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**AN EXAMINATION OF SELF-IDENTITY, SENSE OF CONNECTION, AND
MEMBERSHIP OF INDIVIDUALS WITH NATIVE AMERICAN ANCESTRY**

A Research Project

Presented to the Faculty of

The George L. Graziadio

School of Business and Management

Pepperdine University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

in

Organization Development

by

Tamara Van Schyndel

April 2018

This research project, completed by

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under the guidance of the Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the faculty of The George L. Graziadio School of Business and Management in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

Date: March 2018

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Abstract

This exploratory qualitative study examined individuals' self-identity and sense of belonging related to the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin and the impacts of their tribal connection as enrolled tribal members. It was believed the greater the sense of belonging and connection, the stronger the identity and the greater the impact on the community as a whole. Eight individuals with Oneida ancestry were interviewed about their Native American ancestry and membership, participation in Oneida community, sense of connection and belonging to family and community, self-identity, and congruence with Oneida ancestry and tribal enrollment. Although participants generally did not participate in formal cultural or community activities, they reported connection and belonging to their families and ancestry and self-identified as Native American. They believed their self-identities influence their desires to give back to the community. Based on this study, the Oneida community is advised to: host tribal events related to strengthening identity and building community, develop and incorporate school-age curricula and programs that support Native American identity development, and review and revise tribal membership criteria to support the sustainability and sovereignty of the tribe.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iii
List of Tables	vii
1. Introduction.....	1
Study Purpose	3
Study Setting.....	3
Definitions.....	4
Significance of the Study	5
Researcher Background	6
Organization of the Study	8
2. Literature Review.....	9
Native Americans in the United States	9
Tribe demographics	10
Tribal government.....	10
Benefits of tribal membership.....	11
Processes and procedures of tribal membership	13
Trends in tribal membership procedures.....	14
Challenges and risks related to membership procedures	15
Identification.....	16
Emergence of identification.....	18
Importance of identification.....	19
Ethnic and cultural identity.....	19
Nature of identification in Native American tribes.....	22

Dynamics of congruence and dissonance between identification and tribal membership	23
3. Methods.....	26
Research Design.....	26
Participants.....	27
Confidentiality and Consent Procedures.....	28
Data Collection	29
Data Analysis	30
Summary.....	30
4. Results.....	31
Native American Ancestry and Membership.....	31
Participation in Oneida community	32
Sense of Connection and Belonging.....	34
Self-Identity and Congruence with Oneida Ancestry and Enrollment	38
Impact of Identity and Identity Congruence	42
Summary.....	44
5. Discussion.....	46
Conclusions.....	46
Participants’ sense of connection and belonging	46
Participants’ self-descriptions.....	49
Impacts of participants’ self-descriptions	51
Recommendations.....	53
Limitations	55

Suggestions for Further Research	57
Summary	58
References.....	60
Appendix A: Study Invitation.....	65
Appendix B: Consent Form	66
Appendix C: Interview Script	69

List of Tables

Table	Page
1. Participant Demographics.....	28
2. Native American Ancestry and Membership.....	32
3. Participation in Oneida Community	33
4. Reasons for Level of Participation in Oneida Community.....	34
5. Connection to Family.....	35
6. Sense of Belonging to Oneida Nation.....	36
7. Connection to Oneida Community	37
8. Felt Connection to Oneida Community	38
9. Self-Reported Self-Identity.....	39
10. Congruence Between Ancestral Heritage and Self-Identity	40
11. Importance of Self-Identification as a Native American	41
12. Congruence between Oneida Enrollment Status and Self-Identity.....	42
13. Reflection on Self-Identity, Ancestral Heritage, Importance of Native American Ancestry and Oneida Enrollment Status	43
14. Impacts of Self-Identity and Oneida Connection on Oneida Tribal Community .	44

Chapter 1

Introduction

Historically, cultural identity was intrinsically shared via kinship and community of each autonomous Native Nation. Each native or tribal nation may be different, but for the most part, if your mother said you were Indian you were Indian. Natives were raised in inclusive communities and everyone had roles and responsibilities within the tribe. Natives grew up immersed in their native language and participated in their tribe's traditional ceremonies. There was no need for an Indian to question who they were or to whom they belonged. Identities were strong.

It was not until contact with the colonists and the subsequent development of the federal government that a legal definition was required to identify a Native American. The federal government, by passing the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, formulated a standard for determining who would be recognized as Indian:

All persons of Indian descent who are members of any recognized Indian tribe now under Federal jurisdiction, and all persons who are descendants of such members who were, on June 1, 1934, residing within the present boundaries of any Indian reservation, and shall further include persons of one-half or more Indian blood (Indian Reorganization Act, 73d Congress, Sess.II, ch. 576, 48 Stat.988, §19).

Clarity in defining tribal membership was necessary from a federal government perspective so that resources were appropriately distributed to Native peoples (Kiel, 2017).

Further, Senator Burton K. Wheeler of Montana, a sponsor of the Indian Reorganization Act, voiced concern that lowering the blood quantum criterion to less than 50% would increase the pool of Native claimants to an unsustainable size (as cited in Kiel, 2017). Kiel (2017) argues that Wheeler's view was to "get rid of the Indian

problem” by subverting Indigenous people’s sovereignty and sustaining White supremacy (p. 90). Kiel elaborated that blood quantum was a system invented as part of the 1887 Dawes Act and 1934 Indian Reorganization Act as a means to undermine the inherent authority of Native people, sustain White supremacy, continue the disregard for indigenous sovereignty, and ultimately limit how many people could claim Indigenous identity. By creating and enforcing blood quantum criteria, the United States still seeks to dominate natives by enforced colonialism.

Demographic shifts like globalization, moving away from the reservation for education, traveling for work, and intermarriage with other ethnicities, to name a few, lessen the quantum percentage of blood of Native American individuals generation after generation. In the Oneida Nation, for example, the last full blood was born in 2010 and the last quarter blood is projected to be born in less than fifty years. For Oneida, one quarter blood quantum is required to be eligible for tribal membership/enrollment. This means there are but a few decades remaining before the last individual eligible to meet the minimum Oneida membership requirement is born.

Given this, blood quantum is not a sustainable method to identify tribal membership. Additionally, the consequences are multitudinous. On a collective level, the tribe would simply cease to exist. Once there are no more new membership enrollments, the tribal population would decline and the sovereign nation, the self-determining government, as well as the tribal community cease to exist. At the individual level, identity is lost.

Some tribes have approached the problem of blood quantum mathematics and potential tribal extinction by changing their constitutions and/or membership enrollment criteria, namely by initiating descendent lineage, cultural criteria, lesser blood quantum

requirements, or a combination of these. Ultimately, it will be necessary for tribes, if they want to continue to exist as recognized sovereign nations, to create a sustainable definition of membership and adapt membership criteria, accordingly. However, in order to do so will require gathering more information, particularly about the congruence and dissonance between identification and membership processes.

The focus of this study is to explore self-identity, how this relates to the tribe's membership criteria, and the impacts the dynamics have on individuals who identify as Native American, but who are not an "official" tribal member according to the membership criteria.

Study Purpose

The specific purpose of this study is to examine individuals' self-identity and participation related to the Oneida Nation (of Wisconsin) and the impacts of their tribal connection. Three research questions were examined:

1. What are participants' sense of connection and belonging to their families and ancestry?
2. What are participants' self-descriptions related to their ethnic identity and tribal membership?
3. What are the impacts of their self-descriptions?

Study Setting

The Oneida Nation is a federally recognized Native American tribe situated on non-contiguous acres crossing both Brown and Outagamie counties in northeastern Wisconsin. The Oneida reservation is within and adjacent to the city of Green Bay and the villages of Ashwaubenon and Hobart.

The population of the Oneida Nation is 17,268 worldwide. Approximately 7,500 individuals with Oneida ancestry live on or near the reservation in northeast Wisconsin.

A second highly populated area of approximately 2,000 Oneidas is located in southeastern Wisconsin in or near the city of Milwaukee. It is important to note there are three other Oneida nations: the Oneida Indian Nation in New York, the Oneida at Six Nations of the Grand River, Canada, and the Oneida Nation of the Thames in Southwold, Canada. These are not included in this study.

Definitions

Eleven definitions are relevant to this study:

1. *Blood* is the “substance of inheritance in pregenomic eras” (Tallbear, 2013). *Full blood* was a common reference in the 19th century.
2. *Blood quantum*, imposed from within and without, has shaped Native identity and has been the primary determinant of deciding “Who is an Indian” for more than a century (Hill, 2017).
3. *Enrollment* is the process/procedure a Native American tribe undertakes to officially acknowledge a member of the tribe. Being an enrolled member of a tribe means one is legally recognized as a member.
4. *Identification* is simultaneously both a verb and a noun. Identification as a verb is the process of identifying oneself, denoting how one references and/or defines themselves, and according to Ashforth, Cheney, and Tompkins (1987); it depicts the process of becoming. As a noun, identification, also relative to the term *identity*, is a way or a state of being. Identification offers a sense of order and satisfies a need for belonging.
5. *Identity* is a way or a state of being (Ashforth et al., 1987). There are three main components to the core of identity, according to Ashforth, Harrison, and Corley (2008), self-definition, importance, and affect. These components correspond to the following questions: *Who am I? What do I value? And How do I feel about?*
6. *Indianness* is the degree by which the level or amount of Indian blood is/was referenced. The greater degree of white blood, the more competent an Indian was presumed to be able to manage affairs in the civilized world (Harris, Tijerina, & Harris, 2017).
7. *Membership* is the state of being a member or a part of something. Tribes have determined membership by using a variety of criteria, such as reservation residency, cultural affiliation, gendered notions of kinship, etc. Indians have created different strategies for delineating who can legitimately claim rights as members of their tribes (Adams, 2012). In order to become a member, one must prove possession of the tribe’s membership criteria.

8. *Oneida community*: consists of the individuals who self-identify as Oneida and gather together for social, cultural, and other events.
9. *Oneida Enrolled*: one who is recognized as a legal member of the Oneida Nation (of Wisconsin) for having at least $\frac{1}{4}$ blood quantum from the Oneida Nation (of Wisconsin). Oneida Enrolled is equivalent to Oneida Tribal Member.
10. *Oneida Nation*: the Native American governmental organization recognized by the United States federal government.
11. *Sovereignty* is a legal word for an ordinary concept—the authority to self-govern (National Congress of American Indians, 2001-2018c).

Significance of the Study

This study's purpose was to discuss self-identity, sense of connection and belonging, and self-described identity as they relate to individual membership status and Native American identity. The dynamics of these relationships are relevant and present issues within the Oneida Nation. Information about Oneida descendants is greatly lacking. Anecdotally, the dissonance between Oneida descendants' self-identities and their tribal membership appears to be strong for at least some, resulting in a lack of belonging and identity loss. It is unknown if any research has been conducted relevant to this specific study topic, as none were located.

