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The Impacts of Casino Development on Demographic and Land Use Changes Over Time: Planning for Palmer Massachusetts

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The Impacts of Casino Development on Demographic and Land Use Changes Over Time: Planning for Palmer Massachusetts

A Master Project Presented
By
Erin Wilson

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The Impacts of Casino Development on Demographic and Land Use Changes Over Time: Planning for Palmer Massachusetts

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ABSTRACT

This project uses spatial analysis tools to examine the impact of casino development on the demographic make-up of local communities. This was conducted in order to inform future casino communities as to how their communities may be impacted by casino development. First, this project uses Geographic Information System (GIS) based methods of descriptive spatial analysis to analyze demographic changes over time to see what, if any, economic and demographic impacts may likely occur around a casino. Second, this project also interviews key local officials in casino communities to gain on the ground incite regarding the impacts of casinos. While the GIS data suggested that some demographic changes occurred over time, most of the measures selected for this study did not show noticeable spatial shifts. The GIS spatial analysis and the interviews combined provided different perspectives on what to expect when legalizing casinos, although, both approaches yielded the same basic conclusions.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This project uses spatial analysis tools to examine the impact of casino development on the demographic make-up of local communities. In early 2008, the original idea for this project came from the Town Manager of Palmer, Massachusetts. He presented the question to Professor Henry Renski and myself: What would likely happen to my community if a casino were to be developed? From that initial question emerged the idea to compare the demographic impacts before and after a casino was developed across a number of different communities that are similar to Palmer. More specifically, I use Geographic Information System (GIS) based methods of descriptive spatial analysis to analyze demographic changes over time to see what, if any, economic and demographic impacts may likely occur around a casino.

Given the current debate in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and many other states over whether to legalize casino gambling, the project is both appropriate and timely. Today, all but two states in the United States offer some form of state-sanctioned gambling, whether it be lotteries, video gaming, racetracks, etc. Twelve states host commercial casinos. And while some states may not legalize gambling, some, such as Connecticut, have contractual agreements with sovereign Indian tribes to allow casinos on tribal reservations. Many other states are considering bringing casinos to their states as a source of tax revenue and potential economic impacts.

The gambling industry in general, and casinos in particular, have grown tremendously since World War II. Gambling in the United States, in the form of betting and lotteries, has its roots in the colonial period of the late 1700s. Not much fundamentally changed until 1931, when the State of Nevada legalized most types of gambling and casinos opened a new era in gaming. However, it was not until after World War II that casinos and gambling really began to expand into what they have become today. States began to legalize gambling in the form of state lotteries, bingo, pari-mutuel betting, casinos, riverboat casinos, and racinos. The most recent and largest surge of casinos occurred after 1988, when Congress passed the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA). The IGRA allows for Class 1 gambling and Class 2 gambling under strict regulation from the IGRA on tribally-owned lands that are under trust. Class 1 gambling includes small-prize games among tribal members, and Class 2 gambling involves forms of gambling such as bingo, non-banking poker, pull tab, punch boards, etc. However, Class 2 gambling is only allowed on tribal lands if allowed within the State they reside in (Thompson, 2001). Land that is in trust is land that has been federally recognized as tribal territory and is under the jurisdiction of the tribal community. Therefore, these territories are governed by the tribal community's laws and regulations and only minimally adhere to federal state law.

Marshall (2003) explains that gambling in America goes through "boom-bust cycles" that coincide with struggling economies and state budget crises. Because the operation and development of gambling venues is relatively quick and easily taxable, states use gambling as a means to quickly increase tax revenues to support

state budgets, especially during economic downturns when there is a drop in more conventional public revenue sources, such as sales and income taxes. It should come as no surprise that in today's severe recession (2008-2009), states such as Massachusetts, which have been debating legalizing casinos even before the current recession, have become even more interested in alternative revenue streams to bolster their state budget. The casino debate covers not only whether or not to legalize casinos, but also to the specific type of gambling to allow, whether through state run-casinos (also known as commercial casinos) or through slot machines at racetracks (racinos).

The rationale behind casino complexes, or destination casinos with hotels and amenities, is that they bring people into the local economy or region, therefore drawing money from outside the region and transferring the money into the host economy. Economic base theory states that the importation of money from outside will trigger a 'multiplier effect' and 'spin-off development', that will benefit other local businesses as the additional flow of money changes hands (Malizia & Feser, 1999). However, many fear that the cost of adverse social impacts outweigh the beneficial economic impacts, in part because the social impacts are not properly accounted for in studies of economic impacts or cost-benefit analysis. Some critics have argued that state governments should not rely on such 'parasitic' forms of tax revenue generation, while others have maintained that the strategy is just a regressive transfer of money and disproportionately hurts poor people within their communities.

Much of the literature on casino development focuses on the controversies associated with particular tax incentives, economic and fiscal impacts, the negative

social impacts of problem gambling, and other illegal activities associated with legalized gambling. While all of these aspects are important to consider when deciding to bring casinos to a community, other factors should also be assessed and planned for. These include the community impacts related to increased infrastructure demands, demographic shifts, land use patterns, and economic demands that go beyond the common literature. As discussed later, these other types of issues are often defined as social costs, hidden costs, or adverse externalities. Part of the difficulty in deciding whether or not to pursue casino development is that these social costs are vaguely defined and difficult to measure.

This study does not attempt to define or quantify the full spectrum of these social costs of gambling, but rather looks narrowly at the potential demographic and land use impacts of casino development that planners and community leaders should consider when planning for casino based development. Through the course of my study I will address the following research questions:

- In what ways and to what extent does casino development alter a town's demographic and land use profile over time?
- What are the key issues (or areas of concern) a community must consider when deciding whether or not to bring potentially large-scale casino developments into their communities?
- Over the long term, in what ways and to what extent are casinos economically and socially viable for a community?

The main goal of this study is to examine the planning-related issues that arise from casino development by measuring demographic and land use changes

through spatial analysis. These issues, however, go beyond the current literature on social and economic impacts of casino development. My objectives are:

- To analyze local demographic and land use changes resulting from new casino development using GIS, census data and information collected from interviews with key local officials.
- To present comparative case study findings and assessment criteria to inform future research.
- Provide specific planning and policy recommendations for local communities interested in casino development.

The specific context for this study is the town of Palmer, Massachusetts, which has been identified as a potential site for a commercial casino. This study does not take a position as to whether or not a casino should be built in Palmer. Rather, it is designed as a guide for communities considering casino development by suggesting what types of “local issues” may arise and what strategies and practices towns may want to consider when preparing for casino development. I compare Palmer to similar communities (based on criteria such as size, location, type, and developer) where casinos have already been built and will measure the demographic changes before and after development using data from the United States Census Bureau. This study will also examine land use impacts that have occurred over time in the communities adjacent to the Mohegan Sun and Foxwoods Casinos in Connecticut by interviewing key community planners and examining the

regional comprehensive plans and studies conducted within these 'casinosheds' of Connecticut.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The U.S. gambling industry is currently experiencing an economic boom. States nationwide are permitting venues for gambling with the hope of bolstering their regional economic system and promoting growth within their sluggish economies. Much of the debate is about whether or not the economic impacts are worth the economic and social costs. Similarly, much of the literature regarding casino development is highly polarized. There are discussions of economic impacts that address areas of concern such as tax benefits and the costs of development, and whether or not it is profitable for the state to allow casino gambling. The literature on social costs of casino development looks at social-behavioral issues, e.g. problem gambling and increased crime rates. However, there is relatively little study of demographic changes associated with casino development, and of the impact of these changes on land use or municipal administration.

The Economic Perspective

There are two main schools of economic theory that can provide some guide for understanding the economic impacts of casinos: Economic Base Theory and the Market Failures approach.

Economic Base Theory supports the notion that casinos can positively impact the local economy by either bringing outside dollars into a community and/or by stopping the outflow of dollars by residents who gamble out of state. In its simplest form, Economic Base Theory contends that an increase in export sales and income stimulates demand for supporting (or non-basic) sectors such as retail services

through local purchases by workers and through sales from intermediate goods and services providers (Malizia & Feser, 1999). This trickling down of income creates a 'multiplier effect.' In short, money that comes into a region creates a cycle of effects that generates more circulation of money and jobs within that region. Although the theory is discussed in terms of regional exports, the same logic holds for tourism-based sectors that lure visitors from away.

Economic base theory is a demand-driven model of economic growth, and as such, is generally viewed as a short-run model of growth because it assumes no changes in technology or the local region's industry mix. In the long run, it is less valid since markets and regions change in response to new technologies and consumer preferences, which can alter the amount of money imported into the region as well as exported outside that region. A criticism of this theory, in terms of casino development, is that a saturation of casinos would limit the amount of dollars that are brought into a community, thereby decreasing the amount of dollars that flow between regions (Malizia and Feser, 1999). Dollars would become more localized and transfer within the region as opposed to gaining extra dollars from elsewhere. Dollars will be more likely spent within their regions where casinos are located as opposed to spending dollars in a nearby region that also contains a casino. From the state's perspective, Massachusetts would rather legalize gambling in order to prevent Massachusetts's residents from spending their dollars in Connecticut. In doing so, the state of Massachusetts would benefit from the tax dollars generated if casinos were to be legalized.

The Market Failure Approach looks at ways in which economic policy can fix the “failure of private markets to achieve economic efficiency” (Bartik, 1990). Grounded in neoclassical welfare economics, the market failures approach typically advocates limited government action unless, for one reason or another, the free market fails to efficiently allocate resources. Some reasons why there may be a market failure include: chronic involuntary unemployment or underemployment, or insufficient tax bases for fiscal benefits, agglomeration economies, increasing returns to human capital, and research and innovation spillovers.

The market failure offers no concrete ‘yes’ or ‘no’ recommendation for whether to allow gaming. On the surface, one might content that there is no ‘market failure’ that needs to be corrected by government prohibiting gambling in the first place. Others might suggest casinos as a prescription for areas suffering from chronic involuntary unemployment due to labor market frictions that prevent people from moving following a major plant closing. For example, In Southern Connecticut, casinos served to replace the defense industries that were once major employers in the region. While the service wage of the casino is much lower than that of the defense industry, the service industry produced new jobs in the region that employed many of those who were unemployed by the economic transition. However, a more nuanced interpretation may view the social costs of gambling as negative externalities, in which case the market failures framework might recommend regulation or restriction that is if the social costs of gambling outweighed their economic benefits.

