The Effects of Tribal Governments on Reservation Poverty Rates

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Abstract

Poverty rates on Indian reservations are far higher than the national average. Since Tribal Governments have at least some control over these reservations, to what extent are they to blame for these higher than average poverty rates? I look at each reservation and their type of government, constitution, policies and demographics to analyze the causes of their poverty as it relates to tribal government. There are many other pieces of research that are similar to this, but none looking specifically at the overall effects the government has on its community. My hypothesis is that communities with higher poverty rates tend to have Tribal Governments that have a system similar to the United States other than traditional systems. There are many other variables to also look at when testing this hypothesis. Data has been gathered from the U.S. Census, the Native American Constitutional Law Project, Tiller's Guide to Indian Country and other sources. Preliminary analysis shows that Indian gaming is only a partial solution to Native poverty on reservations.

Introduction

Over the years many scholars have researched many aspects of Indian reservations, tribal governments, and Native Americans overall. But yet, there are still gaps in some of the research. Few scholars have done research on the reasons of high poverty levels on Indian reservations. The importance of any Native American research is to inform readers and other scholars of what is happening with Native American policies, governments and their people. Generally, the research is focused on similar topics, most dealing with land and or treaty rights. The main question in this research is whether or not tribal governments have any effect on the high-poverty reservation rates. The literature that has been reviewed has shown many different aspects to Tribal governments and what reservations entail.

In hopes of informing more people of Indian reservations and tribal governments, this research also looks at the impacts different tribal government systems have on their community.

Literature Review

Formation and History

There is a body of literature that discusses federally recognized reservations, their histories, the relationship with the federal government and the tribal government. It is important that people are aware of one of the many problems on Indian reservations. It is important to teach people about the history of American Indians, for those who do not know the history; it may be difficult to understand how hard it is to live on an Indian reservation. Most of the Native American history is not taught in schools. R.H. Keller said, "Typically history text books fail to provide an adequate encounter with the past and too often relieve students from responsibility for making their own historical judgments"(Keller, 1972). In addition to this, it is very difficult to define the

word reservation. This term is always being redefined and it also depends on perception. Irme Sutton states that the term "Indian reservation" varies, it varies with time, economic and generational differences, types of government, and tribal sovereignty (Sutton, 1976). Today, the United States "has a unique legal and political relationship with Indian tribes and Alaska native entities as provide by the U.S. Constitution, treaties, court decisions and federal statues" (Department of Interior, 2011). The United States government has a 'government-to-government' relationship with these recognized entities and provides services to about 1.9 million American Indians and Alaska Natives. Though, these tribal governments view their relationship a bit different, they view this relationship with the federal government as one that allows them to retain their land and sovereignty. The difference between Alaska Natives and American Indians' relationship with the federal government is the difference between two entirely different acts. American Indians relationship with the federal government grew out of a series of treaties that were signed between Tribes and the US government, whereas the Alaska Natives' relationship was formed by a single act in 1971, signed by President Nixon. This established the government-to-government relationship that now exists in this state.

This leads us to the Federal Register, which is a list of the many tribes and entities that have undergone many life altering changes; these include but are not limited to, the Dawes' Act, the Termination Policy, boarding schools, and the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. Over the hundreds of years of assimilation, thousands of tribes in the country, is now just 565. These 565 tribal entities are recognized and are eligible for funding and services from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) (Musaus, 2010). These tribes have, under the BIA's supervision have formed a system government, and this being the only option some had for their people.

Governments

There have been many eras, many events, and many cases that have shaped the policies that are set in place for tribal governments today. I say "for" because many tribal governments are controlled, to some degree, by the federal government. "As one group of authors put it, 'most important, any discussion of American government must be based on the fact that native peoples inhabited this hemisphere before the European invasion. Originally, North Americans dealt with indigenous peoples as sovereign nations by signing formal treaties with them'" (David E. Wilkens, 2011). In David E. Wilkins' text it is mentioned that we must not forget that there are three different, broad categories of systems that tribal governments are under, one, original; two, transitional constitutional and lastly, contemporary constitutional (2011). The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 established the tribal governments we see today, which many of the governments' constitutions are based upon the United States' constitution. And because of the IRA many tribal governments are still under the hand of the federal government. One article in an IRA tribal constitution states, "This Constitution shall become effective when approved by the President of the United States or his authorized representative and when ratified by the qualified voters of the [Tribal Name] at an election conducted pursuant to rules and regulations promulgated by the Principal Chief". The Bureau of Indian Affairs under the watchful eye of the Department of Interior and the Secretary of State controls the tribal governments with ratifications of the tribal constitutions and the amount of funding the tribe is allowed and to some extent, how that funding is allocated within the tribe. At the time of formation of these government systems, chiefs and leaders thought that they were doing what was best for their people. For those tribes that are still under the IRA system, we still see the difficulties tribal

governments continue to experience inside and outside the federal structure. Some have chosen to change this.

The relationship between the federal government and tribal governments are also very important. This relationship greatly impacts reservations through education, business, and administration and land rights; especially during the most recent era of self-determination. In an article by Lilas Jones Jarding the relationship between the tribes and the federal government is nearly non-existent. This is supposed to be based on a nation-to-nation relationship. When states became states and after the Articles of Confederation were signed and passed, states gained full jurisdiction over reservations. The nation-to-nation relationship was diminished to a state-to-tribal government relationship. This relationship has been an uphill battle since. These relationships have been "characterized by increased interaction over time, conflict, and lack of clarity" (Jarding, 2004). The lack of communication, unclear boundaries, and neither side wanting this relationship were some factors that were also conflicts in this relationship. Most states' focus was on removing Indian lands farther west or on protecting their citizens from native anger. These two reasons often intertwined, for obvious reasons (Jarding, 2004). This history of states and tribal relationships is on that is barely remembered in United States history books. Congress has ratified many acts dealing with tribes, that the states had no control over, many of which are unheard of and left out of the media. This makes this relationship that much more complex, states do not have control over ratified acts but they have to follow the regulations and guidelines. The biggest problem is over jurisdiction. States want jurisdiction over reservations' land and tribes are unwilling to give up land and treaty rights. The differences of wants in land and resources have played very important roles in many states' decisions regarding Indian lands. And because there is a drastic difference, states are willing to negotiate with tribes

when it comes to members' needs. This relationship has done two different things to reservations. One, it has allowed these tribes to become more independent on regulating enforcement on their reservation. Giving tribal governments full jurisdiction to their boundaries, like states have, is a way of showing they have independence to keep a functioning government. Two, it has weakened their ability to function as a strong independent nation, keeping tribes more dependent on the federal government, by showing the tribes that their funding is a necessity. The federal government set up these unique relations in hopes to have these tribes run efficiently with minimal help from their government. The states, or the other hand, have made it so it is hard for the tribes to be independent.