The projections of the declining population (in about 5 years) and the last quarter blood Oneida to be born in a few decades were the impetuses for the research urgency. Tribal membership criteria is in question and, through informal dialogue, many members of the community have expressed concern that blood quantum is not sustainable. Additionally, in recent months, flyers promoting community discussions regarding increased opioid abuse, addictions and related deaths have been circulating which have also elevated the urgency. Speculating these matters are not mutually exclusive, and being privy to informal dialogue regarding the effects of a fragmented society and broken

social systems, made this research even more important for this particular Oneida Nation community.

The Oneida Nation is not the only native nation with this issue. There are tribes that have reviewed and revised their membership practices and procedures. However, there are many more that have not. It is a national issue among Native nations and there are no simple answers. The conclusions of this study will provide other native nations a reference point for further research and most importantly, changes and enhancements to current tribal membership practices.

Thus, this study is both important and urgent because there is little literature relevant to both cultural identity, tribal membership and Native American identity. Additional results produce current information about the potential impacts of dissonance between identity and membership. This creates potential validation points and/or significant benchmarks of the impacts of dissonance between identity and Native American membership and could initiate tribal programs to build individuals (esteem and confidence) and further strengthen their self-identity. In effect, this work could lead to more resilient individuals and can begin to repair the fragmented community— familial and organizationally.

Researcher Background

My mother is 3/4 Oneida and my father white, which makes me 3/8 Oneida (0.375 blood quantum). While I am an Oneida enrolled tribal member and was raised on the reservation I did not grow up with the culture, language or traditions. Instead, I grew up hearing frequent stories from my white grandmother of the drunks, thieves and cheaters who were apparently my kin. I was taught to take pride in not taking

governmental (federal or Oneida) handouts, and I became even more conflicted in college when I was pressured to utilize federal grants because I am an enrolled tribal member.

I struggled in college. I had never known anyone to go to university and had no idea what to expect or how to be a successful student. There were no obvious programs or services available to me, and even if there were, I was not looking for assistance. I was taught to take care of myself (and everyone else). Eventually, I did accept grant money to get me through the next semester, and ended up dropping out, but not before I had a verbal altercation with a native friend about my Indianness. I was adamant I was not Indian.

My identity crisis consistently emerged, accompanied by severe depression and bouts with alcohol. My life significantly changed with intermittent counseling, and especially when I married and had my daughter. I have worked for the Oneida Nation for over twenty-five years now and have essentially been on a mission of self-awareness, people building, and process improvement. Most recently, I have been involved in a consultant capacity engaging community in dialogue about tribal membership and belonging.

My experiences have certainly led me to this project, but the continued interest I have in the topic is due to my daughter. My daughter is half Hispanic and 3/16 Oneida, not enough to be enrolled Oneida. She struggles at times with her own identity and has become intrigued by the topic of blood quantum and identity through my work and curiosity. I believe this study will continue to help her and others so that struggles with identity decrease and can be replaced with programs to strengthen our youth and build resilient Oneidas who will continue to protect the next seven generations.

Organization of the Study

This chapter provided the background and purpose for the study. The study setting and significance as well as my background as the researcher also were provided. Chapter 2 provides a review of theory and research relevant to the present study. Literature on Native Americans, identification, and tribal membership practices is reviewed. Chapter 3 describes the methods that were used in this project. The research design as well as the procedures related to participant selection, confidentiality and consent procedures, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis are described.

Chapter 4 will report the results of the study. Chapter 5 will provide a discussion of the study results, including conclusions, limitations of the study, recommendations, and suggestions for continued research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to examine individuals' self-identity and participation related to the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin and the impacts of their tribal connection. This chapter reviews Native Americans in the United States, particularly, tribal demographics, tribal government, benefits of tribal membership, processes and procedures of tribal membership, trends in tribal membership procedures, and challenges and risks related to tribal membership procedures. Identification is also reviewed, namely its emergence, importance, the nature of identification in Native American tribes, and the dynamics of congruence and dissonance between self-identification and tribal membership.

Native Americans in the United States

Native Americans are widely known as socially and geographically diverse groups that have inhabited the United States for thousands of years. Historically, Native American peoples have experienced trauma in the form of dislocation from their Native lands, enforced separation from their cultural roots and assimilation to European American traditions, and systematic attempts to eliminate their Native languages and spiritual practices. Psychological and behavioral problems are the natural consequence of such erosion of their traditional ways of life. Conditions of racial discrimination only deepen the psychological wounds Native peoples have faced (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010; Hawkins, Cummins, & Marlatt, 2004).

According to the 2014 American Community Survey, about 2% percent of the total U.S. population consists of American Indians and Alaska Natives (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). That equates to approximately 5.4 million Native Americans who

potentially struggle to maintain their ancestral practices (Evans-Campbell, 2008), while increasing their representation in American political and cultural life. The term *potentially* bears italics here because not all natives are the same. There are over 500 tribes that have different cultures, traditions, and languages. There are urban and rural native people that flow repeatedly to and from both contexts of the native and non-native worlds (Proulx, 2006). There are some Native American tribes that are successful in both worlds, others continue to struggle from various traumas, and other tribes no longer exist.

Through colonization, land, language and culture were taken from native people. Native Americans, some seeing themselves through a paradigm of collectiveness, were determined to protect its people by complying (albeit forcefully) with living on reservations, sending their children to boarding schools to become colonialized, and no longer speaking their languages and practicing their traditions. In recent years, the native struggles were met with educated and prominent tribal leaders who once again are standing up for their people—standing up against government policy, holding the federal government to its treaties, and fighting to protect their inherent sovereignty.

Tribe demographics. There are 567 federally recognized Native American tribes (U.S. Department of the Interior Indian Affairs, 2017). Instead of tracking tribes separately, the many diverse groups were divided into “culture areas” based on similar habitats and characteristics. North America, excluding present-day Mexico, is broken into ten “separate culture areas: the Arctic, the Subarctic, the Northeast, the Southeast, the Plains, the Southwest, the Great Basin, California, the Northwest Coast and the Plateau (Pritzker, 2000).

Tribal government. Similar to other governments, Native American governments have power to determine their own way of governance, pass and enforce

laws through police departments and judicial systems, create and maintain infrastructure, and provide benefits and services for its citizens. The United States Constitution however, also makes tribal governments unique. It recognizes the sovereignty of tribal governments and their authority to self-govern, based on confirmation from treaties, executive orders, laws, and Supreme Court rulings (National Congress of American Indians, 2001-2018c). At the same time, these governments do have to maintain relationships with local, state and federal governments and agencies. It is recognized that the status of tribal nation governments is central to many issues relative to tribal nations.

Tribal nations and state governments have many common interests. For example, they share responsibility, with local municipalities as well, for public resources and the environment. They also strive to protect and serve their communities through comprehensive services, and their goals align in that both tribes and states strive to maintain strong and healthy economies (National Congress of American Indians, 2001-2018b). It is important to nurture intergovernmental relationships, especially for all to reap the benefits of potential collaborations and improvements.

Benefits of tribal membership. Benefits and services accompany tribal membership in a variety of ways. Federal agencies and funding are in place to uphold the responsibilities the federal government agreed to provide for Native American tribes. Most notably, the Bureau of Indian Affairs carries out programs that support and assist tribal governments comparable to programs of state and other local governments. This includes educational programs, social services, and resource protection (U.S. Department of the Interior, 2017). These benefit tribal members mostly indirectly, as they assist in the development of government, economy and program improvements.

More directly, tribal members benefit psychologically, emotionally, and physically from special programs of the Indian Health Service (IHS). IHS provides health care services and medical care, as well as specialized programs for maternal and child health, mental health, substance abuse, home health care, nutrition, and other needs (U.S. Department of the Interior, 2017). Financial benefits are also directly available for tribal members. Some examples of financial assistance include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Security Income, Food Stamp Program, and Low Income Heating and Energy Assistance Program. Additional federal benefits of tribal membership include those from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Justice, Agriculture, Education, Labor, Commerce and Energy. This may not be an exhaustive list, and the benefits may be more indirect in nature. However, it is important to note:

The federal government guaranteed the health, safety, and welfare of tribal nations in exchange for over 450 million acres of tribal lands. Upholding this federal responsibility remains critical as American Indian and Alaska Native citizens experience higher disease rates, lower life expectancy rates, higher dropout rates, and higher poverty rates than any other racial or ethnic group in the country. (National Congress of American Indians, 2001-2018a, para. 1)

Lastly, there are socially meaningful benefits. A social benefit of tribal membership includes the inclusiveness of being a part of something, a sense of identification with others (Bettez, 2010). Being a part of something and experiencing a sense of belonging improves individual well-being. Thus, there are less demands for assistance, such as psychological, emotional and physical health services which are often provided by the tribe. A happier, well-balanced community needing less costly services can also result in diversion of funds to improve upon the social fabric of community.

Processes and procedures of tribal membership. For most of the 20th century, the U.S. government enforced a minimum blood quantum of one quarter to be considered Indian (Hamill, 2003). However, Tribes were given back their authority to determine their own membership criteria. “Without the authority to draw boundaries of membership, tribes would be powerless to protect their resources and rights from outsiders” (Adams, 2012, p. 16.). Thus, tribes vary in their practices of determining membership.

Indians have created different strategies for delineating who can legitimately claim rights as members of their tribes (Goldberg, 2006). According to Fogelson (1998), blood and descent are one of the three rudimentary aspects as the basis for Indian identity within Indian communities and in the non-native community at large. The remaining two aspects are land and community.

Kinship is another principal way to regain and/or construct Indian identity (Hill, 2017). By establishing ancestry, marriage or adoption, legitimacy can be established to access cultural knowledge to participate in Indian community (Krouse, 1999). Tribes have determined membership by using a variety of criteria, such as reservation residency, cultural affiliation, racial identify, in addition to gendered notions of kinship. Indian identity did not consider blood quantum prior to colonialism.

Churchill (1999) argues two points—that the concept of blood quantum did not exist as a criterion for native identity and group membership in precontact North America and the criterion of blood quantum was created and imposed to annihilate Native people and cultures. Churchill further claims that in North America, “native peoples have, for the most part, always maintained relatively high degrees of social cultural inclusiveness and consequent reproductive activity (interbreeding) among one another” (p. 41). He goes

further to say that “genealogy rather than genetics was the core component of social composition” (p. 41). For the sake of membership, Churchill thus proposed a genealogical model as key to membership in the pre-contact era, as opposed to a racial model. In doing so, Hamill (2003) argues that Churchill pits the approach of the U.S. government in opposition to traditional Indian ways. Some tribes however, have followed suit and gone against their traditional ways.

