | 100.00 |
| Black or African American              | 4348          | 265         | 4613   |
|                                        | 94.26         | 5.74        | 100.00 |
| Asian American                         | 3785          | 52          | 3837   |
|                                        | 98.64         | 1.36        | 100.00 |
| American Indian or Native American     | 212           | 501         | 713    |
|                                        | 29.73         | 70.27       | 100.00 |
| Arab, Middle Eastern, or North African | 217           | 9           | 226    |
|                                        | 96.02         | 3.98        | 100.00 |
| Native Hawaiian                        | 94            | 12          | 106    |
|                                        | 88.68         | 11.32       | 100.00 |
| Pacific Islander                       | 240           | 15          | 255    |
|                                        | 94.12         | 5.88        | 100.00 |
| Total                                  | 16151         | 1405        | 17556  |
|                                        | 92.00         | 8.00        | 100.00 |

First row has *frequencies* and second row has *row percentages*

**Source:** 2020 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey

**Note:** Respondents were asked to indicate whether they or a family member were Native American. This table shows the primary race of those who identified themselves as Native American when asked about ancestry. When capturing self-identified natives through their ancestry we can see that Native Americans are racially diverse. Furthermore, of the 713 respondents that indicated Native American as their primary race, 212 indicated that they themselves were not Native American when asked about their ancestry. Relying on racial and ethnic measurements alone is not sufficient to capture Native American populations.

It can be difficult to determine who identifies as Native American based off race alone. Unfortunately, ancestry is also not necessarily the most consistent measurement for capturing Native populations. Many people also falsely claim Native American heritage because they believe family lore about descending from Native Americans. These individuals, commonly referred to as "pretendians,"<sup>11</sup> have

<sup>11</sup> The term "pretendians" is a portmanteau of the words "pretend" and "Indian" and is used to describe individuals who falsely claim to have Native American heritage to gain benefits or cultural capital.

become a source of controversy and frustration for many Native American communities. National surveys may mistakenly collect data from pretendians, particularly if they only rely on self-identification of Native American as a race. Pretendians also pose a threat to collecting accurate data. When a national survey collects data from Native Americans, it is not clear that it is reflective of people who racially identify as Native Americans, or people who identify as Native American because of ancestral relations.

It is important to note that Native Americans are not a specific race, but a diverse population of people whose governments' sovereignty are recognized through the U.S. Constitution and treaties with the United States.<sup>12</sup> Race and ethnic labels were created by outside forces and do not acknowledge the factors created by centuries of colonization, relocation, and genocide. Surveys that rely strictly on racial and ethnic self-identification do not tell us anything about Native Americans who experience the world through another racial lens, such as Afro-Indigenous, Latinos, and White respondents. As illustrated in Figure 1, traditional measurements generally rely on a respondent indicating that their race is Native American.

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<sup>12</sup> Article I Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution grants Congress the power "...To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes." The Commerce clause recognizes the sovereignty of Tribes as sovereign entities that are separate from either states or foreign governments.

## Pretendians and Identity

Senator Elizabeth Warren is a recent example of someone claiming falsely claiming Native American ancestry. As is common in many households across the United States, Warren and her brothers state that older family members had told them that they had Cherokee ancestry.<sup>13</sup> She had gone through life believing this family lore, even contributing recipes to a Native American cookbook titled *Powwow Chow* published in 1984 and identifying herself as Cherokee.

Use of her Native ancestry first became an issue of content during her bid for the Massachusetts Senate seat in 2012, when her opponent Scott Brown attacked her for fabricating her Native American ancestry for personal and professional benefits. When questioned about her background in an interview, Warren said that "being Native American has been part of my story, I guess, since the day I was born." When asked to provide documentation for her heritage she denied having documentation and only relying strictly on family lore and ethnic features.

"No, as I said, these are my family stories. I have lived in a family that has talked about Native Americans, talked about tribes since I had been a little girl," she said. "I still have a picture on my mantel, and it is a picture my mother had before that - a picture of my grandfather. And my Aunt Bea has walked by that picture at least 1,000 times remarked that he - her father, my Papaw -- had high cheek bones like all of the Indians do. Because that is how she saw it and your mother got those same great cheek bones and I didn't. She that thought was the bad deal she had gotten in life."

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<sup>13</sup> There are three federally recognized tribes affiliated with the Cherokee. At the time of European contact, the Cherokee were settled in the southeastern woodlands of the United States, spread across what is now considered Tennessee, Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama. In the 1830's most of the Cherokee people were removed from their ancestral lands and forced onto a reservation in Oklahoma. The United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee and the Cherokee Nation are both currently located in Oklahoma, and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians currently reside in North Carolina.

Her use of her Native American ancestry became most publicized in 2016 when Donald Trump began attacking her by calling her “Pocahontas.” In July of 2018 President Trump made an offer to donate money to her favorite charity if she took a DNA test that “shows she (sic) is an Indian.” Taking him up on his offer she released the results of a DNA test that indicated she has mostly European Ancestry, with some existence of a Native American ancestor somewhere between 6 and 10 generations ago (Madison, 2012).

Senator Warren was criticized by The Cherokee Nation, arguing that the use of a DNA test to determine Native American heritage as “inappropriate and wrong” (Chavez, 2018). Furthermore, geneticists also argued that DNA tests generally do not have large enough sample pools to rely on to determine Native American ancestry, and often rely on indigenous peoples from Central and South America (Francescani, 2018).

## **Native Americans and Social Identity**

Senator Elizabeth Warren is a visible example of someone identifying as Native American and experiencing Native identity based off distant relations, but she is not alone. President Bill Clinton claimed to have a Cherokee grandmother, receiving criticism from the Indigenous community at the time (Lott, 2003; Williams, 1998). Many people have claimed a relationship to Native Americans to varying degrees. Circe Sturm investigated this trend of people claiming Indigenous

heritage and noted that many claim to be Cherokee because of the size of the tribe and the early cultural syncretism of Cherokee for readily adopting white standards of civilization, making them a member of what Euro-Americans would call the Five Civilized Tribes<sup>14</sup> (Sturm, 2011). There are currently three federally recognized Cherokee tribes and another 15 state recognized tribes, though the federally recognized tribes do not generally recognize the state recognized tribes as Cherokee.

The controversy surrounding Elizabeth Warren's claims to Native American ancestry raises important questions about cultural appropriation and identity politics. Some Native American groups and tribes have criticized Warren for claiming Native American heritage without being a member of a tribe or fully understanding the complexities of Native American identity. Factors such as DNA tests, family lore, or having high cheekbones, are not sufficient for legitimizing someone as a Native American. Rather, tribal governments each establish their own requirements for being a citizen of their tribe. These requirements vary from tribe to tribe, some have blood quantum requirements,<sup>15</sup> other tribes request that you show lineal descent from someone on a tribal roster.

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<sup>14</sup> The Five Civilized Tribes was a term applied by the young United States government referring to the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminoles. They were classified as “civilized” because they had adopted customs and norms of the Anglo-American culture.

<sup>15</sup> Blood quantum is determined by the ethnicity of both parents. For instance, if both parents are full blooded Cherokee, then the child is full blooded Cherokee. If only one parent is Cherokee and the other is not Cherokee, the child is ½ blooded.

However, Warren's claims also highlight the importance of recognizing and honoring diverse cultural backgrounds and histories. Her experience shows that many Americans have connections to Native American ancestry and that this heritage can be a source of pride and identity. Many Americans may proudly claim this identity without understanding the harm that it may be creating. Many others may also experience Indigeneity under a broader lens, such as members of tribes who may not be recognized by the federal government but are recognized by various state governments. American citizens who have Indigenous backgrounds from outside of the United States, such as First Nations in Canada, or descendants from Indigenous peoples from Central and South America may also experience Indigenous identity (Turner, 2006).

## **Theory**

Scholars have attempted to use varying methods to ensure that their population is Native. Table 3 gives a small sample of literature that works with Native populations. Many rely on methods of self-reporting of indigeneity or racial identity though rarely is tribal citizenship status captured. Others attempt to work within tribal communities to ensure their respondents are citizens of a tribe. Measures of tribal citizenship are not necessary when conducting research in tribal communities as it is generally built in, because people who live on reservations, attend tribal schools, use tribal clinics, are more than likely tribal citizens. These methods provide a good measurement of that specific tribal community but may

often miss the nuances of members of other tribes. Furthermore, by focusing on conducting a study in Native communities, the survey population may not include Native Americans who do not live in their tribal community, as well as Indigenous people who do not have a tribe of which they may be a citizen.

**Table 3: Sample of Existing Literature**

| Article                             | Screening Method                | Tribal Citizenship Measure? |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Chow-Garcia et al (2022)*           | Tribal Citizens                 | Yes                         |
| Fryberg et al (2021)                | Self-Identified Native American | Yes                         |
| Herrick & Mendez (2019)             | Race                            | Yes                         |
| Herrick (2022)                      | Race                            | No                          |
| Herrick et al (2020)                | Race                            | Yes                         |
| Huyser (2020)                       | Race                            | No                          |
| Jacobs (2014)*                      | Tribal Citizens                 | Yes                         |
| Jaramillo, Mello et al (2016)*      | Tribal Citizens                 | Yes                         |
| Jones-Kerwin & Peterson (2023)      | Race                            | Yes                         |
| Winterowd, Montgomery et al (2008)* | Tribal Citizens                 | Yes                         |

\* Tribal citizenship built into study because studies were conducted in tribal communities or organizations

Native Americans, like Latino and Asian Americans, have a pan-ethnic, or in this case pan-tribal, identity (Cornell, 1990; Cornell & Hartmann, 2006; Nagel, 1995; Okamoto & Mora, 2014). There are currently 574 federally recognized tribes and 63 state recognized tribes, each with their own unique cultures, languages, history, and citizenship requirements. While some commonalities do exist across all tribes, we should also see a distinct identity at the tribal level as well.

Indigenous identity is inseparable from the traumas Native Americans have faced. Tribes have been victims of oppressive policies, slavery, treaty violations leading to the theft of resources and land, or even outright genocide (Basso, 2016; Brown, 1970; Grossman, 2005; Smith, 2012). These traumas have been shown to have a large impact on modern tribal communities, shaping how they view the world, and can be exhibited in their political behavior (Brave Heart et al., 2011; Orr, 2017; Sanchez et al., 2020). Because of this, we may expect to see tribal identity as a separate experience from pan-tribal measures. Tribal membership is an important aspect to Indigenous identity and should not be overlooked when surveying the Native American community.

My methodological approach is to use claims of Native American ancestry to screen for Native Americans, removing anyone who does not indicate having Native ancestry. I then use the identity model developed by Perry G. Horse (Kiowa) to measure indigeneity and Indigenous identity, next to standard measurements of Native Americans to determine if there is a difference between screening methods. I find that while controlling for citizenship is important in surveying Native populations, personal ties to the culture and community are most important in predicting tribal and Native American identity.

The Horse model is composed of five components that Horse argues defines indigeneity. The legal and sovereign status of Indigenous people just looks at whether an Indigenous person is a citizen of a tribe. Personal sensibility asks how involved one is with their culture and community. Cultural change looks at if an Indigenous

person views their cultural commitment as more traditional or modern.<sup>16</sup> Horse argues that racial attitudes of Indigenous people generally recognize that the dominant society is a White Euro-American culture under which Indigenous people struggle. Finally ethnic nomenclature looks at the preferred terminology used by Indigenous people.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Traditional generally meaning committed to traditions and culture of the ancestors before contact. A modern view would be a combination of traditional ways while also adhering to the dominant society's norms.

<sup>17</sup> **Legal & Sovereign Status:** Is the individual a citizen of a tribe?

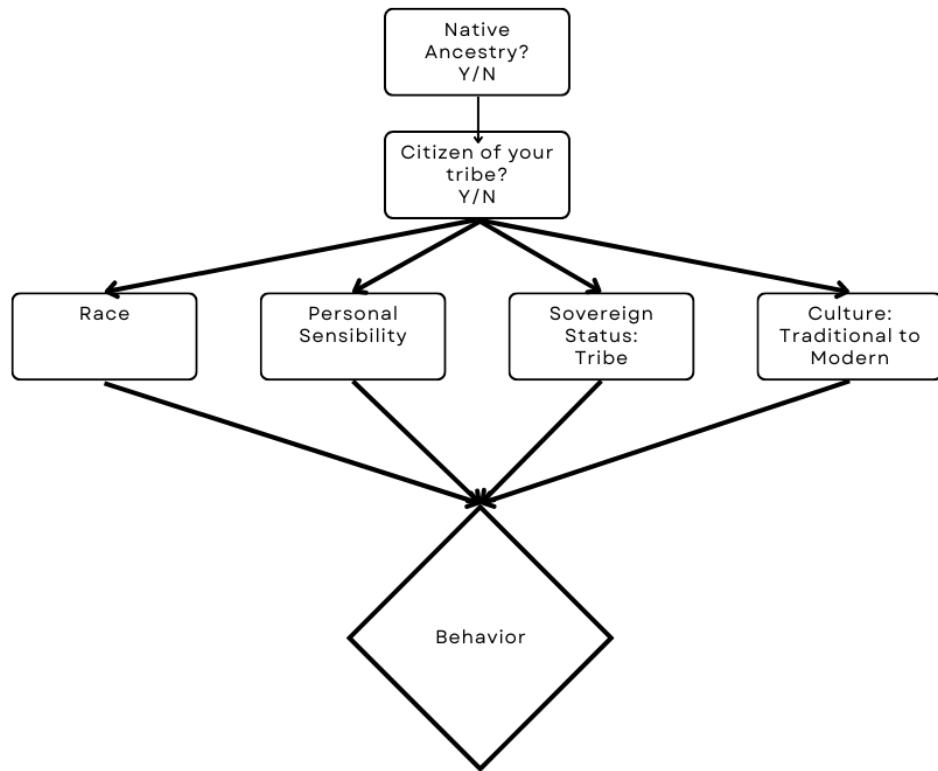
**Ethnic Nomenclature:** What is the individual's preferred label of identification?

