

School for Advanced Research
Global Indigenous Politics series

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Beyond Red Power

American Indian Politics
and Activism since 1900

*Edited by Daniel M. Cobb
and Loretta Fowler*



School for Advanced Research
Global Indigenous Politics Book

2007

14

Florida Seminole Gaming and Local Sovereign Interdependency

Jessica Cattelino

The Seminole Tribe opened high-stakes bingo in 1979. Most tribes that have gaming operations make minimal profits, in contrast to the Seminoles. In fact, one study found that thirty-one facilities out of about two hundred account for 62 percent of the total Indian gaming revenue.¹ In 1988 Congress passed legislation to define and regulate several classes of gaming (see table 6). Since that time, scholarship has generally focused on the interactions between tribes and states from the standpoint of state opposition to or non-Indian attitudes toward gaming. Recent attention has also turned to the relationships between casinos and federal acknowledgment.² Jessica Cattelino's chapter focuses on the local context to examine the interface between the exercise of Seminole sovereignty and the sizable income from Class II gaming. She explores how Seminole charitable donations have given expression to indigenous identity concepts and altered power relationships with non-Indians.

The explosive growth of tribally operated, high-stakes gaming across Native North America has called new public and scholarly attention to the legal foundations of tribal sovereignty. Gaming also has brought into focus the importance of local and regional politics to American Indian political and economic action, because gaming reshapes political fields not only on Indian reservations but also between indigenous communities and their

non-Indian neighbors. For the Seminole Tribe of Florida, the American Indian tribe that first launched high-stakes gaming, casino success has brought more local scrutiny and journalistic attention, fostering local resentment of Seminoles' new economic and political power. At the same time, gaming has joined together Seminoles and non-indigenous Floridians in new political alliances, collaborative projects, and joint economic ventures. This chapter analyzes the intersection of locality and sovereignty in the context of Florida Seminole tribal gaming.

From newspaper headlines, it may seem that political controversies follow inevitably from tribal gaming. Many regions, most prominently, southern Connecticut, have endured gaming-related disputes over traffic congestion, tribal land purchases, crime, and federal recognition. In California and other states, hard-fought battles over ballot measures on Indian gaming fill the airwaves with increasingly sophisticated advertisements about "special rights," fairness, and, more recently, tribal sovereignty and self-reliance.³ Yet gaming and sovereignty also come together in new relations of cooperation and interdependency between tribes and neighboring communities, from tribal philanthropy to intergovernmental cooperation, from local social-service delivery to job creation. Understanding the local dimensions of tribal sovereignty in the gaming context demands scholarly attention to the everyday politics of indigeneity and the ways that gaming has become a key point of engagement between Indian and non-Indian communities.

In legal and political analyses of tribal sovereignty, there is a pervasive emphasis on the tribal-federal relationship. The federal focus is based on the important principle that American Indian tribes have a nation-to-nation relationship with the United States, grounded in precolonial national orders, treaties and other forms of state recognition, and a long line of judicial rulings.⁴ The scholarly emphasis on the formal legal dimensions of sovereignty has reinforced this federal focus and scale; studies of "federal Indian law" sideline or take as a "problem" the local as a site of legal action and entanglement.⁵ Only recently has more attention been devoted to tribal-state relations as sites of sovereignty and to the internal tribal politics that shape sovereignty movements.⁶ Still, the local and regional remain underanalyzed. Indeed, as Karen Blu wrote in 1980, and which still holds for the present, "the regional factor in Indian studies has been largely ignored or glossed over, as has the amount of influence Indians have on their localities."⁷ Some important work has been done, such as Blu's work on Lumbee identity in North Carolina and Paula Wagoner's ethnography of regional identity in Bennett County, South Dakota.⁸ Neither author takes sovereignty as a focus, but the methods and questions of each author suggest that further analysis of regional politics could refine our theories of sovereignty. This would show

not only the ways that sovereignty escapes the “federal Indian law” framework and produces and challenges regional politics, but also how indigenous sovereignty is forged and maintained less through formal legal processes than by everyday relationships within and across communities, families, and generations.⁹

If the national remains the frame for most scholarship on tribal sovereignty, locality has emerged as an important analytic for thinking about indigeneity. The very category of indigeneity posits a spatial (and temporal) relation to colonialism. Also, anthropologists and others seek to understand the ways that people construct, are shaped by, and enact place.¹⁰ In South Florida—where the Everglades dominate the Seminole Big Cypress Reservation, the cowboy culture of the central peninsula pervades the Brighton Reservation, Latin American migrant workers share history and space with the Immokalee Reservation, and the Hollywood Reservation has been surrounded by suburban development—local politics are unavoidable and not simply matters of clearly defined Indian and non-Indian interactions. Indigenous identity and political vision are produced partly (though by no means only) at a regional level, in interaction with others. That is, locality and indigeneity are related because the concept of indigeneity links people to place and because the local is a social field in which indigeneity is constituted, often challenged, and reproduced.