Varying factors will continue to influence tribal membership practices. The need to be agile to the changing landscape of the world is to be considered for tribes to maintain their unique sovereign status. They must have authority over their own internal affairs (Skenandore, 2002). This alludes to Adams’ (2012) claims that, “American Indians, like people across the globe, negotiate and renegotiate their identities in a dynamic world . . . the way that contact with ‘others’ encouraged Indians, and the people they met, to reconsider their identities and re-conceptualize who belonged to their communities” (p. 10).

Trends in tribal membership procedures. During cultural and political transitions, the process of identification to blood went both ways to manipulate the measure (and benefits) of Indian-ness. Some people could be acknowledged as full-blood even though a parent was non-Indian. Hamill (2003) claimed a Potawatomi woman considered herself full-blood because she helped the full-bloods. Conversely, a full-blood who cut his long hair was eligible for the mixed-blood opportunities of education. Both full-bloods and mixed bloods (even some non-Indians) enjoyed rights of citizenship equally without regard to blood quantum.

As discussed by Adams (2012), “membership in a tribe is historically-constructed and constantly-evolving process” (p. 4). Especially when blood quantum criteria are

attached to political and cultural meanings, procedures will change as politics and culture change. Where previously, Indian people were considered inferior or savages, in current day they may be seen as “deeply spiritual, noble, indigenous environmentalists that worship Mother Earth (Hamill, 2003).

Shifts in tribal membership procedures are anticipated. Whereas at some point it may have been sufficient to provide a Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) for proof of Indian ancestry, in some tribes in Oklahoma, today it is not sufficient. Claim of Indian identity per the CDIB must also accompany a requirement to participate in Indian life. To some the CDIB means nothing at all, the true Indian identity comes from community participation, speaking the language and attending ceremonies. Founding president of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal College, Dr. Mann, further asserted that she is Cheyenne and does not need a card to tell her that. In the foreword of an important Oneida anthology, Dr. Mann shares, “For as long as one can remember, the first peoples of this land have had strong identities, as well as remarkable knowledge of their bloodlines. Just as their histories held great significance, so did the family” (2017, p. ix). This perspective supports the notion that the CDIB is merely a U.S. government document and has nothing to do with being a real Indian (Hamill, 2003). Wilkins and Lomawaima (2001) have characterized the relationship between American Indian tribes and the U.S. federal government as an ongoing contest over sovereignty.

Challenges and risks related to membership procedures. Tribal membership is much more than the determination of parentage. There are challenges and risks that accompany membership rules that tribes must consider. Tribes, Indian people and external entities alike, negotiated terms of inclusion in their membership rules. For tribes, inclusion meant “to protect their unique political position and defend their tribal

sovereignty against the expansionist pressures of the United States” (Adams, 2012, p. 33). For the tribal members, or potential members, inclusion determined who was entitled to the tribe’s assets. And for external entities, like the federal government, the more inclusive membership was it affected their “desires to limit, and eventually eliminate, the number of Indians eligible for federal benefits” (p. 29).

Conversely, if membership is too exclusive, tribes can face economic as well as political destruction. For example, according to Adams (2012), the Cherokees created membership criteria to protect their resources and sovereign rights from outsiders. They were determined to have legal membership criteria that could stand up to federal scrutiny, yet wanted to limit tribal rights of individuals in their core community who may not agree with their actions. There is an overlap “between the control of tribal membership and the preservation of tribal sovereignty” (p. 43). Too much exclusivity gives more control to a certain few, and the fate of tribal existence may eventually come into question.

For Indian people, inclusion not only meant equal distribution of rights to tribal assets, programs and services, it was an important marker of community belonging (Adams, 2012). Legal scholar Goldberg (2006) pointed out that “citizenship is intimately entangled with fundamental cultural, social, economic, and political dimensions of tribal life” (p. 33). Whether too inclusive or too exclusive, there are impacts on all stakeholders.

Identification

Identification in a broad sense can be construed as the concept of identity and how one thinks of oneself, particularly within a context as an individual, how they relate to others, and who they are in terms of a group (Cooper & Thatcher, 2010). Identification can simultaneously be both a verb and a noun. Identification as a verb is the process of identifying oneself, denoting how one references and/or defines themselves, and it

depicts the process of becoming (Ashforth et al., 1987). As a noun, identification is a way or a state of being, offering a sense of order and satisfying a need for belonging.

Identity theory focuses on the interaction between self and society, wherein each individual has multiple identities that derive from the role positions (e.g., manager, daughter, friend) he or she occupies in society (Stryker, 1980). Additionally, “The more salient the role identity, the more meaning, purpose, and behavioral guidance the individual should derive from its enactment” (Thoits, 1991, pp. 105–106). Alternatively, Social Identity Theory indicates that people gain a definition of themselves based on their social groups and the characteristics of those groups (Tajfel, 1982).

At the core of identity there are three components, self-definition, importance, and affect (Ashforth et al., 2008). These components correspond to the following questions: Who am I? What do I value? And How do I feel about...? As these core features of identity ultimately result in behaviors of identity, the content of identity often is articulated as: “– namely, values (I care about B); goals (I want C); beliefs (I believe D); stereotypic traits (I generally do E); and knowledge, skills and abilities (I can do F)” (p. 7).

Another formulation of identification is to incorporate self-concept orientations. In addition to the three components of identity above (self-definition, importance, and affect), there are also tendencies for a person to relate as an individual, a relational partner, and a group member. For example, individuals are impacted by: (a) self-definitions in terms of specific relationships or groups and (b) distinctions between the tendency to think of oneself as individual, relational partner, or group member (Cooper & Thatcher, 2010). Cooper and Thatcher further express there are self-concept orientations that when partnered with or dependent upon certain (identification) motives,

identification is impacted. Similarly, community can also be impacted by an individual's self-concept orientations.

In any case, identification engages more than one's thoughts or mind, it engages deep emotions. Albert et al. (1998) likened identities to onions where, as one peels back the layers, one eventually elicits tears (strong emotions), signifying the vital core of identity that is the basis for identification. Identification can feel like a visceral sense of belonging, like being home.

Emergence of identification. Identification can be considered a form of becoming by conscious and unconscious choices. According to Cooper and Thatcher (2010), there are self-concept orientations by which individuals tend "to think of oneself as an individual, relational partner, or group member" (p. 16). There are also factors of identification motivation that influence the relationships to the self-concept orientations. The constructs of identification being the self-concept orientations that are influenced by various motives, such as self-improvement (or enhancement) and belonging, their relationship(s) result in targets of identification. In other words, dependent on individual motives at any given time, the way an individual sees themselves is affected. Conscious and unconscious motivations ultimately affect identity.

Ashforth et al. (2008), suggests there is a "process of identification as an interplay between individuals and organizations" (p. 18). It incorporates how an individual constructs their own narrative of identity by incorporating "elements of the collective into their sense of self" (p. 18) through actions and interpretations. The collective then provides *sense-breaking* and *sense-giving* at connecting junctures in episodes of identification. The interactions and relationships continue to provide a sense-making for identification. This cycle of individuals and organizations working together to make

sense of who they are is a common feature of several identification process models, according to Ashforth and colleagues.

Importance of identification. Identification is important because it offers a sense of self and a sense of belonging (Ashforth et al., 2008). Everyone has a story of who they are and how they belong in the world. It's an ongoing matter of sense-making for one's existence. Identification can give purpose, support, as well as refuge. In a positive light, identification contributes to individual and collective success. By virtue of fulfilling purposefulness, identification and strong identity creates a path toward behavior that can achieve goal actualization.

However, from a less positive perspective, the outcomes of identification can cause turmoil individually and collectively (Ashforth et al., 2008). Identity conflicts can result in dysfunctional roles which can be central to organizational life. A tactic to deal with identity conflict is referred to as "*identicide*, where one suppresses and even kills an identity" (p. 32). Such negative outcomes can be detrimental to identification.

Both positive and negative outcomes are important to individuals and organizations alike. A sense of social harmony can be created when identifications align. According to Ashforth et al. (2008):

What makes identification a compelling construct is that it roots the individual in the organization. In defining oneself in terms of the identity of the relevant collective or role, one becomes a microcosm of the collective or role, ready and willing to enact its identity and act in its best interest. (p. 36)

Ethnic and cultural identity. It is evident from reviews by Trimble, Helms, and Root (2003) that there is limited empirical research on American Indian identity compared to that of other groups. Furthermore, most empirical research on American Indian identity focuses on cultural identity (not self-identity). For example, Oetting and

Beauvais (1990-1991) proposed the Orthogonal Cultural Identification Theory (OCIT) which posits that identification with any one culture is independent of identification with any other culture. The OCIT has been referenced in relation to American Indians. However, it assumes that an individual's position along a continuum of identification with one culture implies nothing about the individual's position along a continuum of identification with another culture (Gonzalez & Bennett, 2011). The OCIT does not factor in constructs of bicultural or multicultural identity. By nature of being American Indian or Native American, an individual is inherently bicultural or multicultural, being simultaneously American. Thus, the OCIT is not a comprehensive tool of assessment for natives.

Trimble (2000) has proposed a four-part ethnic identity measurement model, which has been followed, in part, by cultural identity researchers (e.g., Oetting & Beauvais, 1990-1991; Moran, Fleming, Sommervell, & Manson, 1999). This measurement model proposes that the assessment of ethnic identity needs to include at least four domains: natal, subjective, behavioral, and situational. Natal measures include birthplace and ethnic origins of self and family members. Subjective measures can include self-identification, acculturation status, ego-involvement in group, and attitudes towards out-groups. Behavioral measures can include language use, music and food preferences, and participation in cultural and religious activities. Finally, situational-context measures can include home- family, work, or school settings. Research on cultural identity has primarily assessed the behavioral domain of Trimble's model. Gonzalez and Bennett (2011) thus argued that cultural identity can and should be considered a behaviorally focused identity, as it is a behavioral manifestation of one's ethnic identity.

Trimble et al. (2003) make the salient point that ethnic identity is multidimensional and that research using only single constructs to measure ethnic identity will have shortcomings. Furthermore, Oetting, Donnermeyer, Trimble, and Beauvais (1998) discussed the multiple socializing agents, such as culture, communities, families, schools, and peers, that affect ethnic and cultural identity. These socializing agents most likely interact with and influence several components of American Indian self-identity (Gonzalez & Bennett, 2011).

Another area of research on racial identity may provide further insights into the complexity of cultural identity development. Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, and Smith (1997) proposed the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI) as a composite theoretical approach for understanding identity. Initially proposed for African American identity, the MMRI provides an empirical strategy for studying other racial and ethnic group identities, such as American Indian identity. Rather than being concerned with the development of racial or ethnic identity, the MMRI is principally interested in the status of an individual's ethnic identity and what it means from a person's self-concept, to be part of a group. There is a qualitative meaning to being a group member, and it is within the person's self-concept (Gonzalez & Bennett, 2011).