The empirical literature on the economic impacts of casinos is equally diverse. Much of the literature suggests that the economic benefits outweigh the costs of casino development, yet this assumption is still very contentious. According to the State of the States, American Gaming Association (AGA) Survey of Casino Entertainment, the gaming industry experienced a 6.8 percent growth at the national level from 2005 to 2006. Of the 11 states (at the time) that housed 460 commercial establishments, casinos employed 366,197 casino workers, who earned about \$13.3 billion in income, including benefits and tips (AGA, 2007). An earlier AGA sponsored study found that the economic gains make up for any social costs caused by destination casinos (Marshall, 2003). While the study goes on to suggest that both the costs and benefits are intrinsically intertwined, and therefore hard to assess separately, the overall consensus is that casino development is positive overall for communities because of the tax incentives, and therefore are in higher demand by states as a tool for generating tax revenues.

Conversely, Walker and Jackson (2007) argue that the economic benefits do not provide a net benefit to states. They indicate that the prospective economic gains are marginal and in most cases do not support the state budgets. Their study suggests that the casino industry does not have a positive impact on economic growth at the state level and that states should not expect long-term growth effects from legalizing casino gambling.

Robert Goodman argues a similar point in his book The Luck Business (1995), where he addresses the myths and fallacies of the casino industry. His book discusses the states' race to allow gambling in the hopes of increasing tax revenues.

With the exception of large-scale destination casinos like those in Las Vegas, Nevada, the state budget shares due to casino development are most times less than 5% of the state budget. He explains that while states race to pursue perceived tax benefits, the economic benefits are in fact not as appealing as the American Gaming Association publishes yearly.

Felsenstein, Littlepage, and Klacik (1999) take a different perspective by examining casino development from the perspective of game theory. They argue that casino developers and local governments play the 'game' of economic development in reverse. The study explains that communities typically use tax abatements and other incentives to compete for footloose businesses according to the "prisoner's dilemma." In this typical scenario, communities are the prisoners (or players) and the prospective factory is the resource holder. Yet, in pursuing casino-based development, the prospective developers are the players and the community holds the resources. Felsenstein, Littlepage, and Klacik (1999) further argue that the export-base model is typically the most common framework guiding local economic development decision-making. However, they find that the casino strategy often seems more like import substitution, using local development to generate redistributive effects on the community. According to traditional game theory, local governments should win in the casino development "game" because they hold the resources. Yet, in reality, communities still tend to lose out because of unknown long-term impacts and competing interest groups. Even playing the game in reverse, many communities are willing to take the chance of attracting casino

development under conditions of imperfect knowledge, based on perceived economic advantages that casino development brings to the table.

In “Competing for Growth: The Exceptional Case of Gaming” author Claude Louishomme (2003) also looks at the process and politics of casino based economic development. He explains that states and local governments consistently try to attract businesses in order to promote new investments, jobs, and public revenue through economic development. He argues that with gaming, politics becomes an expressive dimension rather than the instrumental routine in economic development. He studies three similar cases in Missouri that used tax dollars for economic development projects: The St. Louis Domed Football Stadium, the Wal-Mart Corporation, and Riverboat casinos. He found that due to the moral implications of gambling, the Riverboat casinos created the biggest public outcry and were highly contended. The other two projects created little opposition. Louishomme argues that “Casinos are not regarded solely as an economic development strategy, but is defined as a moral dilemma (pg. 1105).” This perspective will be discussed further in the section below.

The Social Perspective

Many of the social criticisms of casino development are based upon either its impact on people’s behavior and/or negative public perception of casinos. Much of the behavioral debate focuses on the moral issues of problem gambling and crime. The debate over perceptions focuses on whether there is support for casino gambling and/or perceived social problems due to casinos.

Janes and Collision (2004) studied the impacts of behavioral changes over time resulting from casino development. The study looked at the social and economic impacts of tribal gambling versus state-run commercial gambling institutions, since the two differ significantly in terms of the allocation of taxing and public vs. private ownership. The authors surveyed eight community leaders in eight communities before and after casino development to see what types of changes occurred over time from 1995 to 2000. The study found that in 2000, more issues of community, infrastructure, and social impacts emerged over that time. However, regardless of the impacts identified, communities still benefited from the economic impacts and many residents believe that the casino improved the quality of life of their community.

Stitt, Nichols and Giacomposi (2005) conducted a study on people's perceptions of casino development, based upon social exchange theory. They tested the hypothesis that those who receive the most benefit from casinos perceive them less negatively. After examining eight communities four years before and after casino development, the study found that those who gambled and lived close to the casinos were more likely to support casinos and saw little to no change in issues such as crime, except for bankruptcy and divorce. Those who did not gamble saw gambling to be a negative impact both in their own perceived experiences and within the social community as a whole.

Richard McGowan takes a different perspective on the social impacts of casinos. In his book Government and the Transformation of the Gaming Industry (2001), McGowan looks at the anticipated social issues caused by casinos as a way

to promote social capital. Drawing upon Robert Putnam's arguments in Bowling Alone (2000), McGowan considers the anticipated social impacts of gambling to be addiction, lack of fairness, and dishonesty, which he argues relate to many of Putnam's points about the decline of social capital. Rather than outlawing casinos, however, McGowan recommends that the industry promote competition, privatize state lotteries, open the casino market, and increase the federal government's role in regulating the industry. In doing so, he expects that greater social capital could be obtained from casino gambling through (regulated) market liberalization rather than monopolization. He argues that if regulated correctly, the recreation of gambling would allow for a different avenue for social interaction that if properly managed can increase participation in community activities and increase social capital.

While each of these socially-focused studies has looked primarily at behavior and perceptions of casino development, there is a relative lack of literature looking at impacts of casinos beyond behavior, perception, and problem gambling. The literature addressed above is unclear as to what exactly are social costs and how are they quantified, and in what ways these social factors balance inform a cost-benefit perspective.

Walker (2007) specifically looks at the issues of quantifying the social costs of casinos. He examines the different types of approaches to evaluating the cost and benefits of gambling, the different views as to what should be included as costs, and the different interpretations of social costs due to disparate fields of studies. He explains that generally there is no standardized methodology for measuring social costs and goes on to suggest that existing cost-benefit calculations do not provide

useful metrics because they vary too widely across studies. His claims are based on evidence that there are differences in the literature pertaining to the definition and 'real' monetary cost of social costs. What exactly are the specific social costs and are they even measurable? Walker looks at case studies in Las Vegas and notes problems in past studies, calling the methods arbitrary in many cases.

Walker is not alone in identifying the lack of consensus and inherent difficulties in defining and measuring the social costs of gambling. Marshall (2003) calls these social impacts "hidden costs", and, based on a national poll, characterizes them as "productivity reductions, social services and creditor losses, not accounting for divorce and family disruption associated with problem and pathological gambling" (p. 207). Marshall points out the limits of quantifying social costs by the National Gambling Impact study. He explains that "critics point out that rather than giving gambling a clean bill of health, the commission actually cited insufficient data to establish specific causal relationships" when describing social costs.

Gazel (1998) discusses the different components of economic impact studies of gambling in state and local economies. His study looks at the positive and negative impacts of casinos in local and state economies and offers suggestions as to why some economies fare better reaping the economic benefits legalizing gambling. In his analysis he itemizes the types of impacts and the costs associated with the impacts, denoting "government" as a source of a "type of impact" when accounting for total negative impacts of casino gambling in Wisconsin and Illinois. However, the "type of expenditure" for government as a source of an impact does

not include a direct dollar amount of how much that impact costs. Higher crime was also considered as a negative externality but rates were “not estimated” in the Illinois study. As explained earlier, other literature on social impacts identify these costs to be significant costs.

Gazel (1998) goes on to argue that economic impact studies do not fully address ground truth conditions or account for all the “costs.” He suggests that despite the lack of comprehensive studies within the literature, that most state and local economies have experienced net monetary losses due to casino gambling in their jurisdictions, and that politicians should examine the negative impacts associated with casino gambling and not just only the positive side of job creation and increased tax revenues.

There are some authors that attempt to define social costs or “hidden costs” specific to their research. However, in most cases, they identify these costs as unquantifiable (Christianson, 1998; Eadington, 1998).

Although difficult to quantify, some authors do acknowledge the hidden costs or adverse externalities of casinos that much of the previous literature has tended to ignore or not clearly to define within their studies. A recent article by Lori Stabile (2008) suggests that the social impacts of casino development go beyond the basic behavioral and perceptive impacts. Stable explains that while much literature suggests the economic benefits outweigh the social costs, those in Connecticut who live close to the Mohegan Sun and Foxwoods Casinos are experiencing dramatic changes that have impacted the local and regional infrastructure. The article indicates that community members, while generally happy with the casino

development, are also concerned about other impacts, such as loss of rural character, traffic congestion, an increase in the number of English as a Second Language (ESL) students in the school system, and housing issues such as “hot bedding” where many people live in a house and share beds based upon shifts worked at the casinos. According to Stabile, many of the casino workers are immigrants. Instead of putting the money back into the local economy by buying food and other amenities, many immigrants send their surplus income as remittances to relatives in order to support their families not living in the United States. City officials in the casino towns and in the adjacent towns expressed to Stabile their concern that they have become reactive as opposed to proactive in the development of casinos.

Chadbourne, Walker, and Wolfe (1997) studied the impacts of casino development on historic preservation by looking at infrastructure, housing demand, land use, environmental, service, and social impacts in. The report found that the development of casinos did impact historic preservation based upon these factors. Their report also suggests that not only are historic sites impacted by these factors but communities in general also experience these impacts.

Conclusion

While much of the research literature has a focus and method different from that of this study, this report nevertheless aims to identify and analyze the types of positive and negative impacts that casino developments may have upon a community, going beyond the social and economic needs that have already been

examined in much depth. The goal is to look at the strains that are placed on communities from casino development in order for the planners and community leaders who deal with the gaming industry to plan for long-term spatial and demographic changes that may have wider implications for community character.

Chapter 3: The Casino Debate in Massachusetts

The ongoing casino debate in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts provides the backdrop for this comparative analysis. Many states regard casino development as a tool for local economic development, and as a quick way to increase revenues by taxing gambling profits. Like many of its peers, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is also considering casinos as a way to offset budget shortfalls without raising taxes. The discussion of casinos in Massachusetts has been longstanding, but has intensified in recent years. The following chapter describes the political climate regarding the race to casinos, the possible scenarios going forward, and the future for Palmer, Massachusetts.