In the United States, localism has been recognized as a privileged site for identity and politics at least since Tocqueville and remains a vital force despite the twentieth-century expansion of the central government. Indeed, federalism renders the local constitutive of the nation-state. Therefore, it is especially important to consider the locality of tribal sovereignty.¹¹ This chapter offers an ethnographic argument for the importance of local politics to the ongoing practices, limits, and possibility of tribal sovereignty. I analyze two aspects of gaming in South Florida: the creation and continuing popularity of the Seminole Coconut Creek casino and the growth of gaming-based charitable giving by the Seminole tribal government.

From Bingo to Hard Rock, with a View from Coconut Creek

In 1979 the Seminole Tribe of Florida opened Hollywood Bingo, a modest operation on a busy intersection of suburban Hollywood, a city situated along Interstate 95 between Fort Lauderdale and Miami. Hollywood Bingo was the first high-stakes gaming operation operated by an American Indian tribe, but within a decade tribal gaming would become an economic engine

and political hot potato in many regions. Hollywood Bingo initially met with some local resistance, led by Broward County sheriff (and subsequent Florida attorney general) Bob Butterworth. But Seminoles successfully defended their sovereignty-based gaming rights in the path-breaking case *Seminole Tribe v. Butterworth*, which established the legal framework for tribal gaming and launched a casino revolution that soon spread across much (but not all) of Indian Country.¹²

By 2007 the Seminole Tribe was operating seven gaming facilities across its six urban, suburban, and rural reservations (figure 10). Some operations, such as the Brighton casino, are modest and cater to a local clientele. By contrast, new and massive Hard Rock casino-resorts on the Tampa and Hollywood reservations draw huge crowds to their gaming floors, convention centers, entertainment venues, shopping plazas, and restaurants. On an August 2004 Saturday night, it took me twenty minutes to drive less than a mile from the tribal headquarters in Hollywood to the casino, with casino-bound traffic backed up and the Seminole Police Department directing vehicles to overflow parking lots. Whereas the annual tribal budget had been less than \$2 million in 1979, by 2000 it reached \$300 million, almost entirely funded by gaming proceeds. By 2006, annual net revenues from Seminole gaming approached \$600 million.¹³ The elected tribal government allocates gaming funds to an array of social services (health care, education, elder services, crime prevention), administrative operations (the tribal bureaucracy, land management), cultural programs (a museum; language instruction in Miccosukee and Creek/Muskogee, the two Seminole languages; tribal and outreach cultural education programs), and economic development initiatives (agriculture, retail businesses and venture capital, tourism), as well as to each of the approximately three thousand tribal citizens in the form of monthly per capita dividends. After struggling for decades against endemic poverty, Seminoles moved into a period of economic security during the late twentieth century.

As never before, gaming compelled Seminoles and local communities to work together in sometimes tense, and often unequal, political and economic partnerships. Of course, Seminoles long had interacted with local non-Indians, for example in early-twentieth-century commercial activities such as tourism, hunting, and fishing; indeed, those relations shaped Seminoles’ political and economic vision.¹⁴ But with gaming, Seminoles increasingly relied on a non-Seminole consumer base for tribal income, and they courted public opinion during high-stakes political and legal battles over gaming rights.

Seminoles now sit on local tourism boards, administer educational programs in local high schools, travel abroad with economic development