The 17-item Ethnic Identity Scale (EIS; Umaña-Taylor, Yazedijan, & Bámaca-Gomez, 2004) measures three dimensions of ethnic identity: Exploration (seven items; e.g., "I have not participated in any activities that would teach me about my ethnicity"); Resolution (four items; e.g., "I am clear about what my ethnicity means to me"); and Affirmation (six items; e.g., "I wish I were of a different ethnicity"). These theories, concepts and approaches about ethnic and cultural identity are validated tools and

justifiable approaches, but not necessarily comprehensive-enough to assess the multicultural identity of Native Americans.

Nature of identification in Native American tribes. For centuries, Native American Tribes have shared their creation stories passed on by oral traditions (Proulx, 2006). The stories are of cultural origin and identification. Kinship, status and tribal identification cards, as well as blood quanta are also now part of common sense objective identification. The land, traditions, language and spirituality also have a relevance to Native American identity. Individually, how an individual chooses to interact with others and community can help determine individual and social identities. As Cook (2017) noted:

Identity is important. The colonists were very successful ‘radicalizing’ indigenous identities such that people talk about being 25 percent of this or 40 percent of that, but one does not belong to a nation based on one’s blood quantum. Belonging to an indigenous nation is a way of being in the world. Holding a membership card is not a way of being and money can’t buy it. (p. 3)

On a tribal national level, most Native American tribes are considered sovereign nations. Through their self-governance these tribes can determine their own identity. Whether they look to their cultural traditions, their language, or their history to redefine themselves, they can determine who they are—and/or what they might become. Depending on the tribal government structure and its constitution, the notion to redefine a tribal nation may include constitutional reform or a simple council resolution promulgating tribal identification criteria. Identification then for individuals is whether or not one fits the criteria.

For some tribes however, their only context to establish identity in contemporary society may be to recognize cultural identity loss due to colonialism. Colonialism and colonial projects include forcing Native Americans to live on reservations, removing

children from their families to attend boarding schools, and prohibiting the native language from being spoken and the traditions from being practiced (Hill, 2017). These federal government policies were aimed to take away what was perceived “Indian-ness” and render the Native Americans extinct. In this scenario, both the tribe as a whole and individuals struggle to determine identity, if they choose to redefine and rebuild their nation and themselves.

The impacts of identification within Native American Tribes are many. Taylor (1994) suggested that people and groups can incur substantial damage and distortion if their social contexts reflect an image of themselves that is confining, demeaning, or contemptible. It follows that failing to be recognized—or being inaccurately recognized—results in harm and oppression, as the individuals are then, in a sense, imprisoned in a distorted, diminished, and inherently false way of being. Identification impacts not only the individual within the tribe, but the collective as well, socially, economically and politically.

No unified and agreed upon definition of ethnic identity exists (Phinney, 1990); however, the term generally refers to the label(s) people use to self-identify with a broader cultural group. The process of ethnic self-identification includes a person’s knowledge about his or her ethnic group (e.g., culture, traditions, customs, values, behaviors), and personal responses (e.g., feelings, opinions, preferences) regarding his or her own ethnic group (Bernal & Knight, 1993).

Dynamics of congruence and dissonance between identification and tribal membership. Hill (2017) indicates, “Being a member of a clan has privileges and obligations” (p. 16). But what are the impacts of inconsistencies between identification and *being* a member? If an individual believes they are part of the tribe and the tribe

agrees, there is certain congruence and relevancy to that statement. The individual identifying with, and who is accepted as an enrolled tribal member, can benefit from the privileges of membership and they may also feel the obligations.

However, if an individual believes they are part of the tribe, but the tribe says they are not; personal identity can be called into question. The impacts identity loss has on an individual are potentially traumatic yet not easily quantifiable. For example, if likened to identity loss, historical trauma is due to cultural stress and bereavement that has been generalized, internalized, and institutionalized, according to Duran and Duran (1995). The trauma is cumulative and often unresolved (Danieli, 1998) as well as being both historic and ongoing (Durie, Milroy, & Hunter, 2009). Evidence suggests that trauma is transmitted within families (Adelman, 1995; Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 2003), and for indigenous people, across generations within one's tribe (Evans-Campbell, 2008).

If historical trauma and identity loss have such cumulative and unresolved effects spanning generations, how can one begin to quantify the effects of identity loss? According to Adams (2012), large comparative studies “exclude the human dimension of the membership process and they neglect the historical and cultural influences that led to particular decisions on tribal belonging” (p. 33). Suffice to say, the particular decisions on tribal membership have also not considered the human dimension of incongruent identity.

Native American tribal demographics, government, benefits of tribal membership, processes and procedures of tribal membership, trends in tribal membership procedures, and challenges and risks related to tribal membership procedures were succinctly noted. Identification, in general, was reviewed as it pertained to its emergence and importance. The chapter concluded with further detail relevant to ethnic and cultural identity,

followed by the nature of identification in Native American tribes, and the dynamics of congruence and dissonance between identification and tribal membership.

Summarily, while there are multiple aspects for the topic of identification and identity, the literature specific to Native American self-identity is scarce. In the next chapter, the methodology for how research was conducted is outlined in order to further explore and expand upon the deficient literature.

Chapter 3

Methods

The purpose of this study was to examine individuals' self-identity and participation related to the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin and the impacts of their tribal connection. Three research questions were examined:

1. What are participants' sense of connection and belonging to their families and ancestry?
2. What are participants' self-descriptions related to their ethnic identity and tribal membership?
3. What are the impacts of their self-descriptions?

This chapter describes the methods that were used in the study. The research design is described first, followed by a discussion of the procedures used for participant recruitment and assuring confidentiality and consent. Procedures for data collection and analysis are then described. The chapter closes with a summary.

Research Design

This study used a qualitative research design. The exploratory qualitative research design was purposefully chosen to allow a meaningful way to best collect personal and subjective information, and especially to understand and interpret information in an unfolding way (Creswell, 2014). The qualitative design was considered appropriate to explore and fill the gap in literature relevant to how Native Americans describe themselves in their own world and in their own words. This design is appropriate for this study because it allows for contextual descriptions of the information sought.

The smaller group sample of this qualitative research allowed for deeper connection and sense-making of individuals' perceptions. The exploratory nature allowed for meaningful data to be collected. This was important for the research because not

much data was shared or existed at the time of this study. The drawback to qualitative design is that it is subjective. There are multiple realities that exist, and individuals have their own biases. Those personal interpretations and understandings are then to be interpreted by the researcher, with their own biases and understandings based on their experiences and view of the world (Creswell, 2014).

Participants

Participants were recruited for this study using convenience sampling, as accessible groups of individuals, with whom the research is connected, happens to fit the research context and purposes (Punch, 2011). Participants needed to satisfy two criteria to be selected for the study:

1. Participants had to be a descendant of Oneida ancestry and have, at minimum, one grandparent who was a legally defined and enrolled Oneida tribal member.
2. Participants had to be aged 18 or older on the date of interview.

Participants were personally recruited by the researcher reaching out to connections within the Oneida community and groups from which interviewees are known to meet the selection criteria.

The researcher sent an email (see Appendix A) to attract the potential interview participants and describe the research. Upon receiving positive responses for participation, interview meetings were scheduled. Three participants chose to complete the interview in their homes, one chose to complete the interview at his private work office, another chose a college campus, one at a community education center, and two chose a coffee shop. A consent form (see Appendix B) was sent and reviewed with each participant before each interview was conducted.

Table 1 presents the participant demographics. Eight individuals (four men, four women) were interviewed in this study. Participant ages ranged 19–66. All participants had lived on the Oneida reservation at some point in their lives ($M = 21.5$ years, $SD = 18.3$), although only three lived on the reservation at the time of the study.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

	Overall
Age	Range: 19-66
Gender	Male: 4 Female: 4
Live on reservation (currently)	Yes = 3 No = 5
Time on reservation (years)	Range: 12-66 Mean = 21.5 SD = 18.3

$N = 8$

Confidentiality and Consent Procedures

This study was conducted under the guidance of the Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board, and all human participant protection guidelines were observed. Honoring these procedures assured that the participants were protected from harm and that any risks they face in participating were mitigated. As part of these procedures, participants received complete information regarding the benefits and risks of their participation. They also were advised that their participation is voluntary, confidential, and protected under the extent of the laws of California. The consent form (see Appendix B) was reviewed with each participant and all participants consented to take part in the study.

The consent form describes the study purpose and identifies myself as the primary researcher along with my university affiliation and why the research is being conducted.

Participants were advised of all procedures involved in the study and the time required for participation. Risks and safeguards for mitigating the risks were outlined. The consent form assures participants that they could withdraw from the study or refuse to answer a question at any time. No participant withdrew or declined to answer.

Data Collection

An original 23-question interview script was created for this study (see Appendix C). Three basic demographics questions gather participants' age, gender and residency. Relevant to the behaviors, content and core of identity (Ashforth et al., 2008), the core interview questions were organized into four sections:

1. Native American ancestry and membership. Four questions gathered information about their Oneida ancestry, tribal enrollment status, blood quantum, and other tribal affiliations.
2. Participation in Oneida community. Five questions inquired about their participation in the Oneida community, including the extent to which they speak the language, participate in traditional ceremonies, utilize Oneida benefits or services, and participate in Oneida government. They also were invited to share their reasons for participating or not participating in the community.
3. Sense of connection. Four questions examined participants' sense of connection and belonging with their families and the Oneida community. They also were asked to share what their level of connection and belonging "look like" or "feel like" on a day-to-day basis.
4. Self-identity and congruence with Oneida ancestry and enrollment. Six questions were asked to examine how participants identify themselves in terms of their ethnicity and heritage, the extent to which their Native American ancestry and Oneida enrollment status matches their self-identity, and their perceived importance of self-identifying as a Native American. They also were asked to consider how their self-identity and its congruence with their ancestry and enrollment status affect both their day-to-day lives and the tribal community, if at all.

Interview data were audio-recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Each interview lasted approximately thirty minutes.

Data Analysis

The interview data for the present study were content analyzed using the following procedures (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2013):

1. The researcher read all the interview notes to develop an understanding of the nature, breadth, and depth of the interviews and the data gathered.
2. The researcher reviewed the answers participants provide for each question one at a time. Meaning units were coded as appropriate to the data reported.
3. Answers for each question and participant were sorted according to the codes identified for each question.
4. Following the sorting in Step 3, the codes and the data associated with each code were reviewed to evaluate the appropriateness of each code and its wording. Codes were reworded, combined, or expanded as needed.
5. The number of participants reporting each code was calculated when the analysis is complete.
6. A second coder reviewed the data analysis for all the interviews to determine whether the results appear to be reliable. Where discrepancies are found in the results, the researcher and second coder discussed and agreed upon how the analysis would be revised.

