

PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS TAXATION AND GOVERNANCE OF NATIVE AMERICANS

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Current attitudes towards self governance and taxation practices of Native Americans were examined using a survey of over 900 undergraduates at Oklahoma State University. Results show strong resentment towards the Native American community, with large support for policies that would harm the Native American community. However, these results are contingent on factors such as racial status, awareness of the Native American community, partisanship and favorability towards tribes. Those who are in closer contact, in terms of awareness and favorability, with Native Americans, as well as minorities and Democrats are the most supportive of policies that would benefit the Native American community.

Research concerning attitudes toward minorities has grown in recent years. However, research focusing on perceptions towards Native Americans is severely lacking. One reason is that Native Americans represent only 1% of the population in the United States. Oklahoma provides a unique context to examine perceptions towards Native Americans because this group constitutes 8% of the population within Oklahoma. Given the large Native American population within Oklahoma, we ask, to what extent are attitudes towards Native Americans within Oklahoma supportive of the Native American community?

Using a more populated region to study perceptions towards Native American was used within upstate New York. Here the Native American community is more numerous than the national average (Smith 2005; Smith 2007). Overall, the results of this research suggest very favorable attitudes towards Native Americans exist within the general population, as related to issues of taxation and self governance. These results are especially important because general support for current practices within the Native American community can translate into additional supportive public policies. On the other hand, more negative attitudes from the public could pose a threat to the Native American community if current practices are revoked or altered. Following the study of upstate New York, it is of interest to further develop this research by focusing on additional regions with large Native American communities, such as Oklahoma.

To expand the above research and consider another geographic region with a large population of Native Americans, we conduct a survey of student attitudes about taxation and self governance of Native Americans within Oklahoma. Results show strong resentment towards the Native American community, with large support for policies that would harm the Native American community. However, these results are contingent on factors such as racial status, awareness of the Native American community, partisanship, and favorability towards tribes. Those who are in closer contact, in terms of awareness and favorability, with Native Americans, as well as minorities and Democrats are the most supportive of policies that would benefit the Native American community. To explain these results, we review the literature of perceptions towards

Native Americans, and then outline the survey used to gauge current student perceptions. Next we highlight the important findings from the survey and discuss their implications.

PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS NATIVE AMERICANS: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Perceptions of Native Americans have varied across time. To understand current perceptions related to taxation and self governance, a brief overview of taxation and governance policies is necessary to place subsequent perceptions in context.

TAXATION AND SELF GOVERNANCE OF NATIVE AMERICANS

Taxation

Article I of the U.S. Constitution declares that Indians cannot be taxed and that Congress “shall have the power to...regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the states, and with the Indian tribes,” providing a foundation for U.S. authority over Indian tribes and individuals (Hamilton 1999, 509). By the 1790’s, U.S. Indian policy suggested that through “training in civilization,” and the “promotion of commerce under fair regulations,” including “land purchases by orderly methods,” the Indian Problem might be solved (Debo 1970). These objectives formed the basis of U.S. policy towards tribes for the next 200 years. These taxation policies are still in place today.

Self Governance

The issue of self governance has roots within the Indian removal practices of the 1800s. Indian removal policies were adopted to provide land for white settlement and to resolve land disputes between some southern states provided much of the context for early 19th century relations (Bordewich 1996). Rhetoric hardened on both sides of the Indian removal debate after Andrew Jackson’s election emboldened

Alabama and Georgia to deny Indians civil or legal rights by using the idea of state sovereignty based on a strict interpretation of the Constitution (Debo 1970). Jackson explained to the tribes through official and secret envoys (Perdue and Green 2005) that the federal government was “helpless to interfere with state laws” (Debo 1970, 115-116). Subsequent litigation, *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia 1831*, *Worcester v. Georgia 18* (Bordewich 1996, 45), affirmed the inherent sovereignty of tribes and produced the doctrine of retained sovereignty, or the “retention of attributes of sovereignty not explicitly surrendered” (Wilkins 1997, 20-21), echoing sentiments of those against Indian removal who saw Indians as human beings and entitled to receive the same treatment as others (Deloria 1984).