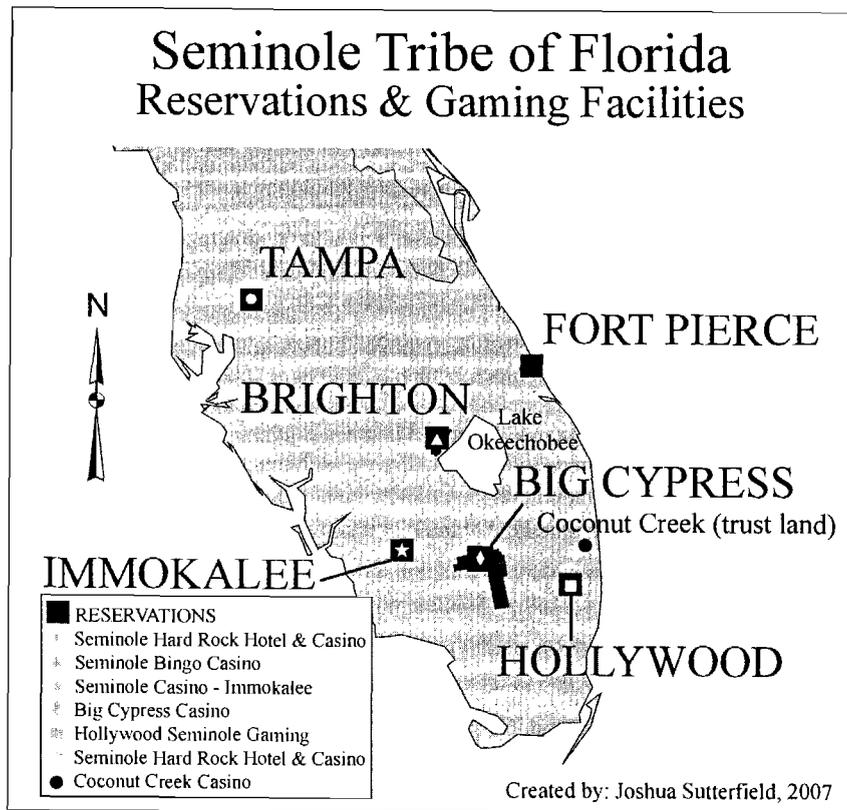


Figure 10. This map locates the seven casinos operated on land owned by the Seminole Tribe of Florida as of 2007. Six of them are situated inside reservation boundaries. The Coconut Creek casino was established on land brought into trust by the tribe in Coconut Creek, Florida. Map courtesy of Joshua Sutterfield.

groups promoting South Florida, and run advertising campaigns listing their gaming-based contributions to the local economy in jobs, increased tourism, and payment for goods and services. Seminole Gaming holds well-attended job fairs and employs thousands of Floridians, mostly non-Seminole and of diverse races and neighborhoods. Seminoles are often represented in local, multicultural education programs and festivals—alongside whites and African Americans, Cubans and other Caribbean immigrants. As late as 2000, however, a respected local journalist wrote an oral history-based book titled *Race and Change in Hollywood, Florida* without including a single Seminole oral history and with only a few passing references to Indians.¹⁵ The ritual enactment of Seminoles' local belonging has extended to displays of civic

leadership and corporate citizenship, for example in the occasional and quite remarkable appearance of tribal leaders as parade marshals in reservation border towns. In 2001 Max Osceola (Panther), tribal council representative from Hollywood, was commodore of the high-profile Fort Lauderdale Winterfest Boat Parade, and in 2004 the Seminole Hard Rock took over the event's corporate sponsorship.¹⁶ Such localizing relations can limit sovereignty by heightening local perceptions that tribes are private political and economic interest groups, not governments. These also threaten tribal sovereignty by putting tribes on a plane of equivalence with local governments, not national ones. This is risky business. Yet local gaming-based relations typically have reinforced sovereignty: through these relations, Seminoles have asserted their governmental status and achieved new regional power.

One example of local animosity over gaming that turned into a mutually beneficial relationship of sovereign interdependency was the development of the Coconut Creek casino (figure 11). In late 1999 the tribe prepared to open a modest casino on approximately five acres of trust land in the north Fort Lauderdale suburb of Coconut Creek. The land, which was located in an industrial and agricultural zone that soon became surrounded by suburban development, had been obtained in 1982 and placed in trust in 1985 as compensation for the eminent domain taking of Hollywood Reservation land for the Florida Turnpike. Turnpike construction had disrupted reservation sociality and space by bisecting tribal housing developments, reducing sightlines and mobility across reservation space, and increasing noise. Yet unintended consequences offered new opportunities. Most directly, tribal leaders in the 1990s correctly predicted that a casino at Coconut Creek would do brisk local business without reducing the Hollywood gaming market, located approximately fifteen miles to the south. Additionally, the turnpike may prove a boon to Hollywood Hard Rock casino business if the tribe successfully completes ongoing negotiations with the state to build a tribally funded exit ramp adjacent to the casino.

When news of the proposed Coconut Creek casino hit the press in the late 1990s, the local establishment in this retiree-filled suburb protested on the grounds that the casino would introduce crime, create traffic snarls, and reduce property values. Newspapers cited the tribe's nontaxable status and its sovereign immunity as dangers to the local economy and to unsuspecting casino patrons. They noted that tribal sovereignty generally prevents adjacent communities from regulating land use and business practices on Indian reservations and that tribal governments enjoy sovereign immunity, unless waived, for purposes of contract and liability. The Coconut Creek city manager termed the casino "a significant detriment to our community."¹⁷ After initially failing to meet with city officials, tribal leaders

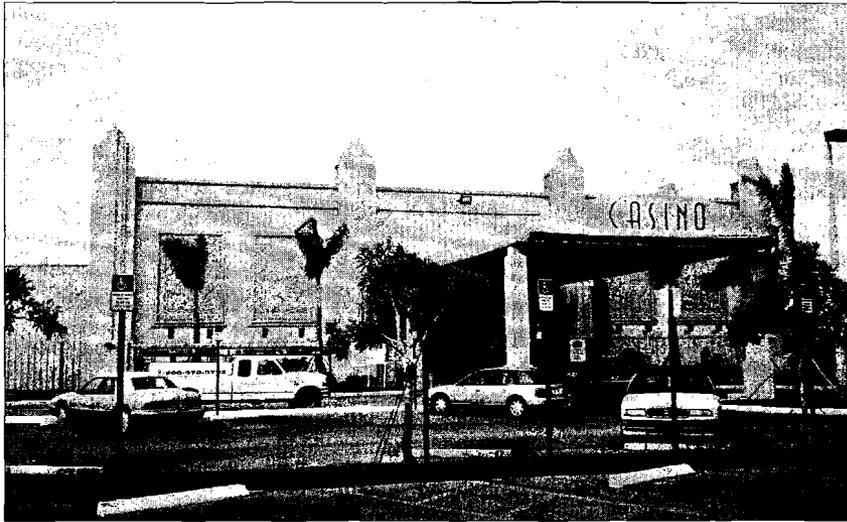


Figure 11. The history of the Coconut Creek casino in South Florida has revealed the potential for both conflict and cooperation between gaming tribes and local and state authorities. Photo courtesy of Jessica Cattelino.