Summary

This exploratory qualitative study examined concepts of membership and belonging within one Native American tribe in the United States. Eight individuals with Oneida ancestry were interviewed about their Native American ancestry and membership, participation in Oneida community, sense of connection to the community, and self-identity and congruence with Oneida ancestry and enrollment. Interviews were conducted in-person and the data were examined using content analysis. The next chapter reports the results of the study.

Chapter 4

Results

The purpose of this study was to examine individuals' self-identity and participation related to the Oneida tribe of Wisconsin and the impacts of their tribal connection. Three research questions were examined:

1. What are participants' sense of connection and belonging to their families and ancestry?
2. What are participants' self-descriptions related to their ethnic identity and tribal membership?
3. What are the impacts of their self-descriptions?

This chapter reports the study results organized by research question. Findings related to participants' Native American ancestry and membership are presented first, followed by a report of findings related to their participation in the Oneida community, sense of connection and belonging, self-identity and congruence with Oneida ancestry and enrollment, and the impact of their self-identities and degree of identity congruence.

Native American Ancestry and Membership

Four questions gathered information about their Oneida ancestry, tribal enrollment status, blood quantum, and other tribal affiliations (see Table 2). All participants reported having great-grandparents and grandparents who were enrolled Oneida members. Additionally, all participants' mothers were enrolled in Oneida. Only four reported that their fathers were enrolled. Regarding participants' own tribal enrollment, six are enrolled (two of which have an additional tribal ancestry outside Oneida) and two are not enrolled in Oneida (but are descendants). The six Oneida enrolled participants self-reported blood quanta ranging from three eighths to three quarters.

Table 2***Native American Ancestry and Membership***

	n
Closest Oneida enrolled relative	
Mother	8
Father	4
Grandparent	8
Great grandparent	8
Tribal enrollment status	
Enrolled in Oneida tribe	6
Not Enrolled (Descendant)	2
Other tribal affiliations	2
Blood quantum	
Unknown	2
3/8	2
7/16	1
More than half or 5/8	2
3/4	1

N = 8

Participation in Oneida community

Six questions inquired about interviewees' participation in the Oneida community (see Table 3), including whether they live on the Oneida reservation and the extent to which they speak the language, participate in traditional ceremonies, utilize Oneida benefits or services, and participate in Oneida government. They also were invited to share their reasons for participating or not participating in the community. Although all participants reportedly receive Oneida benefits or services (e.g., Oneida health center services, dental and vision services, fitness center, higher education funds, gas stations), the majority of participants reported not speaking the language ($n = 5$), attending traditional ceremonies or longhouse ($n = 7$), or participating in General Tribal Council meetings or governmental decisions ($n = 7$).

Table 3
Participation in Oneida Community

	n
Speak the Oneida language	
Not at all	5
Minimally	1
Taking classes	1
Daily	1
Attending traditional ceremonies or longhouse	
No	7
Yes	1
Receive Oneida benefits or services	
Yes	8
No	0
Participate in General Tribal Council meetings or governmental decisions	
No	7
Yes	1

$N = 8$

Participants then were asked to explain why they do or do not participate in the tribe (see Table 4). The sole participant who participated in tribal government reported that she did so to positively influence Oneida government and members. She elaborated,

I feel like the main reason I participate is to make sure that we have policies and decisions based around values that I feel are Oneida values. . . . I'm trying to do my best to influence people and talk about things and vote in what's the best interest for the tribe overall and not individual families or individuals.

The remaining seven participants offered varied reasons for not participating in government, primarily concerning their sense of trust and connection to the Oneida community and their views of the government. For example, two participants reported fearing not being included and respected. One explained, "My biggest fear is . . . that my ideas would be shut down right away." Another two cited lack of government efficacy as their reason for not participating. One stated, "It doesn't really seem like there's a lot of action that's being taken and it is doesn't seem like any action that is taken, is not in the

best interest of the tribe.” Another two stated they are not comfortable participating and do not feel connected to the Oneida community, while yet another does not participate due to their disbelief in the Oneida government. Not believing the government is particularly Oneida, he explained, “It’s just made up. But people make it seem like...it has been around for thousands of years and people say, ‘Well, this is our tradition.’ It’s not our tradition. It’s just made up and forced upon us.” The remaining participant cited lack of time to participate.

Table 4

Reasons for Level of Participation in Oneida Community

	n
Reasons for Participating (n = 1)	
To influence Oneida government and members	1
Reasons for not participating (n = 7)	
Fear of not being included and respected	2
Lack of government efficacy	2
Lack of comfort and connection to Oneida community	2
Disbelief in Oneida government	1
No time available to participate	1

N = 8

Sense of Connection and Belonging

Four questions examined participants’ sense of connection and belonging with their families and the Oneida community. They also were asked to share what their level of connection and belonging “looks like” or “feels like” on a day-to-day basis.

The responses for participants’ sense of connection to their families are recorded in Table 5. Half the participants reported having a moderate degree of connection to their families, while the other half reported having a strong connection. Three participants shared that the reason for their strong connection to family was positive family interactions and involvement. These interactions and involvement included family

customs and coping mechanisms that influence connection, respect and supportiveness among family members, and participative family decision-making. One participant stated, “My only family is Oneida. I’m close with my family.”

Another three participants stated that the frequency of interaction and communication was a reason for strong connection—particularly, the more connection they had during childhood, the more connected some participants felt in adulthood. One participant shared, “The family I see regularly and that’s the family from when I was growing up, I would say we’re very close.”

Three participants claimed the reason for their feeling disconnected from family is/was the lack of regular or frequent interactions due to family living circumstances. These circumstances included being away at college, growing up estranged from a divorced (Oneida) parent, and less connection during childhood led to feeling less connected now.

Table 5
Connection to Family

	n
Degree of Connection to Family	
Moderate	4
High	4
Reasons for connection	
Positive family interactions and involvement	3
Frequent interactions and communication	3
Reasons for disconnection	
Lack of regular/frequent interactions due to family living circumstances	3

N = 8

The responses for participants’ sense of belonging to the Oneida Nation are recorded in Table 6. Half the participants cited a strong sense of belonging to the Oneida Nation, while two reported moderate and two reported no sense of belonging. The most

commonly cited reason for increased sense of belonging was feeling included by those around the participant (n = 3), especially as it concerned growing up or working on the reservation. One participant stated, “It helps growing up on the reservation; I feel more connected.” Two others stated they felt they belonged as a result of others including them at work on the reservation and at school with other Native cohorts.

The themes of “taking part in family traditions” and “Native activities and having a strong self-identity as Oneida” were each cited by two participants. One participant shared, “It just seems like that there’s a sense of pride that comes with that, a sense of belonging and then there’s a lot of values, traditions that are Oneida.”

The two participants who reported a moderate sense of connection cited having to take the initiative to learn about Oneida culture, with little or no guidance, and feeling excluded by the tribe as decreasing their sense of connection. The two participants who felt no connection described a lack of regular interaction with family and community.

Table 6

Sense of Belonging to Oneida Nation

	N
Sense of belonging	
Strong	4
Moderate	2
None	2
Reasons for strong sense of belonging (n = 6)	
Feeling included by those around me	3
Participating in family traditions and native activities	2
Possess strong self-identity as Oneida	2
Actively engaging and encouraging others	1
Reasons for less sense of belonging (n = 4)	
Having to take the initiative to learn about Oneida culture, with little or no guidance	2
Being excluded by the tribe	2
Lack of regular interaction with family and community	2

N = 8

Although two participants felt disconnected from the Oneida community and one reported moderate connection, five participants described themselves as connected to the community (see Table 7). Six participants cited their reasons for feeling connected, with participation in family events and community outreaches (n = 5), looking like and being known as an Oneida tribe member (n = 4), and connection to place, people, and culture (n = 4) as the top three reasons. Participation in family events and community outreaches included examples such as participating in the Fourth of July parade and pow-wow; attending bowling, golf and baseball tournaments; supporting fundraisers; and volunteering for community outreach projects for the Oneida Police Department, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and placing flags on veterans' graves on Memorial Day. Another participant stated, "I've lived here my whole life. I can't even fathom living anywhere else. Growing up, everybody knew everybody's family." Age and gender did not seem to have a significant impact on community connection (or any other segment).

Table 7

Connection to Oneida Community

	n
Level of connection	
Strong	5
Moderate	1
None	2
Reasons for connection (n = 6)	
Participation in family events and community outreaches	5
Looking like and being known as Oneida tribe member	4
Connection to place, people, and culture	4
Regular and frequent interactions with tribe members	3
Inclusion and mutual respect with tribe members	1
Governmental support received as a tribe member	1
Reasons for disconnection (n = 4)	
Lack of interaction and participation with natives, events, and land	2
Lack of knowledge or awareness of what's going on	1
In-group prejudice against people returning or coming to the community	1

N = 8

Four participants additionally noted why they feel less connection to the community, such as lack of interaction and participation with other natives, events, and land (n = 2). One participant explained, “I don’t really talk to many other natives. . . . I don’t really have anybody other than family that I feel involved with.” Another stated, “Don’t know that many people other than my brother and sisters that are tribal members. They really aren’t in my work group; they aren’t in my groups or social circles.”

Next, participants were asked to share what their level of connection and belonging “looks like” or “feels like” on a day-to-day basis (see Table 8). Imagery and emotions evoked by this inquiry created an overarching theme of connection to Oneida land, people, and culture. Participants described this as feeling wanted and welcomed, everything in the participant’s life being relevant to Oneida, creating a connection and common understanding for youth, having pride and accomplishment in cultural awareness, family connections of participation and knowing each other, and feelings of connection to the land. Another participant shared how it felt to be disconnected:

It depends who I’m with. . . . If I’m with people who are very attached to the Oneida community (and because) I don’t feel very attached to the Oneida community. . . . I don’t really feel like I belong in that space.

Table 8

Felt Connection to Oneida Community

	n
Felt connection to Oneida land, people, and culture	6
Imposter feelings when interacting with others who are attached to the community	1
No response	1

N = 8

Self-Identity and Congruence with Oneida Ancestry and Enrollment

The next set of questions examined participants’ self-identify, enrollment status, and impact of their alignment or lack of alignment. Table 9 identifies the various ways

participants reported their self-described identity. Four participants identify themselves as Oneida. Three participants described themselves as multiracial, including Mexican American and Oneida, Caucasian and Oneida, and Caucasian and Native American. One participant stated, “On a work application, I might check the box saying Native American, but other than that it’s not something that would come up or something someone would ask about.”

Table 9

Self-Reported Self-Identity

Ethnic Identity	n
Oneida	4
Multiracial	3
Native American	1

N = 8

Table 10 reveals the level of congruence participants felt between their Native American ancestral heritage and their self-described identity. Three participants felt their self-identity aligned with their Native American ancestral heritage, while three participants felt the two were incongruent. The remaining two participants felt moderate congruence—indicating elements of both congruence and incongruence.