**Racial Attitude:** Does the individual believe that White Euro-American culture oppresses Indigenous cultures and people?

**Personal Sensibility:** How much does the individual engage in their community and culture?

**Cultural Change:** Does the individual view their cultural expressions as more traditional or modern?

**Figure 3: Proposed Model**



**Figure 2:** My proposed model captures a potentially broader and diverse audience and defines Indigeneity through ancestry and tribal membership. Race can then be used to observe influences on behavior. For instance, a White Native American and a Black Native American are both Native Americans, but their experiences may differ because of their racial backgrounds. The traditional model would fail to capture either.

## Data & Methods

To measure Indigenous identity and the potential effectiveness of the Horse model, my analysis relies on original survey data collected from attendees at powwows at universities local to the Southern California area, hosted in partnership with regional tribes and their tribal governments. This survey is titled the Native Voices Survey 2023-2024. Participation in the survey was completely voluntary by

those in attendance at the powwow. Respondents were asked a screening question “Are you at least 18 years of age?” in which those who indicated they were not 18 were removed. The purpose of this study is to analyze those who claim to be Native American, so respondents were also asked “Do you consider yourself, or your family ancestry to be Native American or American Indian?” Giving respondents the opportunity to indicate whether they themselves identify as Native American or have ancestral relations gives respondents more freedom in indicating their relationship to being Native American.

To determine race and ethnicity, I used language matching the language from questions used in the 2020 CMPS. Respondents were asked “What do you consider your race or ethnicity?” Respondents were also asked “Even if they are all important, which of these would you consider your primary race or ethnicity, if you had to choose one?”

The sovereign and legal status of respondents measures the tribal affiliation of individual respondents and was collected through two questions. First respondents were asked “What tribe do you or your family trace your ancestry?” This question is worded in a manner that invites respondents to indicate tribal affiliation even if they may not be citizens. To control for citizenship, respondents are also asked “Are you a citizen of this tribe?”

**Table 4: Survey Demographics**

|                                 | Non-Citizen | Citizen     | Total        |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| N                               | 77 (38.3%)  | 124 (61.7%) | 201 (100.0%) |
| <b>Primary Race</b>             |             |             |              |
| White                           | 29 (41.4%)  | 13 (11.0%)  | 42 (22.3%)   |
| Hispanic or Latino              | 1 (1.4%)    | 1 (0.8%)    | 2 (1.1%)     |
| Black or African                | 0 (0.0%)    | 4 (3.4%)    | 4 (2.1%)     |
| American Indian/Native American | 39 (55.7%)  | 100 (84.7%) | 139 (73.9%)  |
| Native Hawaiian                 | 1 (1.4%)    | 0 (0.0%)    | 1 (0.5%)     |
| <b>Generation</b>               |             |             |              |
| Gen Z (18-27)                   | 14 (20.6%)  | 25 (21.7%)  | 39 (21.3%)   |
| Millennial (28-42)              | 26 (38.2%)  | 55 (47.8%)  | 81 (44.3%)   |
| Gen X (43-58)                   | 22 (32.4%)  | 25 (21.7%)  | 47 (25.7%)   |
| Baby Boomer (59-77)             | 6 (8.8%)    | 10 (8.7%)   | 16 (8.7%)    |
| <b>Lived on Reservation</b>     |             |             |              |
| Never Lived on Tribal Land      | 70 (93.3%)  | 81 (65.3%)  | 151 (75.9%)  |
| Lived on Tribal Land            | 5 (6.7%)    | 43 (34.7%)  | 48 (24.1%)   |

**Source:** Native Voices Survey 2023-2024

To compile a personal sensibility score, participants responded to 10 items adapted from the American Indian Enculturation Scale (Winderowd et al., 2008). This scale measures the extent to which people engage in activities related to Native American cultures. Respondents were asked “In general, how much do you participate in the following activities?” with possible responses ranging from never to daily.

#### **Personal Sensibility Measures:<sup>18</sup>**

1. Seek help from Elders.
2. Socialize with Natives or have Native friends.
3. Use or know Native language.
4. Attend powwows or social dances.
5. Work in Native communities.
6. Sing or drum native songs.
7. Make Native art.
8. Eat or cook Native food.
9. Attend a Native ceremony.
10. Know or share Native history.

<sup>18</sup> These personal sensibility measures were used in the Indigenous Futures Project to measure a relationship with a respondent’s tribe.

These measures are consistent with Horse's model for personal sensibility. No individual activity determines legitimacy of personal sensibility, and some such as being able to speak a language, may not be applicable to all tribes because that language may no longer be available. Because factors may vary between tribes, responses are combined and given an average score, creating a personal sensibility index. Because these activities measure how much one engages in their community and culture, we should expect those who either grew up or currently live on tribal lands to have higher levels of personal sensibility than those who have never lived on tribal land.

**H1A:** Those who have lived on tribal land will have higher levels of personal sensibility than those who do not.

Furthermore, tribal citizens have a legal tie to their tribe, and while one does not have to be a citizen to engage in their tribal culture, it should be expected that citizens would be more likely to be engaged with their community and culture than non-citizens.

**H1B:** Tribal citizens will have higher levels of personal sensibility than non-tribal citizens.

Lastly, I create a measure for Horse's cultural change. Respondents were asked to rank themselves on a ten-point scale, with traditional being 1 and modern being 10. While Horse did not indicate that there would be anything to indicate an individual's preference, we should at least expect to see those who identify with being traditional are probably more connected to their tribal culture and

community. We can use the personal sensibility index to test if being more connected to your community and culture predicts the likelihood of identifying oneself as more traditional than modern.

**H2:** Identifying as traditional will be positively correlated with higher levels of personal sensibility.

To test this, I run an OLS model using cultural change as the dependent variable and personal sensibility, citizenship, and whether someone has lived on tribal land at some point.

## **Implementing the Horse Model and Identity**

Next, I look at how these measures predict the importance of Indigenous identity, particularly when controlling for citizenship. I rely on various standard self-reporting measures of identity, in which respondents could indicate the degree to which they agree with a series of statements. The first two statements attempt to capture Indigenous identity; "Being Native American is an important part of my identity," and tribal identity; "Being a member of my tribe is an important part of my identity." Responses were recorded on a 5-point scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." I recoded these responses from -1 indicating "strongly disagree" 0 representing "neither agree nor disagree" and 1 indicating "strongly agree."

I do not believe that citizenship is a reliable predictor of Native American identity. Elizabeth Warren even stated that being a Native American was important to her identity. However, a key aspect of social identity is shared experiences

between group members. Because of this we should expect higher personal sensibility scores should be indicative of shared experiences so respondents with high personal sensibility scores should be more likely to have a stronger sense of Native American identity.

**H3A:** Tribal citizenship is not a reliable predictor of Native American identity.

**H3B:** Higher levels of personal sensibility positively associated with Native American identity regardless of tribal citizenship status.

Native Americans are a diverse group of peoples, and tribes are separate entities with unique cultures, histories, and traditions. Because of this, we should expect to be a separate phenomenon from Native American or Indigenous identity. Citizenship will still probably not predict tribal identity, as those who are not citizens can easily experience tribal identity if it is important enough to them. However, higher levels of personal sensibility are still expected to predict higher levels of tribal identity.

**H4A:** Tribal citizenship is not a reliable predictor of tribal identity.

**H4B:** Higher levels of personal sensibility positively associated with tribal identity regardless of tribal citizenship status.

Lastly, because identifying as traditional means a commitment to traditions of ancestors, I expect those who identify as culturally traditional to be more likely to have higher levels of personal sensibility than those who identify as modern.

## Results and Analysis

I begin my analysis by illustrating the potential effectiveness of my chosen control variables, ancestry, and citizenship. As a screening question, respondents were asked to indicate whether they, their parents, their grandparents, or a distant relative were Native American. Respondents who indicated that they had no Native American ancestry were not even offered the opportunity to complete the survey, leaving only those who indicated that either a Native American parent, grandparent, or a distant relative. I also created a dummy variable for tribal citizens, separating tribal citizens and non-tribal citizens.

First, I look at levels of engagement in tribal community and culture, or personal sensibility. Table 5 shows the regression analysis between living on tribal lands and levels of personal sensibility. I ran an OLS model using the CMPS model measuring just claims of ancestry, and then divide tribal citizens and non-tribal citizens. Regardless of citizenship status, those who lived on tribal lands are more likely to have higher levels of personal sensibility, confirming hypothesis 2A. This relationship is stronger for tribal citizens, which can also be seen when using the CMPS model of measuring indigeneity through ancestry, confirming hypothesis 2B.

**Table 5: Personal Sensibility Regression**

| VARIABLES            | (1)<br>Ancestry     | (2)<br>Non-Citizens | (3)<br>Tribal Citizens |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Citizen              | 0.561**<br>(0.236)  | -                   | -                      |
| Lived on Reservation | 1.349***<br>(0.265) | 1.915***<br>(0.700) | 1.255***<br>(0.287)    |
| Constant             | 4.124***<br>(0.178) | 4.085***<br>(0.183) | 4.718***<br>(0.170)    |
| Observations         | 196                 | 73                  | 123                    |
| R-squared            | 0.184               | 0.095               | 0.137                  |
| F-Stat               | 21.78               | 7.471               | 19.15                  |
| Prob > F             | 2.96e-09            | 0.00791             | 2.58e-05               |
| Degree of Freedom    | 193                 | 71                  | 121                    |

Standard errors in parentheses

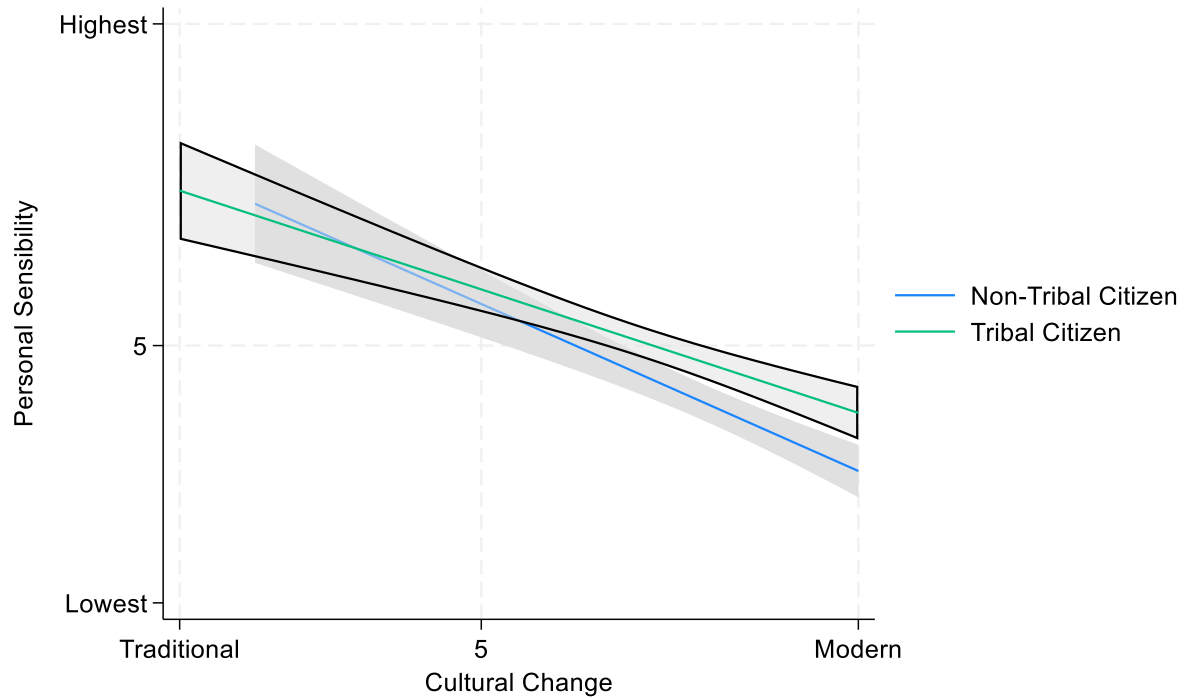
\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Source:** Native Voices Survey 2023-2024

**Note:** Personal sensibility is an index of ten variables measuring the level of interaction between respondents and their tribal community and culture. These scores are then combined and averaged. This table shows that those who live on tribal land are more likely to have higher levels of personal sensibility than those who live off tribal land.

The other measure of the Horse model that I look at is cultural change, or how individuals rank themselves on a scale of traditional to modern. Identifying as more traditional would mean a higher commitment to the ways of the ancestors while modern would indicate that one believes that culture changes over time and that adhering to the traditions of their ancestors is not as important to their identity. Figure 4 shows that those who have higher scores of personal sensibility generally have lower scores in the cultural change measure, indicating identifying with traditional over modern.

**Figure 4: Personal Sensibility and Cultural Change**



**Source:** Native Voices Survey 2023-2024

**Note:** This linear regression illustrates the relationship between level of engagement with their community and culture and cultural identity. The more engaged one is in their community and culture the more traditional they identify.

I also run an OLS regression by adding a control for citizenship and a measure of whether an individual has lived on tribal land. Regardless of citizenship status or whether an individual has lived on tribal land, individuals with higher levels of personal sensibility generally identify as traditional.

