



Voter Turnout of Native Americans Living on United States Reservations

Honors Political Science Capstone Thesis

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What factors contribute to the voter turnout of Native Americans living on federally designated Native American Reservations?

Abstract

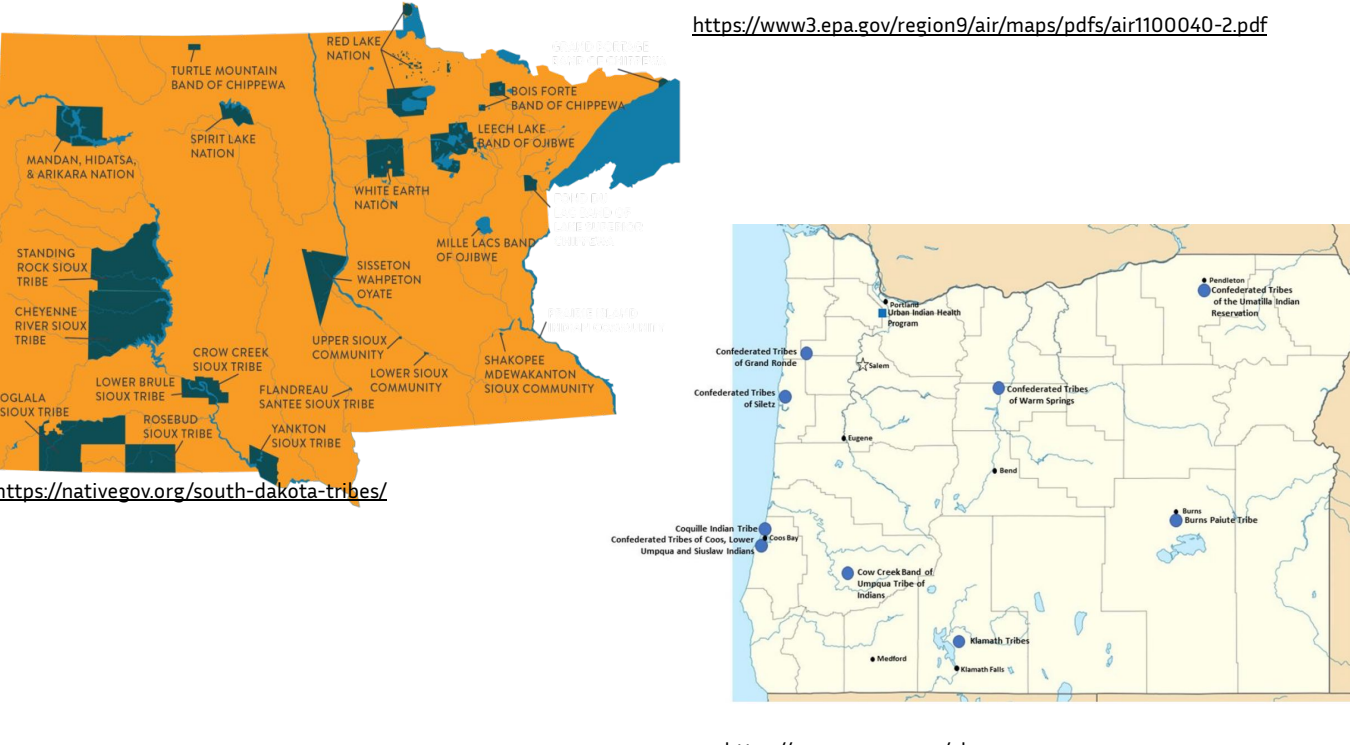
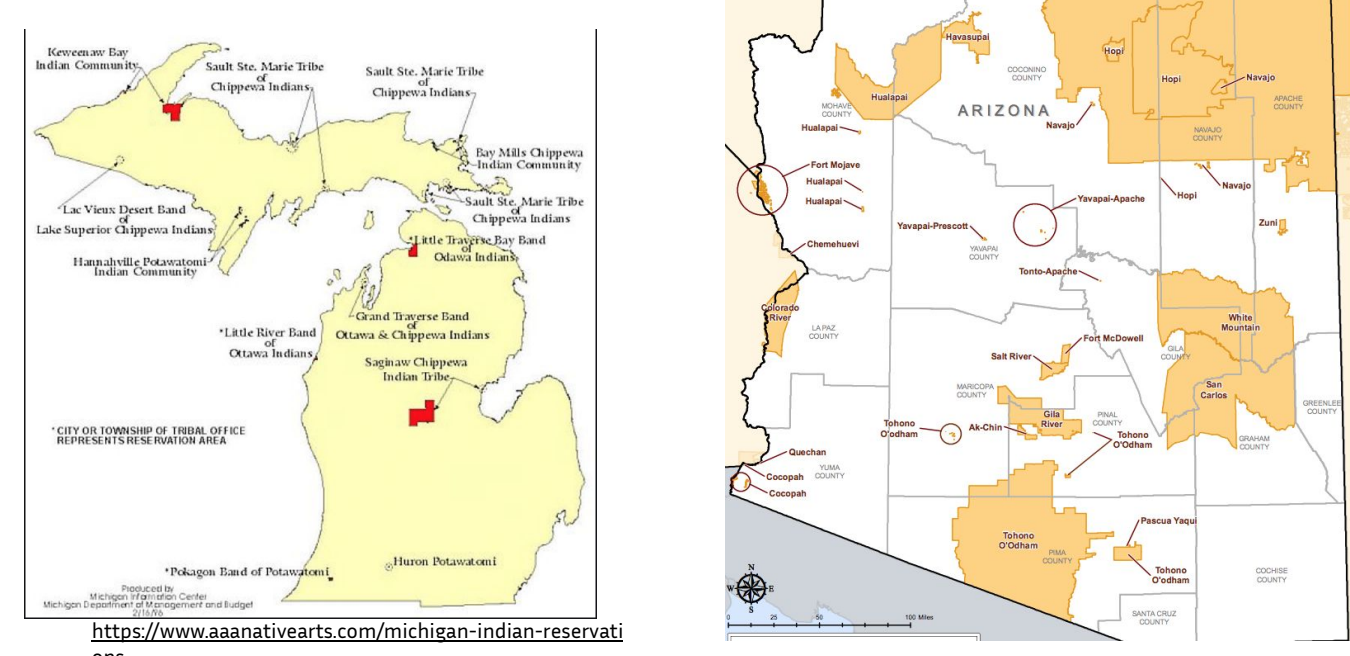
The lack of research on Native American voter turnout further perpetuates critical issues, including lower levels of education, high poverty levels, and the deficiency of social welfare programs. This research examines causes for Native American voter turnout for those living on reservations by using data from four states, Arizona, Michigan, Oregon, and South Dakota. The data for this project was accumulated using various state or municipal resources for the 2014 and 2016 general elections. I hypothesize that the leading indicators for voter turnout are the high poverty rates and high unemployment rates among Native Americans living on reservations. The findings of this research support that the variables that work best as predictors of voter turnout are the presence of gaming operations, median household income, and educational attainment. The findings also focus on the institutional barriers to obtaining the data that make this research possible and impactful, and suggests improvements for future research.