The race to ‘Racinos’ in Massachusetts?

In 2008, just prior to the current economic downturn, Governor Patrick proposed licensing three casinos spread throughout the state of Massachusetts primarily as a revenue-generation strategy. According to the Boston Globe,

“..Patrick said the financial windfall would outweigh the serious social ills associated with gambling. The hundreds of millions of dollars in additional state revenues, he said, would be directed toward rebuilding the state’s crumbling roads and bridges and providing property tax relief for beleaguered homeowners.” (Boston Globe, 2007)

Governor Deval Patrick's proposal called for allowing three resort casinos to be built in Western Massachusetts, Southeastern Massachusetts and metropolitan Boston, which he estimated would generate 20,000 jobs and \$2 billion in economic activity (Viser, 2008). Highlights of Governor Patrick's proposal include:

- Three licenses for resort-style Casinos
- 20,000 projected new jobs
- \$2 billion in projected economic activity
- \$600 to 900 million in upfront fees for the state.
- 27% of gambling proceeds go to state, estimated 400 million in revenues, after subtracting social costs (Globe, 2007)

The location of these proposed casinos would be determined by a bidding system. In 2007, the Boston Globe published a map that discussed five proposals for casinos in the state: Marlborough, Revere, East Boston, Middleboro, and Palmer, Massachusetts (Globe, 2008). There are many stakeholders in the State that are pro-casino, such as City officials trying to save their local economies, the Mashpee Wampanoag Indian Tribe, a local casino developer, and the Mohegan Tribe, owners of Mohegan Sun in Connecticut. Along with those favoring casinos, there are many in the state that are opponents of casino development based hugely on the moral implications of gambling and the types of "social" impacts that occur.

Governor Patrick's initial attempts were rejected by the state legislature and assumed dead for the time being. However, as the budget deficit increased, political party leadership changed, and the economy worsened, the topic was raised once

again at the state level in 2009. The 2008 elections opened the door for many changes and discussions at the state capital. First, Massachusetts voters outlawed dog racing in the state, which subsequently shut down four race tracks. Secondly, the political shifts in office brought a new speaker of the house, which removed the biggest opponent to Governor Patrick's casino proposal, House Leader Salvatore F. Dimasi. More importantly, the public favor may have shifted to favor casinos. For example, in early 2009 a State House News Service Poll asked residents, "Do you think Governor Patrick should or should not try again to win passage of legislation legalizing casino gambling in Massachusetts?" and by a 57 to 38 margin residents said he should (Sandler, 2009). Another issue looming is that the Mashpee Wampanoag Indian Tribe in Middleboro is seeking to put 539 acres into federal land trust, which will heighten the possibility to allow them under the Indian Gaming Act build a casino in the State of Massachusetts.

In early 2009, State Treasurer Timothy Cahill proposed that the state legalize slot machines and allow slot parlors in Massachusetts. Slot machines bring in the greatest and quickest tax revenue. If the state allows slot parlors, former dog race tracks would be able to run slot machines and turn into "Racinos". With the current economic crisis, budget deficits, support from residents, pressure from Indian Tribes, and a change in political leadership, the reality of some sort of casino/slot machine proposal is likely to emerge and is likely to pass.

A Casino in Palmer?

The Town of Palmer has been marked as one of the most probable candidates to build a casino in Western Massachusetts. The Town owns a 158-acre

lot that sits adjacent to the Massachusetts Turnpike. In late 2008, the Mohegan Sun Tribe leased this lot for 50 years with the option to lease for 99 years and or to buy the property. If casinos are legalized within that time frame, the Mohegan Sun Tribe will lobby for a casino in Palmer.

The issue has not been taken lightly in Western Massachusetts. Towns in Western Massachusetts, along with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), formed a committee that discussed the regional impacts if such a casino were built in Palmer. The committee was charged with studying the various regional physical, environmental, and human impacts resulting from casinos by advocating for stakeholders in the region. When Governor Patrick's proposal failed, the committee was suspended. However, the committee was reactivated in 2009 with the expectation that something will move forward in the state.

In a telephone interview with Timothy Brennan, Planner at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) on March 23, 2009, Brennan explained that there are two current scenarios looming in the region and state. Mr. Brennan explained that there are lots of speculations and alternative proposals being tossed around. With a change in leadership, severe need for revenues, and the loss of dog racing revenue, there is a lot of pressure at the state level to push forward some form of casino/racino/slot machine parlor proposal.

The first scenario suggests the slot machine parlor idea, which he believes will move quickly at the state level. That proposal does not support building big resort casinos, therefore eliminating the idea of a casino being built in Palmer. Since slot machines bring in the largest revenue, legalizing slot machines will bring quick

tax revenues to offset the potential tax increases, and will presumably lessen the impacts that larger casino developments would bring.

The second scenario looks at the “Racino” proposal. Racinos are casinos that have some sort of pari-mutuel betting, such as the betting on dogs, horses, or car races. This reshapes Governor Patrick’s proposal by allowing slot machines at the current race tracks that have lost business since the illegalization of dog racing in the state. That proposal, however, leaves room for one large casino to be built in Massachusetts. Under this scenario, recent discussion suggests that there still is an opportunity in the future to gain support for a casino in Palmer. With a current lease term of 99 years, and with plans to develop a casino already in place, if a proposal of this second sort is passed, a casino is more than likely going to be built in Palmer, Massachusetts.

Chapter 4: Research Methods

The initial question guiding this research was, “What would be the impacts if a casino were developed in the town of Palmer?” Although I do not formally predict impacts for Palmer, I use a set of case studies of towns of similar characteristics to offer some suggestions for likely impacts for Palmer.

This research was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, I use a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) database to analyze spatial patterns of demographic change before and after casino openings. I choose two case sites with casinos that were built in the 1990’s that are similar to Palmer in terms of size of casino, location of casino, type of casino, or the type of developer. The second phase of this research addresses anticipated changes in land use through interviews with planners in the Towns of Montville, Norwich, and Ledyard, Connecticut, and through the analysis of data on land use changes in Connecticut, collected from the CLEAR-Research Institution at the University of Connecticut.

Phase 1

Phase 1 of this research project addressed the first goal and objective:

- To analyze local demographic and land use changes resulting from new casino development using GIS, census data and information collected from interviews with key local officials.

Step 1: Selecting the Comparative Case Study Locations

A crucial element of this study is to identify valid comparison sites to Palmer, MA. I expect the impacts of casino development to vary based upon both the attributes of the community as well as the attributes of the casino. To understand what might happen in Palmer, it is therefore necessary to identify communities where casino development has occurred that had similar characteristics to the proposed site in Palmer prior to the opening of the casino. My criteria for evaluating prospective comparison sites included:

Year Built: Because much of this data for this study comes from the Decennial Census of the US Census Bureau, the comparison sites selected had to have been built during the 1990's to compare the before and after impacts from 1990 to 2000.

Location: Since the northeastern US has many unique characteristics in terms of land form, cultural characteristics, climate, travel distances, and so forth, it was important to pick sites that are within the same broader region as Palmer. Also, while this study does not go deeply into the economics of casino location, proximity to other casinos is another factor when determining how well a casino will fare in the marketplace.

Commercial/ Tribal Casino: Commercial casinos are casinos that are run by the state and follow state-mandated laws and regulations. Tribal Casinos are owned by native peoples and are regulated by the 1988 Indian Gaming Act. Commercial and tribal casinos are operated in very different ways. Since tribal casinos are on sovereign land, the rules and regulations differ, along with the management of funding and development. Because land in trust is considered to be part of a

sovereign state, states do not have much control or jurisdiction over this land. For those states that allow gambling and/or have a contractual agreement with the Indian Tribes themselves, Tribes can regulate the establishment without interference by the state or by the contractual agreement. It is important to note that the following research was unable to compare commercial casinos against tribal casinos because the majority of states to legalize casinos did not become legal until after 2000 making it hard to compare data over time. Instead it looks at two Tribal casinos. The difference between the two is a matter of political lobbying and more regulation and authority by the state.

Type: Whether tribal or commercially owned, there are several different types of casinos:

- Resort Casinos – Casinos that are all-inclusive with options for overnight stay and restaurants, sometimes entertainment. Some of these casinos are called destination casinos depending on their size. Las Vegas and Atlantic City are destination areas where many casinos of all types are located within one area.
- Riverboat Casinos – Casinos that travel up and down a river, found mostly in the Midwest.
- Docked Casinos – Some states allow casinos, but only on water. In some cases the casino itself is on a docked riverboat (which may or may not travel) while related amenities such as hotels, restaurants, and entertainment venues are located on land.

- Racinos – Casinos that are found at racing venues, such as horse, car, and dog racing facilities where pari-mutuel betting presides.
- Convenience Casinos – These are smaller-scaled casinos placed in areas where people can travel shorter distances without having to stay for an extensive amount of time.

Type matters because each caters to a different market and offers different amenities and various jobs within the development.

Size: The size of the casino can also alter the types and magnitude of impacts that a community can expect. For instance, live entertainment, a variety of dining experiences, and an assortment of games can alter the profile of patrons. In general, the larger the casino, the more people it may attract along with many different types of patrons.

Ownership: For the purpose of this project and case study specifically for Palmer, Massachusetts, I felt looking at the owner, being Mohegan Sun, was relevant to Palmer since the Mohegan Tribe is currently leasing the land where the casino is proposed to be located. In most cases, the owner may not make a difference as to the land use and demographic impacts. However, in the case of Palmer, the proposed developer is Mohegan Sun, and I thought it was relevant to include this criterion after speaking with town planners in Connecticut, to understand the current business climate and the relationships that the Mohegan Tribe has to offer.

Originally, this study was going to look at other criteria identified in the literature such as the economic status of the host community, unemployment rates, population sizes, and proximity to other casinos, and urban vs. rural locations as key determinants for choosing a case study. However, based solely on the available data and the years in which casinos were built, it was hard to find any casinos built in that time frame that would match these criteria.