Many nations have followed the example of the Cherokee Nation. In 2003, the Cherokee Nation took the first step of "self-determination" by ratifying the 1999 constitution which states they no longer need the approval of the Secretary of the Interior for any ratifications, if the Nations so choose to change. One example of this self-determination shows "in 1992, the Confederated Tribe of the Warm Springs reservation in Oregon, who issued a Declaration of Sovereignty" (Biolsi, 2005), these tribal governments are paving way for other tribes to declare their independence. In doing so, some of these tribes have lost a large portion of their federal funding, which is not what the "self-determination" policy was supposed to do. The loss of funding was due to some accounts being frozen. This account that greatly effects the tribes' funding is the fixed cost funding. This funding was supposed to help the tribes under the 'Strategic Plan' the federal government had set up in correlation with the Self-Determination Act. The Self-Determination Act was "supposed to transfer local decision-making power to the tribes" (Stull, 1990). This policy did not work the way it was intended, it actually did the exact oppose. After this policy was enacted, "most tribal governments remained quite limited in their

ability to administer and carry out full range of service programs" (Champagne, 1983). The strategic plan that was set in place, not only froze accounts, but made it more difficult for a tribe to become self-dependent. This decision making power that was granted through the Self-Determination Act was now shadowed by the 'Strategic Plan' in action. This put all the decision making powers to the federal government, once again, leaving little room for the ideas of tribal leaders to take effect.

The Self-Determination Act, previously mentioned, is titled the Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975. This act changed the focus of the federal government from termination to assisting a tribal entity become more independent. Title I of this act, the Self-Determination part, established procedures by which tribes could negotiate contracts with the BIA to administer their own education and social service programs. This act provided several bloc grants to Indian tribes to help develop plans to assume responsibility for federal programs (PDF). After the Self-Determination Act was set in place a "host of new programs took hold in Indian country in the 1970's, reservation bureaucracies emerged based on jobs provided by these programs" (Stull, 1990). It had seemed that this was a good direction for tribes to follow; many tribes receiving these grants from the federal government seemed to be prospering. The reservations were improving, with self-determination, many governments were, and some still are, hoping to change. Reservations are trying to be more independent by developing more small business and expanding bingo halls into casinos and even resorts. Reservations enacting this policy have economically prospered, showing that the assistance of the government was very helpful in the economic success of the tribe. Over the last few decades, the growing numbers of casinos, hotels and resorts have not only given many reservations, such as the Navaho Nation, an economic gain but these businesses provide many opportunities for jobs for the people.

Indian Gaming

This great opportunity began with an act passed in 1988 titled the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA). This act first started "in the face of continuing federal budget cuts in the belief that even if prosperity came to America it would never reach the reservation" (Kachel, 2001). After the ratification of this new act only eight tribes took the matter of saving their reservation into their own hands, not many, including the federal and state governments, did not believe that Indian gaming would become a success. Once Indian gaming became successful, states and the federal government stepped in. Specifically, in Florida, the state tried suing the Seminoles stating that their gaming operations were in violation of state compacts. In 1982 the Supreme Court ruled in the case of the *Seminoles v. Butterworth*, a decision that exempted all federal lands, reservations, of state gaming regulations. This was a great economic opportunity for tribal governments. Indian bingo operations grew nationwide, some becoming multimillion dollar operations. "The Seminoles were the first to recognize the potential profitability of high-stakes bingo, the operation of three separate bingo halls grossed over $31 million in 1986" (Kachel, 2001). But, of course, there were, and still are, stipulations and regulations within IGRA. One of those stipulations being tribes is that "permitted to spend their gaming profits only on services to members, on charitable contributions, or on a per capita distribution to members. This revenue has allowed tribes with profitable gaming to replace or supplement federal funds"(Mason, 1996). Because of this stipulation successful tribes, like the Seminoles, were lending out money to tribes that were interested in starting a bingo hall of their own. After a start up of their own bingo hall, the Mdewakanta Sioux tribe, a tribe of only 123 members, profited greatly. Within a year this tribe paid out dividends of more than $500,000. This is one example of a tribe profiting from the gaming industries and giving back to their members through per

capita payments and to the local community by creating small business and programs that will benefit their people. This also includes the creation of jobs for tribal members. Job opportunities, on some select reservations, were limitless. Historically, jobs on the reservations were government sector jobs, which was their leading employer for many years. This was not the case anymore once gaming expanded. Other profitable bingo halls, and eventually, casinos have helped tribes, such as the Oneida, remodel or build multi-million dollar resorts. After economic development occurred many tribes claimed "unemployment fell dramatically from five or six times the nation average too often well below the nation unemployment rate and also brought a 'pride factor' which is difficult to measure in dollars and cents" (Kachel, 2001). "Nationwide, 237 Indian tribes in 28 states use Indian gaming to create new jobs, fund essential government services and rebuild communities. In 2009, tribal governments generated $26.2 billion in gross revenue from Indian gaming, $3.2 billion in gross revenue from related hospitality and entertainment services, 628,000 jobs nationwide for American Indians and our neighbors, $9.4 billion in Federal taxes and revenue savings, and $2.4 billion in state taxes, revenue sharing, and regulatory payments" (National Indian Gaming Association, 2009). The National Indian Gaming Association stated in 2009 that fewer than 20 of the 237 that have gaming operations have successfully improved conditions on reservations for their members. Only a few of the reservations have not had success, most have a comfortable or moderate profit from their operations.

Poverty

Of the 565 federally recognized tribal entities, only a little more than 300 have tribal governments. There are some reservations that have as few as six members, who can choose not to have an IRA system of government. Nevertheless, the tribe still receives federal funding. Even

so, with federal funding still coming in and many tribes having success with IGRA, many reservations are still well above the national poverty rate.

The 2000 census reported that 39 percent of on-reservation American Indians was living below the poverty line, higher than any other group and four times the rate for the average American. (Henson, 2007). The high poverty rates on reservations questions the ability of their government. There are several factors that go into measuring poverty rates as well as many factors that measure causes of reservation poverty rates. One important factor is a reservation's location. "The expectation that areas with large population concentrations have more job opportunities and hence higher income levels … and … locations in a nonmetropolitan area has a significant and negative on income levels" (Leichenko, 2003). Location seems to a large factor in the success or failure of a tribe. An example of this would be the drastic differences between reservations in the state of Minnesota. Reservations, such as the Mdewakanta Sioux, in the metropolitan area are much more successful in comparison to one in Northern Minnesota. This example shows that a casino in a heavily dense population area has more job opportunities and a larger consumer crowd, whereas, those in the north have to travel far distances to reach a casino and have fewer employment opportunities to offer and the market for their gaming is much smaller. Even so, at the end of the 1990's, the average on-reservation still had per capita income was less than $8,000 compared to more than $21,500 for the average U.S. resident. Statistics also show that after gaming industries were developed, the unemployment rate on reservations dropped by two percent and the percent change in on-reservation per capita income increased from 30 percent to 36 percent within the decade (Henson, 2007).

