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## Native American Identity: A Review of Twenty-first Century Research

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## Conclusion

The purpose of this literature review is to exam research on Native American identity within the social sciences in the twenty-first century in order to identify trends in research topics, various perspectives, and potential future studies, through the review of a sample of 86 publications relating to the topic of Native American identity. The sample was retrieved utilizing three scholarly databases across a wide range of fields of study. Publications are examined by area of focus and publication year.

Following the completion of the search for relevant publications, the results (86) were compiled into a list. Each item was reviewed to determine the field of study to which it corresponds: Anthropology, Ethnohistory, Psychology, Sociology, Education, and Other. Most frequently, this was done by noting the publication journal. Books or other publications were categorized on the basis of abstracts, the authors bio, or the actual text itself. The total for each category was calculated. Each item was also reviewed in detail and annotated for relevance to the topics under consideration. The results were then charted by publication year and field of research. (See Figure 1: Results by Field of Study) The annotations were then piled sorted in order to analyze the prevalent sub-topics.

In the early twenty-first century, Native American identity received some attention from anthropologists, and other social researchers. However, focus on this topic has somewhat dwindled, though it is discussed within works centered on other topics. A significant portion of this work has focused on identity politics and the role of government in shaping Native identity due to the conflicting interests of the federal and tribal governments. Research has also tended to focus on a narrow band of influencing factors, rather than addressing Native identity as a whole.

The linear fixed concept of identity forced onto Native American tribes through federal policy is in conflict with the fluid nature of identity and limits these groups from shaping their own membership boundaries and therefore their cultural future. The breadth of legal complications that have occurred in the past may potentially continue into the future. Further, Native Americans have a vested interest in controlling membership boundaries in order to maintain cultural continuity, distinctiveness, and community resources. The federal government, which has long influenced the shape of Native American tribal identity through racializing membership boundaries, has a biased interest to limit membership inclusion for economic benefit. It should also be said that, as experts, anthropologist studying Native American identity have an ethical obligation to research this topic with consideration to the impact such research has on federal policy and its implications for tribal sovereignty.

Further research to understand the Native American identity and boundary maintenance should include the role of historical trauma, federal policy, enrollment, cultural revitalization, tradition, ceremony, and community participation and importantly should address tribal response and cultural preservation. The Markstrom model is a potential paradigm for studying Native identity that could incorporate important factors identified in existing research. Research is needed to determine whether the model would be applicable in the field of anthropology as a means to create a more holistic picture of modern Native identity. Importantly, it may offer more insight into how influences from outside cultures are resisted in order to maintain cultural continuity and group cohesion. This may eventually lead to identifying culturally specific methods of defining membership; assist in resolving the conflict of interest between tribal and federal governments, and aid self-determination.

# Introduction

In the 1960's, the native American population, as reported in census data, increased faster than would be biologically possible (Castile 1996, p. 744). Some have argued that this increase was a result of "recruitment" (Castile 1996, p. 744). **The number of Native Americans self-identifying increased from 523,591 in 1960 to 1,878,285 in 1990 (Nagel 1995, p. 947).** In 2010, 5.2 million people identified as Native American (Jacobs 2014, p. 80). Several other sociopolitical influences occurred during this time including the passing of several influential pieces of legislation and the growth of a pan-Indian identity.

Native American identity gained some attention in social research, especially anthropology, in the 1990's. "Research into the emergence of indigenous identity and their relationship to local identities, ... and processes of globalization ... is still in its initial stages, much is legal or historical rather than ethnographic" (Strong 2005, p. 255; Anaya 1996; Hanson 2004; Morris 1992; Muealebach 2001; Smith & Warch 2000).

Native American identity also gained focus from researchers in cultural and developmental psychology, as well as sociology, at the turn of the century. This review addresses how Native American identity has been approached by social researchers since the 1990's through a holistic approach.

## Methods

**How has Native American Identity been addressed in social research since 1990?**

The present study utilized the EBSCO Host, JSTOR, and Web of Science composite databases to retrieve social research publications focusing on Native American identity, within the time period from 1990 to 2016.