Introduction

- Research regarding Native American voter turnout is difficult due to lack of data resources and previous research.
- As potential explanatory factors, this research focuses on variables such as education, poverty, age, voter registration, median household income and the presence of gaming operations from four states: Arizona, Michigan, Oregon, South Dakota.
- Voter participation data is collected using voter statistics from each tribal reservation's respective county, as well as tribal data from the 2016 Arizona Election Report.
- Arizona, Michigan, Oregon, and South Dakota vary in population size, economic status, and geography. This variation allows pinpointing of similarities or differences from state to state and how these variables interact.

- This research is important in helping to pinpoint the factors that influence voter turnout.. The Native American population is important to America's culture and history and is often overlooked, neglected, and manipulated.

Methodology



Total population	Median Age
Native American Population	Population over 18
Population over 18	# Gaming Operations
% High School Graduate	Gaming Revenue
% Bachelor's Degree or Higher	% Below Poverty Level
% Households with Computer	Unemployment rate 16 yrs +
% Households wth Internet	Median Household Income

Socioeconomic variable data was collected from Census Bureau "My Tribal Area". Voter participation data was collected through each tribal reservation's respective county archives.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
1	State	Tribal Name	Total pop	Native Am	Median Age	% Below P	Median % High Sch	% Bachelor's	% Househ wth Int	% Househ wth Comp	% Gaming	Revenue	County	Final	Balot2020	
10	Arizona	Maricopa	1348	1169	25.3	924	0.372	22344	0.221	0.663	0.05	0.562	0.481	1	Final	131528
11	Arizona	Navajo	172875	166395	31.9	122735	0.395	27961	0.181	0.739	0.083	0.457	0.25	4	5000000	28892
12	Arizona	Pima	4111	3394	23.9	2522	0.434	30451	0.16	0.645	0.036	0.794	0.722	3	61800000	427102
13	Arizona	Salt River	7386	5115	36.3	5747	0.302	35417	0.198	0.733	0.107	0.815	0.672	3	35000000	1608875
14	Arizona	San Carlos	10443	9363	24.9	6340	0.47	31946	0.304	0.705	0.05	0.606	0.339	1	12000000	123535
15	Arizona	Tohono O'odham	10761	5307	29.2	7351	0.463	28750	0.288	0.752	0.066	0.621	0.405	4	30000000	427102
16	Michigan	Bay Mills Reservation	1263	856	29.5	926	0.167	48818	0.077	0.26	0.109	0.901	0.842	1	460893	15690
17	Michigan	Grand Traverse	725	452	28.4	447	0.279	34896	0.173	0.8318	0.09	0.775	0.634	1	1607566	15690
18	Michigan	Hemlock Indian Community	656	465	24.4	444	0.32	32411	0.259	0.84	0.082	0.848	0.733	1	117018	10014
19	Michigan	Isabella Reservation	27617	2043	37.5	21643	0.156	52117	0.059	0.907	0.029	0.887	0.788	0	0	25797
20	Michigan	L'Anse Reservation	3584	739	47.5	2764	0.19	41250	0.089	0.916	0.161	0.777	0.895	0	0	3536
21	Michigan	Lac Vieux Reservation	236	207	20	233	0.478	25563	0.014	0.86	0.093	0.703	0.5	2	325965	7484
22	South Dak	Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe	8556	6630	29.1	5558	0.339	41417	0.226	0.851	0.16	0.611	0.536	2	0	784
23	South Dak	Crow Creek Tribe	2164	1598	24.7	1338	0.379	34048	0.114	0.801	0.108	0.563	0.526	1	11000000	512
24	South Dak	Flandreau Santee Tribe	509	424	34.4	324	0.37	38333	0.081	0.84	0.133	0.767	0.693	1	12400000	3012
25	South Dak	Lower Brule Tribe	1631	1485	23.5	988	0.422	32550	0.166	0.823	0.098	0.73	0.569	1	0	1461
26	South Dak	Lower Sioux Tribe	19855	16714	26.1	12561	0.481	34380	0.173	0.773	0.134	0.636	0.538	1	0	1172
27	South Dak	Rosebud Tribe	11418	9556	24.7	6877	0.574	22587	0.142	0.768	0.144	0.623	0.415	1	0	2167
28	South Dak	Standing Rock Reservation	8616	6560	28.5	5518	0.401	37527	0.213	0.836	0.167	0.646	0.539	2	1000000	1195
29	South Dak	Sisseton Tribal Lands	6829	2524	32.5	4593	0.249	43750	0.092	0.853	0.171	0.719	0.608	0	0	3402
30	Oregon	Coos, Lower Umpqua	100	63	27.5	73	0.24	20750	0.188	0.917	0.017	0.804	0.761	1	37050000	55069
31	Oregon	Cowille	453	158	47.5	387	0.164	29519	0.053	0.869	0.133	0.691	0.596	1	8000000	31962
32	Oregon	Grand Ronde Community	518	148	38.3	389	0.287	37500	0.137	0.837	0.054	0.846	0.701	1	0	5911
33	Oregon	Fort McDowell: Paiute and Sha	336	325	37.8	262	0.423	17321	0.221	0.734	0.06	0.336	0.255	0	0	10807
34	Oregon	Siletz Reservation	675	383	26.1	378	0.277	33068	0.139	0.878	0.052	0.761	0.684	1	7500000	25785
35	Oregon	Umatilla Reservation	2937	1095	41.7	2226	0.195	53462	0.095	0.887	0.157	0.812	0.687	1	15000000	28464
36	Oregon	Warm Springs	4296	3911	28.6	2867	0.337	43250	0.226	0.812	0.095	0.741	0.528	1	3000000	12273

Native Vote – Election Protection Project

2016 Election Report



Indian Legal Clinic
Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law
Arizona State University
March 6, 2018

2016 voter participation data for tribes on reservations in Arizona was provided through the 2016 Arizona Election Project.