Another factor to look at when it comes to poverty on Indian reservations is education levels. American Indian enrollment in private degree-granting institutions more than doubled

between 1976 and 2006. In 1976 about on 76,100 American Indians/Alaska Natives were enrolled in colleges and universities(United States Department of Education Institute of Education Science, 2008). With enrollment rising, degree-earning American Indians have also risen. Each degree level, at the very least, doubled in two decades. The more educated a person is about the problems on their reservation is a way of attempting to 'fix' the poverty problem on their reservation. This will not come quick, nor will it come in the next decade, but the more information gathered and the more that goes into educating members on what needs to be changed and how to implement these changes will be a great step forward. Also, being a less dependent on the federal government and finding ways to increase their own funding that can be allocated into the reservations and to members will show to the federal government that tribes are, and always have been, independent nations.

Authors, Terry L. Anderson and Dominic P. Parker stated "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" (Anderson, 2008). This statement sums up the main question I have regarding this research; by taking out many factors of natural reasons for poverty, what part do the different tribal government systems play in reservation poverty rates? Since there are multiple forms of tribal government systems, what are the differences in these systems that may cause these high poverty rates? In theory, those government systems that have a more traditional aspect of government would have lower rates than the oppressed system of the IRA. Traditional systems would seem to be more centered among the people than a system that is regulated by a larger government system.

Systems of Tribal Governments

The key measurement of this research is in the system of government a tribe has implemented. To those who do not study American Indians or federal Indian laws are not aware that there are multiple systems of government. Some tribes implement a combination of two forms of government. The most common system used today is the IRA, which is based upon the federal government. Many tribes have followed the example of the United States government and state governments. This example changed tribal governing from a traditional system to the contemporary forms we see today. This change was more drastic for the members of these reservations; the leaders went from hereditary chiefs to elected officials. These new leaders, who were often men, were not always looking at the people's best interest when making decisions for the tribe. The problem with this is this system of government hasn't changed in the eight or more decades since it was created. Though, many governments are getting back to more traditional ways, or somehow incorporating traditional ways, of governing their nations, it is not improving the poverty rates that are extreme on these reservations. These changes that have taken place are showing that the self-determination era and the policies that have been passed, such as IGRA, have improved conditions on reservations. Even so, the poverty rates on most of the reservations are still much higher than the national average.

Statement of Hypotheses

Firstly, I believe that in a comparison of tribal governments; the governments with systems that are IRA formed have higher poverty rates than those that are enacting a more traditional system of government.

Also, those governments who have members that have attained a higher education have increased their individual income than those who have members that have not attained a higher education.

Lastly, in a comparison of tribal governments, the tribal governments with a higher unemployment rate are most likely not to have a gaming industry on their reservations than those that do have gaming industries.
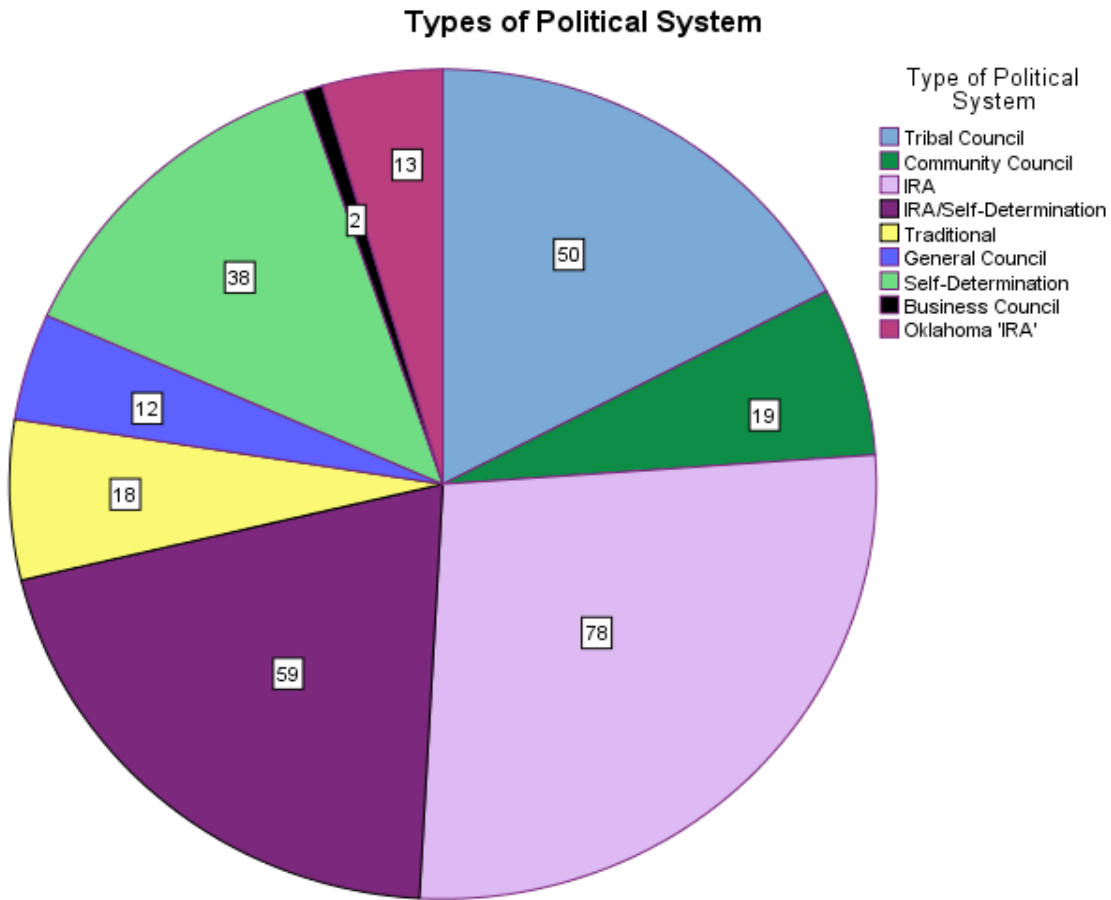
Methodology

In doing this research, I asked have asked many questions such as, why is reservations' poverty rates much higher than the national average, what are the reasons for these much higher rates, and if anyone, who is to blame? I have looked into systems of governments on reservations and if differences in these systems matters in terms of poverty rates. I have stated my hypotheses and gathered data to test these theories. Firstly, looking at the systems of government, I realized that there are nine active political systems in tribal governments. I ran analysis on these nine, but I also used Wilkins and Stark's example and condensed these nine into three distinct categories. The categories that Wilkins and Stark were labeled; original, transitional constitutional, and contemporary constitutional, but labeled traditional, IRA, and council in the analysis. Also, some of the data viewed and analyzed was the United States 2010 Census data. This data set was the American Community Survey which lists out many demographics. From here many demographics were taken and added to the data set that was compiled. These demographics include, percent of people with a bachelor's degree, household size, school enrollment, employment and unemployment numbers including how many are eligible for employment, household units, household income, households on federal funding programs such as public

assistance, social security, and SNAP. Other demographics include percentage of poverty, house ownership, renter status, age, and native population. Also, Tiller's Guide to Indian Country, first and second editions, compiled by Veronica E. Velarde Tiller also lists key demographics which include land area, acres in trust, acres owned by the tribe, gaming establishments, year gaming operations opened, total reservation population, total enrollment, percent of high school graduates and higher education attainment, unemployment rates, per capita income and type of political system and year that political system was established. The data set that I have compiled will help test these hypotheses and help come to some conclusions.