**Table 6: Cultural Change Regression**

| VARIABLES            | (1)<br>Ancestry      | (2)<br>Non-Citizens  | (3)<br>Tribal Citizens |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Citizen              | -0.0717<br>(0.279)   | -                    | -                      |
| Personal Sensibility | -1.476***<br>(0.172) | -1.602***<br>(0.240) | -1.391***<br>(0.236)   |
| Lived on Reservation | -0.236<br>(0.328)    | -0.958<br>(0.770)    | -0.165<br>(0.384)      |
| Constant             | 11.02***<br>(0.403)  | 11.32***<br>(0.515)  | 10.71***<br>(0.590)    |
| Observations         | 181                  | 68                   | 113                    |
| R-squared            | 0.353                | 0.446                | 0.275                  |
| F-Stat               | 32.18                | 26.21                | 20.86                  |
| Prob > F             | 0                    | 4.50e-09             | 2.08e-08               |
| Degree of Freedom    | 177                  | 65                   | 110                    |

Standard errors in parentheses

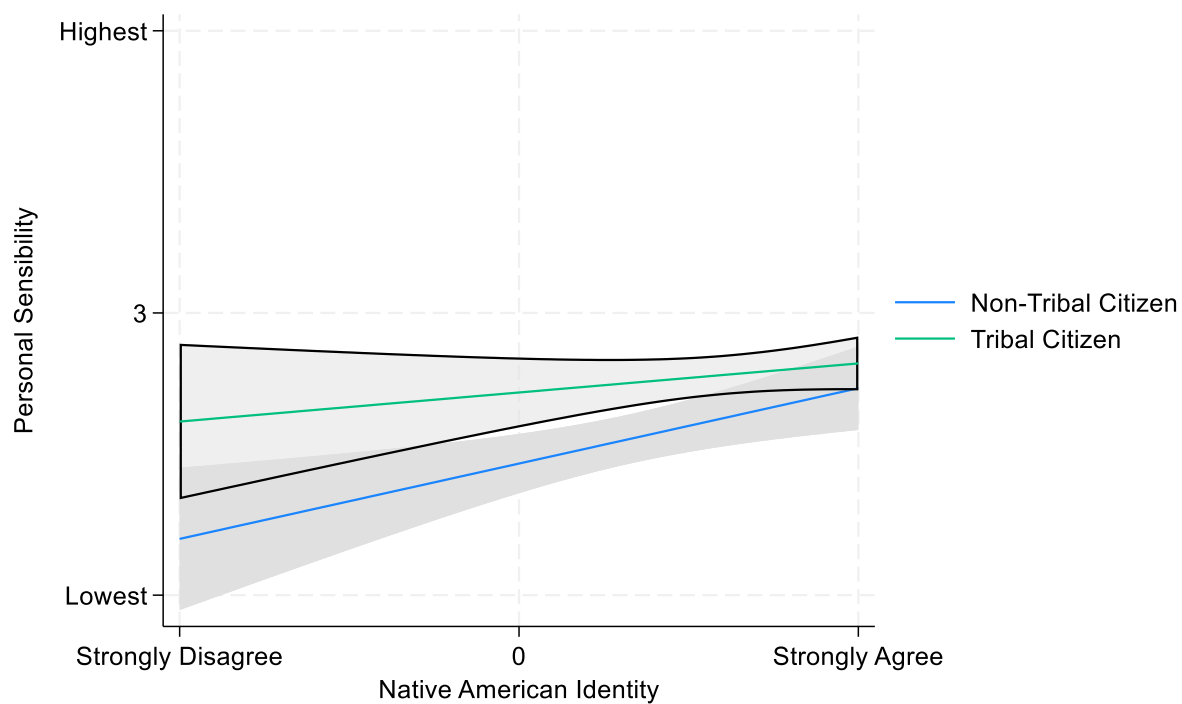
\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Source:** Native Voices Survey 2023-2024

**Note:** This regression table includes citizenship and a measure for whether someone has lived on tribal land showing that higher levels of personal sensibility predict a likelihood of identifying as traditional over modern.

The final portion of my analysis looks at pan-tribal and tribal identity. Table 6 shows that tribal citizenship is not a reliable predictor of experiencing Native American or pan-tribal identity. Personal sensibility is consistently the strongest predictor of stronger levels of Native American identity, meaning those with stronger ties to their community and culture are more likely to indicate that being Native American is important to their identity.

**Figure 5: Personal Sensibility and Native American Identity**



**Source:** Native Voices Survey 2023-2024

**Note:** This linear regression illustrates the relationship between level of engagement with their community and culture and how important Native American identity is to them. The more engaged an individual is with their tribal community and culture, the more likely they are to say that being Native American is an important part of their identity. Note that Tribal citizens generally have a higher threshold of participation before they feel that being Native is important to their identity.

**Table 7: OLS Horse Model and Native American Identity**

| VARIABLES                   | (1)<br>Ancestry      | (2)<br>Non-Tribal Citizens | (3)<br>Tribal Citizens |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Citizen                     | 0.214***<br>(0.0759) | -                          | -                      |
| Personal Sensibility        | 0.101*<br>(0.0548)   | 0.248***<br>(0.0887)       | 0.0171<br>(0.0700)     |
| Cultural Change             | -0.0245<br>(0.0200)  | -0.0136<br>(0.0369)        | -0.0280<br>(0.0242)    |
| Racially Identify as Native | -0.0236<br>(0.0816)  | 0.0342<br>(0.102)          | -0.0851<br>(0.127)     |
| Lived on Reservation        | -0.0409<br>(0.0866)  | -0.0877<br>(0.259)         | 0.00516<br>(0.0954)    |
| Constant                    | 0.338<br>(0.249)     | -0.0798<br>(0.441)         | 0.826**<br>(0.318)     |
| Observations                | 177                  | 65                         | 112                    |
| R-squared                   | 0.130                | 0.221                      | 0.022                  |
| F-Stat                      | 5.122                | 4.256                      | 0.606                  |
| Prob > F                    | 0.000210             | 0.00425                    | 0.659                  |
| Degree of Freedom           | 171                  | 60                         | 107                    |

Standard errors in parentheses

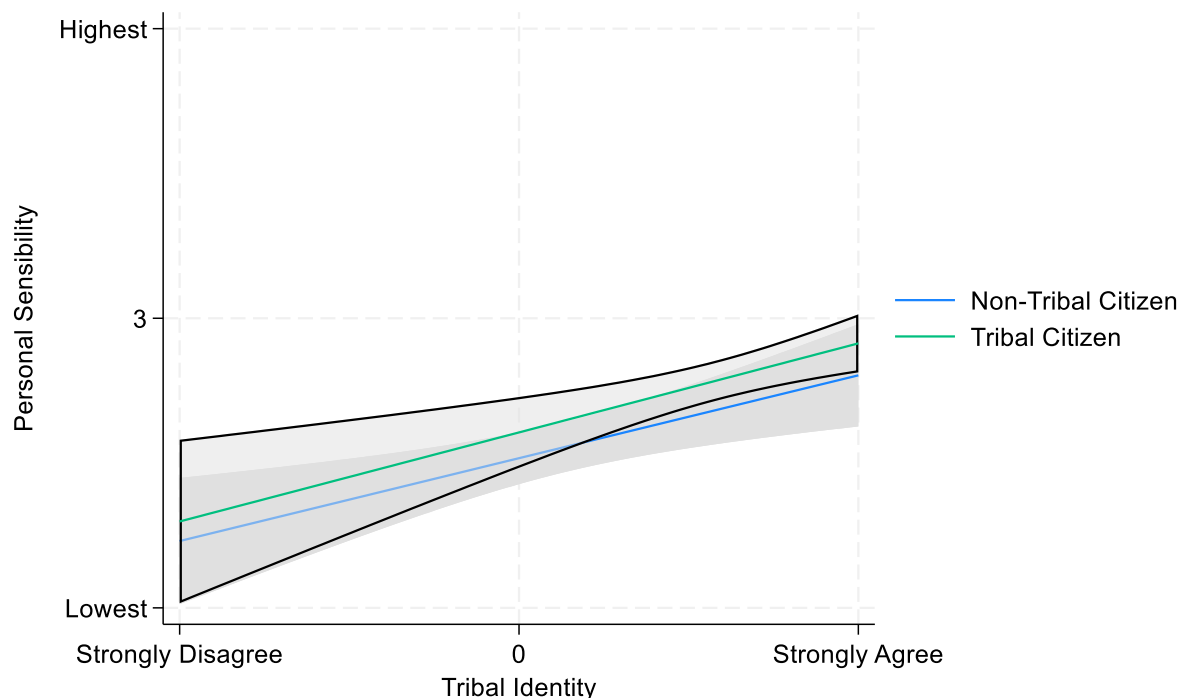
\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Source:** Native Voices Survey 2023-2024

**Note:** This OLS model looks at the relationship between aspects of the Horse model and Native American identity. Generally, Tribal citizens will be more likely to claim Native identity being important to them than non-tribal citizen. However, by separately observing citizens and non-citizens, we can see that those who are most engaged in their tribal community and culture, are more likely to indicate that being Native is important to their identity.

Because tribes are defined as individual communities, tribal identity presents itself as a separate phenomenon. Figure 6 shows that personal sensibility is still consistently a predictor of tribal identity, meaning those who participate in their community and culture are more likely to indicate that tribal identity is important to their identity. However, unlike Native American identity tribal citizenship is a strong predictor of tribal identity. Furthermore, those who identify as traditional are more likely to indicate that their tribal identity is important to them, particularly for tribal citizens.

**Figure 6: Personal Sensibility and Tribal Identity**



**Source:** Native Voices Survey 2023-2024

**Note:** This linear regression shows the relationship between personal sensibility and tribal identity, distinct from Native identity. While personal sensibility does predict tribal identity, note that tribal citizens who are less engaged in their community are less hesitant to claim tribal identity than they are over native identity.

**Table 8: Tribal Identity Regression**

| VARIABLES                   | (1)<br>Ancestry       | (2)<br>Non-Tribal Citizens | (3)<br>Tribal Citizens |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Citizen                     | 0.435***<br>(0.0703)  | -                          | -                      |
| Personal Sensibility        | 0.177***<br>(0.0495)  | 0.255***<br>(0.0952)       | 0.128**<br>(0.0569)    |
| Cultural Change             | -0.0360**<br>(0.0182) | -0.0420<br>(0.0396)        | -0.0423**<br>(0.0200)  |
| Racially Identify as Native | -0.116<br>(0.0755)    | -0.115<br>(0.110)          | -0.167<br>(0.107)      |
| Lived on Reservation        | -0.0339<br>(0.0799)   | -0.658**<br>(0.278)        | 0.0547<br>(0.0801)     |
| Constant                    | 0.0712<br>(0.225)     | -0.0142<br>(0.473)         | 0.686***<br>(0.260)    |
| Observations                | 178                   | 65                         | 113                    |
| R-squared                   | 0.365                 | 0.264                      | 0.169                  |
| F-Stat                      | 19.81                 | 5.384                      | 5.475                  |
| Prob > F                    | 0                     | 0.000901                   | 0.000473               |
| Degree of Freedom           | 172                   | 60                         | 108                    |

Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p&lt;0.01, \*\* p&lt;0.05, \* p&lt;0.1

**Source:** Native Voices Survey 2023-2024

**Note:** This OLS model looks at the relationship between aspects of the Horse model and Tribal identity. Like Native identity, tribal citizens will be more likely to claim tribal identity being important to them than non-tribal citizens. Tribal citizens are more likely to claim tribal identity to be important to them than Native identity, and personal sensibility consistently predicts how important tribal identity is to the individual, regardless of their legal affiliation to a tribe. Furthermore, tribal citizens who identify as culturally traditional generally have the highest levels of tribal identity.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Measuring Indigeneity through ancestry alone can certainly provide a broader pool of survey respondents who identify as Native American in some capacity. However, capturing citizenship allows researchers to observe variations in attitudes and behavior between the two groups. Citizenship is a legal indication of group membership, and while it is not required to identify with being Native American or participate in tribal communities or cultural activities, it does make it

more likely someone will engage in their culture.

The Horse model gives researchers the ability to look not just at tribal citizenship, but the influences of cultural and communal ties have on experiencing tribal and pan-tribal identity. My survey was conducted at powwows and is naturally biased towards people who are at least minimally engaged in Native American culture. A nationally representative survey would not necessarily have respondents with the same level of personal sensibility. Furthermore, the poorest members of tribal communities may not be able to travel to powwows, and their voices may go unheard.

However, powwows still certainly attract members of the Native American community, but also attract people who may seek ties to the Native American community even if they do not have tribal citizenship. Future research should seek to test the Horse model in nationally representative surveys. While my sample size is small, I believe that the Horse model will provide an explanation for who experiences Indigenous identity even with a larger pool of respondents.

The Horse model tells us that those who are most connected to their community and culture are generally more likely to experience higher levels of identity. The next chapter will look at its ability to predict attitudes. Horse argues that racial attitudes are an important aspect of Indigenous identity.

## **Chapter 3 Indigenous Attitudes: Racial and Tribal Influences over Attitude**

### **Introduction**

In the United States, Thanksgiving weekend is known for excessive eating, excessive consumption, and football. On Sunday, November 23, 2023, football fans would watch the Kansas City Chiefs play their longtime rivals the Las Vegas Raiders. The Kansas City Chiefs have been criticized for a long time by Native American communities for their appropriation of Native American imagery and culture. On game day, fans paint their faces with warpaint and wear head regalia, cheering their team using face war cries while making a chopping gesture with their hands, a gesture known to Chiefs fans as the “Tomahawk chop.”

The game that day was hosted on television, and cameras focused on a 9-year-old fan named Holden Armenta, who was wearing a headdress and face paint while he cheered on his team, as excited and happy as any 9-year-old fan. Unfortunately for this boy, this became an issue that the media picked up and the public debated. However, of all the voices that were covering that topic, it is difficult to find discussion from Native Americans.