**Search # 1 Criteria:** *Directed at reviewing research primarily focused on identity*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Native American or American Indian or Alaska Native - Subject (AND)</li> <li>(AND) Identity - Title</li> <li>(AND) Cultural Identity - Subject</li> <li>(AND) Scholarly or Peer Reviewed - Type</li> <li>(NOT) Education - Subject</li> <li>(NOT) Health - Subject</li> </ul> | <p>The past six decades revealed the following common sub-topics in relation to Native American identity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Historical Trauma:</b> Historical trauma, forced relocation, forced assimilation, mandatory boarding schools, acculturation, loss of traditional modes of production</li> <li><b>Globalization:</b> Discussions related to the influences and interactions between local, national, and global forces</li> <li><b>Identity Politics:</b> Enrollment, membership, recognition, blood quantum, stereo types, self-image, authenticity</li> <li><b>Identity Constructs:</b> Identification, culture, land, space, history, tradition, values, oral tradition, connectedness, revitalization, indigenous movement, participation</li> <li><b>Group Boundaries:</b> Inclusion, exclusion, communication, performance, negotiation</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

**Search #2 Criteria:** *Directed at reviewing identity as addressed in ethnography*

- Native American or American Indian or Alaska Native - Subject
- (AND) Scholarly or Peer Reviewed - Type
- (AND) Ethnographic Research - Subject