Findings

To start I ran a test to distinguish the different types of political system using all nine categories. I did this to see how many tribes are running a specific system and to see how many were running each. Look at Graph 1.1. I noticed that some of the council systems were being used in very few tribes; this is why I chose to condense these systems into three categories. Before I did this, I ran one more test using all nine categories, this test shows what level of poverty each system has. (Graph 1.2)

Graph 1.1

Types of Political System

	Type of Political System
▨	Tribal Council
■	Community Council
▨	IRA
■	IRA/Self-Determination
□	Traditional
■	General Council
▨	Self-Determination
■	Business Council
■	Oklahoma 'IRA'

13
2
50
38
12
19
18
78
59

This second test is shown in Graph 1.2. It seemed to be that some of the average poverty rates for some were much higher at first glance. By looking at the number of each system and their average poverty rate I noticed, like with the business council, that since there are only two tribes running a business council, their average is much higher than that of tribal council, for example. This proved to me that it was necessary to condense these into the three categories.

Graph 1.2
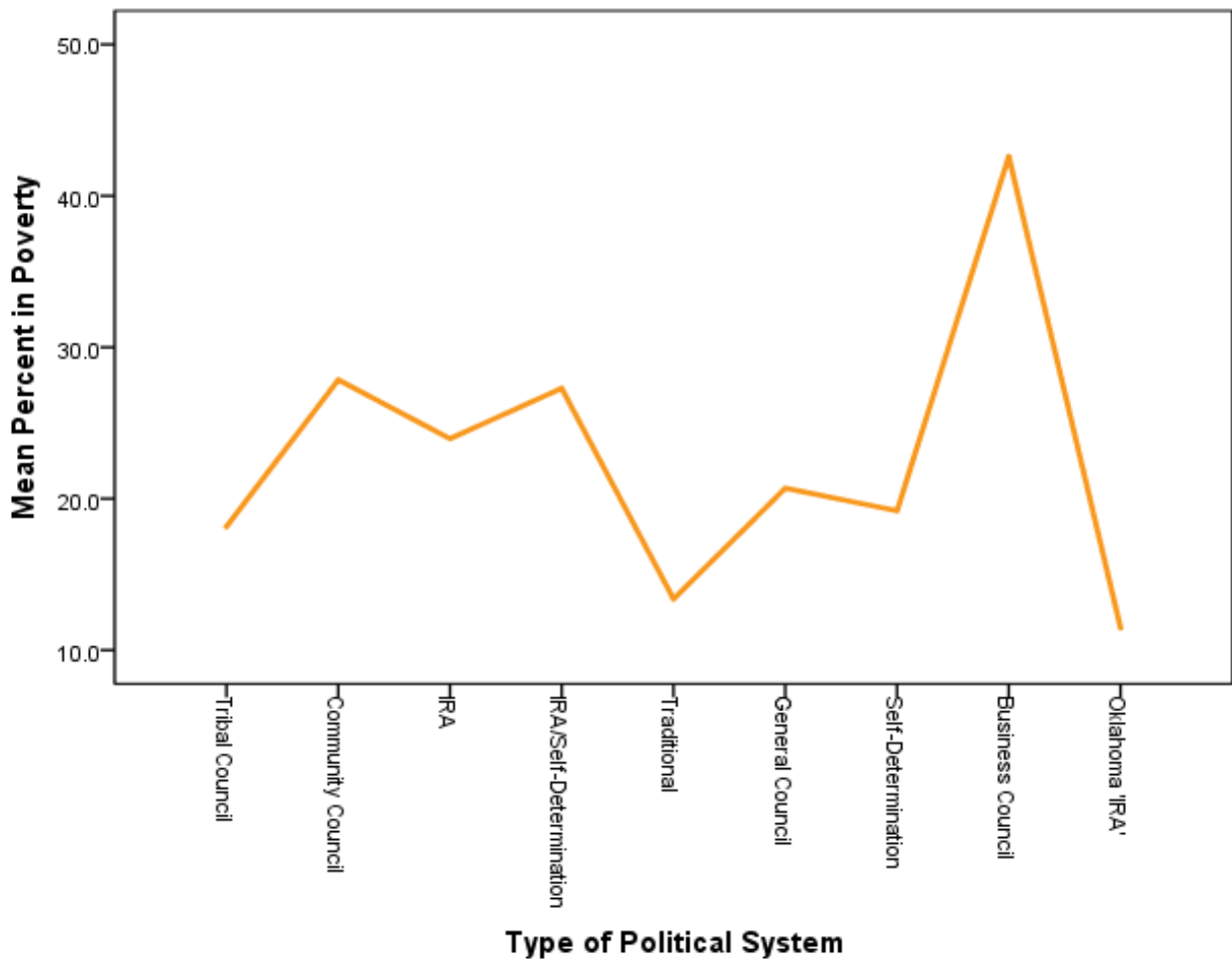
After grouping these nine into the three categories, I ran the very same tests and created similar visuals. The results of these tests are in Graph 1.3 and 1.4.

Graph 1.3 shows that after grouping these systems, there are an extremely high number of tribes running a government that an IRA or contemporary constitutional system or is very similar to those systems of government, compared to the lower number of actual IRA government.