Intertwined with self governance and sovereignty is the issue of citizenship. The extension of citizenship to Indian tribes by Congress was contentious. Some in western states favored the citizenship and allotment in several provisions of the Dawes Act believing that such provisions would lessen the influence of the federal government in local affairs (Hoxie 2001). Others argued that the “backward” Indians could not defend their holdings from exploitation by whites, and that the federal government was obligated to maintain a paternal/guardian relationship with Indian tribes (Hoxie 2001). Federal government policies attempted to straddle the fence by providing Indians with greater federal protection without appearing to retreat from the government’s commitment to Indian citizenship (Hoxie 2001).

The 1934 Indian Reorganization Act was intended to resolve the conflicting goals of Indian autonomy and assimilation (Walch 1983). Central provisions of the act sought to prohibit further allotment of tribal land, and reclaim previously allotted lands, establish tribal governments with control over tribal funds, and establish a revolving loan fund for the use of tribes and individual Indians (Debo 1970). Critics on both sides of the 1934 act charged that the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) still controlled too much of tribal governments and required tribes to Anglicize governmental institutions and abandon tribal models (Walch 1983). Other critics saw tribal governments as too communistic, or believed that provisions of the act would give tribes an unfair economic advantage regarding land and natural resources (Walch 1983; LaGrand 2002). By the late 1940s substantial budget cuts for reservation programs and development and the resignation of the primary drafter of the 1934 IRA

and BIA Commissioner Collier led Congress to consider policies to more rapidly assimilate Indians (Walch 1983). The debate over termination would be framed by Congressional proponents in terms of equality and freedom for individual Indians.

In 1949 the Hoover Commission recommended termination. The Commission mandated that Congress no longer recognize Indian sovereignty (Wilkins 1997). One advocate of the policy Senator Arthur Watkins of Utah extolled the new found freedom of the Indian: "Following in the footsteps of the Emancipation Proclamation... I see the following words emblazoned in letters of fire above the heads of Indians- These People Shall be Free!" (Berkhofer 1979, 186). Termination policies, which also freed the federal government from the Indian, began in 1953 with the adoption of House Concurrent Resolution 108 and Public Law 280 which called for tribes to be freed from Federal supervision and control (Walch 1983), and transferred tribal court jurisdictions in five states to the respective state court systems (Berkhofer 1979). By 1954, the federal government had terminated recognition of "110 tribes and bands" in the U.S. as sovereign nations (Walch 1983). Overall, Native American tribes remain sovereign today.

RECENT PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS NATIVE AMERICANS

Policy practices towards Native Americans have set the groundwork for negative public perceptions. Contemporary discussions of Indians are often framed within "an assumption of unearned privileges" that tend to mirror old dichotomies by reducing NAs to lazy drunks or as a minority interest group that relies on the misplaced guilt of Americans in Congress and more importantly, the courts (Kidwell 2007). However, recent research into tribal/state/federal taxation and sovereignty disputes in New York suggests that currently New Yorkers are largely supportive of tribal positions in these disputes, respect treaty obligations, and tribal sovereignty generally (Smith 2005).

To assess attitudes towards Native Americans, Buffalo State University studied public opinion of NAs by other New Yorkers. Data from focus groups and surveys of more than 450 western New Yorkers showed a willingness to support Indian sovereignty issues generally, that many stereotypes (positive and negative) expressed by respondents

were instilled in elementary school, and that proximity to reservations or other contact with NAs allows for the introduction of countervailing information lessening public acceptance of common NA stereotypes (Smith 2005). Western New Yorkers' support for NA sovereignty was very strong at 81%, while support for NA sovereignty among respondents who patronize tribal businesses reached 93% (Smith 2005). Though the majority of respondents were sympathetic to the positions of Indian tribes some views expressed in the focus groups mirrored historical stereotypes: "They are alcoholics and drug dealers...the reservation is a no-man's land, bare and lawless" (Smith 2005, 8).

Zogby International essentially reached the same conclusions as the Buffalo State research. Using a telephone survey and a sample of 902 interviews from western New Yorkers, Zogby found that 78% of respondents agreed with tribal claims regarding state taxation and that these supporters were uniformly consistent across ages, genders, and political affiliation and orientation (Smith 2007). The survey also shows that nearly 60% favor casino gambling in New York generally, in Buffalo specifically, and support the Seneca Buffalo Creek Casino in particular. Further, both Democratic and Republican voters, as well as men and women, favor casinos. Overall opinion of Indians in the poll was 55% favorable, nearly four times more than those who said they hold a negative opinion (16%) (Zogby 2006).