The first step in conducting this analysis was to identify all of the casinos in the United States that were built in the 1990's. Next, I filtered out all of the remaining casinos based on the above similarities to come up with a list of comparison sites:

Table 1: Case Study Criteria

<u>Location</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Scale</u>	<u>Owner</u>	<u>Commercial/Tribal</u>	<u>Year Built</u>
Montville, Connecticut	Mohegan Sun	Resort Casino	Large	Mohegan Tribe	Tribal	1993
Verona, New York	Turning Stone	Resort Casino	Medium		Tribal	1997
<i><u>Proposed Location</u></i>						
Palmer, Massachusetts		Resort Casino	Medium	Mohegan Tribe	Commercial	TBD

Step 2: Conducting Analysis and Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

With the comparison sites selected, the next step was to obtain 1990 and 2000 census data for each case site. This report looks at the local impacts over time, and it is important to use small area spatial units that either have consistent boundaries over time, or can be aggregated to form consistent temporally consistent geographic units. I used census block group data, since these are the most detailed geographic units that can be obtained in both the 1990 and 2000 census data sets.

From the census data, I was able to download boundary map files for State, County, sub-county, and block group data shape files. I imported all of these data into a spatial database and projected them into the correct geographic coordinates.

Like most communities, the town of Palmer is primarily interested in changes that will likely occur within the municipal boundaries. However, much of the literature explains that casino development can have varying impacts at different regional scales. Therefore, I conduct my analysis and a variety of spatial scales: 5, 10, and 20 miles of each casino as well at the municipal and county levels.

Block group boundaries are generally consistent across the 1990 and 2000 Censuses, but block-group boundary definitions changes can and do occur (as found for the New York case study). Typically, these changes involve either the splitting existing block groups and not by redrawing boundaries on the margin. I use my spatial database to create consistent spatial units, by recombining 2000 block groups to match their 1990 boundaries and aggregating the associated attribute data.

In this study I examine the change in population, change in household number and size, change in racial distribution, total Hispanic, total foreign born, those under the age of 18, total of non family and non relatives in family and non family households, renter vs. owner occupied housing, and the number of bedrooms. My objective is to analyze spatially the demographic changes from before and after the casinos were built to see if these demographic characteristics were impacted by casino development.

Phase 2

The next phase of the research took a more qualitative approach: interviewing town planners in communities close to casinos in Connecticut and tracking land use changes in Connecticut through research conducted by the CLEAR Research Institute, University of Connecticut. This phase addresses the following two goals and objectives:

- To present comparative case study findings and assessment criteria to inform future research.
- Provide specific planning and policy recommendations for local communities interested in casino development.

I interviewed town planners from the towns of Montville, CT (home of Mohegan Sun), Norwich, CT (town abutting Mohegan Sun), and Ledyard, CT (home of Foxwoods Casino and Resort) to discuss the impacts of casino development and to gain insight on what recommendations they may have for communities looking into bringing casinos into their areas. I asked these local planners the following questions:

- What types of issues have arisen since their casinos were built?
- How has the town adapted to these changes?
- What is your role? How has your role as a government official changed if at all?
- Learning from your experience, what issues do you feel the town should have looked into more carefully?

- What recommendations, if any, would you give to other communities looking into casino development?
- Has your community profile changed because of casino development, and if so in what ways?

To compliment my interviews I also examined studies of the land use impacts of casinos at particular sites. For Connecticut, I was directed to a land-use study conducted by the University of Connecticut Connecticut's Changing Landscape Land Cover project that shows land-use changes over many years. I looked at the percentage of developed land in each year to see how much developed land changed before and after the casinos were built in Connecticut.

As a final step, I gathered all of my findings and came up with assessments, conclusions and recommendations for planners and town officials when thinking about bringing casinos to their communities. The next chapter reports the results from my spatial and demographic data analysis for the two study sites in Verona, New York and Montville, Connecticut.

Chapter 5: Analysis

This chapter conducts a spatial analysis of the demographic changes occurring in the areas surrounding two casino developments in communities that are similar to Palmer, MA. I open the chapter by introducing the two comparison sites and explaining why they were chosen as case studies. The chapter goes on explain how the analysis was conducted and concludes with a summarization of the key results from my investigation.

Table 1: Case Study Criteria

Case Study Criteria						
<u>Location</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Scale</u>	<u>Owner</u>	<u>Commercial/Tribal</u>	<u>Year Built</u>
Montville, Connecticut	Mohegan Sun	Resort Casino	Large	Mohegan Tribe	Tribal	1993
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<u>Proposed Location</u>						
Palmer, Massachusetts		Resort Casino	Medium	Mohegan Tribe	Commercial	TBD

Case Study Sites

When determining case studies, it is important to pick sites that are as similar to Palmer as possible in order to rule out characteristics that may impact the results of the study. In short, the more similar the case study is to Palmer, the more accurate the results are.

Verona, New York

Verona is a small town located in central New York with a population of 6,425 people as of the 2000 census. It is home to the Rising Sun Casino. The Rising Sun Casino was built in 1997 and is tribally owned and managed. Verona was picked as a case study because it is a medium sized resort casino built in the 1990's, and is located within the northern region of the United States and is within close proximity to Palmer, Massachusetts.

Montville, Connecticut

The second case study site is Montville, Connecticut. Montville is located in the south eastern region of Connecticut and has a population of 18,546 in 2000. It is home to the second largest casino in the world; Mohegan Sun Casino and Resort. The town also neighbors the largest casino in the world-Foxwood's Casino and Resort. While the magnitude and scale to gambling in and around Montville is far beyond what is being proposed in Palmer, Massachusetts, I chose Montville because it is within 80 miles to Palmer, MA and is operated by the Mohegan Tribe who is also the would-be operator of the casino in Palmer.

Analysis

I look at the spatial demographic impacts that have occurred before and after a casino was built for both Verona and Montville. My basic unit of analysis is the census block group. Aggregating block groups into larger spatial units allows me to conduct my analysis at a variety of spatial scales--within 5, 10, and 20 miles of where the casino is located. I also conduct my analysis for the host municipality and

county. Figures 1 and 2 detail each case study and their corresponding boundaries at different distances.

Figure 1

Verona, New York Turning Stone Casino

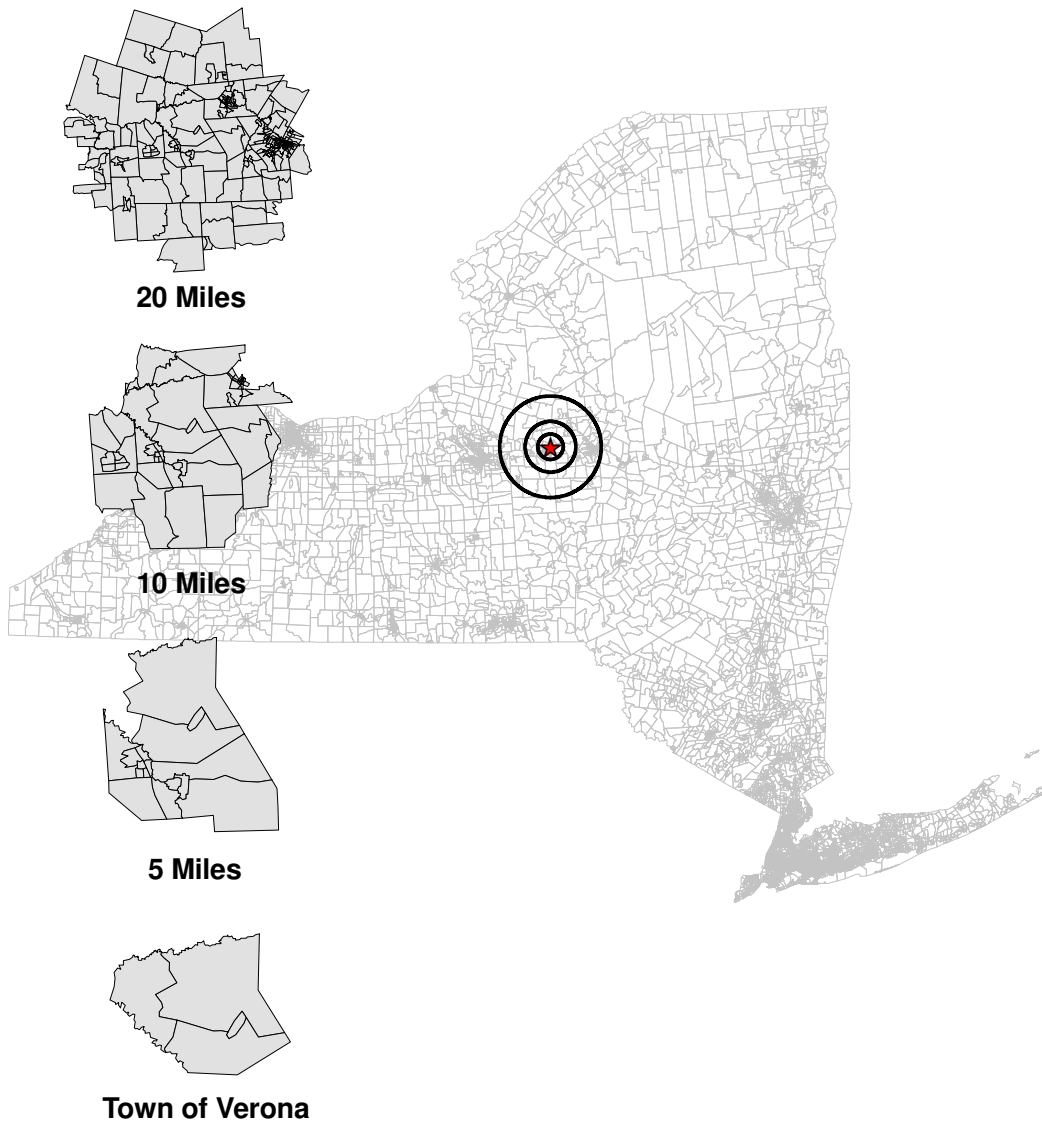
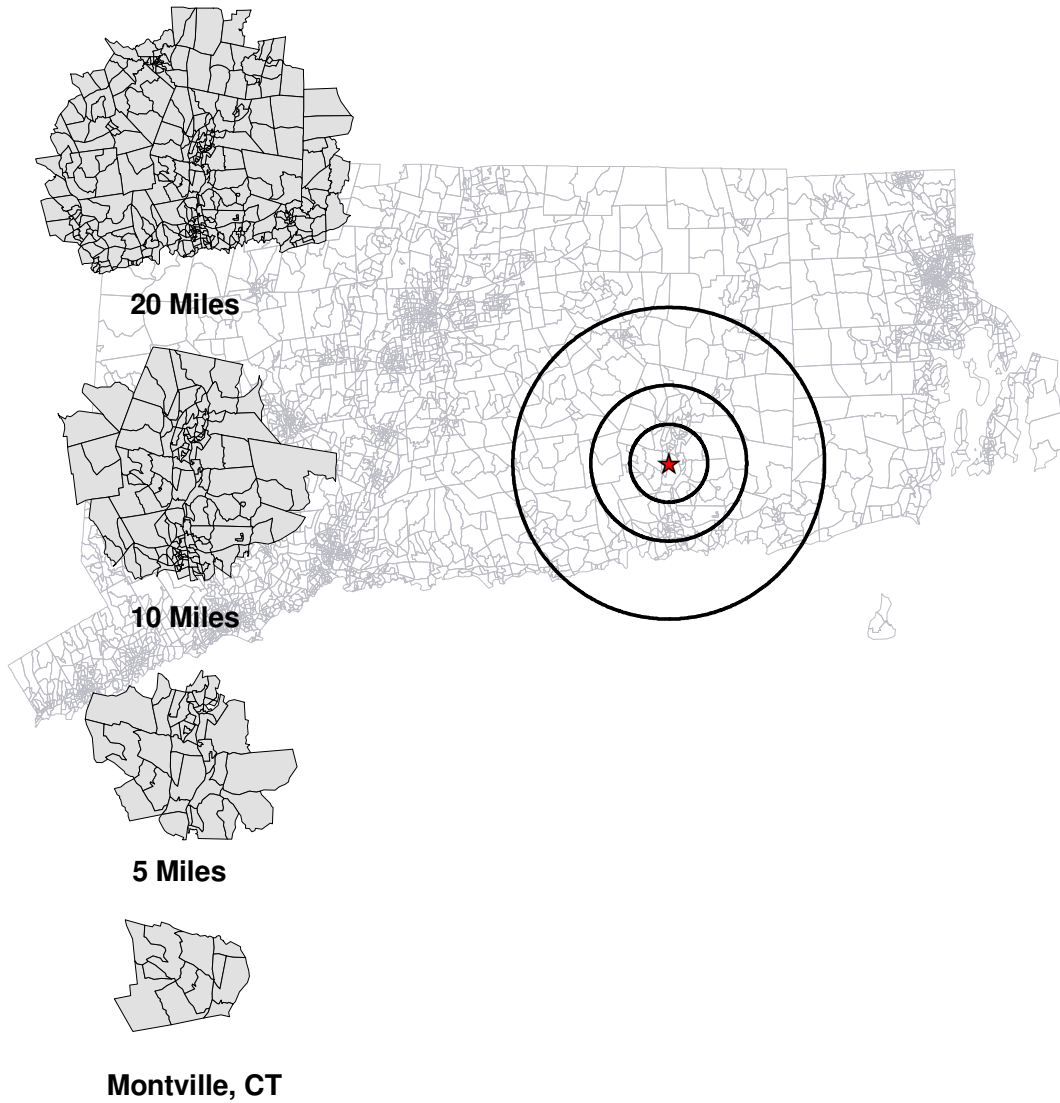