began to promote their sovereignty through negotiation, reciprocity, and relations of interdependence. With this strategy, the tribe eventually won over Coconut Creek officials and secured tribal gaming rights. The city even bestowed upon the casino a plaque that read “esteemed corporate citizen”; the same city manager now lauded the casino’s success. Also, the tribe managed to educate the local public about tribal sovereignty: in 2001 a local newspaper characterized tribal and city officials as being “as close as a flush hand to a riverboat gambler’s vest.”¹⁸ Seminoles accomplished this financial and political success, in large part, by promising the city a \$1 million annual voluntary contribution (later increased to \$1.5 million). This “Municipal Service Provider Agreement” characterized the contribution as assisting the city of Coconut Creek in defraying the casino’s municipal impacts on water, police and fire, garbage removal, and additional services. Importantly, tribal officers repeatedly asserted that this contribution was not a tax, emphasizing their sovereign, non-taxable status. The tribe also donated to a city park and to a local organization for abused children.

Under many circumstances, casino revenue sharing threatens to undermine tribal sovereignty because American Indian tribes feel compelled to negotiate with state and local, not federal, governments. This is particularly true when, under the 1988 Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, tribes must

negotiate with states in order to operate the most lucrative class (Class III) of casino games. Taking advantage of Florida’s persistent refusal to negotiate a compact, Seminoles have built a gaming empire based on Class II games, which the state cannot regulate. As a result, the tribe’s revenue sharing with local governments is truly voluntary and thus is more powerful as a negotiating chip. In the Coconut Creek case, the tribe came to the table with sufficient power to negotiate favorable terms and emerged with substantial profits and regional goodwill. Such instances remind us that powerful sovereigns often negotiate with a range of actors, public and private. For example, the fact that foreign nation-states negotiate trade agreements with American mayors does not compromise state sovereignty, even as states enter into agreements with “lesser” governments. Tribal sovereignty is not necessarily threatened by tribes’ participation in local politics or by negotiations with municipal governments. Instead, the political, symbolic, and ethnographic significance of these actions depends on the power relations that guide them.

The Coconut Creek casino opened in February 2000, fully under tribal management and with a Seminole manager, Jo-Lin Osceola (no clan known). Osceola had spent the preceding two years in leadership training at the Hollywood casino, working in every casino job on a rotating basis in order to learn the ins and outs of the business. She was twenty-nine years old at the time, the youngest manager and the only female manager of a tribal casino. Osceola emphasized that having a Seminole as the casino executive meant “being able to control the decisions” within the tribe.¹⁹ The casino was earning about \$60 million a year by 2003, had created 275 jobs by late 2000, and had sparked economic growth among local vendors.

The initial casino controversy died down quickly in Coconut Creek, and both the tribal and municipal governments touted the casino’s benefits. A lawsuit settled in 2004 resolved a dispute between the tribe and its casino developer partner, making the tribe the sole owner and operator of the casino. Casino events, such as a December 2000 “Biker Bash,” drew Seminole and non-Seminole participants (in this case, motorcyclists on the eve of a charity ride) and the casino instantly became a focal point for local senior-citizen socializing. As a sign of diplomatic respect, the mayor of Coconut Creek, Marilyn Gerber, was asked to serve as a “celebrity” judge for the 2000 Miss Seminole pageant. This pageant, like Seminole patchwork clothing contests and other judging events, traditionally has non-Seminole judges, often local non-Indian leaders or Indian leaders from across the continent. (According to several Seminoles, this externalizing practice avoids the inevitable—and moral—privileging of family members that would occur with Seminole judges.) The mayor’s introduction by tribal chairman James

Billie (Bird) drew a loud round of applause from tribal citizens. Still, new tensions arose in 2006, when the Seminole Tribe submitted an Application for Trust Status to the US Department of the Interior. The application requested that approximately forty-four adjacent acres that the tribe and its subsidiaries had purchased and held in fee simple be placed into trust. Conversion to trust status would expand the tribe's local control and power while removing the land from property tax rolls. At the same time, the proposed expansion to create a destination resort with a larger casino, restaurants and retail, and 1,500 hotel rooms would anchor a new Coconut Creek economic development project, bringing tribal and city fortunes ever closer.