Graph 1.3
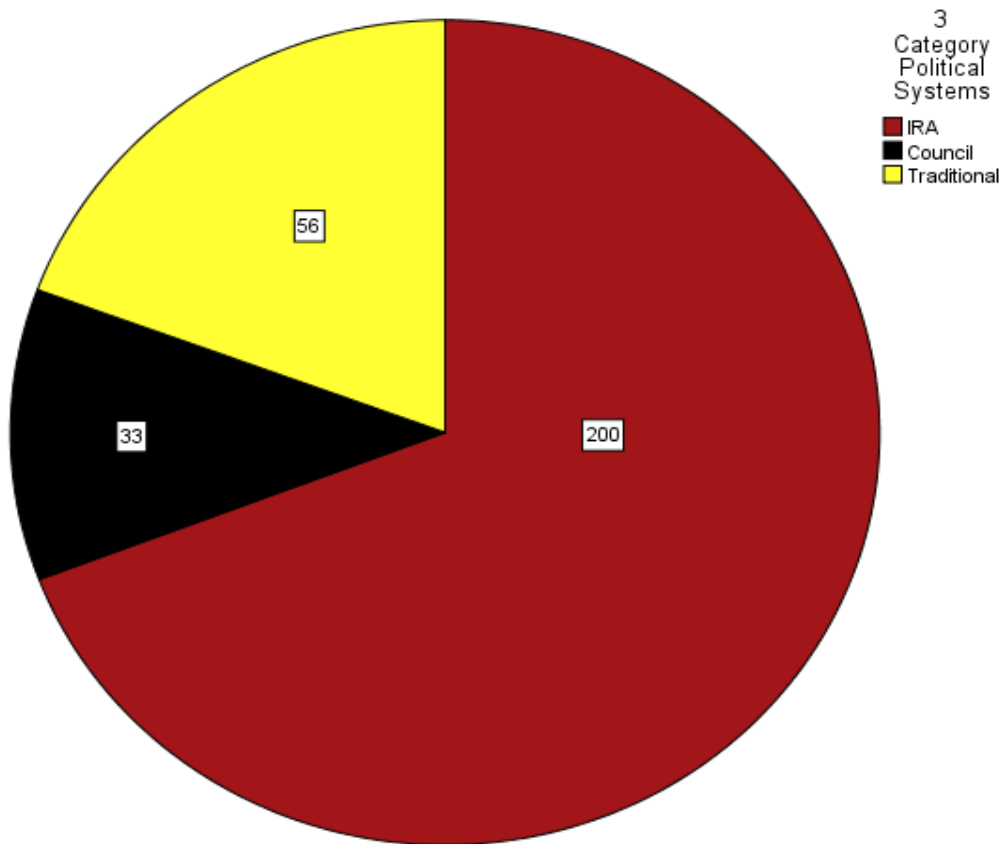
Graph 1.4 shows the average percent of poverty within each of these systems of government. It shows that compared to an IRA system, a traditional system has a lower average percentage in terms of percentage of poverty. It also shows that the council system is much higher, at 31.9 percent, than the IRA and traditional government system.

This leads right into my first hypothesis. In a comparison of tribal governments, those governments with an IRA political system are more likely to have a higher poverty rate than those with a more traditional system of government. With this first analysis it shows that an IRA system of government, in fact, does have a higher poverty rate than that of a traditional system of government. It is only on average, three percent higher, but it is higher. Though, it shows that

neither of these systems have the highest average percent of poverty. This shows that the 33 council systems have the highest average poverty rate.

Graph 1.4
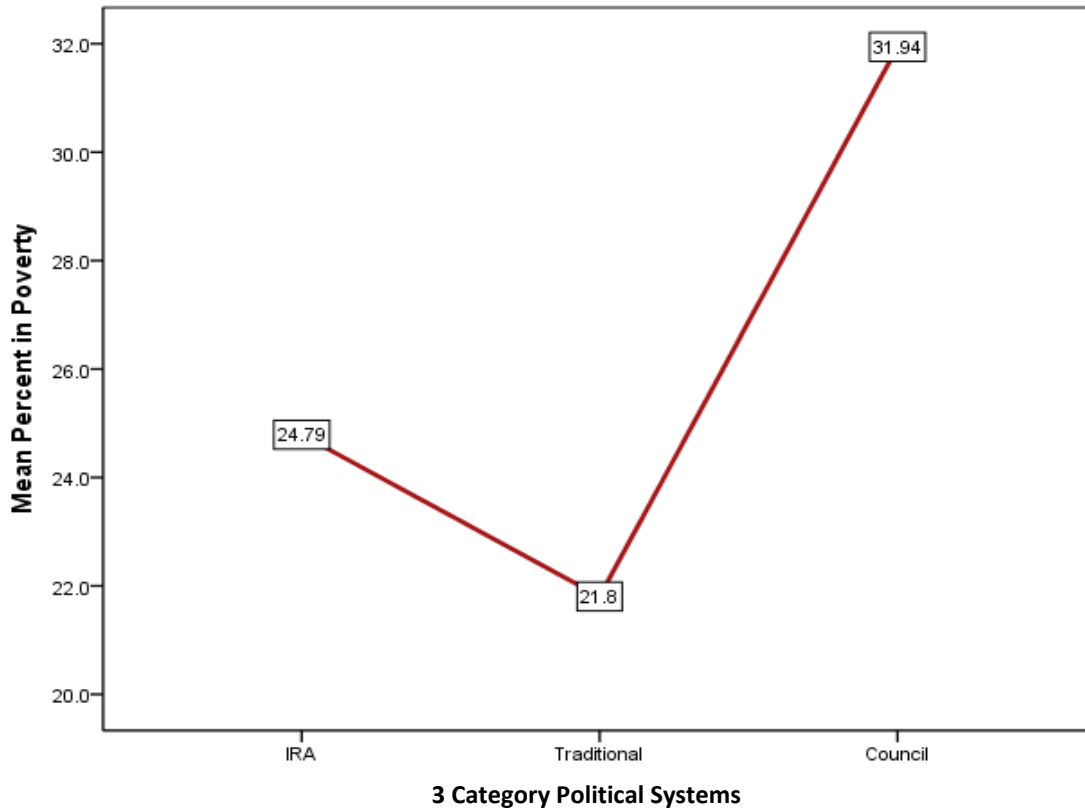
This moves right into my next hypothesis; those tribal governments whose members have attained an education higher than high school will more likely have higher per capita incomes per household than those with members that have not attained a higher education. The theories here are the same as others in the sense that a higher education brings better job opportunities which, in turn, offer better pay and higher per captia incomes. So using this theory in relationship to tribal governments, I tested these two variables in a compare means test to see if these two have a correlation in terms of political government systems within a native tribe. Table 1.1

shows the result of the tests comparing the average of education attainment higher than high school and per capita income within the three political system categories of a tribal government.

Table 1.1

Difference of Means: three political systems, education attainment above high school and per capita income

|	IRA Mean	Traditional Mean	Mean Difference	Significance
High School Education or Higher	72.18	67.99	-4.19	.149
Per Capita Income '06	16554.35	19288.89	2734.54	.078
Per Capita Income '96	12436.06	12721.19	285.13	.878
	IRA Mean	**Council Mean**	**Mean Difference**	**Significance**
High School Education or Higher	72.18	61.34	-10.85	.004*
Per Capita Income '06	16554.35	14413.29	-2141.06	.609
Per Capita Income '96	12436.06	10934.75	-1501.32	.296

Sig = p>.05

This shows that an IRA system has a higher average in higher education attainment than both the traditional and council systems of government; it also shows that per capita income has risen in the last decade. With per capita income, the most drastic increase has been in the

traditional government system. The difference in between the IRA system and the Council system in educational attainment is the only statistically significant. With that said, there are many other relevant statistics shown here. One being the major mean difference in per captia income between the council systems and the IRA systems; the average mean of per capita income in the IRA systems are higher have stayed higher than those in the council systems. But what I found more interesting was the difference in per capita income between the IRA system and the traditional system. The traditional system mean is higher than the IRA system and almost statistically significant in the 2006 numbers.