One participant who felt her self-identity aligned with her ancestral heritage stated, “It matches up perfectly, I feel like . . . It’s not very separate. I see myself as Oneida and I am Oneida.” Conversely, a participant who felt her identity was misaligned stated:

I think historically I think what I would typically think of an Oneida woman, I wouldn’t think of me. I would think of someone more traditional. I would think of someone more educated. So I guess it doesn’t really match. . . . I think of my coworker, I think of her as a strong native woman. I don’t see myself like that.

Table 10***Congruence Between Ancestral Heritage and Self-Identity***

	n
Amount of Congruence	
Congruent	3
Moderate	2
Incongruent	3
Reasons for Congruence (n = 3)	
Appearance: Skin color (Indian features)	3
Essential identity (no separation between self and heritage)	1
Behavior is an identifier of heritage, not just appearance	1
Reasons for Incongruence (n = 4*)	
Genetics and family tree not relevant to self-identity	2
Lack of Native appearance	2
Lack of knowledge and connection to the culture	2

N = 8

*One participant claiming moderate congruence offered an example of incongruence, thus increasing the Reasons for Incongruence from 3 to 4.

Three participants explained why they felt congruence between their Native American ancestral heritage and their self-identity, and four explained why congruence was lacking. The common reason for congruence (n = 3) was their appearance (e.g., skin color, Indian features). One participant additionally stated that behavior aligns with ancestral heritage more than appearance, stating:

My grandchildren, some of them have blonde hair and blue eyes. It's more about their behaviors, teaching them things I learned as I grew up, having that sense of identity, community, family, traditions, and values and things like that. It isn't about looks, it's about behaviors, as well.

Each explanation for incongruence was cited by two participants, including lack of Native appearance, genetics and family being irrelevant to identity, and lack of knowledge and connection to the culture. One participant stated, "I don't really feel like it matches my self-identity. I feel like I don't look enough like the part. So like it kind of like affects the self-image I have of myself."

Participants then were asked how important it is to them to self-identify as Native American (see Table 11). Five participants stated it is important and one stated it is moderately important. These six participants explained it is important to self-identify as Native American to validate important parts of oneself ($n = 5$) and enhance personal and interpersonal effectiveness ($n = 4$). One participant stated: “I’ve never put any thought into that. I just have always identified as Native American . . . I feel like even if you take my card that says I’m Oneida, I’m still Oneida because that’s what I participate in.” The participant claiming moderate importance stated, “I think it’s important for me to indicate that oh like hey, I’m one of you guys, too . . . And at the same time, sometimes it’s important, other times it isn’t.”

The remaining two participants asserted that a Native American self-identity and heritage is unimportant to daily life. One of these participants explained, “It seems like [in] the world we live in, . . . it doesn’t matter what color you are. We’re all human. So that doesn’t matter to me too much.”

Table 11

Importance of Self-Identification as a Native American

	n
Importance	
Important	5
Moderately important	1
Unimportant	2
Reasons for importance ($n = 6$)	
Validates important parts of self	5
Enhances personal and interpersonal effectiveness	4
Reasons for unimportance ($n = 2$)	
Heritage is unimportant to daily life	2

$N = 8$

When asked to reflect on the congruence between their Oneida enrollment status and their self-identity, six participants stated their enrollment status matches their self-

described identity, one participant reported moderate alignment, and one stated it doesn't match (see Table 12). Six participants offered explanations for their assessment. Three participants emphasized that enrollment status is made up and it has no relationship to self-identity. For example, one participant claims he is Oneida with or without a[n enrollment] card and asserts that blood quantum was assigned arbitrarily. He stated:

I'm full blood because the government said I'm full blood. Somebody had to assign those numbers. It wasn't us. So you're only full blood because some White person says you're a full blood. So to me that doesn't mean you're full blood. Honestly, none of us are.

The participant who felt incongruence between her enrollment status and her identity shared it did not match because she is not enrolled, and yet she claims Oneida identity.

Table 12

Congruence between Oneida Enrollment Status and Self-Identity

	n
Level of congruence	
Congruent	6
Moderate	1
Incongruent	1
Explanation of congruence level (n = 6)	
Enrollment status is made up (has no relationship to identity)	3
It's important to talk about different racial parts of identity	1
Feel Oneida but am not and will not be enrolled	1
Enrolled out of hardship and need of services, not because of self-identification	1

N = 8

Impact of Identity and Identity Congruence

Finally, participants were asked to consider how their self-identity and its congruence with their ancestral heritage and their enrollment status affect them and the tribal community, if at all. Half the participants reported they are affected by the degree of congruence between their self-identity, ancestral heritage, and enrollment status (see Table 13). Two of these participants explained it was difficult to describe because they

were not sure how they felt, but that they wanted to be proud and helpful, but without being judged. Another two participants stated that decisions they made (or were affected by) relevant to these topics, particularly sharing enrollment status, affected children and their ability to be treated fairly. One participant was saddened by the reflection that:

If I didn't have an enrollment status and I would still have the ancestry I did and the life circumstance I did or that I do, I probably wouldn't even think twice about it. I think I would just, by default, rely on my socialization as a grandson of a Dutch farmer, right? I'd rely on that. That's all I'd know. That'd be my default. I wouldn't have a lot of importance placed on that piece, which makes me sad. . . . If I didn't have that enrollment status, I wouldn't, I probably wouldn't seek that out because it's been a very intentional work for me to do.

Table 13

Reflection on Self-Identity, Ancestral Heritage, Importance of Native American Ancestry and Oneida Enrollment Status

	n
Degree of impact	
Various impacts	4
None	4
Explanation of impact (n = 4)	
Wish to be proud (and helpful without being judged; based on quantum)	2
Change in ancestral heritage and enrollment status impacts identity	1
Enrollment status affects children and their ability to be treated fairly	2

$N = 8$

Regarding the impact of congruence between self-identity, ancestral heritage, and enrollment status in the Oneida community, five participants expressed that having a congruent self-identity may result in positive giving back to Oneida and benefiting the Oneida Nation (see Table 14). These participants explained they would offer input and a different perspective if someone would listen [without judging blood quantum or enrollment status]. They also described contributing to Oneida by chipping in, working, encouraging others, helping at the longhouse, supporting Oneida youth, and conducting research to give back to the tribe. Other examples included being a role model for

students, volunteering for community outreaches, being an example for others, and sharing art and gifts with the community. A participant believed her contribution is initiating necessary conversations about belonging and change—especially about the future and sustaining Oneida. Another participant believed that providing unofficial ambassador-like duties to educate others and correct false information is his contribution. One participant shared, “I try to speak of Oneida often in the spaces where people forget where we’re at but will say something that is false or isn’t right, I’ll be able to offer that perspective. So I think that benefits Oneida.”

Table 14

Impacts of Self-Identity and Oneida Connection on Oneida Tribal Community

Impact on Tribe	n
Giving back to Oneida to benefit the nation	5
Detrimental results if dissonance continues between identity and Oneida community	2
No response	1

$N = 8$

Two participants also noted that detrimental impacts for the Oneida community could result with continued dissonance between self-identity, ancestral heritage, and enrollment status. These participants predicted that if disconnected descendants are not engaged, the tribe ultimately will cease to exist. One shared, “If everybody in the tribal community were like me [not connected, no time, and heritage not important], I don’t know how long the tribal community would be around.” The dissonance also has an unknown impact. One participant stated, “But not being really involved in the community I don’t know if they really affect me or if I affect them.”

Summary

This chapter reported the results of the study. All eight participants had enrolled family members and six were enrolled themselves. All participants receive Oneida

benefits or services but, for the most part, did not participate in formal cultural or community activities—primarily due to diminished sense of trust and connection to the Oneida community and their views of the government.

Most or all the participants reported having a moderate or strong connection to their families and moderate or strong sense of belonging to the Oneida Nation and community. These feelings largely were influenced by the nature and amount of family and community interactions and involvement and sense of being included by others. Individual appearance and felt connection to place, people, and culture also influenced participants' sense of connection.

In terms of ethnic identity, half the participants identify as Oneida, while three identify as multiracial, and one identifies as Native American. Five participants reported moderate to strong congruence between their self-identity, Native American ancestral heritage, and Oneida enrollment status. Such congruence reportedly affects the participants, their children, and the tribe. Self-identifying as Native American was seen as important for validating important parts of oneself and enhancing personal and interpersonal effectiveness. No participants cited destructive impacts of identity. The next chapter provides a discussion of these results.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine individuals' self-identity and participation related to the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin and the impacts of their tribal connection. Three research questions were examined:

1. What are participants' sense of connection and belonging to their families and ancestry?
2. What are participants' self-descriptions related to their ethnic identity and tribal membership?
3. What are the impacts of their self-descriptions?

This chapter presents a discussion of the study results. Conclusions related to each research question are outlined first. Practical recommendations based on the conclusions are then offered. Limitations of the study are acknowledged and suggestions for further research are advised. The chapter closes with a summary.

Conclusions

Participants' sense of connection and belonging. Study findings indicated that half the participants ($n = 8$) reported strong connection to their families, and half reported moderate connection. Family connection seemed related to the degree of positive and frequent interactions with family members. Half the participants also reported a sense of belonging to Oneida Nation, while the remaining reported moderate or no connection. Connection to Oneida appeared related to whether participants felt included by others in the tribe, as well as to their interaction with family and community.

Most (75%, $n = 6$) felt connected to the Oneida community. Community connection was related to three factors: (a) the amount of participation and interaction with family, the Oneida Nation, and the Oneida community; (b) having a Native

American appearance and whether others recognized them as Oneida; and (c) having a sense of being personally rooted in one's place, people, and culture. The concept of place, people, and culture was reflected in several images and ideas expressed by participants.

The findings were consistent with Ethnic identity models, which suggest that individuals' sense of self emerge from their experiences and perceptions related to natal factors (i.e., birthplace and ethnic origins), subjective factors (i.e., self-identification, acculturation status, ego-involvement in group, attitudes towards out-groups), behavioral factors (e.g., language use, music and food preferences, participation in cultural and religious activities), and situational factors (Gonzalez & Bennett, 2011; Moran et al., 1999; Oetting & Beauvais, 1990-1991; Trimble, 2000).

Prior literature also has identified several factors that affect Native American young people's identity and connections. These factors include supportive family relationships, especially maternal warmth; positive self-esteem; engagement in traditional culture; and perceptions of community support (LaFromboise, Hoyt, Oliver, & Whitbeck, 2006; Zimmerman, Ramirez, Washienko, Walter, & Dyer, 1998). The research results supported this also, particularly family relationships, participation in tradition and culture, and self-described impacts on community.