The recent survey research seems to show that perceptions of Indians have become more positive and that there is room for improvement. The Buffalo State and Zogby research showed that people are supportive of some degree of tribal sovereignty along with modifications to treaties that are fair and equitable to all involved.

EXAMINING PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS NATIVE AMERICANS

The purpose of our research is to extend the analysis of New York to Oklahoma, where Native Americans makeup 8% of the state population. To assess current perceptions towards Native Americans, two specific policy arenas were chosen: taxation and Native American self governance. In terms of taxation, we focus on perceptions toward tax exemptions of reservations, including if this policy should apply to non-Indians as well, and if taxes should be collected and given to the

state government. With respect to self governance, we are concerned with perceptions supporting or opposing the continued practice of Indian self governance, rather than governance by the state.

Taken together, these two arenas present two clear sides. On the one hand, opinions could support current practices and policies that benefit Native Americans. On the other hand, opinions could represent the opposite and indicate support for actions that would in essence disadvantage the Native American population. For example, allowing taxation on reservations to benefit the government removes a special exemption for Native Americans and could decrease sales on reservations due to additional taxes, which again would disadvantage the Native American community. By using these two sets of issues, we hope to find clear patterns exist with respect to support for or against practices that benefit Native Americans.

To analyze perceptions towards Native Americans, we chose to implement a survey to students at Oklahoma State University. The use of student samples has been questioned in past research. However, two points need to be addressed with respect to the sample. First, in choosing this sample, we relied on socialization research that supports the attainment and persistence of political attitudes during pre-adult years (Searing, Wright and Rabinowitz 1976; Jennings and Niemi 1981; Achen 2002). Given that college aged students have been socialized within the home and school, previous research supports the notion that that these students have formed valid opinions that are central to our study. Further, the above research documents the staying power that these attitudes have. Political attitudes are remarkably stable over time, even those formed during these pre-adult years. Given this, we do not feel the results would differ substantially by using a different population. Second, although we have confidence in the sample chosen, we do acknowledge previous critiques of samples drawn using students and we do not wish to over-generalize our results to a much larger population. Instead, our results should be taken as a sample within Oklahoma and we will frame them as such.

Our sample of students comes from all students enrolled in Oklahoma State University's introductory political science course, which is a required course for graduation. From all sections of this course, 964 students chose to participate for extra credit given by their instructors. Data were collected via a forty eight question survey, with responses

recorded onto scantrons.¹ The responses were then scanned and transferred into a data file to be used for analysis. Our sample does address consistency across the state of Oklahoma in terms of key demographics. First, women represent 50.7% of Oklahoma residents and 48.94% of our sample. Within Oklahoma, 78.93% of residents are white and 79.07% of our sample are white. Further, 8.00% of the Oklahoma population are Native American, compared to 9.50% of our sample. Overall we find good consistency between our sample and the larger Oklahoma population in terms of race and gender.

DEPENDENT VARIABLES

In analyzing perceptions towards Native Americans, two areas were of interest and serve as the main focus of the analysis. Within each area, dependent variables were selected based on the survey questions asked.

Taxation

Our first interest is general taxation issues central to Native Americans. To assess preferences within this issue group, three survey questions were used. First, respondents were asked about their views for sales tax exemption for reservations with the following question, "By federal law and treaties, sales of products and services on Indian reservations are not subject to state tax. Which of the following statements is closer to your opinion? a) This policy should apply to both Indians and non-Indians, or b) This policy should apply only to Indians." For this question, the responses for "b" were given a 0 and the responses for "a" were given a 1. Second, preferences towards collecting taxes from Native American business were assessed by asking, "Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The Oklahoma State government should begin to attempt to collect sales taxes on items sold on Indian reservations." Responses were coded as -2 "strongly disagree," -1 "disagree," 0 "no opinion," 1 "agree," 2 "strongly agree." Lastly, respondents were asked who should benefit from a sales tax if implemented among reservations. The question was, "If there was a sales tax on products purchased on Indian reservations, who should receive the tax revenues?" Responses were coded as 0 "Native Americans," 1 "Oklahoma State government."