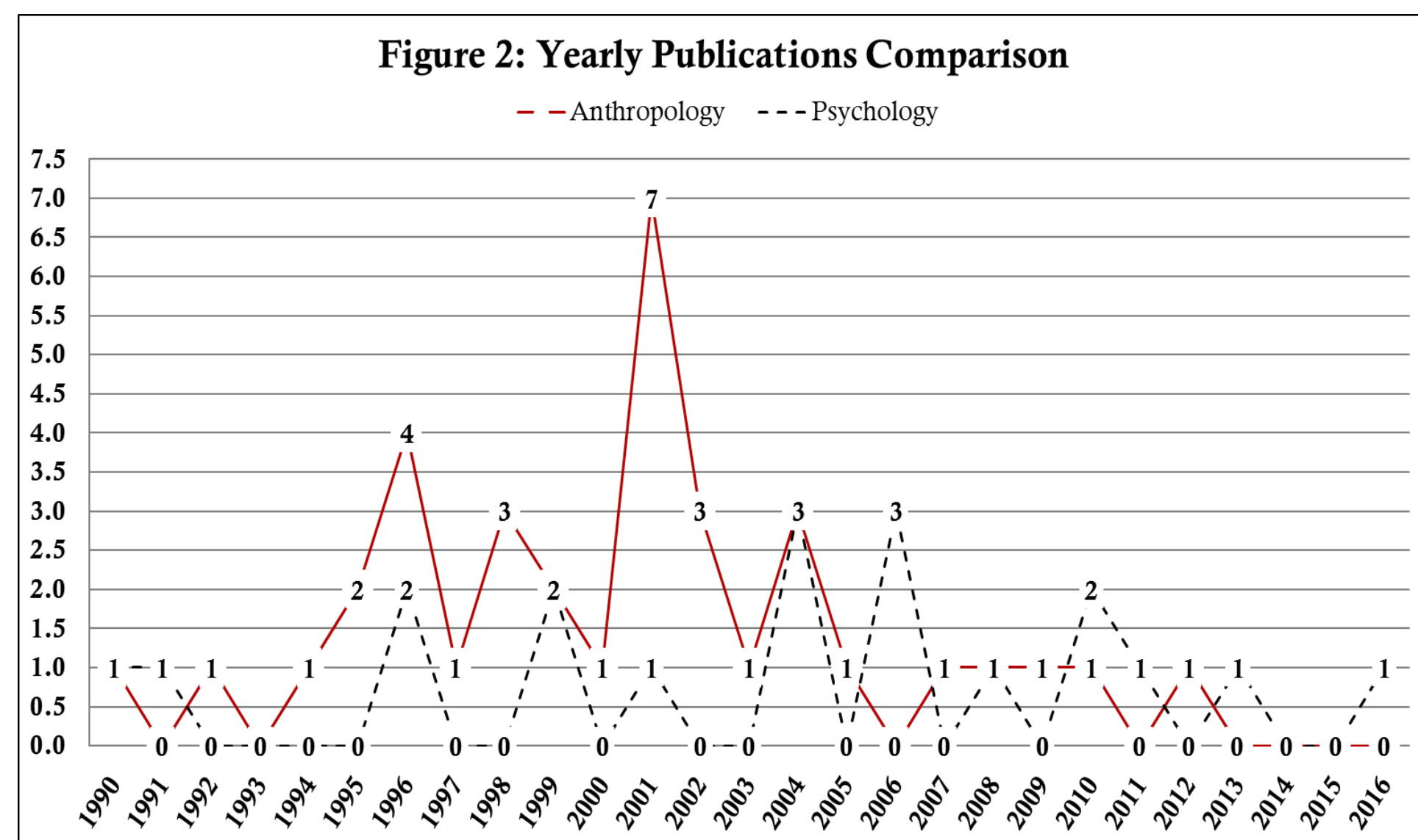
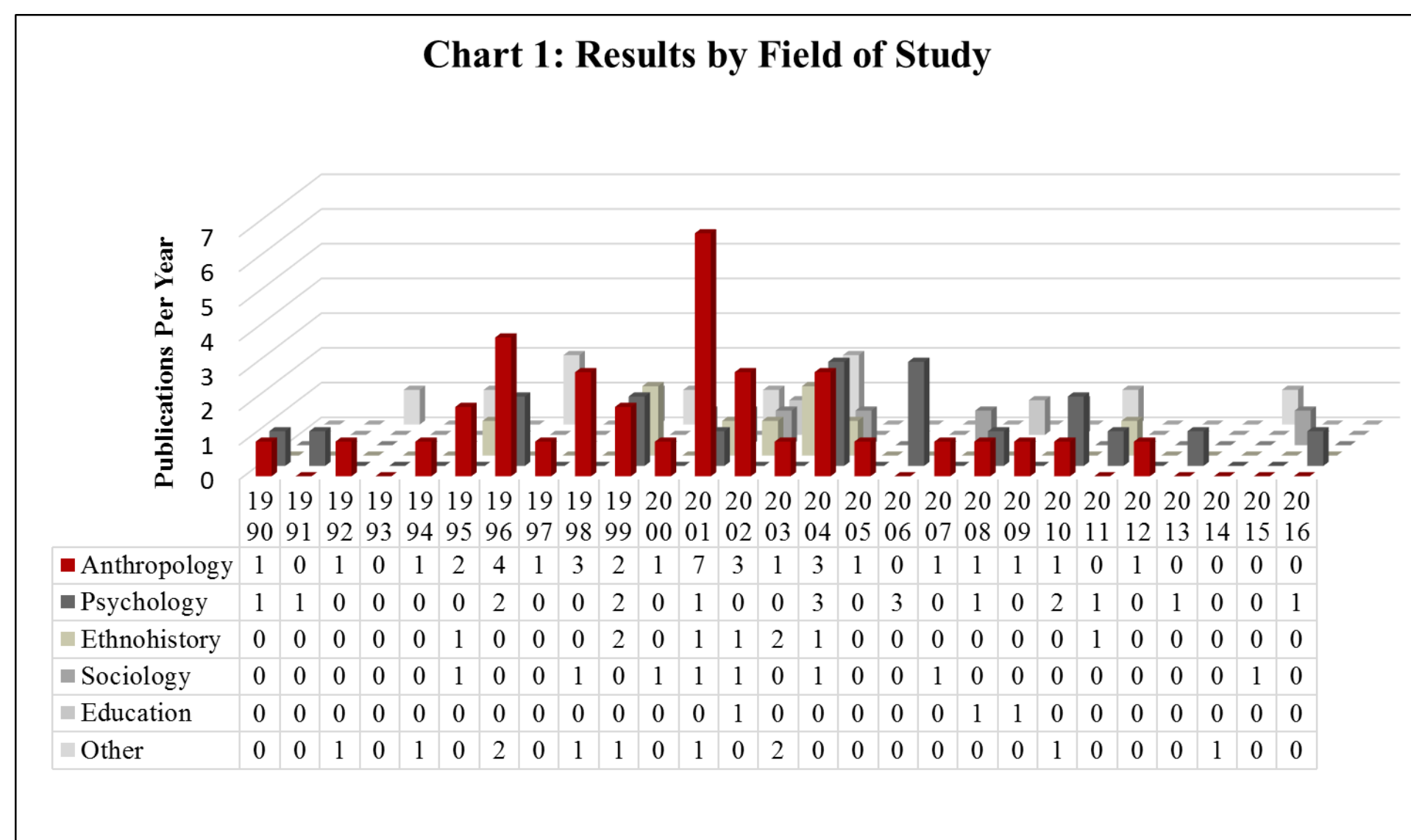
36 of the 484 unique publications were included from the search results. 50 studies from references were included that met the initial inclusion criteria. (Not limited to peer reviewed articles). **A total of 86 scholarly publications addressing Native American identity were reviewed.**