Given the findings that connectedness and belonging were largely related to frequent positive interactions with family and the community, it is important to keep or create new traditions and events to increase the frequency and quality of family and community interactions. Families and the community at large would do well to focus on this. For organizational development consultants working with Native families and communities, one of the first steps of diagnosis when intervening with a community or family may be assessing the level of connection. If connection is determined to be an

issue, it may be helpful to assess the nature and frequency of interaction occurring and work with the families. Intentional and purposeful conversations can be initiated by personal invitation for community members to discuss the possibilities of community - and community belonging, in particular. Block (2009) identifies dialogue that generates actions rather than mere conversation. They include discussions to improve the structure of belonging: invitations, possibility, ownership, dissent, commitment and gifts. An organization development consultant would do well to refer to generative questions to improve and increase interactions, such as: What declaration of possibility can you make that has the power to transform the community and inspire you?

Moreover, feeling included by others was cited by several participants. Therefore, it is important to be aware that actions taken to include or exclude others affect the degree to which other tribe members feel they belong to the community. This, in turn can serve to strengthen or weaken the community. Interventions to enhance sense of belonging may focus on creating opportunities or encouraging behaviors that help others feel included (e.g., community potlucks).

“Another way of thinking about all this is to look at the invisible structures of an abundant community. They are a set of rules and customs that are threads of community fabric, often called social fabric” (McKnight & Block, 2010, p. 10). Given participants’ sense of rootedness in people, place, and culture and how this affects their sense of connection and belonging, it is advised to nurture and create opportunities for this rootedness to improve upon the social fabric of the nation. Opportunities could include celebrations and events and making a point of including others.

Finally, it is important to be aware that appearance can influence individuals’ sense of connection and belonging. It would be helpful for individual members or the

tribe as a whole to consider and acknowledge what being Native American means—such as whether it depends upon appearance, ancestry, behavior, or other factors. If descendants are being excluded based on appearance, the numbers of tribe members may be reduced and the overall tribe weakened. This may be something to focus on redefining if connection and belonging are concerns.

Participants' self-descriptions. Of the eight participants, four specifically self-identified as Oneida. The remaining participants recognized themselves as multiracial and Caucasian. Three of the four participants believed their self-described identity as Oneida aligned with their Native American ancestral heritage. Native appearance and having Indian features appeared to be important for congruence, while others denied the relevance of genetics (and appearance). Five participants also self-identified as a Native American. Participants asserted that embracing their Native American ancestral heritage validates important parts of themselves that help them be more effective personally and interpersonally. Six participants believed their self-identity aligns with their Oneida enrollment status. Most participants added that enrollment status does not or should not affect self-identity because it is a contrived system.

Findings were consistent with Hamill's (2003) general assertion that genetics are not relevant to identification to one's Native American ancestral heritage. It was stated that some people could be acknowledged as full-blood even if one parent is non-Indian. Burnett (1970) cited the case of a Potawatomi woman who considered herself full-blood because she helped the full-bloods. Conversely, a full-blood who cut his long hair was eligible for the mixed-blood opportunities of education. Hamill concluded that both full-bloods and mixed bloods (even some non-Indians) enjoyed rights of citizenship equally without regard to blood quantum.

Some participants in this study asserted that embracing their Native American heritage enhanced their personal and interpersonal effectiveness. Similarly, Thoits (1991) asserted, “The more salient the role identity, the more meaning, purpose, and behavioral guidance the individual should derive from its enactment” (pp. 105–106).

Participants also emphasized that enrollment status does not or should not affect self-described identity and the notion of enrollment is made up, consistent with Adam’s (2012) claims that:

American Indians, like people across the globe, negotiate and renegotiate their identities in a dynamic world . . . the way that contact with “others” encouraged Indians, and the people they met, to reconsider their identities and re-conceptualize who belonged to their communities. (p. 10)

Accordingly, some participants (and researchers in the field) argue that true Indian identity comes from community participation, speaking the language, and attending ceremonies. Dr. Mann once heard an esteemed Montana spiritual leader refer to his CDIB card as a pedigree card. Dr. Mann (2017) further asserted that she is Cheyenne and does not need a card to tell her that.

Although there seems to be alignment with Native American ancestral heritage among self-identified Oneidas, some participants denied the relevance of genetics. The Oneida Nation and community (along with other Native communities) should be aware that not all individuals who identify as Oneida (or their respective tribe) believe that genetics are the reason for their Native identities. Interventions and future thinking could incorporate dialogue about what it means to be Oneida. If the Oneida Nation and other Native communities promote and publicly encourage members and descendants to embrace their heritage, individuals and communities alike may enjoy greater personal, interpersonal, and collective effectiveness.

It was also concluded that enrollment status does not or should not affect identity—this is understandable, as the general belief within Native communities is that enrollment policies were initiated by the federal government to ultimately eliminate Native American communities. It follows that tribal communities may be advised to promote and encourage the importance of strong self-identities (versus enrollment). Shifting the focus away from enrollment and toward self-identity would open the doors for more inclusion of descendants and non-blood related family members to have more dialogue. Enrollment criteria also may be reviewed to determine whether change is needed. National agencies and consultancies wishing to support tribal endeavors toward sustainability and sovereignty should be cognizant of these activities and collect data of different tribes' activities and explorations, for sharing with other tribes seeking to address similar matters.

Impacts of participants' self-descriptions. Study findings indicate that half the participants were affected by their reflection of identity, heritage, and enrollment status. Some had difficulty explaining their unexplored feelings, especially for such things as not wanting to be judged for their blood quantum or lack thereof. Decisions relevant to these topics impact others, especially children developing their own identity. Of the four participants who were affected by their reflections of identity, heritage, and enrollment status, it is apparent they believe their sense of identity is a reason for and supports their individual and deliberate contributions to give back to the Oneida Nation.

Findings that participants were affected by their reflection of identity, heritage, and enrollment status, and the difficulty the participants had to explain their unexplored feelings were consistent with past literature that emphasized the highly emotional nature of identification (Albert et al., 1998). Identification can feel like a visceral sense of

belonging and being at home. At the core of identity are three components: self-definition, importance, and affect (Ashforth et al., 2008). These components correspond to questions such as “Who am I?” “What do I value?” and “How do I feel about...?”

Additionally, findings that participants believe their sense of identity is a reason for and supports their contributions to give back to the Oneida Nation are supported by Ashforth et al. (2008), whose model portrays identification as interactions between individuals and organizations and the constructive of an identity narrative by individuals.

The implications of half the participants being affected by their reflection of identity, heritage, and enrollment status, and especially that it was difficult for some to explain their unexplored feelings indicates the importance of further exploring individual circumstances related to identity. The Oneida Nation and community members could coordinate and facilitate dialogue to explore reflections of individual identity, heritage, and enrollment topics. Such conversations could generate data helpful for community building and revision of enrollment policies. All stakeholders should be privy to the impacts of various topics and the options to be explored, to ensure the individual implications are understood and the general impacts to the community are acknowledged. It would be pertinent for various Native communities and non-enrolled members to participate in similar interventions. Data collection related to different tribes’ activities and explorations may prove helpful for how other tribes address similar matters. The agencies that support tribal nations and communities can offer space on their media platforms for general housing of such information so it can be accessible to all.

Given that individuals’ identity may be related to their giving back desires and behaviors, it would behoove Native communities to initiate interventions to increase descendants’ sense of Native identity and community. Specific interventions may include

inventorying members' assets, gifts, and contributions for the purpose of recognizing, referencing, and promoting these among the community. Special conveners of community, McKnight and Block (2010) reference such interventions as forms of community organizing. Community organizing is a "way of thinking about creating a competent and abundant community. . . . Being connected in a way we are speaking of develops confidence that we can create change based on the gifts of all" (p. 31). These activities could be especially valuable for youth and community development.

Recommendations

Three recommendations for Oneida enrolled members and the Oneida Nation are offered based on this study:

The first recommendation is to host tribal events related to strengthening identity and building community. Study findings indicated that participants were somewhat uncertain regarding their feelings and reflections about their connection and belonging to the Oneida community, their enrollment status, and their self-identity as Native Americans. This suggests that they may be lacking some clarity about how connecting or failing to connect to their community affects them. Without this clarity, these individuals may miss opportunities to participate in their community in ways that enrich themselves and help strengthen and sustain the larger collective. Therefore, a recommendation emerging from this study is to host tribal events that promote small group conversations in the manner of Peter Block about how the Oneida community may be built and sustained by members and descendants embracing their ancestry, particularly among youth.

Quarterly events held and hosted by the Oneida Nation may offer opportunities for members to gather and discuss issues of identity and membership in a loosely

organized fashion. Each event may feature discussion about a specific topic, such as identity as a Native American, enrollment status and processes, the meaning of being Native American, and more specifically what it means to be Oneida. The anticipated outcome of these sessions includes deeper individual understanding about one's Native American identity and connection to the tribe, as well as enhanced understanding about others' views. "The power of the small group cannot be overemphasized. Something almost mystical, certainly mysterious, occurs when citizens sit in a small group, for they often become more authentic and personal with each other there than in other settings (Block, 2009).

The second recommendation is to develop and incorporate school-age curricula and programs that support Native American identity development. 75% (6 of 8) participants asserted that a strong sense of Native American identity (and pride) motivates them to give back for the betterment of the Oneida nation and community. Additionally, individuals who self-identify as Native American embrace their heritage, which in turn validates parts of themselves and helps them be more effective personally and interpersonally. Therefore, the Oneida Nation—particularly the Oneida school system and surrounding community schools—are advised to develop and incorporate age appropriate and progressive curricula and programs that support Native American identity development. The curriculum could focus on identity development, cultural and heritage awareness, and strengthening youth's sense of self as they develop their own identity in the changing community and this changing world. Programming could include recognition and special speakers and sharing the various ways an individual can give back to the community, thereby strengthening the nation, as well.

The third recommendation is to review and revise tribal membership criteria. Although most participants reported congruence between their self-identity and enrollment status, they also emphasized that enrollment status is not an important factor for their identities. It follows that membership criteria may need to be reviewed and revised to enhance inclusiveness and support the sustainability and sovereignty of the tribe. The Oneida Nation or designated board, committee, commission, or community group could develop a community survey to obtain specific feedback on enrollment criteria and input for options the Nation should examine. With the information obtained, themes could be determined and an impact analysis (i.e., economic, social, operational) could be performed. Interventions and dialogue could be facilitated among General Tribal Council members and Oneida descendants, again in small group conversations, to work toward community consensus on next steps, if any.

These same recommendations may be relevant for other Native American tribes wishing to enhance their sustainability and sovereignty. Additionally, organizational development consultants can play helpful facilitative roles in conducting the interventions described. Small group conversations can be designed by consultants, and can also be easily taught by example and convening, to community members to continue the work.

Limitations

Three limitations affected this study and merit discussion. First, the paucity of prior research and literature on the topic necessitated an exploratory approach in this study. As a result—combined with the small sample size, the depth of the present study was limited, but it was a first step. Future studies should utilize larger samples and make use of surveys as well as interviews to both gain a sense for the broad issues (using a survey) and then more fully examine key issues that emerge (using interviews). A series

of studies also could be used to progressively collect information (e.g., focus group studies on identity and heritage, interviews and surveys to discuss identity and enrollment status).

