

AMERICAN INDIAN CASINOS AND THE RISE IN NATIVE AMERICAN
SELF-IDENTIFICATION

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This paper explores the dramatic rise in individuals identifying as Native American by linking individual racial self-identification with the opening of American Indian casinos at the state level over time. We find that the opening of the first tribal gaming casino in a state is associated with an increase in the probability that individuals with American Indian ancestry will self-identify as Native American. Moreover, these effects increase over time and are driven in part by the likely payment of casino dividends to tribal members. Our results point to the importance of economic incentives underlying the individual choice of racial identity.

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