The following graph (Graph 1.5) shows a relationship between per capita income and education attainment in the three different categories of political systems. The graph shows the interactive relationship between education attainment above a high school diploma and the percent of per capita income. This shows that in education attainment does not vary that much between these political systems; it also shows that per capita income varies greatly between the different political systems. The one that has the closest relationship between the two variables is the IRA system of government; whereas, the council system has a much larger difference between these two variables.

Graph 1.5
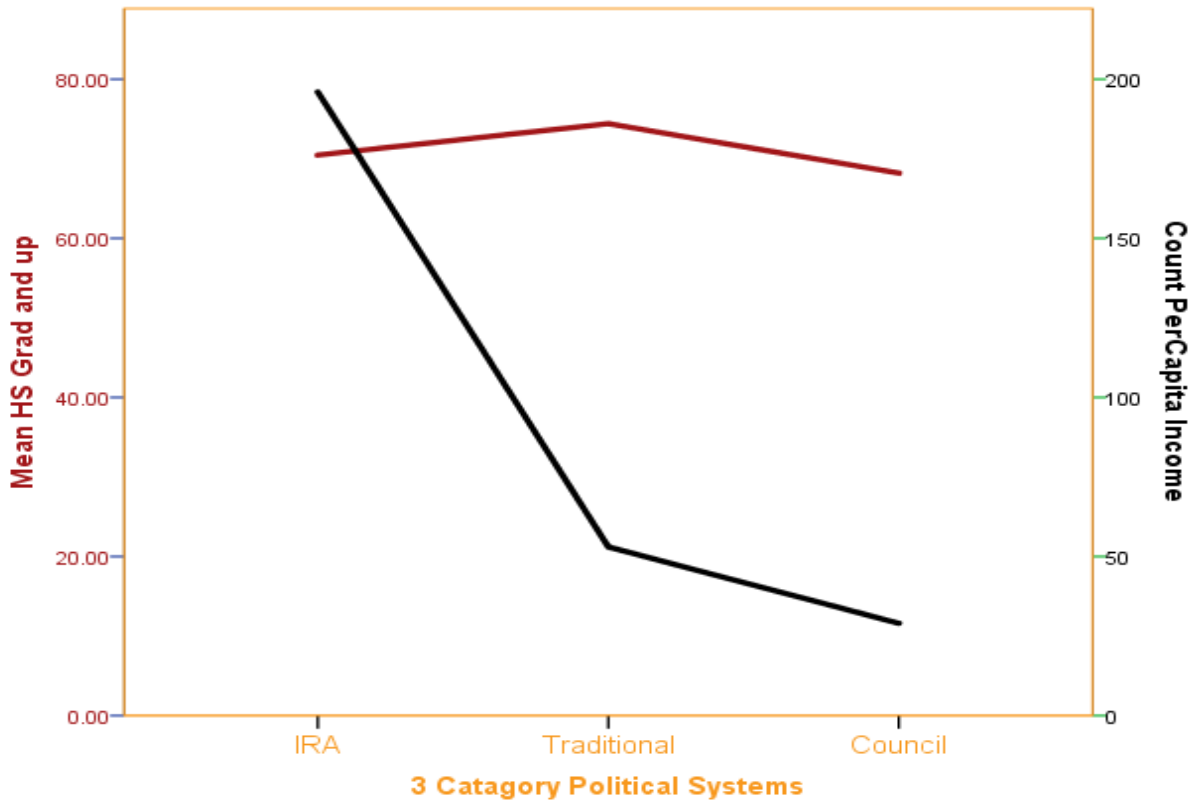
Before moving on to the next hypothesis I wanted to see if there were any other statistically significant differences in any of the other variables in the different political systems. I ran the same test of independent sample test on multiple variables including: household incomes, households that receive social security, SNAP benefits, public assistance, unemployment rates, and a variety of others. The results of the different means within these political systems can be viewed in the following tables, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5.

Table 1.2

Difference of Means: IRA political system and Council political system

	Political System	Mean	Mean Diff	Sig (Assumed)	Sig (not Assumed)
Gaming Establishment	IRA	.73	.154	.074	.104
	Council	.58			
Household Earnings	IRA	4373.10	4060.07	.275	.008*
	Council	313.03			
Household on Public Assistance	IRA	236.68	193.04	.260	.007*
	Council	43.64			
Household on Social Security	IRA	1737.26	1634.05	.250	.005*
	Council	103.21			
Household with SNAP	IRA	689.31	601.51	.255	.006*
	Council	87.79			
HS Grad and/or higher	IRA	70.48	2.28	.501	.606
	Council	68.20			
Percent with Bachelor's Degree	IRA	12.61	-3.041	.184	.437
	Council	15.65			
Per Capita Income 06	IRA	12147.56	1557.42	.370	.163
	Council	10617.15			
Per Capita Income 96	IRA	17766.09	-3621.44	.236	.581
	Council	21387.54			
Percent in Poverty	IRA	24.79	-7.15	.048*	.107
	Council	31.94			
Population 96	IRA	17979.47	15131.78	.412	.043*
	Council	2847.69			
Total Population 06	IRA	3912.44	2962.83	.429	.060
	Council	949.61			
Tribal Enrollment 96	IRA	3186.39	1502.56	.235	.097
	Council	1683.83			
Tribal Enrollment 06	IRA	4541.25	2882.08	.286	.030*
	Council	1659.17			
Unemployment Rate 06	IRA	16.66	-9.069	.003*	.022*
	Council	25.73			

*Sig at .05

The theories that lead to comparing these two systems of government were that a council government would have more of an effect on poverty than an IRA system because council

systems are still under the organization of tribal members who are still using the colonized approach to run a government, as much as they want to be their own nation and run their own government. Because of this, there could be many conflicts between members to run this type of governmental system. In comparing the IRA system of government and the council form of government you can see their relationship with these other factors that could affect poverty rates. The tests show significant results in household income, household earnings, households on social security, households on SNAP (Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program), population, tribal enrollment in 2006 and unemployment rates in 2006. What I personally found interesting was that those households on SNAP were not only significant but under the IRA system, the mean was drastically higher than the council system with a mean difference of 601 households. Another significant result lies in those households receiving social security with a mean difference of 1634 households with a significant value at .005, the most significant result in this test.

The next table shows the average differences between an IRA system and a traditional system. This test was run with the thoughts that a traditional government system would be much better for a tribe/reservation than an IRA system of government. By better, it is meant that a traditional government would have much lower unemployment rates, households on SNAP and social security, graduation rate and education attainment rates. IRA systems of government would have higher averages on per capita income, gaming establishments and tribal enrollments. The results in this test show that there is significance in five variables. The most significant, equal variances not assumed, is the averages between households on public assistance. The difference in averages is 169.68 with the average for IRA systems being hither at 236.68 and the traditional systems only at a 67 average. Other significant results include household earnings,

households on social security, households on SNAP and percentages with bachelor's degrees. The others didn't show up as significant results, some that did come really close were total populations in 2006 and high school graduates and higher education attainment. Contrary to my prediction, the unemployment rate for 2006 was lower in an IRA system than that of a traditional system, but in a traditional system per capita income in 2006 was on average 1356 enrollees than the IRA system. The most interesting result in this test was the average percent of members on a reservation outcome. The mean difference between the two political systems is 3.12 with a statistical significance of .031 equal variances assumed and .033 equal variances not assumed, with an average of 70.48 for the IRA system and a 74.42 average for a traditional system. This shows that on average people in a traditional government system have a 33 percent higher chance at obtaining a bachelor's degree.

