The Effects of Tribal Governments on Reservation Poverty Rates

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Senior Thesis
Interests

- Previous research lacking information of Tribal Governments
- Poverty Rates are much higher than National Average 15.3% (ACS 2010)
- Personal and first hand experience
  - Living on a reservation
Brief History

- Dawes Act 1887
  - Allotment
- IRA 1934
  - Tribal Governments
- IGRA 1988
  - Gaming Operations
Literature

- Federal Register
- Douglas Kachel – Beginning of Indian Gaming
- W. Dale Mason – Indian Gaming
- Robin M. Leichenko – Income and Location
- Duane Champagne – Self-Determination
- David E. Wilkins and Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark
  - 3 Broad Categories
    - Original
    - Transitional Constitutional
    - Contemporary Constitutional
Terry L. Anderson and Dominic P. Parker
- “because this *poverty* cannot be explained solely by natural resource, physical, and human capital constraints, institutions are likely to be a part of the explanation”
United States Reservation Block Groups and Poverty Rates

- Red is Indian Reservations
- Blue is non-metro block groups with 20% or higher poverty rates
Indian Gaming

- Regulated by IGRA 1988 and NIGC
- National Indian Gaming Commission (NIGC) is funded by revenues from casinos
- 40% or 220 of 565 Tribes have one or more operations.
- Revenues from casinos help boost development on reservations
- Unemployment Rates
- Poverty
Gaming Revenues by Region

Portland
$2.7B (09–$2.5B)
50 ops (09–49 ops)

St. Paul
$4.4B (09–$4.4B)
119 ops (09–120 ops)

Sacramento
$6.8B (09–$7.0B)
62 ops (09–62 ops)

Phoenix
$2.5B (09–$2.6B)
48 ops (09–47 ops)

OK City
$1.6B (09–$1.5B)
51 ops (09–49 ops)

Tulsa
$1.8B (09–$1.7B)
65 ops (09–64 ops)

Washington DC
$6.7B (09–$6.8B)
27 ops (09–28 ops)
In a comparison of tribal governments those with systems that are IRA formed have higher poverty rates than those governments enacting a more traditional system of government.

In a comparison of Tribal governments those governments who have members that have attained a higher education have increased the overall per capita income on the reservation than those who have not attained a higher education.
In a comparison of Tribal governments, the government system with a higher unemployment rate are most likely not to have a gaming industry on their reservation than those that do have gaming industries.
Methodology

- American Community Survey 2010 – United States Census Bureau
- The Native American Constitutional and Law Digitization Project
- Tiller’s Guide to Indian Country
  - 1st Edition Published 1996
  - 2nd Edition Published 2006
    - Demographics
    - Land Area
    - Enrollment and Population
    - Types of Government Systems
Methods

- Units of Analysis
  - Federally Recognized Tribal Governments – 565

- Independent Variable
  - Systems of Government
  - Gaming Operations
  - Education

- Dependent Variables
  - Poverty Rates
  - Per Capita Income
  - Unemployment Rates
Political Systems – 3 Categories

3 Category Political System

IRA: 24.7%
Traditional: 21.8%
Council: 31.34%

Pie chart showing
- RA: 56%
- Council: 33%
- Traditional: 20%
### HS Ed and Per Capita Income

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<th>IRA Mean</th>
<th>Traditional Mean</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Significance</th>
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<td><strong>High School Education or Higher</strong></td>
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*Significance = P<.05
HS Ed and Per Capita Income

3 Category Political System
Unemployment and Gaming

3 Category Political System

Gaming Establishment

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Mean Unemployment Rate 2006
IRA systems have a higher poverty rate than Traditional systems.

Reservations that have a traditional government system have a higher graduation rate than that of an IRA system of government.

Reservations with gaming industries have a higher unemployment rate than the reservations that do have a gaming industry.