The Armenta family stated that their family, including their son, are members of the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians<sup>19</sup>, and meant no disrespect by wearing

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<sup>19</sup> The Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians are a federally recognized tribe Indigenous to California, residing in Santa Barbara.

the costume. Tribal Chairman Kenneth Kahn, of the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash

Indians, responded to the incident with a statement to the Santa Ynez Valley News:

We are aware that a young member of our community attended a Kansas City Chiefs game in a headdress and face paint in his way of supporting his favorite team. Please keep in mind that the decisions made by individuals or families in our community are their own and may not reflect the views of the broader tribal community," Kahn said. "As a federally recognized tribe, the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians does not endorse wearing regalia as part of a costume or participating in any other type of cultural appropriation.

While the regalia worn by Holden was not culturally significant to his tribe, many tribes do claim that head regalia are sacred and only to be worn by certain members of their community for certain ceremonies. With Native Americans being such a diverse population, it is possible that attitudes about Native American mascots depend on things such as an individual's tribe of ancestry, their racial identity, and their own attitudes on racial and political issues.

In this chapter I continue my discussion for using the Horse model to understand how tribal citizenship and participation in tribal communities and culture may influence attitudes about race and racial views of Indigeneity. I find that while levels of personal sensibility do not predict racial attitudes, tribal identity can. Furthermore, when adding racial attitudes to Fryberg's model measuring support for Native mascots, the significance of ethnic identity vanishes.

## **Native Mascots**

The use of Native Americans as mascots has been common for sports teams ranging from little league to professional teams. Those who oppose the use of Native

American mascots point to psychological research demonstrating that Native mascots are stereotypical and undermine the well-being of Native Americans (Burkley et al., 2017; Chaney et al., 2011; Fryberg et al., 2008). Others who support the use of Native mascots contend that Native mascots honor Native people and are not offensive (Vargas, 2019). Opinion polls appear to support this stance, suggesting that as many as 90% of Native Americans do not find Native mascots offensive (Cox et al., 2016). Stephanie Fryberg however, found that opinions regarding the use of Native mascots were largely dependent on ethnic identity and participation in tribal community and culture.

Participation in tribal community and culture is what Perry G. Horse defined as personal sensibility. As illustrated in Chapter 2, the level of personal sensibility is important in predicting both tribal and pan-tribal identity. Horse also identified racial attitudes as an important aspect of Native American identity. He attributes this to the fact that race itself is a foreign concept to Native communities, introduced by European colonists and enforced by their American descendants (Horse, 2005). The concept of race has been traced back to 15<sup>th</sup> century Europe as a way to classify people from around the world and rationalizing slavery and colonialism (James, 2011; Zuberi, 2001).

Native Americans are more than just a race. Rather they can also be citizens of many diverse tribal governments, with distinct cultures and histories. Horse acknowledges this by discussing the sovereign and legal status of Natives (Horse, 2005). Limiting definitions of Native American identity to tribal citizens is

problematic for a variety of reasons that are beyond the scope of this dissertation.<sup>20</sup>

However, these definitions can have consequences for how Native Americans experience their Native identities (Garrouette, 2001; Jacobs & Merolla, 2016). In particular, Native people who meet legal criteria are perceived to be more “legitimately” Native American and are less likely to have their Native identities questioned than those who do not meet these criteria (Garrouette, 2003).

## **Theory: Native Americans and Racial Attitudes**

Group identification refers to an individual’s awareness of belonging to a certain group and having a psychological attachment to that group based on a perception of shared beliefs, feelings, interests, and ideas with other group members (Chong & Rogers, 2005; Conover, 1988; Tajfel, 1982). A lot of research in political science has shown how identity and group membership have been found to have influence over attitudes (Chow-Garcia et al., 2022; Smith & Hogg, 2008; Terry et al., 1999; Turner et al., 1987).

Much of the work has shown that racial and ethnic identity can influence opinion (Dawson, 2003; Sanchez et al., 2019; Sanchez & Masuoka, 2010; Sanchez & Vargas, 2016). Research has even shown that the ability to detect hate speech varies based on racial identity, indicating possible racial variances in attitudes about Native mascots (Kiela et al., 2020; Sap et al., 2019).

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<sup>20</sup> See Garrouette (2003)

Group membership is not always based on racial identity, other research has focused on political definitions of group membership tracing behaviors back to nation or tribe of origin (Chow-Garcia et al., 2022; Jaramillo et al., 2016; Masuoka & Junn, 2008; Orr, 2017). Because of the unique political status of Native Americans, it is possible that attitudes among Native Americans will vary depending on whether they are a citizen of a tribe.

## Hypotheses

Racial Attitudes are an inherent aspect of being Native American, as racial labels were conferred on Native Americans by White Euro-American culture. Because of this we should see Native Americans have stronger attitudes than non-Native Americans.

**H1A:** Native Americans should have higher racial attitudes than non-Native Americans.

I also argue that ancestry is necessary but not sufficient for capturing Native populations. Consistent with Horse's model of Indigenous identity,<sup>21</sup> tribal citizenship is an important legal status that is unique to Native Americans. Therefore, I believe that we should see variation between tribal citizens and non-tribal citizens.

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<sup>21</sup> **Legal & Sovereign Status:** Is the individual a citizen of a tribe?

**Ethnic Nomenclature:** What is the individual's preferred label of identification?

**Racial Attitude:** Does the individual believe that White Euro-American culture oppresses Indigenous cultures and people?

**Personal Sensibility:** How much does the individual engage in their community and culture?

**Cultural Change:** Does the individual view their cultural expressions as more traditional or modern?

**H1B:** Racial attitudes for Native Americans are higher for tribal citizens than non-tribal citizens.

Lastly, I wish to replicate Stephanie Fryberg's (Tulalip)<sup>22</sup> analysis on belief in Native American mascots being harmful, and then compare it to the Horse model. I believe Horse's racial attitudes will account for the belief that Native American mascots are harmful.

**H2:** Racial attitudes are positively correlated with the belief that Native American mascots are harmful.

## **Data & Methods**

To observe the racial attitudes of Native Americans I use data from the 2020 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey (CMPS). The CMPS provides a racially diverse sample of people who claim Native ancestry.

Because the CMPS does not collect data on tribal citizenship status, I collected survey data from powwow attendees at powwows in Southern California during 2023. Powwow attendees provide an excellent pool to sample respondents because attendees should attract tribal citizens with a connection to their culture, and various other people seeking a connection to Native culture for various reasons. I included two screening questions to ensure that respondents were over the age of 18 and that they claimed to be Native American or have Native ancestry. To determine ancestry, respondents were asked, "Do you consider yourself, or your

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<sup>22</sup> The Tulalip Tribes of the Tulalip Reservation is a federally recognized tribe of Duwamish, Snohomish, Snoqualmie, Skagit, Suiattle, Samish, and Stillaguamish people. They are indigenous to the Pacific Northwest Coast of Washington.

family ancestry to be Native American or American Indian?” Respondents were able to indicate whether they considered themselves or a relative Native American. This left my survey with a sample size of (n=201). While this sample size is small, it is important to keep in mind that Native populations are a small subset of the overall population and difficult to survey. The potential lack of representation does lead me to be cautious about generalizing beyond my sample, but it provides a practical approach to demonstrating the racial diversity of Native Americans and how that may influence attitudes and behaviors.

To measure tribal citizenship, respondents were asked if they were a citizen of the tribe to which they traced their ancestry. While beliefs in Indigenous ancestry may be somewhat arbitrary, tribal citizenship is strictly determined by the tribes and is a legal expression of ingroup acceptance. Because of this we should also see variations in racial attitudes when comparing citizens to non-citizens.

To determine race respondents were asked two questions using language from the 2020 CMPS; “What do you consider your race or ethnicity?” in which respondents were able to select multiple options. While people may hold multiple racial backgrounds, respondents were also asked to select the race with which they primarily identify; “Even if they are all important, which of these would you consider your primary race or ethnicity, if you had to choose one?”

To gauge racial attitudes, I asked respondents to indicate how much they agree with the following statements: “I believe Whites experience discrimination.”

("-1 strongly disagree, -.5 disagree, 0 neither agree nor disagree, .5 agree, and 1 strongly agree.") and "I believe Native Americans experience discrimination." ("-1 strongly disagree, -.5 disagree, 0 neither agree nor disagree, .5 agree, and 1 strongly agree."). I added these responses together and averaged their scores, with negative scores indicating a belief that Whites are discriminated against and Natives are not, while positive scores indicate that Native Americans are discriminated against, and Whites are not.

Finally, I measure attitudes regarding Native American mascots to replicate Fryberg *et al* 2021. I ask respondents to indicate the level they agree with the following statement: "I think using Native American Mascots is harmful to Native Americans" ("-1 strongly disagree, -.5 disagree, 0 neither agree nor disagree, .5 agree, and 1 strongly agree.").

## Results and Analysis

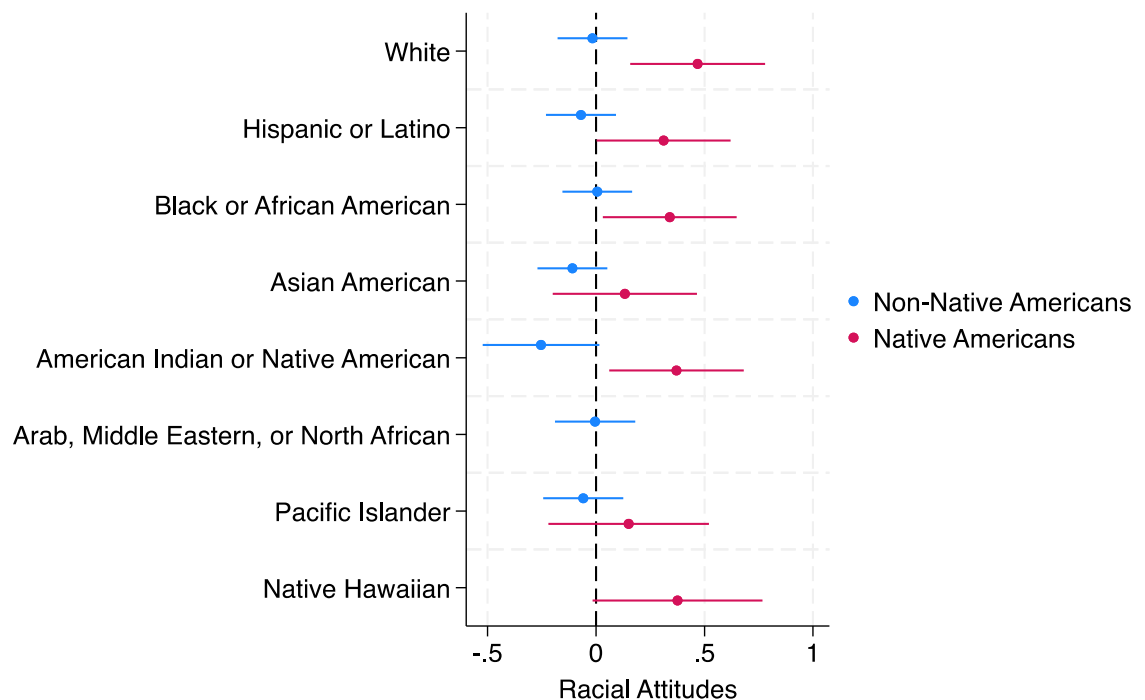
**Table 9: Survey Demographics**

|                                 | Non-Citizen | Citizen     | Total        |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| N                               | 77 (38.3%)  | 124 (61.7%) | 201 (100.0%) |
| <b>Primary Race</b>             |             |             |              |
| White                           | 29 (41.4%)  | 13 (11.0%)  | 42 (22.3%)   |
| Hispanic or Latino              | 1 (1.4%)    | 1 (0.8%)    | 2 (1.1%)     |
| Black or African                | 0 (0.0%)    | 4 (3.4%)    | 4 (2.1%)     |
| American Indian/Native American | 39 (55.7%)  | 100 (84.7%) | 139 (73.9%)  |
| Native Hawaiian                 | 1 (1.4%)    | 0 (0.0%)    | 1 (0.5%)     |
| <b>Generation</b>               |             |             |              |
| Gen Z (18-27)                   | 14 (20.6%)  | 25 (21.7%)  | 39 (21.3%)   |
| Millennial (28-42)              | 26 (38.2%)  | 55 (47.8%)  | 81 (44.3%)   |
| Gen X (43-58)                   | 22 (32.4%)  | 25 (21.7%)  | 47 (25.7%)   |
| Baby Boomer (59-77)             | 6 (8.8%)    | 10 (8.7%)   | 16 (8.7%)    |
| <b>Gender</b>                   |             |             |              |
| Man                             | 27 (38.0%)  | 30 (25.4%)  | 57 (30.2%)   |
| Woman                           | 38 (53.5%)  | 78 (66.1%)  | 116 (61.4%)  |
| Two-Spirit                      | 1 (1.4%)    | 3 (2.5%)    | 4 (2.1%)     |
| Other                           | 5 (7.0%)    | 7 (5.9%)    | 12 (6.3%)    |

Source: Native Voices Survey 2023-2024

First, I look at racial attitudes among those who indicated Native American ancestry and compared them against those who indicated that they had no Native American ancestry. Because my survey does not collect data from people who do not have Native American ancestry, I relied on data collected by the 2020 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey (CMPS). Figure 7 shows that those who indicated that they had Native American ancestry were more likely to hold Whites do not experience discrimination while Native Americans do, compared to their non-Native counterpart.