Beyond Coconut Creek, gaming wealth has enabled Seminoles to create new jobs and businesses, raising the tribe's standing and rendering local communities increasingly reliant upon it for economic growth. According to a June 1999 tribal report, the Seminole Tribe purchased more than \$24 million in goods and services from more than 850 Florida vendors annually. It paid approximately \$3.5 million in federal payroll taxes.²⁰ This gaming-based economic power has landed tribal officials a seat at the table when local governments discuss regional economic development and policy, for example, in negotiations over the massive Everglades restoration initiative. Beginning with the Hard Rock project, the tribal government issued municipal bonds to fund economic development, underlining the fact that tribal economic activity is driven by sovereign governmental action, not private entrepreneurship. The tribe's growing Seminole Police Department (SPD), which is funded with gaming proceeds, has entered into jurisdictional agreements with local law enforcement agencies, and the new rural emergency health services collaborate with regional hospitals.

Not surprisingly, gaming has not eliminated long-standing tensions between Seminoles and neighboring municipalities and individuals. At an interpersonal level, Seminoles complain that non-Indians falsely assume that they are rich. Moses Jumper Jr. (Snake) worried, "[Gaming] stereotyped us tremendously, not only among the locals here in the area." He told of tribal members who could not get favorable loan terms from local automobile dealerships because salespeople claimed to know how rich Seminoles were.²¹ Tensions also characterize some intergovernmental relations. In fact, Jim Shore (Bird), the tribe's general counsel and the first Seminole to become a lawyer, viewed non-Indian local governments as the "biggest challenge" to Seminole self-determination, citing strained relations with municipalities and ongoing legal and political challenges to Seminole economic development projects. Still, he pointed out, "We're not going anywhere," so those governments must learn to coexist.²² With gaming, the tribal government faces new pressures from local and state governments to finance road

improvements and other public projects that are adjacent to reservations. The tribe is constantly fighting political and legal battles over local jurisdiction and sovereign immunity from suit. In such a climate, tribal leaders and constituents must determine whether and how strongly to push sovereignty claims. At issue is not whether gaming has "caused" strained intercommunity relations, but rather the significance of gaming as the key symbol and focal point of Seminoles' place in the social, political, and economic landscapes of South Florida.

From Receiver to Giver

Social scientists and policy makers are understandably eager to analyze the "economic impact" of tribal gaming, and several studies are currently under way. Although valuable, "economic impact" analyses often overlook the social and political dimensions of economy. The political significance of Seminole gaming cannot be grasped without taking into account the changes in *relative* economic power at a regional scale. Gaming-based tribal philanthropy is one example of how gaming has realigned local relations of dependency and sovereignty. Charitable giving illustrates ways that patterned transfers of material goods mediate power and sociality. Gaming-based indigenous philanthropy has the potential to reorganize the symbols and directionality of local economic relationships between American Indians and others.

At least since the early twentieth century, Seminoles had been recipients of charitable giving from local philanthropic groups, especially women's groups. Philanthropy often was coupled with political advocacy. The Friends of Seminoles, long led by the early settler and trader's wife Ivy Stranahan, collected clothing and other goods for Seminole children while advocating for Indian education and benefits (albeit with an assimilative agenda). Broward County community organizations raised money for Seminole housing during the mid-century, and women's groups donated household goods as prizes for Seminole homemaking contests.²³ Religious and secular groups donated clothing, toys, and other goods each year at Christmas. Middle-aged and elderly Seminoles frequently recalled individual donors with gratitude. This was in marked contrast to their accounts of government benefit programs, which most perceived to be inadequate compensation for the great losses of land and life endured by Indians at the hands of the US government.

In interviews and everyday conversation, Seminoles recounted many fond memories of local ranchers, religious leaders, and other private donors, even as they also told of the shame of wearing hand-me-down clothing to

school. At one Big Cypress barbeque, tribal members lined up to greet an elderly white neighbor from a prominent ranching family who had donated to Seminole families. At a centennial celebration of the Stranahan House trading post, Seminoles spoke eloquently in public speeches and private conversation about Mrs. Stranahan's generous spirit and good heart. Charles Hiers (Bird) told me about the generosity of "pioneer" and trading families in southwest Florida and of the joint "cracker"—Seminole opposition to federal "meddling" in their shared way of life through restrictions on hunting and fishing in Everglades National Park.²⁴ Memories of philanthropy can blend seamlessly into trade and exchange, and it cannot be a coincidence that many leading philanthropists were also associated with trading posts, tourist enterprises, hunting and fishing operations, and other businesses.

Seminole gaming has altered the South Florida philanthropic landscape in at least two ways that implicate sovereignty. First, it has called attention to redrawn regional power relations as Seminoles assert political power in conjunction with their newfound economic status. This dimension of charity also reflects Seminoles' need to assert that they are not *simply* economic actors. In a neocolonial logic by which wealth undermines indigeneity, Seminoles' generosity operates both as a defense of gaming wealth and as an implicit, comparative critique of non-Indians' failures to share their wealth (this might be seen as a resignification of the racist phrase "Indian giving").²⁵ By donating to social and cultural causes, Seminoles also call attention to their own cultural distinctiveness and tribal governance, especially when they contribute to historic preservation, cultural programs, and social services.