Tribal	Votes Registered	Balot Cast	Percentage
Ak-Chin Indian Community	410	234	57.07%
Cocopah Tribe*	966	597	61.80%
Colorado River Indian Tribes	5,107	3,319	64.99%
Fl. McDowell Yavapai Nation	551	252	45.74%
Gila River Indian Community	4,427	2,099	47.41%
Havasupai Tribe	129	38	29.46%
Hopi Tribe**	9,346	5,293	56.63%
Hualapai	617	241	39.06%
Navajo Nation**	74,482	40,731	54.69%
Pasqua Yaqui Tribe	1,951	974	49.92%
Quechan Tribe*	3,646	2,529	69.36%
Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community	3,581	1,802	50.32%
San Carlos Apache Tribe***	2,377	1,175	49.43%
Tohono O'odham	5,664	3,317	58.39%
Tonto Apache Tribe*	1,247	1,437	82.36%
White Mountain Apache Tribe****	13,119	8,330	63.42%

Data

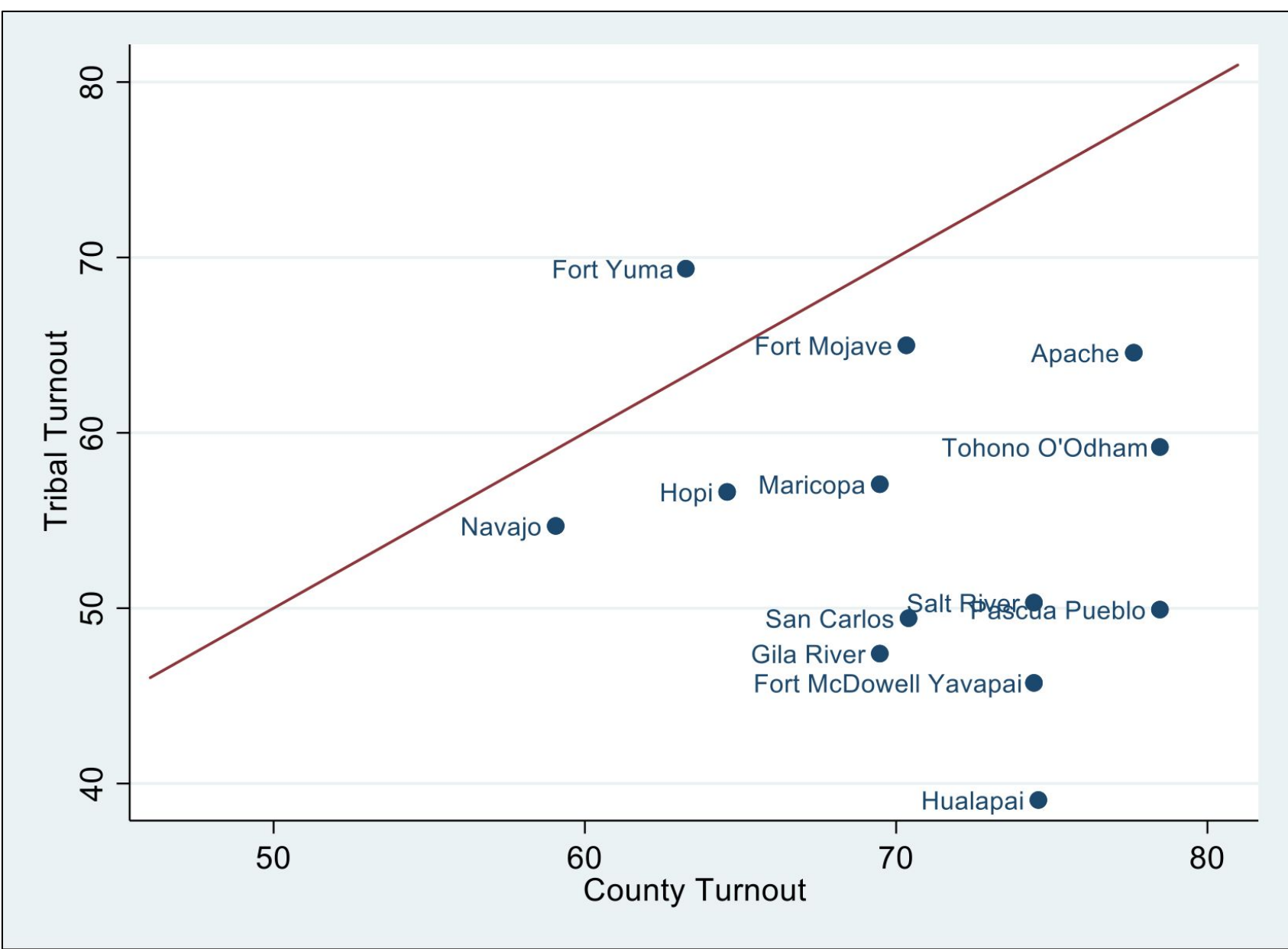


Figure 1: Results showed that reported voter turnout for Native Americans falls significantly lower than overall county turnout.