Native American Self-Governance

Our second interest is general opinion about self-governance of Native American tribes. To assess these preferences, the following question was asked, "Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: American Indians should continue to govern themselves, independent of the state." Responses were coded as -2 "strongly disagree," -1 "disagree," 0 "no opinion," 1 "agree," 2 "strongly agree."

Together, these two areas and the related dependent variables constitute the focus of the subsequent analysis. For each set of dependent variables factor analysis and correlations were conducted and for each, significant differences existed with correlations below 0.20 and uniqueness factors above 0.90. Overall, it was decided to use separate dependent variables rather than create factors or scales.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

In addition to the above dependent variables, demographic questions were asked. These questions provide the basis of our explanatory variables. For each set of dependent variables, specific independent variables were used to help explain the set of dependent variables. Taken as a whole, the independent variables gauged knowledge of local events, hometown size, proximity of hometown to an Indian reservation, awareness of Native American culture, racial status, party identification, ideology, and both favorability towards Native American tribes and casinos.

Knowledge of local events was included as an explanatory variable because it was assumed that perceptions would be based on awareness of local cultures and events within the state. Given this, knowledge of local events was coded as 1 "very unaware," 2 "unaware," 3 "aware," 4 "very aware."² Based on the responses given, 44% of the respondents reported being either unaware or very unaware, while 56% of the respondents reported being aware or very aware of local events. Closely related to knowledge of local events, awareness of Native American culture was assessed. Again, awareness was expected to correspond with more supportive attitudes towards Native Americans. Here awareness of Native American culture was coded as 1 "very unaware,"

2 “unaware,” 3 “aware,” 4 “very aware.”³ The responses show 51% of the respondents indicated they are unaware or very unaware of the Native American culture, while 49% indicated they were aware or very aware.

Beyond local events and forces shaping perceptions, perceptions should be guided by town size and proximity to a reservation. Residents from larger towns generally exhibit more liberal attitudes, while proximity to a reservation should lead to an understanding of the needs and issues of the Native American community. First, hometown size was coded as 1 “large,” 2 “middle-sized,” 3 “small.”⁴ A diverse group of respondents was found, with 38% of respondents from large towns, 33% from middle-sized towns, and 29% from small towns. Second, proximity to an Indian reservation was coded as 1 “less than 10 miles,” 2 “between 10-15 miles,” 3 “more than 25 miles,” 4 “don’t know.”⁵ Similar to the diversity in town size, proximity to an Indian reservation showed a diverse group of respondents. 19% indicated living less than 10 miles from a reservation, 18% are between 10-15 miles, 25% are more than 25 miles. The remaining respondents did not know how close their hometown was to an Indian reservation.

Racial status was included in the analysis because it was assumed that minorities would be more responsive to issues concerning their own or another minority group. Racial status was coded as 1 if the respondent reported being a minority, 0 if the respondent reported being a white, Caucasian.⁶ Overall, 24% of the respondents reported minority status. Within this group, 21% were African American, 44% American Indian, 16% Hispanic, and 19% mixed, bi-racial.

In addition to the above explanatory variables, two variables were used to assess political leanings. Since the dependent variables deal with policy issues, we suspected Democrats and liberals should be more responsive to the needs and issues of the Native American community. To assess political leanings, variables for party identification and ideology were included. First, party identification was coded as -1 “Republican,” 0 “Independent,” 1 “Democrat.”⁷ Here we found 60% of the sample were Republicans, 12% Independent and 28% Democrat. Second, ideology was coded as -1 “conservative,” 0 “moderate,” 1 “liberal.”⁸ In terms of ideology, 42% reported being conservative, 41% moderate and 17% liberal.

Lastly, respondents were asked their favorability toward tribes,⁹ Native American business people,¹⁰ and casinos.¹¹ For each the

responses were coded as -2 “very unfavorable,” -1 “unfavorable,” 0 “no opinion,” 1 “favorable,” 2 “very favorable.” These questions were included because they are directly related to the above dependent variables. For favorability towards tribes, 11% of the sample indicated an unfavorable opinion, 34% indicated a favorable opinion, and the remainder indicated no opinion. For favorability towards Native American business people, 11% of the sample indicated an unfavorable opinion, 24% indicated a favorable opinion, and the remainder indicated no opinion. For favorability towards casinos, 30% of the sample indicated an unfavorable opinion, 38% indicated a favorable opinion, and the remainder indicated no opinion.