Table 1.3

	Political System	Mean	Mean Diff	Sig (Assumed)	Sig (not Assumed)
Gaming Establishment	IRA	.73	.105	.128	.151
	Traditional	.63			
Household Earnings	IRA	4373.10	3372.69	.238	.030*
	Traditional	1000.41			
Household on Public Assistance	IRA	236.68	169.68	.198	.020*
	Traditional	67.00			
Household on Social Security	IRA	1737.26	1357.99	.213	.022*
	Traditional	379.27			
Household with SNAP	IRA	689.31	506.86	.212	.023*
	Traditional	182.45			
HS Grad and/or higher	IRA	70.48	-3.94	.109	.098
	Traditional	74.42			
Percent with Bachelor's Degree	IRA	12.61	-3.12	.031*	.033*
	Traditional	15.72			
Per Capita Income 96	IRA	12174.56	-1356.91	.339	.315
	Traditional	13531.47			
Per Capita Income 06	IRA	17766.09	-3332.15	.109	.282

	Traditional	21098.25			
Percent in Poverty	IRA	24.789	2.98	.242	.187
	Traditional	21.81			
Population 06	IRA	1797.47	13894.97	.322	.063
	Traditional	4084.50			
Total Population	IRA	3912.44	2152.77	.458	.204
	Traditional	1759.66			
Tribal Enrollment	IRA	3186.39	1084.42	.257	.103
	Traditional	2101.97			
Tribal Enrollment 06	IRA	4541.25	1865.27	.321	.106
	Traditional	2675.98			
Unemployment Rate 06	IRA	16.66	-.67079	.773	.783
	Traditional	17.34			

*Sig at .05

The next difference of means test, Table 1.4, was run with the theories that a traditional system, once again, would be a better choice for a system of government than a council system. Similar to the IRA and traditional systems comparison, the traditional system would have a higher average on household earnings, household per capita income, higher education attainment, and percentage of enrollees with a bachelor's degree. And the council systems would have higher averages in households with public assistance, households on SNAP, households with social security and unemployment rates. Keeping in mind that the system better for the people is the traditional government system. Table 1.4 shows the results of these theories. The mean comparison test on traditional systems and council systems has one statistically significant result, that being households on social security. Three others were very close at a significance of .051 to .052, those being household earnings, per capita income in 2006, and unemployment rates in 2006. Like predicted, the traditional system has higher averages in household earnings, household per capita income, higher education attainment, and percentages of bachelor's degrees attained. The difference between the two political systems in household earnings is 687.38 the council systems at 313.03 and the traditional systems at 1000.41. The average household per

capita income for a traditional system is 13531.47 and for a council system it is only 10617.15 a mean difference of 2914.32 leaving this at a .051 significance when equal variance is not assumed. Only one prediction was significant within the council system, which was in unemployment rates in 2006, with a statistical significance at .37 equal variances assumed. Unemployment rate in 2006 seem to be the most interesting. The prediction made earlier was proven in these results, that council systems do have a higher average than the traditional system. The greatest difference in means is 2914.32, with a statistical difference, equal variance not assumed, at .05 is in the variable of per capita income in 2006, the traditional systems being that much higher than the council systems.

Table 1.4 Difference of Means: Traditional political systems and Council political system

	Political System	Mean	Mean Diff	Sig (Assumed)	Sig (not Assumed)
Gaming Establishment	Council	.58	-.049	.650	.653
	Traditional	.63			
Household Earnings	Council	313.03	--687.38	.117	.051
	Traditional	1000.41			
Household on Public Assistance	Council	43.64	-23.36	.458	.402
	Traditional	67.00			
Household on Social Security	Council	103.21	-276.06	.100	.039
	Traditional	379.27			
Household with SNAP	Council	87.78	-94.64	.256	.175
	Traditional	182.45			
HS Grad and/or higher	Council	68.20	-6.215	.141	.193
	Traditional	74.42			
Percent with Bachelor's Degree	Council	15.65	-.075	.981	.985
	Traditional	15.72			
Per Capita Income 96	Council	10617.15	-2914.32	.089	.051
	Traditional	13531.47			
Per Capita Income 06	Council	21387.54	289.29	.963	.968
	Traditional	21098.25			
Percent in Poverty	Council	31.94	10.136	.013	.033
	Traditional	21.81			
Population 06	Council	2647.69	-1236.81	.516	.489

Total Population	Traditional	4084.50			
	Council	949.61	-810.06	.434	.344
	Traditional	1759.66			
Tribal Enrollment	Council	1683.83	-418.14	.629	.645
	Traditional	2101.97			
Tribal Enrollment 06	Council	1659.17	-1016.81	.311	.321
	Traditional	2675.98			
Unemployment Rate 06	Council	25.73	8.398	.037	.052
	Traditional	17.34			

*Sig at .05

The final table shows the difference in means between traditional government systems and non-traditional government systems. The theory here is, overall, a traditional form of government is better for community members. And as stated multiple times previously, in a traditional form of government unemployment rates are lower, per capita incomes, higher educational attainment, household earnings all raise the averages, and households on any federal assistant programs will decrease. Taking all of this into consideration all of this would likely show that the average percent in poverty will also decrease in comparison to non-traditional systems of government. Table 1.5 shows the results of a difference of means analysis. Like predicted in a traditional government system households on public assistance programs have decreased. Households on public assistance in a traditional government system lowered on average of 142.33 percent having significance with equal variance not assumed at .037. Households with social security have significance with equal variance not assumed at .026, an average difference of 1126.56. Those households on SNAP have significance with equal variance not assumed at .030 and an average difference of 421.66. Other predictions made were correct but not statistically significant, variables such as higher education attainment, per capita income, and unemployment rates. The one variable that did not result the way it was predicted was household earnings. Household earnings have significance equal variance not assumed of

.037, with a difference mean of 2797.67, with the traditional system having an average of only

1000.41. As for percent of poverty rates between the two government systems, a non-traditional

system of government has an average percentage rate of 25.59 and a traditional system of

government has an average percent of 21.81. The difference between the two averages is only

3.78, but this is not statistically significant, equal variance not assumed is .094. These results

show, even though it is not statistically significant, traditional systems of governments have

lower poverty rates than any other system.