. regress turnout16 native16 HighSchoolGraduate income casino mi or sd									
Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	34			
Model	2769.43065	7	398.461321	F(7, 26)	=	18.66			
Residual	551.222008	26	21.2008465	Prob > F	=	0.0000			
Total	3320.65266	33	100.631899	R-squared	=	0.8340			
				Adj R-squared	=	0.7893			
				Root MSE	=	4.6044			

turnout16		Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]			
native16		-.1625096	.0324644	-5.01	0.000	-.2292411	-.0957782		
HighSchoolGraduate		-.4600726	.1852738	-2.48	0.020	-.8400983	-.0792369		
income		8.806556	3.494859	2.52	0.018	1.622773	15.99034		
casino		.2202512	2.156038	0.10	0.913	-4.211948	4.63205		
mi		-5.876382	3.262827	-1.80	0.083	-12.38322	.8304551		
or		10.34002	2.36683	3.49	0.002	4.245729	16.43432		
sd		-.5502493	3.289748	-0.17	0.868	-7.310367	6.209868		
_cons		15.74715	31.91534	0.49	0.626	-49.85578	81.35508		

. regress turnout16 native16 HighSchoolGraduate income inter casino mi or sd									
Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	34			
Model	2800.52905	8	350.06132	F(8, 25)	=	16.82			
Residual	520.122903	25	20.8129441	Prob > F	=	0.0000			
Total	3320.65266	33	100.631899	R-squared	=	0.8398			
				Adj R-squared	=	0.7932			
				Root MSE	=	4.5621			

turnout16		Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]			
native16		-.1603455	.032215	-4.98	0.000	-.2264935	-.0939874		
HighSchoolGraduate		4.318707	3.926367	1.10	0.282	-3.767797	12.40521		
income		46.77552	31.35395	1.49	0.148	-17.79913	111.3502		
inter		-.4680459	.3841739	-1.22	0.234	-1.25193	.323109		
casino		-.6081014	2.241795	-0.27	0.788	-5.225164	4.009862		
mi		-6.544829	3.123558	-2.11	0.043	-13.75313	2.483467		
or		11.02845	2.991425	3.69	0.001	4.867496	17.18941		
sd		-.204927	3.67551	-0.08	0.939	-4.38414	6.475154		
_cons		-371.3415	319.264	-1.16	0.256	-1028.878	286.195		

Figure 2: 2016 General Election Turnout by County to Socioeconomic Variables. Results show median household income as strongest indicator of voter turnout, with percent of graduates and presence of casinos also showing significance .

. regress Turnout2016 HighSchoolGraduate income casino									
Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	13			
Model	571.924901	3	190.641634	F(3, 9)	=	5.31			
Residual	323.065591	9	35.8961768	Prob > F	=	0.0221			
Total	894.990492	12	74.582541	R-squared	=	0.6398			
				Adj R-squared	=	0.5187			
				Root MSE	=	5.9913			

Turnout2016		Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]			
HighSchoolGraduate		1.261017	.3534836	3.57	0.006	.4613819	2.060653		
income		-16.7954	7.9494	-2.11	0.064	-34.77819	1.187395		
casino		14.13451	5.232963	2.74	0.023	2.496529	26.1721		
_cons		123.0939	75.12799	1.64	0.136	-46.85741	293.0452		

. regress Turnout2016 HighSchoolGraduate income inter casino									
Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	13			
Model	593.756526	4	148.439159	F(4, 8)	=	3.94			
Residual	301.233856	8	37.65232	Prob > F	=	0.0469			
Total	894.990492	12	74.582541	R-squared	=	0.6634			
				Adj R-squared	=	0.4951			
				Root MSE	=	6.1363			

Turnout2016		Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]			
HighSchoolGraduate		12.17748	14.34113	0.85	0.420	-20.89322	45.24819		
income		39.40827	150.4086	0.26	0.790	-172.1345	290.951		
inter		-1.056156	1.387045	-0.76	0.468	-4.254688	2.142377		
casino		13.3082	5.526397	2.41	0.043	.5643026	21.05209		
_cons		-662.8569	1035.05	-0.64	0.540	-3049.688	1723.974		

Figure 3: Arizona 2016 Election Report to Socioeconomic Variables. Results show percentage of high school graduates as strongest indicators of voter turnout. Median household income and presence of casinos also showing significance .

Conclusion

- Results show high school graduation rate, median household income, and presence of one or more casinos are the best indicators for predicting voter turnout rates among American Indians.
- The results from the Arizona tribal level data compared to the results from the county data also show that better, more reliable data are key to understanding the predictors of turnout, but also that the data collected through this research's county-based method did not produce results that were that different from the tribal results.
- In addition, the results of this research supports that greater economic opportunities for Native Americans corresponds to higher voter turnout. The results of this project shows the significant need for further research on the topic of Native American voter turnout and political participation in general.