Second, philanthropy reinforces sovereignty because it takes place at the level of the tribal government, not individual Seminoles. Individuals and families help one another within the tribe, within religious communities, and probably in other arenas, but it is rare to hear tribal citizens discuss individualized giving to non-Seminoles or to see Seminoles listed as donors to local organizations. By contrast, the tribal government frequently appears in local newspapers, the tribe's newspaper (the *Seminole Tribune*), and other publications as a donor to charitable causes, with pictures of tribal officials (always dressed in distinctive Seminole patchwork clothing) presenting physically enlarged checks, shaking hands, cutting ribbons, receiving plaques, and otherwise acting as generous donors and civic leaders.

Since the mid-1990s, when tribal revenue began to increase dramatically as a result of gaming success, tribal government charitable giving has grown. For example, in 2001 the tribe pledged \$3 million toward the creation of a historical park adjacent to the former Stranahan House trading post (now a modest museum) in Fort Lauderdale. The tribal council also sponsored Smallwood Days, an annual public festival at a historic Gulf

Coast trading post, and the tribe underwrote a small permanent exhibit at the Smallwood Store. The tribe contributes to local schools, athletic teams, Indian River Community College, and health organizations; in 2006 Hollywood tribal council representative Max Osceola Jr. (Panther) was named to the Broward County Red Cross board of directors. The tribal council also sponsors civic events for the public, such as July Fourth fireworks displays and Veterans Day celebrations. In the poor farming town of Immokalee, home of many migrant farmworkers and a small Seminole reservation on the site of a former Indian farmworker camp, the tribe has contributed to programs for health care and education and to the Little League. Former tribal council liaison Elaine Aguilar (Otter) credited these tribal efforts with improving Immokalee's overall reputation and quality of life.²⁶ As former Hollywood casino manager Larry Frank (Otter) put it, "We have extended our hand to the community."²⁷ Seminoles also contribute to other American Indian tribes, sending hurricane-relief emergency crews—with a fire truck, an ambulance rescue unit, and four planeloads of food and supplies—to Gulf Coast tribes in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, for example.²⁸ The tribe also donated large sums to South Florida hurricane relief efforts in the wake of Katrina and Wilma. At the same time, hurricanes revealed tensions over giving. Some Seminoles complained to me that non-Seminole neighbors improperly sought and received tribal emergency water distributions. The collective governmental character of rapidly growing, tribal charitable giving has encouraged local community members to conceive of the tribe as a tribe, and in this manner, it has buttressed tribal sovereignty.

As anthropologists repeatedly have demonstrated, gift giving often is a privileged mode through which power relations are articulated, established, or challenged.²⁹ Gifts are not simply economic transactions or expressions of selfless generosity but instead can be understood as constituting sociality, as creating relationships of obligation, care, power, and politics. This is not to say that charity is simply cynical, a mere ploy for recognition or a mode of coercive control over dependents. That Seminoles maintain close friendships and political alliances with past donors illustrates that charitable giving can move beyond relations of patronage to meaningful intercultural exchange. Nevertheless, the transition from Seminole charitable receiving to giving vividly illustrates shifting power relations in South Florida.

Some Seminoles understand charity to be a mechanism for responding to gaming critics and maintaining positive relations with local communities. James Billie (Bird), then tribal chairman, proposed that charity and generosity could help secure the goodwill of non-Seminoles, and he considered the tribal government to be responsible for creating such relationships.

Sympathy for Seminoles, he said, had deteriorated since gaming: before gaming, “a sympathetic atmosphere still existed. Today, no. Once the Indian got on his feet, made more money than most of the general public, that sympathetic feeling is gone.” In a common refrain, Billie commented bitterly that local non-Indians never bothered Seminoles as long as they remained poor, but gaming wealth sparked scrutiny and jealousy. Billie viewed Seminole charity as one way to counter a newly hostile environment and to move beyond relations of sympathy to create reciprocity:

So now comes the time to reverse the [former] sympathetic feeling to something good. When they're [non-Seminoles] trying to cut your throat, the Indian now needs to take that weird situation to his advantage and pay back and help the others around him. Sponsorships, scholarships, something little—just a mere thank you, hello. Go to their churches and help them or whatever. Just do something.³⁰

For Billie, charity completes circuits of reciprocity with previously generous non-Seminoles, and in this sense, it returns obligation and speaks to history. At the same time, charity is a strategy for long-term tribal political and economic survival in the context of new Seminole wealth and shifting interracial tensions. Charity toward outsiders, for some Seminoles, is a mode of political protection in hostile times and a means for social reproduction both within the tribe and at a regional level.