Figure 2

Montville, Connecticut Mohegan Sun Casino



Based upon available data from the 1990 and 2000 Census's, the following demographic variables were chosen:

Total Population: Summary File 1
Total Households: Summary File 1
Total % White: Summary File 1 (Total White alone/Total Population)
Total % Hispanic: Summary File 3 (Total Hispanic alone/Total Population)
Total % Foreign Born: Summary File 3 (Total Foreign Born/Total Population)
Total % 18 years and under: Summary File 3 (Total under 1-18years/Total Population)
Total % Non-Relatives: Summary File 3 (Total Family and Non-Family Households/Total Non-relatives)
Total Occupied Housing: Summary File 3
Owner Occupied: Summary File 3
Renter Occupied: Summary File 3
1 Bedroom: Summary File 3
2 Bedrooms: Summary File 3
3 Bedrooms: Summary File 3

These variables were chosen after an initial review of the literature and during the interview process. It was important to see the basic demographic changes of persons and households, and since a major finding was a change in racial make up and different cultural presence within these areas, a review of racial make ups, number of foreign persons, and non-relatives in the household became relevant to examine. Also, with the issue of "hot-bedding" that is explained below, looking into the number of owner vs. renter occupied housing and the number of bedrooms in a house also became interesting variables to examine.

Table 2 provides a tabular summary of the results from my spatial analysis. Items in bold typeface represent a large change from 1990 to 2000 that differed greatly from the state as a whole. I also include data from the state as a whole, as a basis of comparison. For example, although the percentage change in Foreign Born residents in Montville is large, these changes are consistent with the state and

county level changes. Therefore, one cannot conclude that these changes were due to casino development.

Table 2: Summary of Results

Summary Results from the Spatial Analysis of Demographic Change

		<u>Verona, New York</u>			<u>Montville, CT</u>		
		1990	2000	%Change	1990	2000	% Change
Population							
	Town	6460	6,425	-0.54%	16,673	18,546	11.23%
	County	250,836	235,469	-6.13%	254,957	259,088	1.62%
	5 miles	24,130	24,585	1.89%	55,666	56,212	0.98%
	10 miles	71,004	70,266	-1.04%	179,376	180,959	0.88%
	20 miles	318,160	304,237	-4.38%	379,120	402,312	6.12%
	State	17,990,455	18,976,457	5.48%	3,287,116	3,405,565	3.60%
% White							
	Town	99.09%	97.71%	-1.39%	93.96%	86.03%	-8.44%
	County	92.67%	90.21%	-2.66%	91.89%	87.00%	-5.32%
	5 miles	98.50%	97.19%	-1.33%	92.38%	84.27%	-8.77%
	10 miles	95.18%	93.58%	-1.68%	90.08%	83.94%	-6.82%
	20 miles	93.75%	91.60%	-2.29%	93.54%	89.03%	-4.82%
	State	74.40%	67.95%	-8.68%	86.99%	81.64%	-6.14%
Households							
	Town	2240	2,399	7.10%	5,949	6,426	8.02%
	County	92562	90,496	-2.23%	93245	99,835	7.07%
	5 miles	9,079	9,674	6.55%	21,039	21,799	3.61%
	10 miles	25,390	26,277	3.49%	65,734	69,301	5.43%
	20 miles	115,350	115,247	-0.09%	140,397	154,489	10.04%
	State	6,639,322	7,056,860	6.29%	1,230,479	1,301,670	5.79%
% Hispanic							
	Town	0.51%	0.53%	3.59%	1.85%	5.23%	182.21%
	County	2.23%	3.15%	41.16%	3.21%	5.22%	62.94%
	5 miles	0.53%	0.96%	78.80%	2.36%	5.66%	139.70%
	10 miles	1.77%	2.50%	41.29%	3.85%	6.44%	67.52%
	20 miles	1.87%	2.70%	44.28%	3.22%	5.38%	66.84%
	State	11.96%	15.10%	26.23%	6.19%	9.37%	51.27%
% Foreign Born							
	Town	0.87%	1.43%	65.18%	3.66%	4.74%	29.69%
	County	3.61%	5.24%	45.22%	4.17%	5.40%	29.57%
	5 miles	1.72%	1.94%	12.81%	4.09%	5.67%	38.80%
	10 miles	2.53%	2.43%	-3.95%	4.12%	5.90%	43.31%
	20 miles	3.31%	4.71%	42.55%	4.30%	5.27%	22.62%
	State	15.85%	20.38%	28.59%	8.50%	10.86%	27.82%
% Under 18							
	Town	29.95%	27.30%	-8.86%	27.69%	24.64%	-11.01%
	County	25.86%	25.29%	-2.22%	24.81%	25.52%	2.85%
	5 miles	27.50%	27.40%	-0.36%	27.53%	25.51%	-7.32%
	10 miles	26.75%	26.17%	-2.15%	29.73%	26.20%	-11.88%
	20 miles	26.50%	25.94%	-2.14%	28.71%	25.78%	-10.21%
	State	25.05%	25.98%	3.70%	24.12%	25.89%	7.35%

Table 2, continued
Non-Relatives

	Town	9.78%	13.06%	33.51%	9.59%	12.86%	34.00%
	County	8.79%	4.30%	-51.07%	10.53%	5.03%	-52.22%
	5 miles	9.55%	11.98%	25.42%	10.28%	14.23%	38.47%
	10 miles	10.19%	12.45%	22.20%	10.32%	13.38%	29.59%
	20 miles	9.07%	10.37%	14.27%	9.85%	12.67%	28.66%
	State	11.82%	5.23%	-55.79%	10.89%	4.59%	-57.82%
Total Occupied							
	Town	2,240	2,399	7.10%	5,949	6,426	8.02%
	County	92,562	90,496	-2.23%	93,245	99,835	7.07%
	5 miles	9,106	9,681	6.31%	20,973	21,763	3.77%
	10 miles	25,411	26,288	3.45%	65,747	69,255	5.34%
	20 miles	115,364	115,312	-0.05%	140,375	154,496	10.06%
	State	6,639,322	7,056,860	6.29%	1,230,479	1,301,670	5.79%
Owner Occupied							
	Town	85.67%	84.95%	-0.84%	77.24%	77.39%	0.19%
	County	65.25%	67.19%	2.98%	64.68%	66.66%	3.05%
	5 miles	70.05%	69.93%	-0.17%	64.23%	64.91%	1.07%
	10 miles	65.79%	67.77%	3.01%	60.84%	62.62%	2.92%
	20 miles	67.19%	69.06%	2.78%	66.88%	68.89%	3.00%
	State	52.21%	52.99%	1.49%	65.63%	66.82%	1.81%
Renter Occupied							
	Town	14.33%	15.05%	5.01%	22.76%	22.61%	-0.65%
	County	34.75%	32.81%	-5.59%	35.32%	33.34%	-5.59%
	5 miles	29.95%	30.07%	0.41%	35.77%	35.09%	-1.92%
	10 miles	34.21%	32.23%	-5.79%	39.16%	37.38%	-4.54%
	20 miles	32.81%	30.94%	-5.69%	33.12%	31.11%	-6.06%
	State	47.79%	47.01%	-1.63%	34.37%	33.18%	-3.46%
1 Bedroom's							
	Town	119	104	-12.61%	521	551	5.76%
	County	11,824	12,058	1.98%	11,518	13,485	17.08%
	5 miles	1,033	1,399	35.43%	2,859	3,178	11.16%
	10 miles	3,445	3,817	10.80%	8,970	10,213	13.86%
	20 miles	14,195	14,882	4.84%	16,857	19,726	17.02%
	State	1,526,551	1,599,718	4.79%	172,448	185,963	7.84%
2 Bedroom's							
	Town	598	659	10.20%	1,702	1,855	8.99%
	County	24,988	25,840	3.41%	30,457	30,597	0.46%
	5 miles	2,486	2,442	-1.77%	6716	6,371	-5.14%
	10 miles	7,248	7,378	1.79%	21,902	21,592	-1.42%
	20 miles	30,452	31,674	4.01%	45,120	45,797	1.50%
	State	1,932,610	2,035,286	5.31%	390,251	385,785	-1.14%
3 Bedroom's							
	Town	1,220	1,317	7.95%	2,760	3,068	11.16%
	County	43,866	44,175	0.70%	41,483	43,892	5.81%
	5 miles	3,923	4,246	8.23%	8,568	9,196	7.33%
	10 miles	11,171	12,158	8.84%	26,663	28,634	7.39%
	20 miles	53,701	54,595	1.66%	64,459	70,394	9.21%
	State	2,238,082	2,344,129	4.74%	487,399	514,182	5.50%

Figures 3 through 15 show the spatial distribution of demographic changes for those measures with changes that exceeded state-level growth.