**Figure 7: Racial Attitudes**



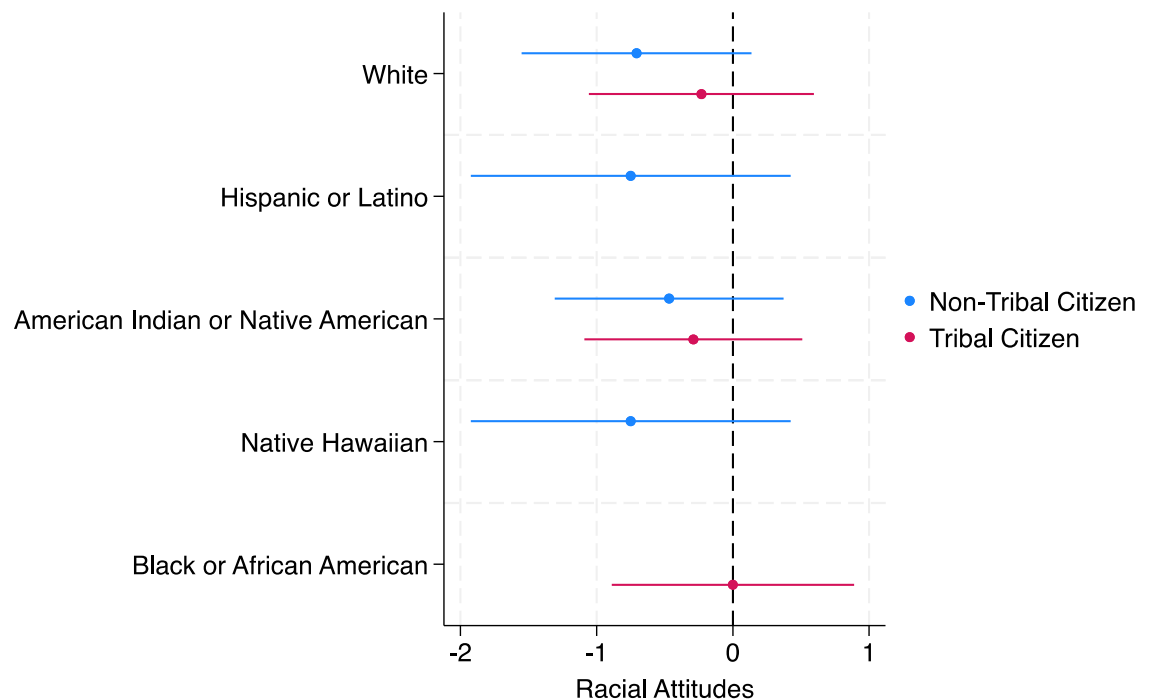
**Source:** 2020 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey

**Note:** Because the CMPS does not have a question to screen for tribal citizenship, I compared racial attitudes between those who said they have Native Ancestry against those who said they do not have Native Ancestry. Higher levels of racial attitudes indicate a belief that Whites generally experience an advantaged position in society while Native Americans hold a disadvantaged position in society.

Consistent with Horse's model, those who claim to have Native ancestry hold stronger racial attitudes than their non-Native counterpart.

While the 2020 CMPS did not collect data on tribal citizenship, my survey was designed to collect tribal citizenship. My survey population is smaller giving much larger confidence intervals and less conclusive results, Figure 8 shows that tribal citizens tend to have slightly higher levels of racial attitudes than their non-tribal citizen counterparts.

**Figure 8: Racial Attitudes and Tribal Citizenship**



**Source:** Native Voices Survey 2023-2024

**Note:** While the Native Voices Survey does not have as large of a population as the CMPS 2020, it asked a question about tribal citizenship, allowing me to compare racial attitudes of tribal citizens to non-tribal citizens. Higher levels of racial attitudes indicate a belief that Whites generally experience an advantaged position in society while Native Americans hold a disadvantaged position in society.

Though the results are not as confident, they do show that tribal citizens may hold stronger racial attitudes than their non-tribal citizen counterparts.

Table 10 shows that tribal citizenship is not a predictor of racial attitudes.

Because of this I must reject H1B that tribal citizens are more likely to hold stronger

racial attitudes than non-tribal citizens. There is a gendered component to racial attitudes in that tribal citizen men are more likely to believe that whites experience discrimination in the United States while Native Americans do not.

**Table 10: Racial Attitude OLS Regression**

| VARIABLES                   | (1)<br>Ancestry         | (2)<br>Non-Citizens     | (3)<br>Tribal Citizens |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Citizen                     | -0.112<br>(0.0758)      | -                       | -                      |
| Personal Sensibility        | -0.0432<br>(0.0479)     | -0.0460<br>(0.0919)     | -0.00424<br>(0.0593)   |
| Age                         | -7.63e-05<br>(0.000134) | -7.39e-05<br>(0.000143) | -0.000147<br>(0.00292) |
| Gender (M)                  | -0.202***<br>(0.0664)   | -0.120<br>(0.108)       | -0.240***<br>(0.0854)  |
| Racially Identify as Native | 0.0612<br>(0.0730)      | 0.229**<br>(0.109)      | -0.119<br>(0.104)      |
| Lived on Reservation        | 0.00700<br>(0.0775)     | -0.137<br>(0.264)       | 0.0265<br>(0.0808)     |
| Native American Identity    | 0.0224<br>(0.0357)      | 0.00112<br>(0.0689)     | 0.0228<br>(0.0427)     |
| Tribal Identity             | 0.260***<br>(0.0853)    | 0.238*<br>(0.129)       | 0.287**<br>(0.118)     |
| Constant                    | 0.457***<br>(0.142)     | 0.419*<br>(0.222)       | 0.387*<br>(0.209)      |
| Observations                | 182                     | 68                      | 114                    |
| R-squared                   | 0.132                   | 0.169                   | 0.166                  |
| F-Stat                      | 3.295                   | 1.738                   | 3.013                  |
| Prob > F                    | 0.00158                 | 0.117                   | 0.00630                |
| Degree of Freedom           | 173                     | 60                      | 106                    |

Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Source:** Native Voices Survey 2023-2024

**Note:** Racial attitudes are coded from -1 to 1, with lower numbers indicating whites experience discrimination and positive numbers indicating Natives experience discrimination. While personal sensibility does not predict racial attitudes, men are less likely to view Native Americans experiencing discrimination. This result varies when looking at tribal citizens and non-tribal citizens.

Table 11 is a replication of the regression model run by Fryberg *et al* (2021).

While my results have a lower significance, they show that men tend to find Native American mascots less harmful, which is consistent with the findings of Fryberg *et*

*al* (2021). However, when splitting results between tribal citizens and non-tribal citizens we see some variation in the predictability of gender on views of use of Native mascots in sports. Ethnic identity also has a moderate effect in predicting the likelihood someone would find Native mascots as harmful. This finding is also consistent with Fryberg *et al* (2021) however by dividing observations into tribal citizens and non-tribal citizens, the effect is eliminated for tribal citizens.

**Table 11: Replication of Fryberg Mascot Harm OLS Regression**

| VARIABLES              | (1)<br>Ancestry        | (2)<br>Non-Citizens     | (3)<br>Tribal Citizens |
|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Citizen                | 0.000562<br>(0.103)    | -                       | -                      |
| Personal Sensibility   | 0.0875<br>(0.0637)     | 0.0510<br>(0.100)       | 0.0958<br>(0.0837)     |
| Age                    | 1.80e-05<br>(0.000206) | -1.50e-06<br>(0.000201) | -0.00660<br>(0.00463)  |
| Gender (M)             | -0.213**<br>(0.101)    | -0.0168<br>(0.154)      | -0.337**<br>(0.136)    |
| Tribal Land Experience | 0.00146<br>(0.119)     | -0.0741<br>(0.363)      | -0.0209<br>(0.130)     |
| Native Identity        | 0.231**<br>(0.105)     | 0.363**<br>(0.164)      | 0.218<br>(0.141)       |
| Constant               | 0.00407<br>(0.160)     | -0.0360<br>(0.229)      | 0.281<br>(0.294)       |
| Observations           | 183                    | 69                      | 114                    |
| R-squared              | 0.091                  | 0.105                   | 0.109                  |
| F-Stat                 | 2.923                  | 1.475                   | 2.655                  |
| Prob > F               | 0.00963                | 0.211                   | 0.0265                 |
| Degree of Freedom      | 176                    | 63                      | 108                    |

Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Source:** Native Voices Survey 2023-2024

**Note:** These results are consistent with Fryberg *et al* (2021) in that citizenship does not predict belief that Native American mascots are harmful, while gender and identity due. However, when splitting observations between tribal citizens and non-citizens results show that gender is only predictive of this belief for tribal citizens. Furthermore, there is variation between the effects of identity between tribal citizens and non-citizens.

Finally, I included the racial attitudes index as described by Horse. Table 12 shows that by including racial attitudes, we see the effects of gender and identity completely disappear. Racial attitudes hold a predictive power over views of Native American mascot use in sports. Generally, those who believe that whites do not experience discrimination, but Native Americans do, tend to believe that Native American mascots are harmful to Native Americans. This result is consistent regardless of tribal citizenship status.

**Table 12: OLS Regression Using Horse Model and Mascot Harm**

| VARIABLES              | (1)<br>Ancestry        | (2)<br>Non-Citizens    | (3)<br>Tribal Citizens |
|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Citizen                | 0.0155<br>(0.0995)     | -                      | -                      |
| Personal Sensibility   | 0.0688<br>(0.0614)     | 0.0473<br>(0.0941)     | 0.0462<br>(0.0839)     |
| Racial Attitudes       | 0.659***<br>(0.105)    | 0.692***<br>(0.153)    | 0.620***<br>(0.144)    |
| Age                    | 7.27e-05<br>(0.000186) | 7.35e-05<br>(0.000176) | -0.00821*<br>(0.00435) |
| Gender (M)             | -0.0996<br>(0.0940)    | 0.0517<br>(0.138)      | -0.202<br>(0.131)      |
| Tribal Land Experience | -0.00625<br>(0.107)    | 0.0714<br>(0.322)      | -0.0468<br>(0.120)     |
| Native Identity        | 0.118<br>(0.106)       | 0.244<br>(0.154)       | 0.0623<br>(0.150)      |
| Tribal Identity        | 0.0335<br>(0.119)      | 0.0199<br>(0.152)      | 0.129<br>(0.188)       |
| Constant               | -0.257<br>(0.163)      | -0.329<br>(0.229)      | 0.166<br>(0.283)       |
| Observations           | 183                    | 69                     | 114                    |
| R-squared              | 0.269                  | 0.340                  | 0.260                  |
| F-Stat                 | 8.017                  | 4.480                  | 5.323                  |
| Prob > F               | 3.51e-09               | 0.000447               | 3.07e-05               |
| Degree of Freedom      | 174                    | 61                     | 106                    |

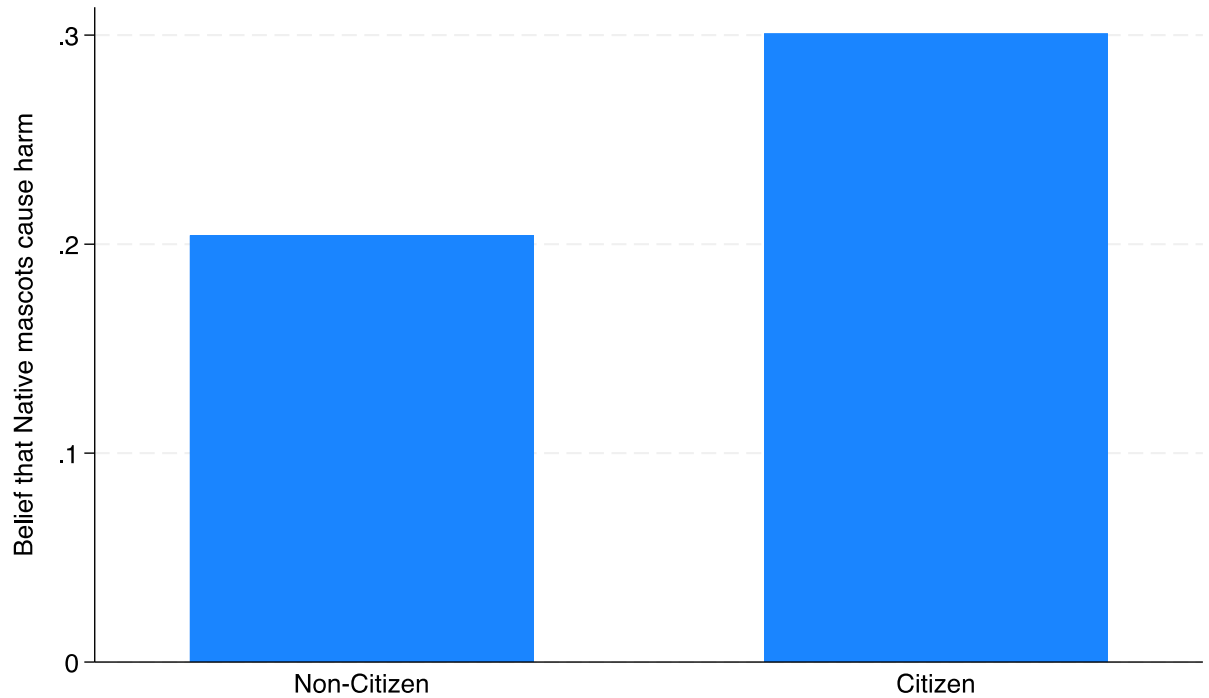
Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Source:** Native Voices Survey 2023-2024

**Note:** Racial attitudes are coded from -1 to 1, with lower numbers indicating Whites experience discrimination and positive numbers indicating Natives experience discrimination. Adding a measure for racial attitudes eliminates the effects of gender and identity.