The present review considered the following topics:

- (1) contemporary Native American identity, (2) impact of historical trauma, (3) impact of federal policy, (4) role of official enrollment, (5) role of cultural revitalization, (6) role of tradition and ceremony, (7) role of community participation.

*Subject field terms were queried in abstract fields in JSTOR and the databases used for the secondary search within JSTOR were limited to the American Indian Studies, Anthropology, and Sociology categories.*

	% Included	Initial Results	Duplicates	Unique Results	Historical or Archaeological	Linguistics	Population or Cultural	Multi-Racial	Gender and Sexuality Studies	Education	Behavioral Science & Health	Art, Music, and Popular Culture	Public Policy	Science, Engineering, and Tech	Total Excluded	Total Included
<b>Search #1</b>																
EBSCO	22%	42	5	37	3	0	12	1	0	3	6	2	1	1	29	8
JSTOR	6%	335	128	207	24	0	98	22	4	8	3	13	3	20	195	12
WoS	11%	95	24	71	10	1	23	8	1	3	12	2	2	1	63	8
Subtotal	9%	472	157	315	37	1	133	31	5	14	21	17	6	22	287	28
<b>Search #2</b>																
EBSCO	14%	14	0	14	0	0	2	0	1	4	3	0	2	0	12	2
JSTOR	4%	149	78	71	17	0	44	0	0	1	2	1	0	3	68	3
WoS	4%	102	18	84	14	3	9	1	2	4	37	1	3	7	81	3
Subtotal	5%	265	96	169	31	3	55	1	3	9	42	2	5	10	161	8
<b>Total</b>	5%	737	253	484	68	4	188	32	8	23	63	19	11	32	448	36