Demographic Change in, Montville, CT

Following the development of the Mohegan Sun Casino, the Town of Montville Connecticut experienced a noticeable shift in the racial and foreign born composition of its population. In 1990, Montville was predominantly white. Roughly 93% of its population was white, a population share noticeably higher than the statewide average of 87% (Table 2). Within the town, there was a slightly higher concentration of non-white people within 5 and 10 miles of the site of the proposed Casino, with a predominantly white population beyond (Figure 3). Between 1990 and 2000, the town's population grew increasingly diverse, with a townwide decline in the white population of 8.4%, considerably higher than the statewide decline of 6.14% (Figure 4). The greatest changes occurred in the area nearest to the casino development site, although there were noticeable declines also that occurred at all spatial scales out to 20 miles.

There was also a considerable increase in the Hispanic population following the casino development. From 1990 to 2000, there was a whopping 182% increase in the Hispanic population, with the greatest increase found within 10 miles of the casino site (Figures 5 and 6). This further illustrates the dramatic demographic changes that occurred in Montville, especially considering that most Hispanics are considered "white" according to the census bureau's criteria for determining race. This suggests that the town's portion of non-hispanic white

persons declined even further than suggested by the change in the white population.

Figure 3

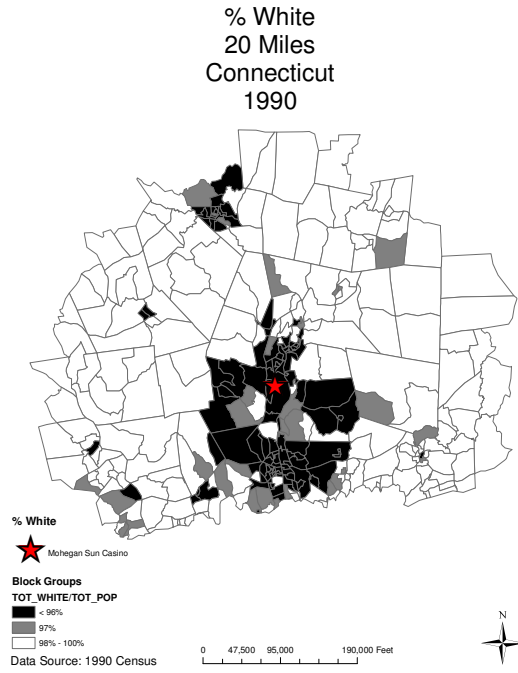


Figure 4

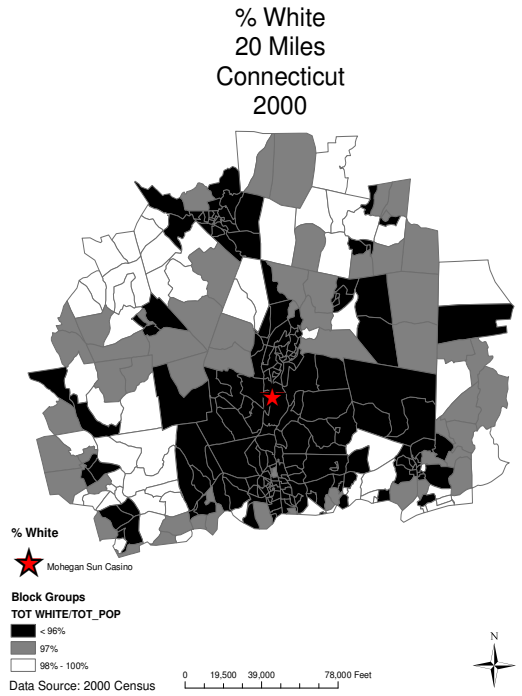


Figure 5

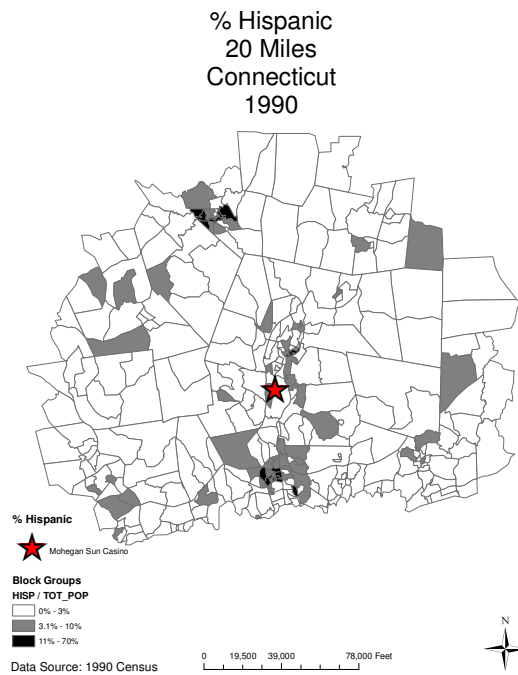
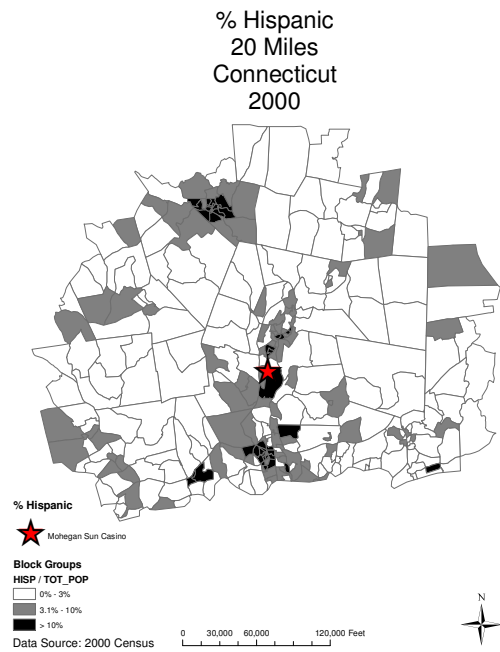


Figure 6



From 1990 to 2000, Montville also experienced considerable growth in its percentage of non-relative households. During this period, the townwide share of non-related households *increased* by 34% while both the state and the county experienced a *decline* in the number of non-relative households by over 50%. This change was most dramatic in the area immediately bordering the casino, but was also significant within the 10 and 20 mile buffers.

Figure 7

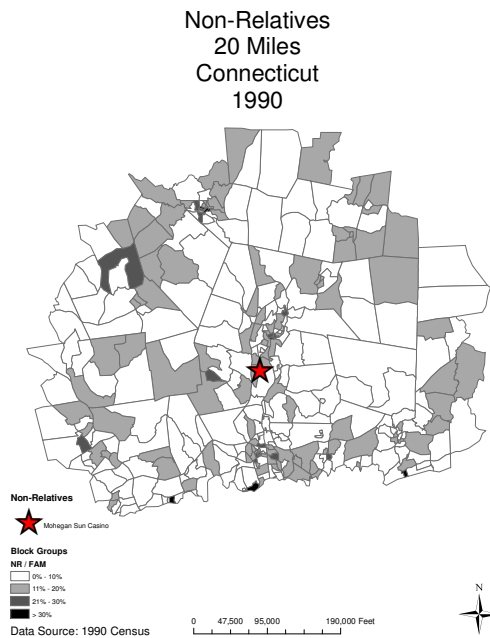
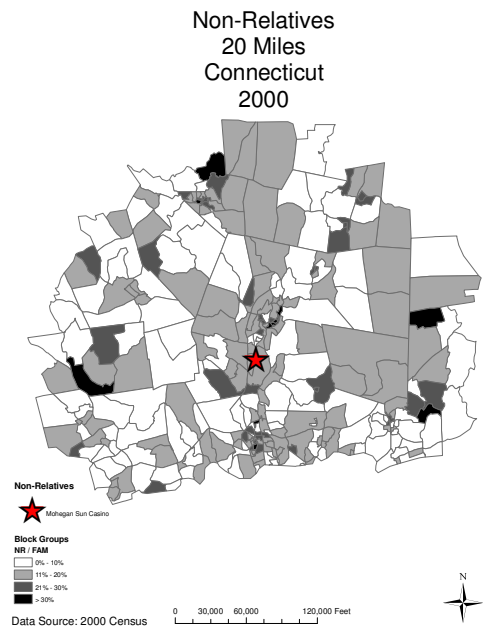


Figure 8



Demographic Change in Verona, NY

The summary results in Table 2, also suggest a sizable increase in the Hispanic population in Verona, New York, between 1990 and 2000, especially within 5 miles of the proposed site. However, the maps shown in Figures 9 and 10 show relatively little change in all but a few isolated block groups to the north of the Casino. Strangely enough, these most effected block groups fall outside of the 5 mile buffer. It is difficult to fully explain this paradox without a fuller investigation of the data.