ANALYSIS

Overall, a series of models were constructed based on the set of dependent variables. Explanatory variables were included based on the assumption that these variables would explain the set of dependent variables. The analysis will proceed by discussing the results for each set of dependent variables.

TAXATION

Knowledge of local events, hometown size, proximity of hometown to an Indian reservation, awareness of Native American culture, racial status, party identification, ideology, and favorability towards Native American tribes and favorability towards Native American business people should explain preferences towards taxation of Native Americans and reservations. To test this expectation, three dependent variables were used and the above independent variables were included in the analyses. For the dependent variable collecting taxes from Native American businesses, an ordered logit analysis was conducted due to the ordered nature of the dependent variable. For both reservations subject to sales tax and recipient of Native American sales tax, logit analysis was used, given the binary nature of these variables. Table 1 presents the results of the three models.

Taxation preferences concerning Native Americans are strongly predicted by racial status and favorability towards tribes. Both minorities

TABLE 1

Preferences Toward Taxation of Native Americans

	Reservations not Subject to Sales Tax	Collect Taxes from Native American Businesses	Recipient of Native American Sales Tax
knowledge of local events	-0.05 (0.14)	0.12 (0.11)	0.25* (0.13)
hometown size	0.31** (0.11)	0.13 (0.08)	0.10 (0.10)
proximity to reservation	0.02 (0.08)	-0.02 (0.06)	0.01 (0.07)
awareness of NA culture	-0.06 (0.11)	0.12 (0.08)	0.07 (0.10)
minority	-0.45* (0.19)	-0.52*** (0.16)	-0.50** (0.18)
party identification	-0.11 (0.11)	0.02 (0.08)	-0.11 (0.10)
ideology	0.05 (0.13)	-0.02 (0.10)	0.04 (0.12)
favorable view of NA business people	-0.22 (0.14)	-0.28* (0.11)	-0.02 (0.14)
favorable view of tribes	-0.34* (0.13)	-0.72*** (0.10)	-0.69*** (0.13)
Constant	1.11 (0.56)		-0.20 (0.50)
Cutpoint 1		-2.08 (0.43)	
Cutpoint 2		-0.54 (0.42)	
N-size	836	847	827
Lr chi2, df, prob	42, 9, 0.00	136, 9, 0.00	75, 9, 0.00

Note: Models with cutpoints represent ordered logistic regression; models with constants indicate binomial logistic regression.

Standard errors in parentheses. ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, +p<0.10.