Simmering beneath the surface of Seminole discourses and practices of charitable giving is the question of political power and authority. Seminoles are in a position to give charity after a long twentieth century in which charitable giving to Seminoles was among the more salient forms of interaction between tribal members and non-Seminoles; dependency characterized civic relations between the tribal government and local and state governments. In today's reorganized field of power, economy, and exchange, Seminole charity is a return or extension of past charity received, but the social meanings of philanthropy extend beyond an ongoing exchange relationship or the demonstration of goodwill. For Seminoles, charity takes on a special significance against the historical backdrop of centuries of economic destitution, dispossession, missionization, and failed economic development. At long last, they can give, not only receive, and with giving come respect and power. Seminole charitable giving also reflects the cosmic obligations and power that some Seminoles feel toward maintaining the whole world, not only their own families and communities.

Even as tribal citizens expressed irritation at local non-Seminole expectations that they should donate gaming proceeds to worthy causes—many

noted bitterly that their own struggles often had been overlooked by others, and tribal citizens shared exasperated looks during tribal council meetings when guests appealed for money—they simultaneously leveraged this expectation toward political recognition. That is, Seminoles have effectively used their donor status to demand recognition and politicoeconomic consultation from municipal governments, civic organizations, and educational institutions. Seminole voluntary contributions to the Everglades restoration initiative have guaranteed them a place at the negotiating table on an issue that affects Seminole livelihoods (especially for cattle ranchers) and everyday lives on the Big Cypress and Brighton reservations. The Everglades contributions also have given Seminoles a forum for reminding South Floridians that Indians were the victims of natural resource mismanagement but, nonetheless, have been generous donors toward righting historic wrongs. Sometimes relations of giving and recognition are not grounded in monetary transfers but express reciprocal exchange structured by new power relations. For example, when the Seminole tribal council offered a 2005 resolution in support of Florida State University's use of the Seminole mascot, at a moment when FSU faced pressure from an NCAA investigation into Indian mascots, it also secured scholarships to FSU for Seminole students and ensured tribal input into the university's use of the Seminole name and image.

Other American Indian tribes also have become generous donors to local, national, and intertribal causes. For example, the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians donated to victims of a wildfire that ravaged an Apache reservation in Arizona and to survivors of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Mashantucket Pequots and Mohegans donated large sums to the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, local historical preservation efforts, and other causes. By 2003 the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Tribe had become one of Minnesota's top-twenty foundation and corporate grant makers (donating more than \$7 million annually); the tribe's chairman called the giving “a cultural tradition.”³¹ Katherine Spilde, in a discussion of the relationship between gaming and American Indian activism, considers increased tribal giving at a local level to be “a model for philanthropy as a conduit to political power.”³² She demonstrates some ways that charitable giving has afforded tribes new access to political power and goodwill. As she notes, however, American Indian charitable giving is not always interpreted generously by local residents. Eve Darian-Smith reports that the Chumash Band of Mission Indians donates more than \$1 million annually to a range of public organizations near Santa Barbara, California, but that such generosity is often overlooked by local residents, “or else they interpret the voluntary giving of money to nonprofit organizations as a purely political gesture made with insincere or manipulative intent.”³³ Charitable giving signals a reinscription

and reversal of dependency relations, which realigns power in ways that both threaten and reinforce indigenous sovereignty at a local level.

As a mode of engagement and a practice of exchange, charity represents Seminole generosity, strategic necessity, and, importantly, new political and economic power. Seminoles have mobilized this as governmental power, reversing ways that charity operated as a colonial technique during the twentieth century. Whether undertaking charity as a defense of the morality of gaming, a sovereign stance, a demonstration of economic power, a political strategy, a return for past generosity, an expression of neighborliness, or a form of participation in a regional community, Seminoles have enacted and localized sovereignty through philanthropy.

Conclusion

Focusing on the local dimensions of sovereignty does not undermine the nation-to-nation relationship between American Indian tribes and the United States. Quite the opposite: it points to the ways that national identities and politics everywhere are constituted in everyday, localized relations, not only for Indian tribes but also for other nations. By exploring gaming as a locus of political action, this chapter also calls attention to the material dimensions of sovereignty, or the ways that economic power, reciprocity, and exchange shape and are produced by sovereignty.

The Coconut Creek casino and charitable giving are only two examples of the many ways that gaming has shifted the economic and political landscape of South Florida, for Seminoles and for many other governments, individuals, and communities in the region. With Seminoles now serving on chambers of commerce, as honored guests at community events, and as players in regional economic development initiatives, new entanglements have tied the tribe and its members more closely to their non-Indian neighbors and simultaneously have provided the means by which Seminoles can assert tribal political status and authority. Of course, Seminoles' new gaming-based visibility also exposes them to criticism, threatening to undermine their political support and standing. To view these entanglements and interdependencies as merely undermining or, conversely, as only advancing tribal sovereignty would overlook the complex texture and particular histories of regional politicolegal relationships, simplifying the multiple meanings of Seminoles' overlapping citizenship and sovereignty. Like other events in South Florida, from the Elián González affair to the 2000 presidential election irregularities, Seminole gaming is a profoundly local story and also a window into larger political processes, in this case suggesting new ways of thinking about the localized and material dimensions of sovereignty.