**Figure 9: Mascot Harm Attitudes by Tribal Citizenship Status**



**Source:** Native Voices Survey 2023-2024

**Note:** Belief that Native mascots are harmful is coded from -1 indicating “strongly disagree” to 1 “strongly agree.” While not significant in predicting differences in opinion, tribal citizens do tend to find Native mascots harmful more than non-tribal citizens.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Personal sensibility seems to hold little influence over racial attitudes. This is possibly because the measures used to capture racial attitudes are salient attitudes for people to hold regardless of their relationship to a tribal community. Those who claim Native American ancestry generally hold stronger racial attitudes than those of the same race who do not claim native ancestry.

Tribal identity does show some predictive power over the level of racial attitudes that Native Americans hold. Horse is correct in asserting that racial attitudes are a part of Native identity, because we can see it when separating pan-

tribal and tribal identities. Future studies could design a racial attitude index designed to focus on Native American views of race.

When replicating the regression from Fryberg *et al* (2021) I created a measure that captured everyone who claimed Native ancestry, and then two measures separating tribal citizens from non-tribal citizens. While tribal citizenship was not significant in the original study or my replication, we can still see variation in the effects of gender and ethnic identity. I think this continues to show the importance of asking respondents about tribal citizenship status because results can vary by population depending on what is being measured. The next chapter focuses on participation in tribal and non-tribal elections, and controlling for tribal citizenship is necessary when measuring participation in tribal elections.

These results completely vanished when adding racial attitudes. Opinions about Native mascots are tied directly to racial attitudes, regardless of tribal citizenship status. It is logical to believe that those who believe Natives experience discrimination will find Native mascots harmful, while those who believe Whites experience discrimination would not find Native mascots harmful. However, this could be because Native mascots are salient in mainstream media, and it is possible that these opinions are formed independently of tribal communities.

## **Chapter 4 Indigenous Behavior: Political Participation in Tribal and Non-Tribal Elections**

### **Introduction**

On election night of 2020 CNN discussed the results of their exit polls as viewers anxiously awaited results. While discussing the race of respondents, the image on screen showed “White, Latino, Black, Something Else, and Asian.” While the “Something Else” group does not exclusively contain Native Americans, it is an example of a rather common occurrence, that Native Americans are not often included in national surveys and political polls. This is understandable in that they can be a difficult population to sample and are a relatively small portion of the overall U.S. population. Furthermore, as demonstrated in Chapter 2, there is not a consistent measurement for surveying Native Americans.

Even though Native Americans represent a small portion of the population, some evidence indicates that Native American vote secured the 2020 presidential election for Joe Biden by swinging Arizona in favor of the Democratic nominee. Joe Biden won Arizona by about 10,500 votes, where voters on the Navajo nation increased to 60,000 votes in 2020 from 52,500 in 2016. However, survey methods do not clarify who constitutes a Native American, whether they are a citizen of a tribe, or have ancestral claims to indigeneity.

This chapter argues for using the Horse model to predict participation in tribal and non-tribal elections. Existing literature finds that the standard socioeconomic status (SES) model does not predict participation in non-tribal

elections. The minimal research that exists on participation in tribal elections finds that tribal identity is the most important determining factor in participation in tribal elections. I find that the SES model does not predict participation in both tribal and non-tribal elections, which is consistent with the existing literature. However, I do find that the Horse model is significant in understanding participation in tribal elections.

## **Native American Political Behavior**

Scholars have identified socioeconomic status (age, education, and income) to be the strongest predictor of participation in American politics (Verba et al., 1995). Some research suggests that socioeconomic does not predict voting participation for Native American voters (Peterson, 1997). Recent research however shows that socioeconomic status predicts political participation when broadening the definition to include non-electoral behaviors such as contacting a government official (Huyser et al., 2017).

Jerry Stubben looked at voting behavior of Navajo citizens in tribal and non-tribal elections and found that, when comparing Navajo participation to other racial and ethnic groups, the Navajo<sup>23</sup> had the highest turnout, even more so than White voters (Stubben, 2005). He also found that Navajo Chapters who were more integrated or assimilated into the Anglo world actually had lower turnout for both

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<sup>23</sup> The Navajo Nation are indigenous to the Southwestern United States, with land spreading across Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico. Their tribal government is organized into 110 Chapters, which are similar to county governments.

tribal and non-tribal elections, illustrating that tribal communities can have an influence over political participation.

Low turnout can also be explained by a history of voter suppression specifically targeting Native Americans (McCool et al., 2007; Peterson, 1957; Sells, 2012). One current issue that Native Americans face is that states have implemented voter ID laws that do not accept tribal identification cards as a valid form of identification to vote (Sells, 2012).

Political science research shows that the political environment can mobilize voters by creating a shared sense of civic community. This sort of community, such as what Putnam (2000) discusses, is what Horse (2005) defines as personal sensibility. As discussed in Chapter 2, personal sensibility is important in understanding Indigenous identity. Political scientists often focus on how shared identity can influence turnout in elections. Much of this literature centers around the notion of "linked fate" initially articulated by Dawson (1995), who argues that Blacks high in group identification see other group members as sharing similar fates, expecting that what would happen to those group members is also likely to happen to them.

Huddy (2013) summarizes a growing body of literature on social identity that helps demonstrate how a politically relevant group orientation helps lower the psychological barriers to participation and motivate others to act in accord with group principles. Importantly, this often depends on the strength of those group identities, as it is not as simple as being an objective group member. Importantly,

this often depends on the strength of those group identities, as it is not as simple as being an objective group member.

Group identity can often override socioeconomic predictors. Similarly, for Latinos, high group identification leads to greater political participation, even when voters are not particularly privileged in terms of resources (Barreto 2007; Barreto and Pedraza 2009). Moreover, recent work extends the identity model to White Americans. For instance, Jardina (2019) finds that affective attachment mobilizes high white identifiers in greater ways than economic evaluations.

Overall, this literature makes clear that people will vote if they see themselves as acting on behalf of a politically salient group, even if the costs to participation are high. These theories of group consciousness, identity, and linked fate help show that one's attachment to a community and sense of belonging to it are critical factors in predicting political engagement.

While there is no shortage of literature on ethnic minority political participation, research on political behavior among Native Americans is limited. Existing literature does show that turnout among American Indians has been low (Peterson 1957, Wang 2012), while others have suggest that turnout largely depends on the election cycle (Herrick & Mendez, 2019; Huyser et al., 2017; Peterson, 1997; Sanchez et al., 2020; Skopek & Garner, 2014). Voter participation in non-tribal elections may fluctuate as some may see participating and voting in U.S. elections as “virtual acts of treason,” whereas others clearly see it as an important vehicle to expand, protect, and advocate for Native American interests (Wilkins and

Stark 2017). Many indigenous people see their tribal government as the only institution capable of representing them and they choose not to participate in non-tribal politics (Wang 2012). Moreover, the most notable predictor of voting behavior among Native Americans is tribal identity (Wilkins and Stark 2017, Herrick and Mendez 2018).

As a unique group of sovereign governments, Native Americans have different socio-political structures governing their societies prior to European arrival in the Americas (Peterson, 1957). Because Native Americans are citizens of sovereign nations, it is possible their group identity is attached to their specific tribe rather than a pan-ethnic identity. Natalie Masuoka and Jane Junn for instance find that for Asian Americans, nation of origin matters more than a pan-ethnic identity. (Masuoka & Junn, 2008)

Because Native Americans have tribal governments to rely on, tribal citizens may not even feel the same compulsion to vote as non-tribal citizens. Tribal governments can work with non-tribal governments to achieve their needs (Evans, 2011, 2014). Research shows that political decisions in tribal politics may have different reasoning than decisions made in non-tribal elections because of historical traumas (Orr, 2017). Peterson (1997) suggests in his narrative that many Native Americans do not follow the traditional individual voting behavior patterns of most Americans or have strong party affiliations because they vote according to tribal issues, often for the candidate who they perceive may advance the best interest of the tribe (Corntassel, 1997; Peterson, 1997). This finding is consistent with other

work that shows that group-targeted appeals can mobilize turnout even across the racial/ethnic aisle (Barreto & Collingwood, 2015; Collingwood, 2020).

Traumas faced by tribes have been shown to have a large impact on modern tribal communities, shaping how they view the world, and is even exhibited in their political behavior (Heart and Horse 2007, Brave Heart, Chase et al. 2011, Orr 2017, Sanchez, Foxworth et al. 2020). This is further seen in non-tribal elections as many tribal citizens who choose to participate are often less concerned about being a part of mainstream political society, and more about the maintenance of their tribal sovereignty (Kahn 2013, Huyser, Sanchez et al. 2017, Wilkins and Stark 2017).

In short, the standard theory of political participation maintains that variables of age, education, and income should positively correlate with voter turnout in tribal and non-tribal elections. However, my theory that is built off the Horse model posits that group membership and engagement in tribal culture predict voter participation in tribal and non-tribal elections.

## **Hypotheses**

Based on the traditional resource model, I would expect that tribal citizens who live on tribal lands, many of whom are socio-economically disadvantaged, would vote at lower rates than would be tribal citizens who live off tribal lands.

**SES Hypothesis (H1):** Compared to voters living off of tribal lands, voters living on tribal lands will be less likely to vote in tribal elections.

However, because voters who live on tribal lands may be more embedded within the tribe, are more likely to be embedded in their tribal culture, I would

hypothesize that members who live on tribal lands are more likely to participate in tribal elections.

**Horse Hypothesis (H2):** Voters who live on tribal land are more likely to participate in tribal elections.

## Data & Methods

My analysis relies on the original data from the Native Voices Survey 2023-2024, collected from attendees at powwows at universities local to the Southern California area, hosted in partnership with regional tribes and their tribal governments. Participation in the survey was completely voluntary by those in attendance at the powwow. Respondents were asked a screening question “Are you at least 18 years of age?” in which those who indicated they were not 18 were removed. The purpose of this study is to analyze those who claim to be Native American, so respondents were also asked “Do you consider yourself, or your family ancestry to be Native American or American Indian?” Giving respondents the opportunity to indicate whether they themselves identify as Native American or have ancestral relations gives respondents more freedom in indicating their relationship to being Native American.

Next, I use the Horse model<sup>24</sup> to measure tribal citizenship, personal connections to tribal community and culture, and their racial attitudes. Tribal

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<sup>24</sup> **Legal & Sovereign Status:** Is the individual a citizen of a tribe?

**Ethnic Nomenclature:** What is the individual’s preferred label of identification?

citizenship is the minimum requirement to participate in tribal elections. The sovereign and legal status of respondents measures the tribal affiliation of individual respondents and was collected through two questions. First respondents were asked “What tribe do you or your family trace your ancestry?” This question is worded in a manner that invites respondents to indicate tribal affiliation even if they may not be citizens. To control for citizenship, respondents are also asked “Are you a citizen of this tribe?” Respondents were also asked a variety of questions including their age, level of education, and income.

To measure personal sensibility, I continue to use the model adapted from the American Indian Enculturation Scale (Winderowd et al., 2008). This scale measures the extent to which people engage in activities related to Native American cultures. Respondents were asked “In general, how much do you participate in the following activities?” with possible responses ranging from never to daily.

**Personal Sensibility Measures:<sup>25</sup>**

1. Seek help from Elders.
2. Socialize with Natives or have Native friends.
3. Use or know Native language.
4. Attend powwows or social dances.
5. Work in Native communities.
6. Sing or drum native songs.
7. Make Native art.
8. Eat or cook Native food.
9. Attend a Native ceremony.
10. Know or share Native history.

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**Racial Attitude:** Does the individual believe that White Euro-American culture oppresses Indigenous cultures and people?

**Personal Sensibility:** How much does the individual engage in their community and culture?

**Cultural Change:** Does the individual view their cultural expressions as more traditional or modern?

<sup>25</sup> These personal sensibility measures were used in the Indigenous Futures Project to measure a relationship with a respondent’s tribe.

These measures are consistent with Horse's model for personal sensibility. No individual activity determines legitimacy of personal sensibility, and some such as being able to speak a language, may not be applicable to all tribes because that language may no longer be available. Because factors may vary between tribes, responses are combined and given an average score, creating a personal sensibility index. Because these activities measure how much one engages in their community and culture, we should expect those who either grew up or currently live on tribal lands to have higher levels of personal sensibility than those who have never lived on tribal land.

I rely on various standard self-reporting measures of identity, in which respondents could indicate the degree to which they agree with a series of statements. The first two statements attempt to capture Indigenous identity; "Being Native American is an important part of my identity," and tribal identity; "Being a member of my tribe is an important part of my identity." Responses were recorded on a 5-point scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." I recoded these responses from -1 indicating "strongly disagree" 0 representing "neither agree nor disagree" and 1 indicating "strongly agree."

Lastly, I replicated questions of political engagement from the 2020 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey (CMPS). For tribal elections, respondents were asked if they are registered to vote in their tribe's elections, and if they selected yes, they were asked; "How often do you vote in your tribe's

elections?" (1 = Never, 2 = Sometimes but not always, 3 = I always vote in tribal elections). Because participation in a tribal election requires citizenship, non-tribal citizens were not included in my samples observing tribal political behavior.

For respondents who indicated that they were registered to vote in state and federal elections, respondents were asked if they voted in the 2020 Presidential election and the 2022 Midterm election (1= Yes, I am 100% certain that I voted, 2= I think I voted, 3= I think I did NOT vote, 4= I am certain that I did NOT vote). I recoded these responses so that only respondents who were 100% sure they voted were scored as 1 and everyone else was scored as 0.