Figure 9

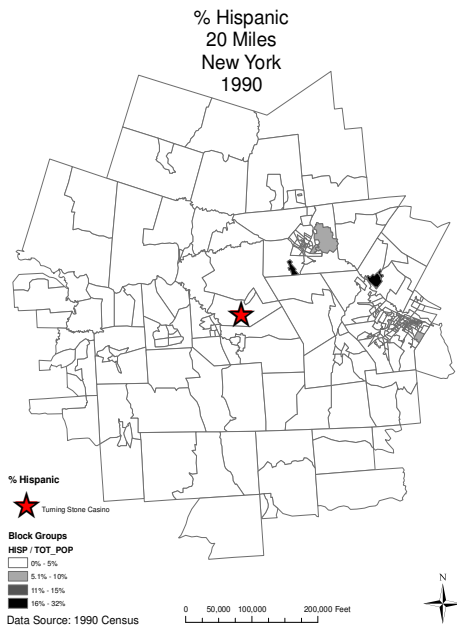
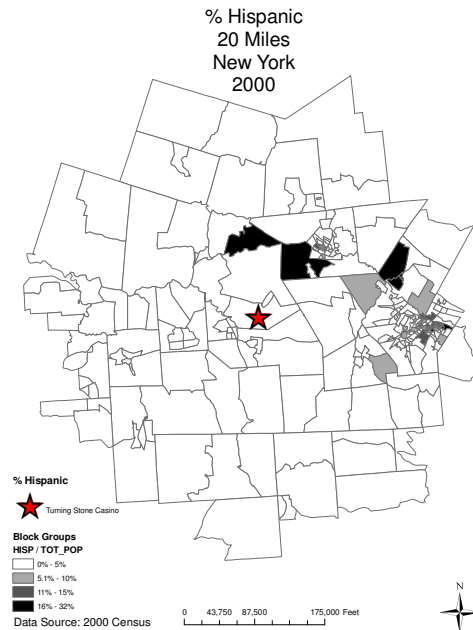


Figure 10



While in Connecticut, the change in the Foreign Born population was consistent at the state and county levels, Verona experienced a much larger relative increase than that of the State of New York. The greatest increase in the foreign

born population (43%) occurred within the 20 miles radius, commiserate with Figures 11 and 12 where there is some evidence of an increase in the density of Foreign Born persons in block groups somewhat far from the casino site, but closer to the historical town center.

Figure 11

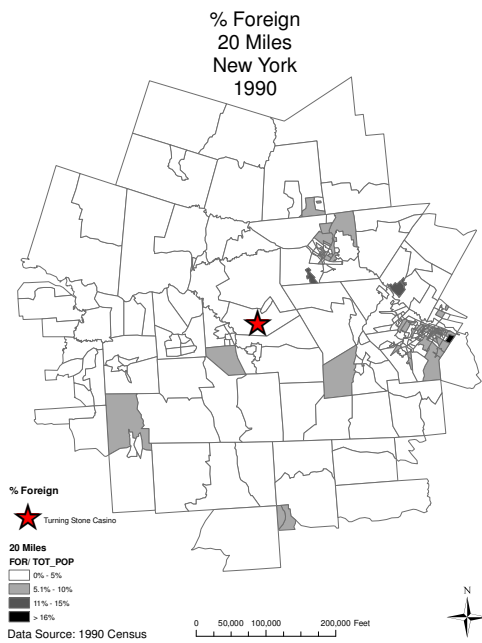
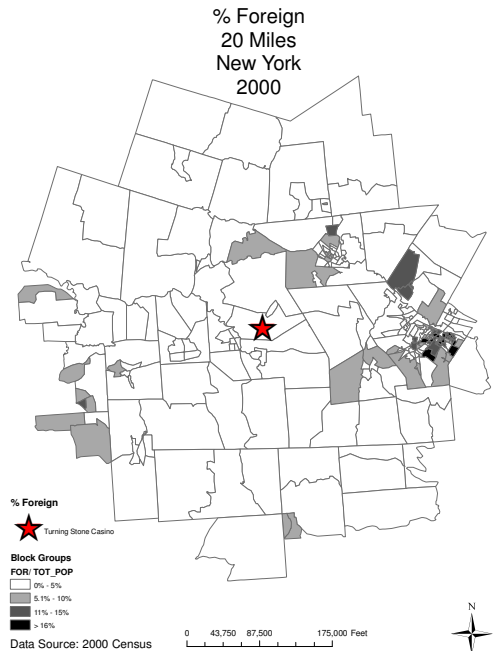


Figure 12



Like Montville, Verona, New York also experienced a sizable increase in its share of Non-relative households, bucking both state and county trends. The largest changes occurred in the areas immediately adjacent to the casino (Figure 13 and 14), despite the fact that the Turning Stone casino is located outside of the traditional town center and the past concentration of non-relative households.

Figure 13

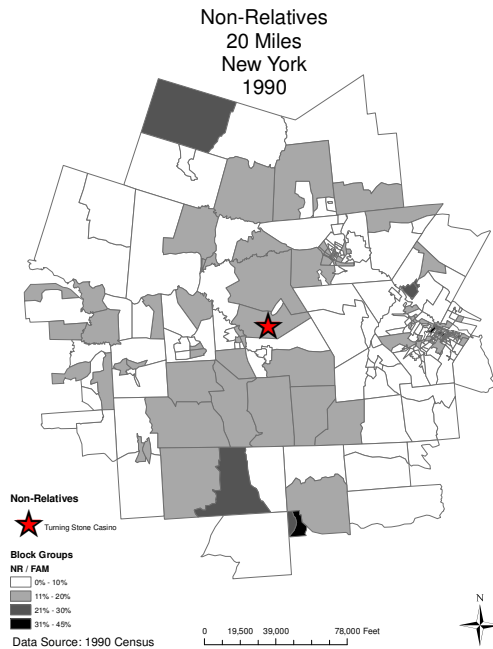
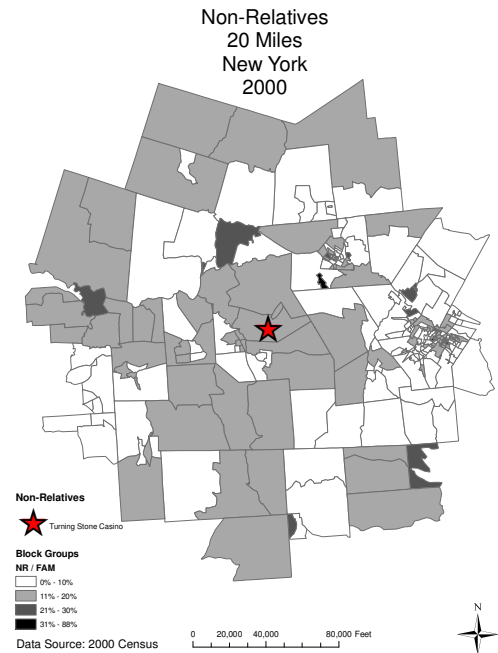


Figure 14



Summary

While the data suggests that some demographic changes occurred over time, most of the measures selected for this study did not show noticeable spatial shifts. The most concrete evidence of casino-induced demographic changes was in the share of persons of non-relative households. In both Connecticut and New York, the percentage of non-relatives living in homes decreased over 50%. However, in the two casino communities, the percentage of non-relative households increased by a considerable number with substantially higher shares occurring relatively close to the casino. It is possible that this number reflects an increased incidence of “hot-bedding” - when multiple people share a house and beds by scheduling around their

shifts at work. Both towns also experienced a noticeable increase in their Hispanic populations. The other significant demographic changes were not consistent across both sites. Montville experienced a sizable decrease in its white population, and Verona saw a significant increase in its foreign born population.

Another important note about the data is that while some demographic changes experienced a larger percent change over time. For example, the share of Hispanics in Montville, Connecticut by 182.21%, the percent increase was only roughly 3.5% of the total population in that area. Because of this, it is hard to attribute changes to the casino development because the percentage was so small in the first place.

Chapter 6: Interviews with Connecticut Stakeholders

In chapter 5, I used spatial analysis tools to examine demographic changes for two communities before and after casino development. The next step in this process involved interviewing key local officials with first-hand experience with casino development who help identify some of the more nuanced and less quantifiable impacts of casino development. The following chapter summarizes key interviews with town planners in Montville, Ledyard, and Norwich, Connecticut. The chapter then goes on to examine the CLEAR Research Study that looks at land use changes over time in the State of Connecticut as a supplemental source for documenting development in Connecticut.

The state of Connecticut is home to some of the largest casino complexes in the world. The largest casino, Foxwoods Resort and Casino, is located in the town of Ledyard, Connecticut and the second largest casino, Mohegan Sun, is located in the town of Montville, Connecticut. The casino proposed in Palmer, Massachusetts would not compare in scale and magnitude to those in Connecticut. However, these two sites are still good comparison sites for several reasons. First, both casinos are close to the border of Massachusetts and share the same general regional context and structure of local governance (e.g. municipal home-rule). They also draw from the same regional market as will the proposed site in Palmer. Lastly, the Mohegan Sun casino in Connecticut is owned and operated by the same tribe as the proposed casino in Palmer.

A key difference between the two existing casinos in Connecticut and the proposed site in Palmer, MA is how they are regulated. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts proposes to legalize commercial casinos under a state charter, and thus the state will have greater authority to regulate gambling. In Connecticut, the state does not allow casino gambling, but does have a contract with the Mashantucket Pequots and the Mohegan Indian Tribe to allow casino-related businesses on contiguous tribal land in trust.

I conducted interviews with three municipal planners who work for towns in Connecticut that either include or neighbor Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun:

- Brian Palaia, Town Planner of Ledyard, Connecticut
- Marcia Vlaun, Town Planner of Montville, Connecticut
- Peter Davis, City Planner of Norwich, Connecticut

I used a semi-structured interview format, that included a small number of open-ended questions that allowed each planner ample opportunity to describe their own relevant experiences. The following are the types of questions that were asked at each interview, followed by a summary of the key issues that were discussed:

- What types of issues have arisen since their casinos were built?
- How has the town adapted to these changes?
- What is their role as a public official? In what ways and to what extent (if any) has their role changed as a result of casino development?
- Learning from their experience, what issues do they feel in retrospect they should have looked into more closely?

- What recommendations, if any, would they give to communities considering casino development?
- Has their community profile changed because of casino development, and if so in what ways and to what extent?

General Findings

Major Economic Impacts

Around the late 1980s and the early 1990s, Southern Connecticut lost the majority of its manufacturing base because of a decrease in defense spending at the federal level and national trends in commercial markets that favored low-cost offshore manufacturing sites over domestic production. The region faced a struggling and stagnant economy with high unemployment rates following the decline of what it had been a thriving economy. At the same time, the State of Connecticut also experienced considerable enrollment growth in post-secondary academic institutions. But, due to a the lack of post-graduate employment opportunities, a high percentage of the state's highly educated youth are moving out of the state upon graduation. The combination of these factors have resulted in the region and the state and is increasingly becoming less competitive in many of its key economic sectors and less attractive to prospective employers.