Table 1.5 Difference of Means: Traditional political system and non-traditional political system

	Political System	Mean	Mean Diff	Sig (Assumed)	Sig (not Assumed)
Gaming Establishment	Non-Traditional	.71	.083	.228	.250
	Traditional	.63			
Household Earnings	Non-Traditional	3798.07	2797.658	.292	.037
	Traditional	1000.41			
Household on Public Assistance	Non-Traditional	209.33	142.335	.245	.026
	Traditional	67.00			
Household on Social Security	Non-Traditional	1505.83	1126.560	.266	.028
	Traditional	379.27			
Household with SNAP	Non-Traditional	604.11	421.665	.264	.030
	Traditional	182.45			
HS Grad and/or higher	Non-Traditional	70.18	-4.229	.097	.075
	Traditional	74.41			
Percent with Bachelor's Degree	Non-Traditional	12.94	-2.783	.083	.061
	Traditional	15.72			
Per Capita Income 96	Non-Traditional	11973.36	-1558.11	.248	.238
	Traditional	13531.47			
Per Capita Income 06	Non-	18202.01	-2896.24	.245	.360

	Traditional				
	Traditional	21098.25			
Percent in Poverty	Non-Traditional	25.59	3.7827	.148	.094
	Traditional	21.81			
Population 06	Non-Traditional	15899.75	11815.25	.365	.068
	Traditional	4084.5			
Total Population	Non-Traditional	3492.81	1733.15	.519	.250
	Traditional	1759.66			
Tribal Enrollment	Non-Traditional	3013.02	911.05	.323	.153
	Traditional	2101.97			
Tribal Enrollment 06	Non-Traditional	4184.71	1508.73	.396	.151
	Traditional	2675.98			
Unemployment Rate 06	Non-Traditional	17.88	.552	.819	.820
	Traditional	17.33			

*Sig at .05

Finally, as stated before, in a comparison of tribal governments, the tribal governments with a higher unemployment rate are most likely not to have a gaming industry on their reservations than those that do have gaming industries. To test this hypothesis, reviews of the previous tests were needed. Reviewing each system's mean for gaming establishments and unemployment rates, results show that in comparing the IRA systems and the council systems the unemployment variable has significance at .003 and .022 with the largest mean difference of 9.07. Between these two systems, whether or not they have gaming operations have no statistical relevance. Taking a closer look, it was noticed that there is only one more statistically relevant variable. This lies in the comparison of council systems and traditional systems of government. The unemployment rates in 2006 between the two systems have a mean difference of 8.39 with a statistical significance at .037 and .052. Unfortunately, the other results show no statistical significance.

To show the relationship between unemployment rates and gaming establishments on a reservation to their political systems, a visual was made (Graph 1.5). The numbers in the bars represent the average percentage unemployment rate. This shows that in an IRA system, unemployment rates do not change that much, they only vary by an average of two percent. The council system of government, similar to the IRA system, unemployment rates do not vary that much based on gaming establishments. The traditional systems of government, on the other hand, show a great difference in unemployment rates in correlation of gaming establishments. On average, it seems to be that a traditional form of government has lower unemployment rates than the other forms of government.

Graph 1.5 Gaming Establishments and 2006 Unemployment Rates
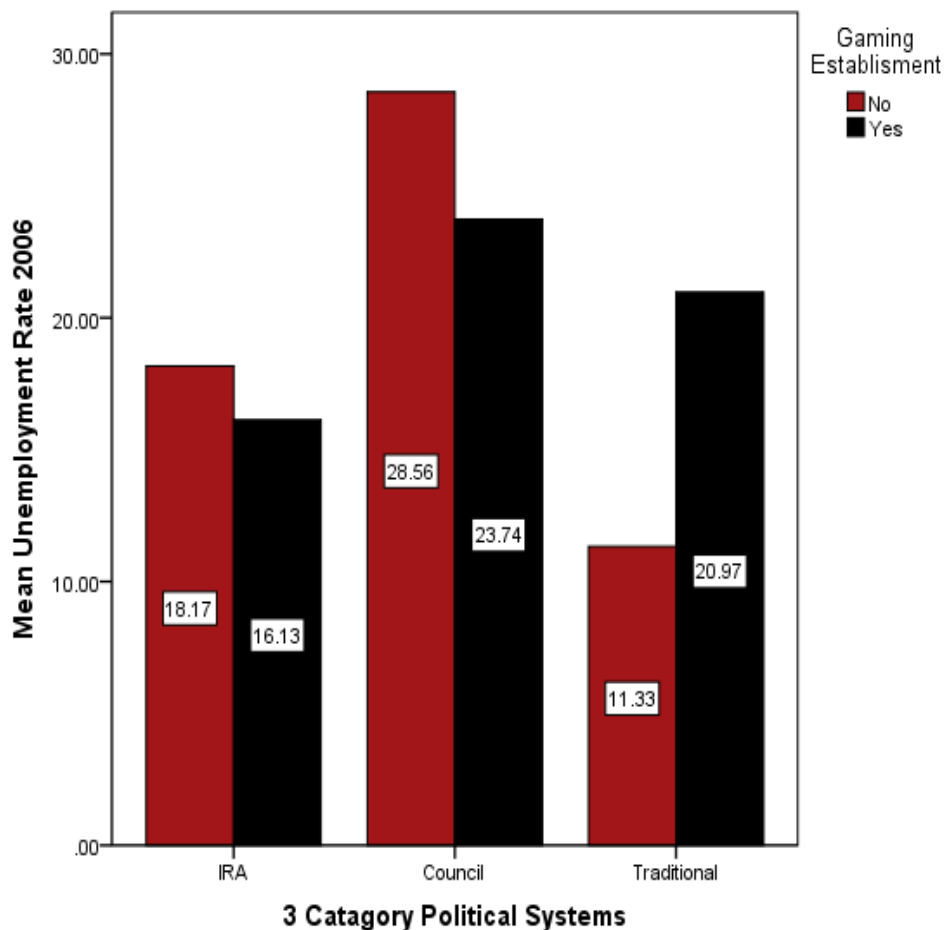
Conclusion

A traditional system of government seems to be the better choice to lower poverty rates. We can see, in these tests, by viewing demographics and not by their policies this system of government has, overall, the lowest poverty rate. There are of course areas that are still questionable, areas such as households on any federal public assistance programs. These numbers are still much higher than the council systems.

These results only raise more questions. These are some of the issues at the surface of the underlying problems with any system of government. Some questions that arise in this entire are one such as, why are reservations using the traditional government system have lower unemployment when they do not have a gaming establishment? Why are the differences in higher education attainment only a little higher in traditional system over an IRA system, when schools in an IRA system have the BIA regulated schools when traditional systems have to rely on state public schools? Why are per capita incomes, an average percentage of 21098, in a traditional system and only 18202 in non-traditional systems but yet the average but household earnings in the traditional system compared to the IRA system is 3372 lower. With these statistics, why are the poverty rates vary so drastically between these three systems?

This research seems to bring more questions to the surface than answering showing the difference between the systems. As it seems, the research done here is just looking at the surface of the problems, as stated before. More research needs to be done and more focus needs to be on policy differences in these political systems that may cause this change. In the future, I hope to do this research myself. This research my help find solutions to the problems of high poverty rates on Indian reservations.

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