## Results

**Table 13: Survey Demographics**

|                                      | Non-Citizen | Citizen     | Total        |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| N                                    | 76 (38.0%)  | 124 (62.0%) | 200 (100.0%) |
| <b>Age (By Generation)</b>           |             |             |              |
| Gen Z (18-27)                        | 14 (20.6%)  | 25 (21.7%)  | 39 (21.3%)   |
| Millennial (28-42)                   | 26 (38.2%)  | 55 (47.8%)  | 81 (44.3%)   |
| Gen X (43-58)                        | 22 (32.4%)  | 25 (21.7%)  | 47 (25.7%)   |
| Baby Boomer (59-77)                  | 6 (8.8%)    | 10 (8.7%)   | 16 (8.7%)    |
| <b>Lived on Reservation</b>          |             |             |              |
| Never Lived on Tribal Land           | 69 (93.2%)  | 81 (65.3%)  | 150 (75.8%)  |
| Lived on Tribal Land                 | 5 (6.8%)    | 43 (34.7%)  | 48 (24.2%)   |
| <b>Education</b>                     |             |             |              |
| Grades 1-8                           | 1 (1.4%)    | 0 (0.0%)    | 1 (0.5%)     |
| Some Highschool but did not graduate | 2 (2.9%)    | 0 (0.0%)    | 2 (1.1%)     |
| Highschool graduate or GED           | 8 (11.6%)   | 14 (12.0%)  | 22 (11.8%)   |
| Some College                         | 23 (33.3%)  | 44 (37.6%)  | 67 (36.0%)   |
| Associates, 2-Year Degree            | 7 (10.1%)   | 18 (15.4%)  | 25 (13.4%)   |
| Bachelors, 4-year Degree             | 23 (33.3%)  | 26 (22.2%)  | 49 (26.3%)   |
| Post-Graduate Degree                 | 5 (7.2%)    | 15 (12.8%)  | 20 (10.8%)   |
| <b>Income</b>                        |             |             |              |
| Less than \$20,000                   | 15 (21.7%)  | 17 (14.5%)  | 32 (17.2%)   |
| \$20,000 to \$29,999                 | 12 (17.4%)  | 16 (13.7%)  | 28 (15.1%)   |
| \$30,000 to \$39,999                 | 7 (10.1%)   | 13 (11.1%)  | 20 (10.8%)   |
| \$40,000 to \$49,999                 | 6 (8.7%)    | 11 (9.4%)   | 17 (9.1%)    |
| \$50,000 to \$59,999                 | 6 (8.7%)    | 12 (10.3%)  | 18 (9.7%)    |
| \$60,000 to \$69,999                 | 7 (10.1%)   | 8 (6.8%)    | 15 (8.1%)    |
| \$70,000 to \$79,999                 | 3 (4.3%)    | 5 (4.3%)    | 8 (4.3%)     |
| \$80,000 to \$89,999                 | 1 (1.4%)    | 4 (3.4%)    | 5 (2.7%)     |
| \$90,000 to \$99,999                 | 2 (2.9%)    | 8 (6.8%)    | 10 (5.4%)    |
| \$100,000 to \$149,999               | 4 (5.8%)    | 15 (12.8%)  | 19 (10.2%)   |
| \$150,000 to \$199,999               | 2 (2.9%)    | 3 (2.6%)    | 5 (2.7%)     |
| \$200,000 or more                    | 1 (1.4%)    | 4 (3.4%)    | 5 (2.7%)     |
| Prefer not to say                    | 3 (4.3%)    | 1 (0.9%)    | 4 (2.2%)     |

**Source:** Native Voices Survey 2023-2024

Table 14 is a correlation matrix of the aforementioned variables for respondents who indicated tribal citizenship. The variable names are listed in rows with the number associated with their column names. Looking down the first row we can see voting in tribal elections is mildly correlated with participating in non-tribal elections from .277 (Voted in 2022 Election) to .275 (Voted in 2020 Election).

We can also see a positive correlation between engagement in tribal culture, from .300 (personal sensibility) to .408 (living on tribal lands) and participation in tribal elections. Education is the only variable from the SES model that can consistently predict participation in tribal and non-tribal elections. Income and age have minimal to no influence in predicting participation in tribal and non-tribal elections.

| Table 14: Correlation Matrix Between Key Variables |                   |                   |                   |                    |                    |                    |                   |                  |                  |                  |       |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------|
| Variables                                          | (1)               | (2)               | (3)               | (4)                | (5)                | (6)                | (7)               | (8)              | (9)              | (10)             | (11)  |
| (1) Tribal Election Participation                  | 1.000             |                   |                   |                    |                    |                    |                   |                  |                  |                  |       |
| (2) Voted in 2020 Election                         | 0.275*<br>(0.021) | 1.000             |                   |                    |                    |                    |                   |                  |                  |                  |       |
| (3) Voted in 2022 Election                         | 0.277*<br>(0.020) | 0.494*<br>(0.000) | 1.000             |                    |                    |                    |                   |                  |                  |                  |       |
| (4) Personal Sensibility                           | 0.300*<br>(0.009) | -0.069<br>(0.490) | -0.067<br>(0.503) | 1.000              |                    |                    |                   |                  |                  |                  |       |
| (5) Cultural Change                                | -0.131<br>(0.270) | 0.113<br>(0.261)  | -0.065<br>(0.519) | -0.523*<br>(0.000) | 1.000              |                    |                   |                  |                  |                  |       |
| (6) Lived on Reservation                           | 0.408*<br>(0.000) | -0.134<br>(0.176) | 0.025<br>(0.803)  | 0.370*<br>(0.000)  | -0.205*<br>(0.029) | 1.000              |                   |                  |                  |                  |       |
| (7) Native American Identity                       | 0.176<br>(0.129)  | -0.048<br>(0.628) | 0.035<br>(0.724)  | 0.443*<br>(0.000)  | -0.317*<br>(0.001) | 0.199*<br>(0.027)  | 1.000             |                  |                  |                  |       |
| (8) Tribal Identity                                | 0.192<br>(0.097)  | -0.049<br>(0.623) | 0.132<br>(0.184)  | 0.306*<br>(0.001)  | -0.335*<br>(0.000) | 0.141<br>(0.119)   | 0.473*<br>(0.000) | 1.000            |                  |                  |       |
| (9) Age                                            | 0.030<br>(0.799)  | 0.154<br>(0.125)  | 0.281*<br>(0.004) | -0.142<br>(0.133)  | -0.154<br>(0.106)  | -0.168<br>(0.072)  | 0.081<br>(0.391)  | 0.148<br>(0.114) | 1.000            |                  |       |
| (10) Income                                        | -0.081<br>(0.487) | 0.027<br>(0.785)  | 0.066<br>(0.506)  | -0.058<br>(0.536)  | -0.029<br>(0.764)  | -0.197*<br>(0.033) | 0.044<br>(0.635)  | 0.137<br>(0.140) | 0.168<br>(0.072) | 1.000            |       |
| (11) Education                                     | 0.265*<br>(0.021) | 0.338*<br>(0.000) | 0.376*<br>(0.000) | -0.003<br>(0.972)  | 0.009<br>(0.927)   | -0.068<br>(0.470)  | -0.055<br>(0.555) | 0.098<br>(0.292) | 0.081<br>(0.387) | 0.182<br>(0.050) | 1.000 |

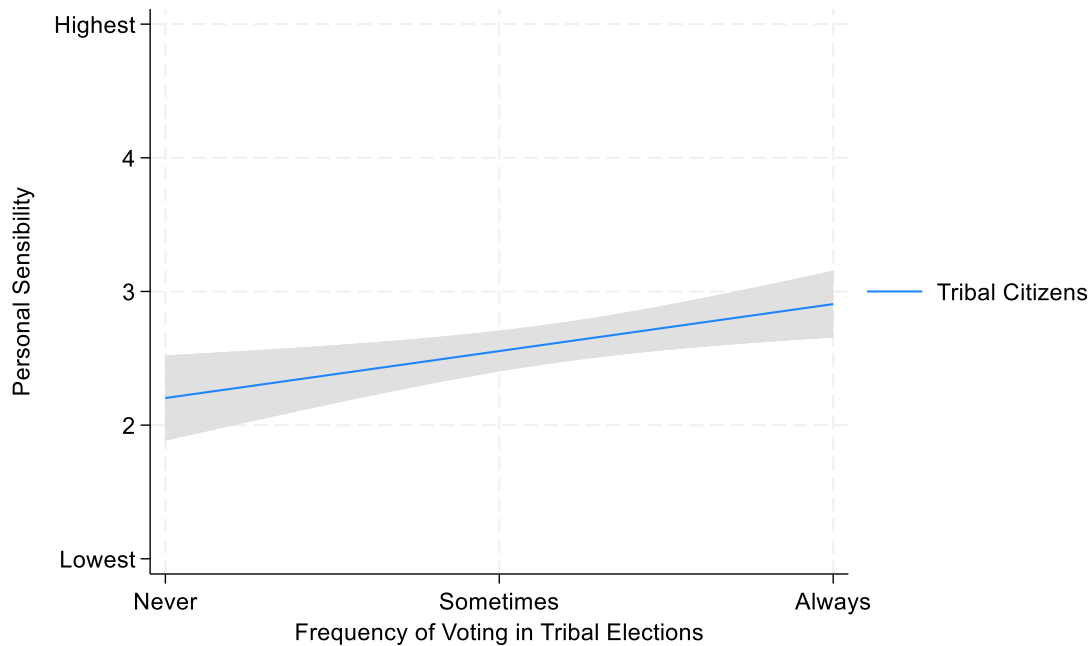
\*\*\*  $p<0.01$ , \*\*  $p<0.05$ , \*  $p<0.1$

Source: Native Voices Survey 2023-2024

**Note:** The strongest predictor of participating in tribal elections is living on tribal lands. While personal sensibility also shows a strong relationship with voting in tribal elections, it is likely a similar population of who has lived on tribal lands. Voting in tribal and non-tribal elections does have a moderate relationship, indicating that being politically active extends beyond the political boundary of a tribe. Although education is the only SES variable that consistently predicts voting, the survey sample has a disproportionate number of people with higher education, due to the data being collected at powwows affiliated with universities.

Figure 10 presents a graphical depiction of the level of personal sensibility and the frequency one votes in tribal elections. Slight increases in personal sensibility, or the amount an individual is connected to their community and culture, indicate a slight increase in likelihood of participating in tribal elections. However, when controlling for other factors such as living on tribal land, we can see that personal sensibility has a reduced impact on participating in tribal elections.

**Figure 10: Personal Sensibility and Frequency of Voting in Tribal Elections**



**Source:** Native Voices Survey 2023-2024

**Note:** While personal sensibility appears to have a mild relationship with participation in tribal elections, it is likely capturing those who live on tribal lands, who will already be likely to have higher levels of personal sensibility.

Table 15 is a regression analysis observing the frequency individuals participate in tribal elections. Those who have higher levels of engagement in their tribe and live on tribal lands are more likely to vote in tribal elections. Though there

is no correlation between income and participation in tribal elections, education and age have a mild predictive power of participating in tribal elections. Because of this I must reject the SES Hypothesis (H1).

**Table 15: OLS Model Predicting Participation in Tribal Elections**

| VARIABLES                           | (1)<br>Tribal Citizens |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Voted in 2020 Presidential Election | 0.328<br>(0.215)       |
| Voted in 2022 Midterm Election      | 0.130<br>(0.165)       |
| Personal Sensibility                | 0.229*<br>(0.125)      |
| Cultural Change                     | -0.0198<br>(0.0365)    |
| Lived on Reservation                | 0.468***<br>(0.153)    |
| Native American Identity            | 0.00459<br>(0.0817)    |
| Tribal Identity                     | -0.0935<br>(0.253)     |
| Age                                 | 0.00663<br>(0.00555)   |
| Income                              | -0.0331<br>(0.0213)    |
| Education                           | 0.108*<br>(0.0629)     |
| Constant                            | 0.634<br>(0.672)       |
| Observations                        | 65                     |
| R-squared                           | 0.387                  |
| F-Stat                              | 3.404                  |
| Prob > F                            | 0.00166                |
| Degree of Freedom                   | 54                     |

Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Source:** Native Voices Survey 2023-2024

**Note:** After controlling for the various effects, we can see that living on tribal lands remains the strongest predictor of participating in tribal elections. While personal sensibility and education have a moderate effect on voting in tribal elections, neither the Horse model nor the SES model are particularly effective in predicting voting in tribal elections.

Next, I will look at participation in non-tribal elections. Tables 16 and 17 are a series of regressions looking at participation in the 2020 Presidential election and 2022 midterm election respectively. These models show that education is the only consistent predictor of voting in non-tribal elections.

**Table 16: Voted in 2020 Election**

| VARIABLES                | (1)<br>Ancestry Model | (2)<br>Non-Tribal Citizens | (3)<br>Tribal Citizens |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Citizen                  | 0.136<br>(0.0851)     | -                          | -                      |
| Personal Sensibility     | 0.0307<br>(0.0596)    | 0.0303<br>(0.124)          | 0.0568<br>(0.0688)     |
| Cultural Change          | 0.0283<br>(0.0202)    | 0.0729*<br>(0.0432)        | 0.0237<br>(0.0228)     |
| Lived on Reservation     | -0.0747<br>(0.0881)   | 0.401<br>(0.353)           | -0.0831<br>(0.0890)    |
| Native American Identity | 0.0459<br>(0.0401)    | 0.127*<br>(0.0742)         | 0.0108<br>(0.0496)     |
| Tribal Identity          | -0.0918<br>(0.0958)   | -0.141<br>(0.151)          | -0.0618<br>(0.133)     |
| Age                      | 0.00286<br>(0.00271)  | -0.00281<br>(0.00508)      | 0.00550<br>(0.00334)   |
| Income                   | -0.00391<br>(0.0103)  | -0.00502<br>(0.0192)       | -0.00273<br>(0.0122)   |
| Education                | 0.0902***<br>(0.0270) | 0.0701<br>(0.0517)         | 0.104***<br>(0.0321)   |
| Constant                 | -0.232<br>(0.326)     | -0.545<br>(0.605)          | -0.189<br>(0.404)      |
| Observations             | 153                   | 56                         | 97                     |
| R-squared                | 0.112                 | 0.135                      | 0.158                  |
| F-Stat                   | 2.007                 | 0.918                      | 2.062                  |
| Prob > F                 | 0.0425                | 0.510                      | 0.0482                 |
| Degree of Freedom        | 143                   | 47                         | 88                     |

Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Source:** Native Voices Survey 2023-2024 2023

**Note:** While education shows predictive power over participation in non-tribal elections, neither the Horse model nor the SES model are particularly effective in predicting participation in non-tribal elections.