Acknowledgments

Research for this chapter was part of a larger ethnographic and archival study of Florida Seminole economy and sovereignty, conducted in 2000–2001 (and on subsequent shorter visits) with tribal permission. The project was generously funded by a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, an American Association of University Women American Dissertation Fellowship, a Woodrow Wilson Dissertation Grant in Women's Studies, a Smithsonian Institution Predoctoral Fellowship, an American Philosophical Society Phillips Fund Grant for Native American Research, a New York University Kriser Fellowship in Urban Anthropology, the Annette B. Weiner Graduate Fellowship in Cultural Anthropology, and a New York University Alumnae Club Scholarship.

Notes

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3. Paul Pasquaretta, *Gambling and Survival in Native North America* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2003); Darian-Smith, *New Capitalists*; and Cramer, *Cash, Color, and Colonialism*.

4. Vine Deloria Jr. and Clifford Lytle, *The Nations Within: The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty* (New York: Pantheon, 1984); and David Wilkins and K. Tsianina Lomawaima, *Uneven Ground: American Indian Sovereignty and Federal Law* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001).

5. One exception to this federal focus is Thomas Biolsi's "Deadliest Enemies": *Law and the Making of Race Relations on and off Rosebud Reservation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), though his is more a study of race and Indian–white relations than of the local dimensions of sovereignty.

6. Brad Bays and Erin Hogan Fouberg, eds., *The Tribes and the States: Geographies of Intergovernmental Interaction* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2002); and Loretta Fowler, *Tribal Sovereignty and the Historical Imagination: Cheyenne-Arapaho Politics* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002).

7. Karen Blu, *The Lumbee Problem: The Making of an American Indian People*, with a new preface by the author (1980; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), xii.

8. Paula Wagoner, "They Treated Us Just like Indians": *The Worlds of Bennett County, South Dakota* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002). Another foundational text is Niels Winthur Braroe's *Indian and White: Self-Image and Interaction in a Canadian Plains Community* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975).

9. For attention to the impact of state and regional processes, see Circe Sturm's chapter 12 and Larry Nesper's chapter 13 in this volume.

10. Keith Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996).
11. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, edited and with an introduction by Harvey Mansfield and Delba Winthrop, transl. Harvey Mansfield and Delba Winthrop (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); and Thomas Sugrue, "All Politics Is Local: The Persistence of Localism in Twentieth-Century America," in *The Democratic Experiment: New Directions in American Political History*, ed. Meg Jacobs, William Novak, and Julian Zelizer (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 301–326.
12. 658 F.2d 310 (5th Cir. 1981).
13. Figures courtesy of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, Legal Department.
14. Harry Kersey Jr., *Pelts, Plumes, and Hides: White Traders among the Seminole Indians, 1870–1930* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1975); and Patsy West, *The Enduring Seminoles: From Alligator Wrestling to Ecotourism* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998).
15. Kitty Oliver, *Race and Change in Hollywood, Florida* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2000). This is all the more remarkable because one of the author's community meetings, which I attended, was hosted by the Seminole Tribe at the Hollywood Reservation library. Worse, the organizers' attempt to generate immigrant, black, and white interracial solidarity turned to outright disregard for indigeneity in the event's title: "We're All from Somewhere Else."
16. Seminoles' matrilineal clan affiliations are indicated after their names.
17. Paul Brinkley-Rogers, "Coconut Creek Fighting Full-Scale Indian Casino," *Miami Herald*, April 25, 1999, 1A, 13A.
18. Robert Nolin, "Casino, Creek Come Up Winners," *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, February 5, 2001, 1A, 12A.
19. Jo-Lin Osceola, interview with author, November 29, 2000.
20. Seminole Tribe of Florida, Briefing on Secretarial Procedures for Class III Gaming (n.p.: 1999).
21. Moses Jumper Jr. (Snake), interview with author, January 16, 2001.
22. Jim Shore (Bird), interview with author, August 10, 2001.
23. Rex Quinn Papers, University of Florida Archives, unaccessioned, Gainesville.
24. Charles Hiers (Bird), interview with author, March 31, 2001.
25. I thank Tony Clark for urging me to incorporate "Indian giving" into this chapter.
26. Elaine Aguilar (Otter), interview with author, January 8, 2001.
27. Larry Frank (Otter), interview with author, October 11, 2000.
28. Nery Mejicano, "Seminole Tribe Sends Help to Band of Choctaw Indians," *The Seminole Tribune* 26, no. 13 (September 23, 2005): 1, 25.
29. For example, see Franz Boas, "The Potlatch," in *Indians of the North Pacific Coast*, ed. Tom McFeat (1895; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967), 72–80; Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (1950; New York and London: Norton, 1990); and Maurice Godelier, *The Enigma of the Gift* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).
30. James Billie (Bird), interview with author, April 13, 2001.
31. Robert Franklin, "Shakopee Tribe among Minnesota's Largest Sources of Charitable Dollars," *The Star Tribune* (Minneapolis), December 29, 2003, www.startribune.com (accessed

December 29, 2003).

32. Spilde, "Creating a Political Space," 72.
33. Darian-Smith, *New Capitalists*, 86.