A second limitation centered on the use of interviews to collect data, which introduced risks of researcher and participant bias. Although care was taken to allow the interviewee to expand upon what they specifically thought of a topic, the researcher might have been excessively cautious about discouraging participants' input or influencing their answers. As a result, participant data may not have fully addressed the focus of the inquiry and the data collected may have been less comprehensive when compared to the specifics of what was hoped to be gathered. In the future, to avoid the limitation, in lieu of separate interviews, a focus group or groups could be engaged in discussion with a facilitator to keep the dialogue on track and specific to the topic. Dialogue amongst group members might help the context of discussion stay on topic in order to answer the specific questions.

The third limitation was due to the small, rather homogeneous sample. In this case, choosing participants from the community, particularly from groups known to fit the section criteria, may have limited the results— particularly biased the results. The convenient sample size, as it is named, is convenient because there is a subjective relationship between the researcher and participants. Additionally, the study participants may have been focused on their perception of a similar project being worked on by the researcher in the same community. In the future, to avoid this limitation, it would behoove the researcher to work outside their community in order to disassociate the researcher from any preconceived notions or bias relevant to the data being collected.

Suggestions for Further Research

Three suggestions for further research are offered based on this study. First, it would be helpful to conduct the study again with revised methods. This suggestion is offered because the design of the current study subjected it to substantial participant biases, which ended up steering the research conversations away from the focus of the study and toward topics that aligned with participants' assumptions about the researcher's true purposes. Specific suggestions for a future study are to utilize external researchers or to conduct research outside one's own tribe to avoid problems of prior relationships and biases between the researcher and participants. Additionally, focus group interviews might allow for stronger facilitation of the discussion and cross-pollination of the responses so that the data are not only more relevant but also richer than what was possible in the present study. It would also be prudent to structure interventions and outline methodologies that clearly identify biases and assumptions up front.

Another suggestion for future research is to conduct the study again with additional research questions to ascertain the effects of positive versus negative family interactions on sense of connection and belonging. This suggestion is made because a key finding identified that a strong connection to family correlates with positive and frequent interactions with family. For example, one participant commented, "Some families drink, some families church." It created a question for just how important positive family interaction might be as opposed to any interaction, whether positive or negative. This begs the question of whether frequent interaction of any kind leads to a stronger sense of connection. Future research could incorporate revised or new research questions and may provide insight into the opiate abuse that is occurring at high ratios in certain communities, particularly native communities.

A third suggestion for research is to examine the experience of inclusion. This suggestion is offered relevant to the finding that a strong sense of belonging is proportionate to an individual feeling a sense of inclusion from others. The proposed research could include performing this study again with additional research questions relevant to types of inclusion to determine the most effective forms of inclusion that strengthen an individual's sense of belonging, as well as support a strong sense of self identity and confidence. This future research could generate valuable insights for Native communities that could be incorporated into parenting classes, mainstream educational and classroom courses, and general capacity building workshops for tribal and community members.

Summary

This exploratory qualitative study examined individuals' self-identity and participation related to the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin and the impacts of their tribal connection. Eight individuals with Oneida ancestry were recruited to undergo an interview about their Native American ancestry and tribal membership, participation in Oneida community, sense of connection to the community, and family, and self-identity and congruence with Oneida ancestry and enrollment. Interviews were conducted in-person and the data were examined using content analysis.

Study findings indicated that although participants generally did not participate in formal cultural or community activities, they had a sense of connection and belonging to their families and ancestry and self-identified as Native American. They added that a Native American self-identity is validating, influences one's desires to give back to the community, and enhances one's personal and interpersonal effectiveness. Based on this study, the Oneida community is advised to: host tribal events related to strengthening

identity and building community, develop and incorporate school-age curricula and programs that support Native American identity development, and review and revise tribal membership criteria to support the sustainability and sovereignty of the tribe.

Suggested future research is to conduct the study again with improved methods and expanded research questions and to more deeply investigate the experience of inclusion within Native communities.

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Appendix A: Study Invitation

Greetings!

I am conducting research on membership and belonging within the Oneida Nation as part of my master's in organizational development at Pepperdine University.

I am writing to request your participation in this study. Participation will involve one 1-hour, in-person conversation with me about your Native American ancestry and membership, participation in and sense of connection to the Oneida community, and personal sense of identity. The conversation would be scheduled at a time and location convenient for you.

To participate, you need to be 18 years or older and have at least one great-grandparent who was an enrolled member of the Oneida tribe. **You do not need to be an enrolled member or active member of the Oneida community to participate in the study.**

Participation is voluntary and confidential. You would not be identified in the study and any answers you provide would be pooled with others' responses and reported in aggregate.

Would you please let me know if you are willing to participate in my study?

I sincerely thank you for your help!

Appendix B: Consent Form**PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY
Graziadio School of Business and Management****INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES****AN EXAMINATION OF SELF-IDENTITY, SENSE OF CONNECTION, AND
MEMBERSHIP OF INDIVIDUALS WITH NATIVE AMERICAN ANCESTRY**

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Tamara Van Schyndel, MS candidate, and Julie Chesley, PhD at Pepperdine University, because you are 18 or older and a descendant of Oneida ancestry with at least one grandparent who is/was a legally defined and enrolled Oneida tribe member. Your participation is voluntary. You should read the information below, and ask questions about anything that you do not understand, before deciding whether to participate. Please take as much time as you need to read the consent form. You may also decide to discuss participation with your family or friends. You will also be given a copy of this form for your records.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to examine your sense of identity and participation related to the Oneida Nation (of Wisconsin) and how this affects you.

STUDY PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part in a 1-hour conversation with the researcher. You will be asked questions about your Native American ancestry and membership, participation in Oneida community, and sense of identity and connection to Oneida ancestry and enrollment.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The potential and foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study include possible emotional upset as you think about your experiences related to the Oneida community. To decrease the impact of these risks, you can stop participation at any time and/or refuse to answer any interview question.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

While there are no direct benefits to the study participants, there are several anticipated benefits to society which may include guiding future research or creating services to support individuals with Oneida ancestry, specifically related to their sense of connection and belonging.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The records collected for this study will be confidential as far as permitted by law. However, if required to do so by law, it may be necessary to disclose information collected about you. Examples of the types of issues that would require me to break confidentiality are if you disclose any instances of child abuse and elder abuse. Pepperdine's University's Human Subjects Protection Program (HSPP) may also access the data collected. The HSPP occasionally reviews and monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research subjects.

The data will be stored on a password protected computer in the principal investigator's place of residence. The data will be stored for a minimum of three years. The researcher will record your answers in a password-protected document and a unique identifier (such as "Participant 1") will be assigned to your information. Any information you share that could uniquely identify you (such names, places, or events unique to you) will be given a fake name.

The data will be stored on a password protected computer in the researcher's office for three years after the study has been completed and then destroyed.

SUSPECTED NEGLECT OR ABUSE OF CHILDREN

Under California law, the researcher(s) who may also be a mandated reporter will not maintain confidential any information about known or reasonably suspected incidents of abuse or neglect of a child, dependent adult or elder, including, but not limited to, physical, sexual, emotional, and financial abuse, or neglect. If any researcher has or is given such information, he or she is required to report this abuse to the proper authorities.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

ALTERNATIVES TO FULL PARTICIPATION

The alternative to participation in the study is not participating or only completing the items for which you feel comfortable.

INVESTIGATOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION

You understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries you may have concerning the research herein described. You understand that you may contact Tamara

Van Schyndel at xxx-xxx-xxxx or xxxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx, or Julie Chesley at xxxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx if you have any other questions or concerns about this research.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT— IRB CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant or research in general please contact Dr. Judy Ho, Chairperson of the Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board at Pepperdine University 6100 Center Drive Suite 500 Los Angeles, CA 90045, xxx-xxx-xxxx or xxxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx.

Appendix C: Interview Script

Thank you again for taking part in my study and your willingness to talk with me today. I will be asking you a series of questions. We'll start with a few demographics and questions of ancestry. Then I will be asking about your experiences, connections and identity, and how you feel about each of those topics.

Demographics

1. What is your age?
2. Gender
3. Do you live on the Oneida reservation?

Yes No

If yes, please specify for how long:

Native American Ancestry and Membership

4. Who is your closest Oneida enrolled relative (interviewer to check all that apply)
 - Mother
 - Father
 - Grandparent (please specify):
 - Great grandparent (please specify):
5. What is your tribal enrollment status?
 - None
 - Enrolled (please specify tribe):
 - Not Enrolled (Descendant)
6. What is your blood quantum?
7. What other tribal affiliations do you have, if any?

Participation in Oneida Community

Now I'm going to ask you a series of questions about your participation and experiences in the Oneida community. Feel free to explain or offer examples for any of your answers, either at the end or as we go.

8. How often do you speak the Oneida language?
9. How often do you participate in traditional ceremonies or attend the longhouse?
10. What, if any, Oneida benefits or services have you utilized?

If yes, please specify which ones:

11. How often do you attend General Tribal Council meetings or otherwise participate in governmental decisions?
12. *(If not already answered):* What are your reasons for participating or not participating in the Oneida community?

Sense of Connection

Now I'm going to ask you a series of questions about your sense of connection and belonging with your family and the Oneida community. Feel free to explain or offer examples for any of your answers, either at the end or as we go.

13. To what extent, if at all, do you feel connected to your family? Please explain,
14. To what extent, if at all, do you feel you belong to the Oneida Nation? Please explain.
15. To what extent, if at all, do you feel connected to the Oneida community? Please explain.
16. *(If not already answered):* What does your level of connection and belonging "look like" or "feel like" on a day-to-day basis?

Self-Identity and Congruence with Oneida Ancestry and Enrollment

Now I'm going to ask you a series of questions about your concept of self or self-identity and how you relate to being Native and Oneida. Again, feel free to explain or offer examples for any of your answers, either at the end or as we go.

17. How do you identify yourself in terms of your ethnicity and heritage?
18. To what extent do you feel your Native American ancestral heritage matches your self-identity?
19. How important is it to you to self-identify as a Native American?
20. To what extent do you feel your Oneida enrollment status matches your self-identity?
21. When you reflect on your self-identity compared to your ancestral heritage, the importance you place on Native American ancestry, and your Oneida enrollment status, how do you think all this affects you?
Possible prompts:
 Physical and practical effects?
 Emotional effects?
 Social effects?
 Any conflicts you observe?
 How comfortable are you with your self-described identity?
22. What impacts, if any, do you think your self-identity and connection to Oneida have on the tribal community?

Closing

23. Is there anything you wish you were asked during this interview?