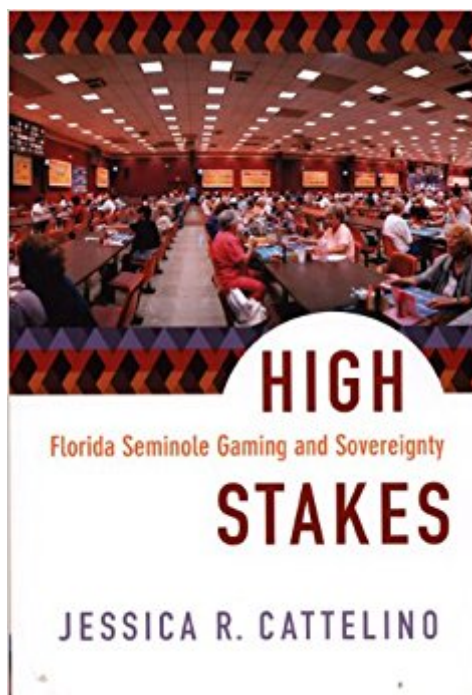


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# High Stakes: Florida Seminole Gaming And Sovereignty



## Synopsis

In 1979, Florida Seminoles opened the first tribally operated high-stakes bingo hall in North America. At the time, their annual budget stood at less than \$2 million. By 2006, net income from gaming had surpassed \$600 million. This dramatic shift from poverty to relative economic security has created tangible benefits for tribal citizens, including employment, universal health insurance, and social services. Renewed political self-governance and economic strength have reversed decades of U.S. settler-state control. At the same time, gaming has brought new dilemmas to reservation communities and triggered outside accusations that Seminoles are sacrificing their culture by embracing capitalism. In *High Stakes*, Jessica R. Cattelino tells the story of Seminoles' complex efforts to maintain politically and culturally distinct values in a time of new prosperity. Cattelino presents a vivid ethnographic account of the history and consequences of Seminole gaming. Drawing on research conducted with tribal permission, she describes casino operations, chronicles the everyday life and history of the Seminole Tribe, and shares the insights of individual Seminoles. At the same time, she unravels the complex connections among cultural difference, economic power, and political rights. Through analyses of Seminole housing, museum and language programs, legal disputes, and everyday activities, she shows how Seminoles use gaming revenue to enact their sovereignty. They do so in part, she argues, through relations of interdependency with others. *High Stakes* compels rethinking of the conditions of indigeneity, the power of money, and the meaning of sovereignty.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I appreciate Cattelino's emphasis on the "fungibility of money" because it allows us to better explore how money is used as a tool for accomplishing certain objectives. I think this is important in understanding how some indigenous communities use non-indigenous tools today in developing and maintaining their communities. She shows how economic self-sufficiency helps with exercising political power. Cattelino provides a range of experiences, comments, instances, etc., where Indian racism is witnessed. This includes television shows and random comments in other settings. Cattelino also relates an argument made by a San Diego State University Professor (see Location 1787) that is also relevant to the policy making concerns expressed by others who have written about Indian gaming. Another part of me wonders in amazement about the Seminole Tribe's ability and willingness to develop their community's wealth. I enjoyed this book and confident others will as well. In talking with friends who have read this book, I know it has changed peoples' perspectives on Indigenous gaming. They previously thought it was a horrible idea, but changed their minds after reading this book. For others, they thought the book missed analyzing certain other, yet important, issues like "settler logics."

I recently assigned this book for my Anthropology of Tourism class. This book is well-written, compelling, and theoretically sophisticated. Cattelino focuses not on the gambling industry itself, but rather on the changes this new economy has brought to the Seminole people. Looking at diverse questions of economic wealth, cultural representations, changing housing forms, and the history of Seminole interactions with U.S. federal programs, she paints an even-handed and sympathetic portrait of a group that has lived through multiple moments of change, of which gaming is only the latest. She challenges dominant U.S. narratives that equate Native American culture with poverty and assume that wealth is inherently linked to cultural loss. I would highly recommend this book for class use, as well as for the general reader who is interested in Native American societies, Native American gaming/casinos, or the Seminole in particular.

I learned more about the Seminoles than I learned about gaming. The author pictured the Seminole culture to accomplish her goal of showing how gaming impacted that culture. The picture was clear and enlightening given that I do not know much about how American Indians actually live today. To me, it was well worth my time.

I was very interested in the book and couldn't put it down. I recommend it for anyone. Very good

information.

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