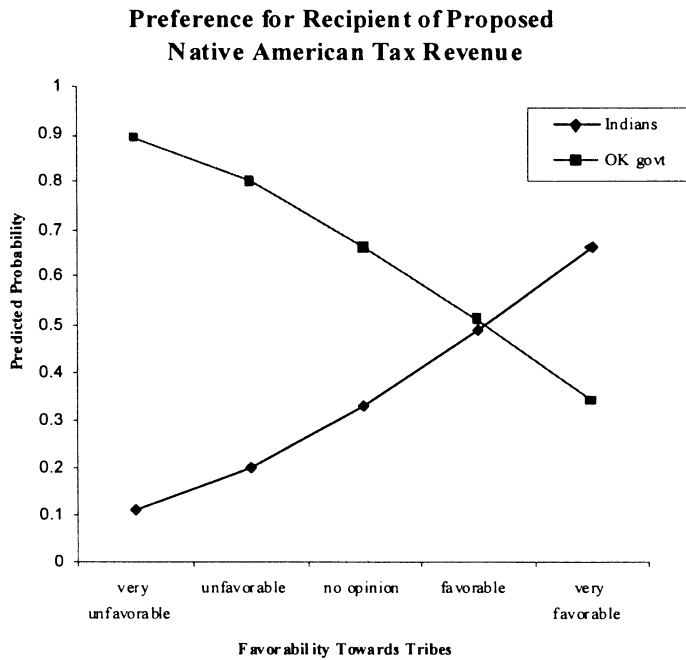
Preferential business treatment of Native Americans: -2 "strongly disagree," -1 "disagree," 0= "no opinion," 1= "agree," 2= "strongly agree" | Reservations not subject to sales tax: 0= "This policy should only apply to Indians," 1 "This policy should apply to both Indians and non-Indians." | Collect taxes from Native American businesses: -2 "strongly disagree," -1 "disagree," 0= "no opinion," 1= "agree," 2= "strongly agree" | Recipient of Native American sales tax: 0= "Native Americans," 1= "Oklahoma State government" | knowledge of local events: 1= "very unaware," 2= "unaware," 3= "aware," 4= "very aware" hometown size: 1= "large," 2= "middle-sized," 3= "small" | proximity to reservation: 1= "less than 10 miles," 2= "between 10-15 miles," 3= "more than 25 miles," 4= "don't know" awareness of Native American culture: 1= "very unaware," 2= "unaware," 3= "aware," 4= "very aware" | minority: 1= minority, 0=white, Caucasian | party identification: -1= "Republican," 0= "Independent," 1= "Democrat" | ideology: -1= "conservative," 0= "moderate," 1= "liberal" | favorable view of Native American business people: -2= "very unfavorable," -1= "unfavorable," 0= "no opinion," 1 "favorable," 2= "very favorable" favorable view of tribes: favorable view of casinos: -2= "very unfavorable," -1= "unfavorable," 0= "no opinion," 1 "favorable," 2= "very favorable"

and those with favorable views of tribes are more likely to maintain preferences in line with current practices, while whites and those with unfavorable views of tribes are more likely to advocate taxation policies that would harm the Native American community. To better understand the magnitude of these effects, predicted probabilities were calculated for each significant explanatory variable while holding all other variables constant at their means. First, with respect to agreement with reservations being exempt from sales tax, minorities are more likely to agree with this current practice. Minorities have a probability 0.08 larger than whites in favor of this policy. On the flip side, whites are more likely to indicate that this policy should apply to both Indians and non-Indians, showing a probability 0.08 larger than minorities in support of this. Clearly differences between these two groups exist. Minorities also differ in their preferences for collecting sales taxes from Native American business and who the recipient of the taxes should be. Whites have a probability 0.11 larger than minorities in agreeing with a policy to collect taxes from Native American businesses. Further, whites are more likely to favor the taxes being given to the Oklahoma government (probability=0.66) compared to Indians as the recipient (probability=0.34). For minorities, the preference supports taxes being given to the Oklahoma government (probability=0.54), but the difference between the preference of recipient is only 0.08, while the difference between whites and minorities is larger.

These same trends apply when favorability towards tribes is considered. First, with respect to agreement with reservations being exempt from sales tax, those with a favorable view towards tribes are more likely than those with an unfavorable view to think this policy should only apply to Indians (probability difference=0.22). On the other hand, those with an unfavorable view of tribes are more likely to think this policy should apply to both Indians and non-Indians (probability=0.89). Those with a favorable view of tribes have a probability that is 0.22 lower than this.

Favorability towards tribes also affects preferences for collecting sales taxes from Native American business and who the recipient of the taxes should be. Those with an unfavorable view of tribes support collecting sales tax from Native American business (probability=0.76). However, those with a favorable view of tribes only have a 0.15 probability of supporting collecting a sales tax. Clearly the issue of taxes is divisive

FIGURE 1



depending on prior favorability towards tribes. Similarly, preferences for the recipient of the sales tax show differences among these two groups. To illustrate this difference, Figure 1 presents a graphical representation of the predicted probabilities.

Those with an unfavorable view towards tribes are more likely to support the tax being given to the Oklahoma government (probability=0.89) compared to those with a favorable view of tribes (probability=0.34). For this group, the preference is for the recipient of the tax to be Indians (probability=0.66). Overall, prior favorability towards tribes corresponds to support for maintaining existing taxation policies, and if these policies were to change, preferences support that tax revenues should be given to tribes. Strong preferences against tribes prove to have strong effects with respect to preferences in support of taxation on Native Americans and taxation policies that negatively affect Native Americans.

