W. Dale Mason. *Indian Gaming: Tribal Sovereignty and American Politics*. (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000), pp 330. $24.95 ISBN 0-8061-3260-4

When Richard Fenno visited the University of Oklahoma as a Julian J. Rothbaum Distinguished Lecturer, he advised then graduate student W. Dale Mason to "put 'Indians' behind the colon" in the title of his dissertation. Mason took the advice and wondered if it facilitated his winning the William Anderson Award for best dissertation in the field of intergovernmental relations. When he subsequently published his dissertation as a book, Mason reversed the order and placed "Indian" in proper prominence *before* the colon. Mason's experience is indicative of both the neglect of Native Americans within political science and the growing recognition of tribes as significant actors in American policymaking.

Indian Gaming richly describes the relations among American Indian tribes with each other, the U.S. government, and state governments. Mason advances his discussion along historical, cultural, legal, and political fronts. He provides a great synthesis of the relevant literature enriched with numerous interviews of stakeholders and policy makers. A 17-page photo section is even included in the middle of the book which does help the reader get a sense of the wide variety of Indian gaming activities and the surrounding political process. He focuses on Indian gaming as a vehicle to answer the research question, "What is the status of Indian tribes in the American political system?" (p.5). His answer is that Indian tribes are unique among political actors. They possess a residual sovereignty that allows them at times to behave like states. In other situations, they behave like classic American interest

groups. Mason even claims that with the increasing political sophistication of at least one tribal organization, it is beginning to resemble a proto-political party.

The author uses primarily qualitative methodology to compare the experiences of tribes to advance their gaming interests in the states of New Mexico and Oklahoma. Pointing out the limits of a two-state comparative case study would be an easy criticism to make, but Mason effectively places his analysis within the overall context of Indian policy. Several times Mason broadens his scope of inquiry to include other states such as California and Florida. He also traces the roots of contemporary policy back through time to the opposing doctrines first proffered by President Andrew Jackson and Chief Justice John Marshall. In Jackson's view, state governments had almost full authority to govern Indian affairs within their boundaries—for all intents and purposes ignoring the Indian Commerce Clause in the U. S. Constitution. Marshall in contrast, took a paternalistic approach that viewed tribes as "domestic dependent nations" with "diminished sovereignty." According to Mason, "Advocates of a particular policy in a given era often fall back on these early arguments modified in form, if not in tone" (p. 13).

Mason recounts how the Supreme Court's efforts to ensure that states protect the civil rights of American Indians were initially very ineffective. In the Cherokee cases for example, the states basically ignored the Court's rulings. Mason might have added value to his analysis by drawing parallels between Indians and other ethnic groups in the American system. Native Americans were not the only ones to suffer from the impotence of the Supreme Court. African Americans faced similar difficulties even during those rare times when the early Court issued decisions favorable toward civil rights.

One can certainly read a well-placed sympathy toward the tribes in Mason's book. After all, the U.S. Government's relations with indigenous peoples have not represented a high point of American democratic idealism. The question remains: Will gaming help to solve the numerous problems facing American Indians, or will the long-term effects prove to be negative? Gambling is still a controversial issue and opponents voice strong arguments about the potential costs to society that Mason all but ignores. I would have liked to have heard a fuller discussion about *why* some tribes, especially large ones like the Navajo, have resisted gaming.

What lessons does the author draw from the comparison of New Mexico and Oklahoma? In New Mexico, effective inter-tribal organization helped advance and protect gaming interests. Such cooperation was possible due to a long history of interrelationships among the tribes and effective leadership. The political establishment in New Mexico was also less resistant to Indian gaming. New Mexico tribes were able to use a multi-pronged strategy of lobbying, litigation, and campaigning to achieve their goals.

Indian gaming interests met with much less success in Oklahoma. The historic policy of relocating Indians from various parts of the country to Indian Territory meant that Oklahoma tribes had little experience working with each other. Resistance by the Oklahoma political and legal establishment was also more intense than in New Mexico. The book's description of the role played by U.S. attorneys was very revealing. According to Mason, the U.S. attorneys played a critical role in the development of Indian gaming policy. Unlike New Mexico, the three U.S. attorneys in Oklahoma were fairly antagonistic to Indian gaming interests.

I recently taught an *Intergovernmental Relations* course and was disappointed to find that no major, contemporary book on federalism or IGR had more than a brief mention of Indian policy. I assigned *Indian Gaming* knowing its particular relevance for Oklahoma students. The class had both upper-division undergraduate and graduate sections and predictably students received the book with mixed results. The undergraduates appeared to find the broad overview of Indian policy presented in the first two chapters enlightening. However, they struggled over the latter portions of the book which do tend to retain a strong dissertation flavor. The graduate students offered much more positive feedback. If the book is still available when I teach the course in the future, it will likely find its way again on the assigned reading list.

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