When thinking about their cultural attachments, non-tribal citizens who identified themselves as moderate were slightly more likely to vote. These results

were not consistent in predicting voter turnout in 2022, where cultural views had no effect, while personal sensibility had a mild effect for non-citizens. I am unable to accept the SES Hypotheses (H1) for non-tribal elections or the Horse Hypotheses (H2).

**Table 17: Voted in 2022 Election**

| VARIABLES                | (1)<br>Ancestry Model  | (2)<br>Non-Tribal Citizens | (3)<br>Tribal Citizens |
|--------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Citizen                  | 0.0408<br>(0.100)      | -                          | -                      |
| Personal Sensibility     | 0.0261<br>(0.0703)     | 0.271*<br>(0.138)          | -0.0403<br>(0.0824)    |
| Cultural Change          | -0.00131<br>(0.0238)   | 0.0360<br>(0.0479)         | -0.00719<br>(0.0274)   |
| Lived on Reservation     | 0.0570<br>(0.104)      | -0.159<br>(0.392)          | 0.0961<br>(0.107)      |
| Native American Identity | 0.000441<br>(0.0473)   | -0.00816<br>(0.0823)       | -0.0247<br>(0.0595)    |
| Tribal Identity          | 0.0232<br>(0.113)      | -0.211<br>(0.168)          | 0.203<br>(0.159)       |
| Age                      | 0.00724**<br>(0.00319) | 0.000308<br>(0.00564)      | 0.00946**<br>(0.00401) |
| Income                   | 0.0101<br>(0.0122)     | 0.0248<br>(0.0213)         | 0.00179<br>(0.0146)    |
| Education                | 0.111***<br>(0.0318)   | 0.0655<br>(0.0574)         | 0.133***<br>(0.0384)   |
| Constant                 | -0.422<br>(0.385)      | -0.714<br>(0.672)          | -0.348<br>(0.484)      |
| Observations             | 153                    | 56                         | 97                     |
| R-squared                | 0.152                  | 0.163                      | 0.239                  |
| F-Stat                   | 2.858                  | 1.147                      | 3.460                  |
| Prob > F                 | 0.00396                | 0.351                      | 0.00164                |
| Degree of Freedom        | 143                    | 47                         | 88                     |

Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Source:** Native Voices Survey 2023-2024

**Note:** This regression table shows how strong standard measures of socioeconomic status, such as age, income, and education, serve as predictors for participation in nontribal elections. The first column represents those who identify as having some Native American ethnicity, while the second column represents those who identify Native American as their primary ethnicity. Consistent with existing literature, age and education serve as reliable predictors for participation in non-tribal elections. However, it should be noted that this sample has a disproportionate distribution of educated respondents and may possibly be an outlier.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

This chapter advances the literature on Native American political participation in tribal and non-tribal elections. The Horse model helps us understand a bit about who participates in tribal elections. Legal and sovereign status allows us to control for citizenship when observing participation in tribal elections. Tribal citizenship is the minimal requirement for participating in tribal elections, and without controlling for citizenship survey results run the risk of generating a type 2 error as non-citizens may indicate that they do not vote. Furthermore, we can see minor variations in the effects education has on predicting political behavior in non-tribal elections.

However, the SES model is not particularly effective in predicting participation in tribal or non-tribal elections, which is consistent with the existing literature. While education consistently had mild predictive results for both tribal and non-tribal elections, it is possible this is a result of sampling bias. My survey was conducted at powwows primarily affiliated with universities, which may have attracted alumni and students. Table 1 shows that 36% of my sample have a bachelor's degree or higher.

## **Chapter 5 Conclusion**

### **Introduction**

People indigenous to the western hemisphere have had labels forced upon them by Europeans since 1492. Europeans brought their definitions of race and blood quantum and used them as tools to oppress the indigenous peoples of America. The racialization of Native Americans was initially established as a method of stealing land and limiting who the government would recognize as a legitimate Native American. While U.S. law has made strides in moving away from race-based discrimination, its oppressive effects remain. Racial conceptions of Native Americans are still utilized in surveys distributed by state and federal governments, national media outlets, and academics.

This dissertation has argued for moving away from relying on racial measurements for surveying Native Americans and relying on ancestral and tribal citizenship measurements. I have repeatedly expressed that Native Americans are not a race but many sovereign peoples. Therefore, we can expect that Native Americans are a racially diverse population whose attitudes are shaped by their ancestral and tribal relationships as much as their race.

## **Summary of Findings**

### **Indigenous Identity**

The 2020 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey showed that a third of people who claim their race as Native American, do not consider themselves to be Native American when asked about their Native ancestry. My survey, the Native Voices Survey 2023-2024, showed that 28% of people who claimed Native American as their primary race were not citizens of a tribe. I do not consider tribal citizenship to be a requirement for experiencing Indigenous identity, rather it can allow us to better understand who is being surveyed.

In Chapter 2 I found that, while tribal citizenship was important in predicting how engaged one is in their tribe, proximity to tribal land was the most important factor, regardless of citizenship. It is not particularly surprising that those who live near their tribal communities are most likely to participate in those communities, it is important to note that non-citizens who live on tribal land are still likely to be involved in those tribal communities.

Perry Horse (Kiowa) also argues that citizenship is only a small aspect of Indigenous identity. He argues that personal sensibility, or the personal connection has to their culture, and community, as well as cultural change, or the personal connection one has with their cultural traditions, are important to understanding Indigenous identity.

My findings in Chapter 2 support Horse's argument. The frequency a person is engaged in their tribal community and culture can predict how important

being Indigenous is to their identity, regardless of their tribal citizenship status. This does not mean that tribal citizenship is irrelevant to measuring identity, rather it is important to note that even non-citizens are both involved in their tribal communities and can have stronger feelings of Indigenous identity.

### **Indigenous Attitudes**

Horse also discussed that racial attitudes are also an important aspect of Indigenous identity, regardless of tribal citizenship or racial identification. That is, anyone who holds an Indigenous experience should recognize that Indigenous people have been negatively impacted by a White dominated society.

In Chapter 3 I found that tribal citizens were more likely to have stronger racial attitudes than their non-tribal counterparts across all racial groups. Furthermore, using the nationally representative sample from the 2020 CMPS, I found that those who claimed to have Native American ancestry, regardless of their racial identity, had stronger racial attitudes than their counterparts who did not claim Native ancestry. This supports Horse's claim regarding racial attitudes among Native Americans, and further supports my argument that Native American identity extends beyond racial identity.

While I found that identifying as Native American, regardless of tribal citizenship, does tend to illustrate higher levels of racial attitudes, there seems to be a gendered component, particularly when filtering for tribal citizens and non-citizens. Tribal citizens who identify as male are more likely to have lower racial

attitudes, implying that there is a gendered component to racial attitudes among Native Americans. This does not seem to be as big of an issue for non-tribal citizens who identify as Native American. While this issue deserves more attention, it certainly illustrates the importance of measuring for tribal citizenship when surveying Indigenous populations.

### **Indigenous Political Behavior**

Screening for tribal citizenship is not only important for understanding attitudes but also capturing political behaviors. For instance, any survey that attempts to measure political participation in tribal politics should certainly consider that tribal citizenship is required for participating in tribal elections. The Horse model insists that we consider legal and sovereign status when thinking about Indigenous identity. Chapter 4 used the Horse model to observe participation in tribal and non-tribal elections.

After screening for citizenship, I found that those who live closer to their tribal community and participate in their tribal community, are also most likely to vote in their tribal community. I also find that the SES model is less reliable for predicting participation in tribal elections. While my results show that education is correlated with participation in tribal elections, it is important to note that my sample was biased towards a college educated population, which is not representative of the education levels of Native Americans. Previous research has

generally found that education is not a reliable predictor of participating in tribal elections.

I also observed political participation in non-tribal elections in the 2020 presidential election as well as the 2022 midterm election. Here I found that the relationship to one's tribal community and culture were not particularly relevant predictors of participating in non-tribal elections. In fact, while my results showed that age and education could predict tribal citizens participating in non-tribal elections, these results were not consistent for non-tribal citizens who still indicate that they have Native ancestry. Even still, these results are biased toward a more educated population, so even education might not be a reliable predictor if applied to a nationally representative sample.

## **Current Limitations**

This project required the use of original data because of the lack of existing data. Many surveys do not include Native American populations because they are an expensive population to survey. The surveys that do include Native Americans are not always consistent in how they capture Native populations, and rarely include a question about tribal citizenship. I argued that, while tribal citizenship is not necessary to experience Indigenous identity, it is important for understanding who is identifying as Native American.

I collected survey data from people who attended powwows in Southern California in 2023. Most of these powwows were affiliated with a university, and

while they were generally conducted in coordination with local tribes, they were hosted on university property, attracting a lot of current and former college students. While this attracted a college educated population, I believed that powwows were a good choice for capturing a population that identifies as Native American, regardless of tribal citizenship status.

Consider who would potentially attend a powwow. I would generally expect tribal citizens who are engaged in their tribal community and culture to attend. There are also non-citizens who may be engaged with their culture who would like to attend and participate. But powwows are open and a welcoming environment for anyone to attend, regardless of their affiliation with a tribal community. I expected many people who may fetishize Native American culture who wish to connect with the family lore regarding a possible Indigenous ancestor. These are also an excellent people to capture in my survey, as I wished to illustrate the differences between people who claim Indigenous ancestry, when looking at other factors such as tribal citizenship and personal ties to a tribal community.

Those who are highly connected with their culture and community are likely to attend a powwow if they have the resources to attend. Unfortunately, this does not include those who do not have the resources to travel to a university to attend a powwow, even if it is affiliated with their tribe. I expect that my sample is biased toward people who may have more resources, be it time or money.

My sample was also relatively small, consisting of about 200 respondents. This was potentially large enough to illustrate some of the points I was making, but

certainly not nationally representative. My sample included people from over 100 tribes, some with federal or state recognition, and some Indigenous to Mexico. While citizens of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, and Navajo Nation were prominent participants, they are also the two largest communities in the country, with satellite communities in major metropolitan areas. Most tribes were represented by one or two respondents, making it impossible to disaggregate respondents by tribe. I also urge caution in disaggregating data by tribe without coordinating with tribal governments themselves, as Native Americans have had a history of outside groups pitting them against each other.

Indigenous ancestry should be the base question for screening for Indigenous populations. Unfortunately, the language I used in my survey created confusion and limitations on those who chose to respond. The limiting language I chose for a screening question read:

This survey is intended for those who either identify as Native American or have Native American ancestry. Do you consider yourself, or your family ancestry to be Native American or American Indian? (Please select all that matter) If you do not have any American Indian or Native ancestry, please click No

While meeting people at powwows, I would often have people with Indigenous ancestry tied to Hawaii as well as Central and South America. I am sure that I missed many potential respondents because of this. Researchers should consider rephrasing this question to be more inclusive of anyone who claims ancestry dating back to pre-European contact. Then further screens can be applied to determine where they trace their ancestry, and if the individual identifies as

Native American, Native Hawaiian, Latino, etc.... Native American is generally a legal term limited to individuals who have pre-European contact ancestry in the continental United States.

## **Future of the Field**

This dissertation argued for moving away from racialized conceptions of Native Americans. Perry Horse's Indigenous identity model is only one way of conceiving of Indigenous identity, but certainly not the only way. Indigenous people are not a monolith, and some models may work better for some groups than others. I do not argue for removing the racial and ethnic conceptions of Native Americans, as many do view themselves through racial and ethnic lenses. Rather, I believe casting a broader net to capture anyone who claims Indigenous ancestry, and then screening for the desired populations from there.

I believe that this dissertation poses a foundational question to studying Indigenous populations, in that we should be clearer about who we are surveying. While my argument focuses on moving away from relying on racial measurements to survey Native populations, it does not explore the relationship between racial identity and Indigenous identity.

While attending powwows, I had discussions with Black tribal citizens, who would tell me about their experiences, and that people do not see them as Native American, even though they have tribal citizenship. Afro-Indigeneity in the Western hemisphere is complex and not limited to the United States. The slave trade took

Africans unwillingly from their homes and spread them around the globe. Many slaves escaped and developed relationships with local Indigenous communities, creating new communities. Many tribes also participated in the slave trade, and while some tribes offered citizenship to their former slaves and their descendants, many tribes did not offer tribal citizenship. Even among the tribes that did offer citizenship to their former slaves, racial tensions still exist.

European colonization did not just spread African slaves around the world, but also spread Whiteness. Many tribes in the United States maintain blood quantum requirements for tribal citizenship, because they feared that White tribal citizens would overtake their community and culture, erasing the traditions of their Indigenous ancestors in favor of the traditions of their European ancestors.

Future research focusing on Indigenous populations with tribal governments should also consider asking tribal citizenship status as a baseline question. While tribal citizenship is not necessary for Indigeneity, it can explain patterns of behavior between tribal citizens and non-tribal citizens. If researchers hope to get a better understanding of participation in tribal politics, then tribal citizenship is required. If researchers wish to observe participation in non-tribal politics, tribal citizenship status may be able to give us a better glimpse at what is influencing attitudes and behaviors of Indigenous populations.

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