NATIVE AMERICAN SELF-GOVERNANCE

Currently within Oklahoma, Native Americans are self-governed and have governmental structures within the tribes, as opposed to being subject to Oklahoma State government. To assess preferences towards maintaining this practice, respondents were asked if they support this policy. Again, knowledge of local events, hometown size, proximity of hometown to an Indian reservation, awareness of Native American culture, racial status, party identification, ideology, and favorability towards Native American tribes and favorability towards casinos should affect preferences for self-governance. To analyze this, an ordered logit analysis was conducted with the above independent variables, and

TABLE 2

Preferences for the Continued Self-Governance of Native Americans

	Self governance
knowledge of local events	-0.08 (0.11)
hometown size	-0.01 (0.08)
proximity to reservation	-0.07 (0.06)
awareness of Native American culture	-0.23** (0.08)
minority	0.59*** (0.16)
party identification	0.04 (0.08)
ideology	0.16+ (0.10)
favorable view of casinos	0.14* (0.06)
favorable view of tribes	0.77*** (0.09)
Cutpoint 1	-2.22 (0.43)
Cutpoint 2	-0.51 (0.42)
N-size	845
Lr chi2, df, prob	738, 9, 0.00

Note: results based on ordered logistic regression.

Standard errors in parentheses.

***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, +p<0.10.

self governance: -2 "strongly disagree," -1 "disagree," 0= "no opinion,"

1= "agree," 2= "strongly agree"

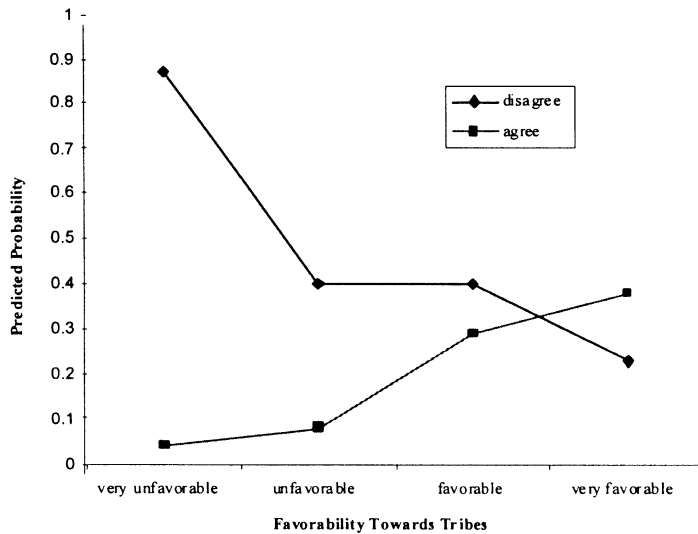
predicted probabilities for each significant explanatory variable were generated while holding all other variables constant at their means. Table 2 present the results of this analysis.

As found with taxation policies, preferences for self-governance were influenced by awareness of Native American culture, racial status, and favorability towards tribes. In short, minorities and those with favorable views of tribes were more likely to support self-governance compared to whites and those with an unfavorable view of tribes (probability difference=0.10 and 0.34, respectively). Instead, whites and those with unfavorable views of tribes were more likely to oppose self-governance (probability=0.57 and 0.87, respectively). Figure 2 displays the effects of favorability towards tribes on preferences towards self-governance.¹² Clearly, favorability strongly affects preferences towards self-governance.

While both racial status and favorability towards tribes both meet our expectations, awareness had an unanticipated affect. Awareness of the Native American culture actually predicts opposition towards self-governance. Those who are more aware of the Native American

FIGURE 2

Agreement with Self-governance of Native Americans



culture are more likely to oppose self-governance (probability=0.51), while those who are less aware are more likely to support self-governance (probability=0.40). These probabilities are smaller in magnitude of support and opposition than we find for favorability, but clearly, awareness does affect preferences for self-governance and not as anticipated.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Overall, the results show consistent negative perceptions towards current taxation and self governance policies among Oklahoma State University students. These attitudes are mitigated by factors such as racial status, partisanship and favorableness towards Native Americans. Given the population diversity within Oklahoma, these results can have important ramifications for policies affecting Native Americans. Additional research is needed within Oklahoma to discover the extent to which these attitudes are confined within the age group examined, or indicative of a widespread trend within the general population.