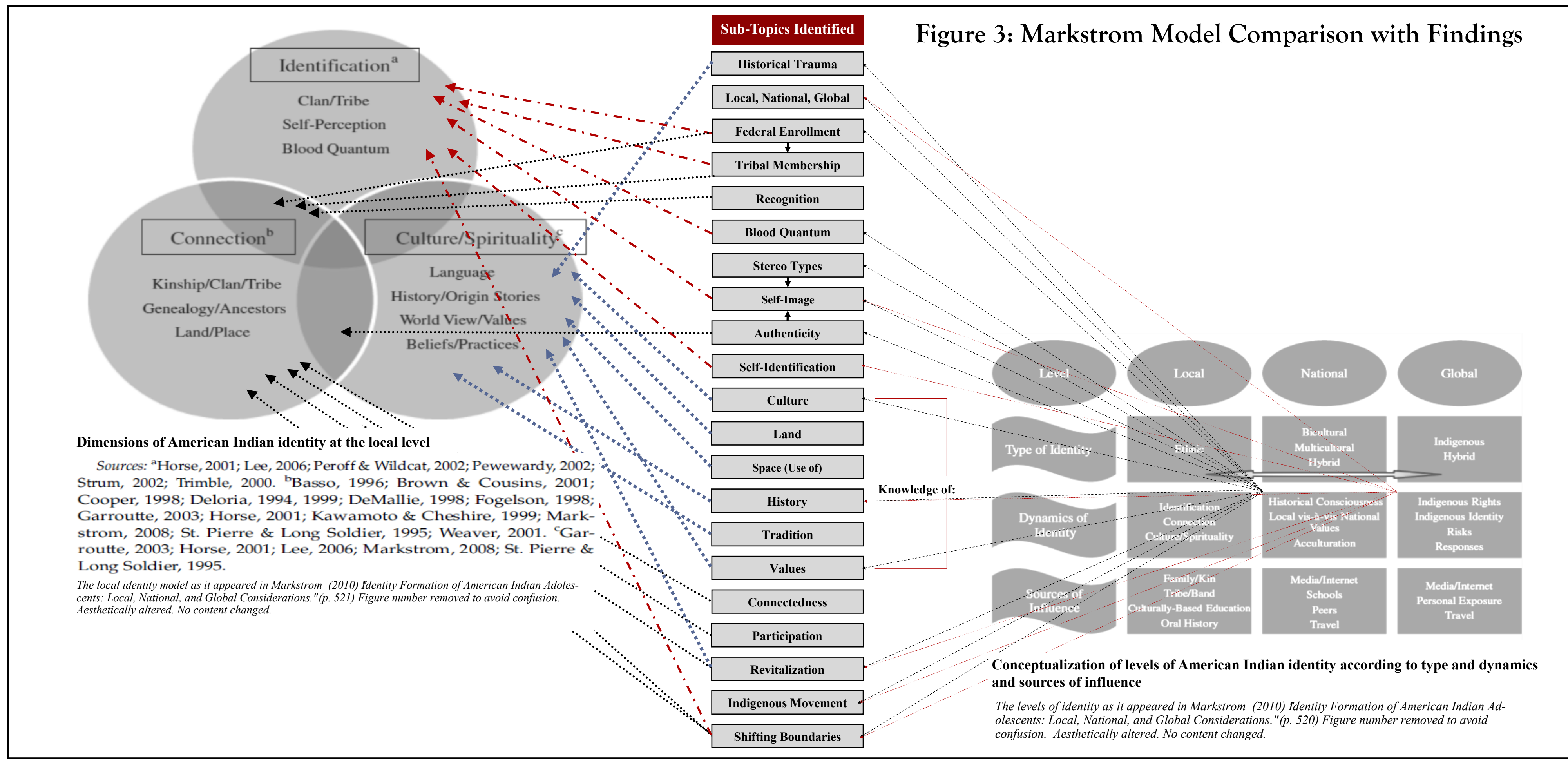


The topic of study continued to receive some attention from scholars in anthropology, as well as other social researches. However, the results indicate that in 2004 this topic began to lose its momentum in anthropology, while developmental and cultural psychology has continued to produce publications of research studies on this topic. (See Figure 2)

The pile sort exercise revealed the following common sub-topics in relation to Native American identity:

- **Historical Trauma:** Historical trauma, forced relocation, forced assimilation, mandatory boarding schools, acculturation, loss of traditional modes of production
- **Globalization:** Discussions related to the influences and interactions between local, national, and global forces
- **Identity Politics:** Enrollment, membership, recognition, blood quantum, stereo types, self-image, authenticity
- **Identity Constructs:** Identification, culture, land, space, history, tradition, values, oral tradition, connectedness, revitalization, indigenous movement, participation
- **Group Boundaries:** Inclusion, exclusion, communication, performance, negotiation

More recently the fields of developmental and cultural psychology have produced models for the analysis and understanding of Native American adolescent identity formation. Notably, Markstrom developed a model that was tested and reviewed in two separate studies by Kulis et. al. This model incorporated the elements of the sub-topics identified in social research during the literary review. (See Figure 3) As show below, some of these topics can be mapped to multiple sections of this model.



## References

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