Compared to the results found in upstate New York, the results within our sample of students within Oklahoma are quite different. The difference in support for tribal taxation issues in Oklahoma and New York may be a true measure of preferences in both populations. It may also be related to different data collection processes between the two surveys. Respondents in New York were taken from a quota sample based on race and sex. Fifteen interviewers administered the questionnaire to 30 subjects each, resulting in 426 usable questionnaires. In addition, the NY survey was administered at varying locations and at varying times of day in March, 2005. Locations included reservation smoke shops, bus terminals, and coffee shops. The Oklahoma survey also used a convenience sample. Nine-hundred sixty-four undergraduates enrolled in an introductory American Government class served as subjects, but no attempts were made to ensure demographic quotas. However, the gender and racial composition of the students do mirror the Oklahoma population at large. Further, the surveys were administered by one interviewer on the campus of Oklahoma State University during September 2007. Respondent selection and sampling frame biases, as well as interviewer effects (variance in appearance,

manner, and facial expression) may be the cause of the differences. For example, clustering interviews around locations like reservation smoke shops may very well distort the findings of a survey by over-representing the preferences of respondents who frequent smoke shops (and are likely to support tribes in taxation issues). Again, additional research within the general population of Oklahoma will be necessary to better understand the extent to which these negative attitudes prevail.

At the same time, the suggestion to widen the sample should not suggest that these results are not valid. We justify our sample on a couple of reasons. First, childhood socialization is a leading predictor of adult attitudes (Searing, Wright and Rabinowitz 1976). Children learn attitudes from their parents and environment, and these attitudes persist throughout their lifetime (Searing, Wright and Rabinowitz 1976; Jennings and Niemi 1981; Achen 2002). In fact, attitudes are extremely hard to change. Therefore, using a student sample does give an indication of attitudes within the state and what future attitudes might be. Further, attitudes strengthen over the course of one's lifetime. Therefore our results can be assumed to strengthen overtime among our sample. This means the strong results we did get can be taken with confidence. Weaker results might be showing an initial pattern that will strengthen and develop overtime.

One of the results worth noting is the presence of no opinions in the sample. For most issues about 30% of the sample reported having no opinion. This result could be produced for a couple of reasons. First, students might genuinely hold no opinion on these issues. However, the question wording of the survey included a no opinion category and students who did not take the survey seriously might have been more likely to indicate no opinion rather than take the time to fully answer the survey. One of the future goals of this research is to implement this survey on a larger scale within other universities in Oklahoma, as well as with a representative sample of non-students. In doing so, we plan to force a response from respondents by eliminating the "no opinion" category. While the amount of no opinions might look large, we would like to point out the large probabilities in many sections of favorable and unfavorable views. Given this, we are not concerned with the proportion of no opinions, though we would correct for this in subsequent surveys.

Overall, the results suggest a lack of support for current taxation and self governance policies of Native Americans within Oklahoma

college students. As future policies are developed, and current policies reviewed, it is important to understand the climate towards Native Americans within Oklahoma. At the same time, factors did lead to more supportive attitudes. One of the most important is favorableness towards tribes, Native American business and casinos. The extent to which Oklahoma can promote a more favorable context, the more likely these attitudes will be supportive.

NOTES

¹ Additional policy areas and questions were used, but the analysis of these is beyond the scope of this paper.

² The question asked, "How aware do you think you are about local and state-wide current events?"

³ The question asked, "How aware do you think you are about American Indian society, culture and history?"

⁴ The question asked, "Is your hometown considered large (such as Oklahoma City or Tulsa), middle-sized (such as Stillwater) or small (under a few thousand people)?"

⁵ The question asked, "How close is your hometown from a reservation or Indian Nation?"

⁶ The question asked, "In which of the following ethnic/racial categories do you identify yourself?"

⁷ The question asked, "What would you consider to be your political party affiliation?"

⁸ The question asked, "Which of the following best describes your political outlook?"

⁹ The question asked, "Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of Oklahoma Indian tribes?"

¹⁰ The question asked, "Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of Indian business people?"

¹¹ The question asked, "Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of casinos?"

¹² Agreement includes those who agree or strongly agree; disagreement includes those who disagree or strongly disagree.

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