Casinos presented an opportunity for the region to offset a market failure and to provide jobs for those living in the region displaced by job losses in other sectors. While the service wage for casino employees does not compare to the high-end salaries provided by the manufacturing sector, the casino has been able to fill some

of the basic unemployment gaps. Today, the casinos are the largest employers in the Southern Connecticut region and have helped to stabilize the regional economy.

Spinoff Effects?

As explained previously, States are interested in casino development not only for potential increased tax revenues, but because of anticipated economic gains and potential spinoff effects from increased spending in other area businesses. However, my interviews indicated that in practice these additional benefits do not occur. Casinos are all-inclusive. Instead of helping other businesses, by say attracting casino patrons to local shops, restaurants, and hotels, casinos in many respects prevent other businesses to thrive in the area. Resort casinos, like those in Connecticut and the one proposed for Palmer, MA, typically offer all types of services and amenities on site. They become highly dominant in the region and are highly competitive –more often drawing existing patrons away from existing local businesses than helping to attract new patrons to area businesses. For example, Ledyard experienced little to no spillover development, and, in Montville, only three hotels were built in relation to the casinos. The same holds for Norwich, although they did experience a higher demand for housing. The key finding from the interviews: spin offs do not emerge as expected. Dollars spent by casino visitors stay in the casinos and do not flow to the local communities, thereby discouraging or disadvantaging other businesses.

Population Growth and Demographic Changes

It is also commonly believed that casino development brings an influx of new residents, often of different races or ethnicities than existing residents. The idea that casinos increase the influx of people into a region did not occur in these communities. The impact of the casino on local population growth was also negligible. Both Montville and Ledyard had a consistent population growth both before and after the casino development, and likewise did not experience a noticeable change in the racial or ethnic mix of their residents. Norwich, however, did experience some casino-induced population growth. The city was able to accommodate its new residents because of an excess of available housing and an infrastructure system that was below its maximum capacity. The Town Planner of Norwich also noted a change in the city's ethnic diversity, primarily through the influx of Asian immigrants. Recalling the findings in Chapter 5, I found a noticeable change in the percentage of white people living around the casino. The casino's impacts may be greater than shown, because as explained by Mr. Davis, census data do not sufficiently count the considerable influx of non-residents who work in the Casino but retain their primary residency in the New York City or Boston metro areas. Not only can this make the census data more ambiguous within the region, it also helps explain why wage earnings may not be circulating in the local region, let alone in the State of Connecticut. Also, the two casinos in Connecticut have by themselves obtained over 6,000 working visas, which indicates a high level of non-citizen workers in the region. In many cases, the money earned here in the United States is sent "home" as remittances to support families in other countries.

Cultural Differences

One of the most heated topics regarding the demographic impacts of casino development is the issue of “Hot-bedding” —when multiple people share a house and beds by scheduling around their shifts at work. In some reported cases, there may be up to ten or more people residing in one place. Too many people living under one roof leads to overcrowding in the household. This poses concerns for fire, health, and safety issues.

Each planners interviewed reported that hot-bedding was a concern in their community. In each case, the town’s zoning, building and health codes prohibit an excess number of unrelated persons living under the same roof. However, the planners also report that the zoning violations occur more due to a cultural understanding and not as a deliberate disregard of local government and authorities (as it is often perceived in the media and by the general public). Ms. Vlaun explained that 9 out of 10 times, residents cooperate with the local officials. The issue tends to be a cultural clash between local government and the Asian population. Culturally, the Asian population tends to live in large numbers and sleep in smaller areas. Therefore, moving into a small house and sharing it with other residents is not an issue for many immigrants, it is the norm. Mr. Davis explained that in Norwich, the most striking issue is that of outside landlords taking advantage of the immigrant population, fully knowing that their occupancy was illegal.

There has been little evidence of an increase in crime behavior in Norwich that can be connected to the recent influx of Asian residents. Mr. Davis explained that the Asian communities tend to police themselves and handle many of their own

problems. He offers anecdotally, that problems of crime typically occur in the cities, which have more to do with low income and impoverished neighborhoods rather than race or residency status.

That does not mean that cultural clashes do not occur. However, these clashes are not a unique consequence of casino development, per se, but rather are common to many New England communities experiencing de-industrialization and recent waves of new immigrants. Both Ms. Vlaun and Mr. Davis compared the current cultural shifts to those that occurred during the huge influx of immigrants during the 1890s-1920s and then again with the closing of the manufacturing mills. Similar issues and cultural clashes such as language barriers and substandard living conditions have emerged since the decline of defense industries and the development of the casinos. Both planners also expressed the view that over time places adapt to these demographic and economic changes.

The biggest challenge for local communities is the language barrier. How do towns effectively communicate with all of their residents? While the census data suggests little demographic changes in racial make up, each town planner agreed that an influx of different ethnic groups work and reside within the region, even though they are not being accounted for within the census data. The town of Montville adapted by communicating through a Chinese and English language magazine, created an accelerated sidewalk program (due to increased pedestrian activity and a fatality), created education programs to educate new immigrants on fire and safety concerns, and hired a full-time employee who can speak Chinese

with the Chinese parents at a multi-cultural grammar school. Ms. Vlaun explained that the town is beginning to assimilate and accept these changes.

Planning:

Each Town Planner has a different role within their communities. In Ledyard, Mr. Palaia works as a facilitator between the Mashantucket Pequots and the town. In the early 1980's, the Pequots began claiming land. The Town of Ledyard became very anti-annexation in response to the loss of its land, and the climate between the Pequots and the town have at times been quite contentious. Today, the atmosphere and business relationship between the town and the Pequots is improving, although the town recently passed a referendum that binds the town to fight additional annexation.

In Montville, the Mohegan tribe currently has claimed roughly 300 acres of land (the old United Nuclear site) and is allowed up to 700 acres of land in the federal agreement. The Town of Montville is concerned about any expansions of the casino. If the tribe can buy land that is contiguous to what is currently developed for gaming, the casino can continue to grow. While the town and Ms. Vlaun are not anti-casino, the planning department works with landowners and businesses to prevent the tribe from buying contiguous land. In the late 1990's the town went through a massive rezoning. The town rezoned their Rt. 32 corridor to commercial and low-density residential zones. The attempt here was to lessen the impact on the water supply and the school system and to make it harder for the tribe to buy up land along this corridor. More importantly, the town is trying to protect its taxable land area. The

more land that the tribe incorporates means that there is less land that can be taxed upon by the Town of Montville. The same holds true for Ledyard.

While the City of Norwich does not house casinos, the City was impacted more greatly than either Ledyard or Montville because of infrastructure capacity and housing stock. In his role as planner, Mr. Davis was able to capitalize on the increased demand for housing in the region. In the late 1990's and in early 2000 the Southeastern Council of Governments released a report that identified a housing shortage in Southern Connecticut of roughly 5,000 homes and then it increased roughly between 7-10,000 homes in 2003 according to Mr. Davis. Norwich benefited not only for having the available housing stock, but also shortly after the introduction of casinos the national housing boom hit America. Norwich looked at the casinos as an opportunity to rehabilitate underutilized mill buildings on the Thames River. On the downside, with both an influx of people and the housing boom, Norwich has been struggling with staffing issues within the planning department. At one point the City had so many ongoing projects that they had to hire a third party to review building plans. Mr. Davis explained that for two years, the development department in Norwich was self-supporting, bringing in \$1 to 1.1 million for the city in development fees.

CLEAR Research: Connecticut's Changing Landscape

Clear Research is a program within the College of Agricultural and Natural Resources at the University of Connecticut that works on many different research projects regarding land use and development in the state of Connecticut. A major study conducted through this program examined "Connecticut's Changing

Landscape”. The study looks at the changes in land use for all the towns in Connecticut from 1985 to 2006. It looks at land cover change, urban growth, forest fragmentation, and impervious surfaces. I used the data compiled from this study to measure how much land was developed before and after the casinos were built.

Table 3 shows the changes in percentages of developed land for each town from 1985 to 2006. The change in developed land over time remains fairly consistent for each town. Mohegan Sun was built in 1993. From 1990 to 1995 developed land increased only by .5%. In Ledyard, gambling at Foxwoods Casino started in 1987. From 1985 to 1990 the percentage of developed land in Ledyard increased by 1.2%. This data provides supporting evidence that there was no significant change in the rate of increase in development once casinos were built.

Table 3: Clear Research Developed Land in Connecticut Towns

Percent of Developed Land in Connecticut Towns					
	<u>1985</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2006</u>
Ledyard	10.4	11.6	12.8	13.5	14.2
Montville	11.9	13.1	13.6	15.1	15.6
Norwich	26.1	28.3	29.4	30.7	31.3

Source: CLEAR Research: Connecticut's Changing Landscape

The GIS spatial analysis and the interviews provided a different perspective on what to expect when legalizing casinos, although, both approaches yield the same basic conclusions. First, the spatial analysis supports the finding from the interviews that, by and large, these comparison communities did not see radical population shifts as a direct result of casino development. Second, the idea that casinos spur spin-off development as anticipated by theory and argued by casino

advocates has not been borne out in practice in these cases. Lastly, the interviews in particular show that each town was capable of mitigating the impacts of casinos, although, in each case the town took a different approach and the planner played a somewhat different role depending on their respective community's needs and capacity levels.

Chapter Seven: Key Findings and Conclusions

This chapter summarizes the major findings within this study. It then goes on to offer some recommendations for towns, like Palmer, that are pursuing or otherwise anticipating future casino development. In the closing section, I discuss the limitations of the research, and how to pursue future research projects based on this preliminary model.

Major Findings

The primary findings from my study are:

1. Towns should not expect spillover economic growth stimulated by casino development. The multiplier effects expected by economic base theory are relatively small compared to other types of destination tourism because nearly all of the ancillary spending (food, entertainment, shopping) occurs within the casino complex and the profits from this activity are largely retained by the casino operators. Local economic impacts from additional earnings are also reduced because many workers commute from neighboring areas or send large portions of their earnings out of the country through remittance.
2. Impacts vary by community depending on the infrastructure and housing stock. Ledyard experienced little growth because it does not have the infrastructure capabilities to support growth. This discourages new residential growth. However, Norwich, CT accommodated most of the impacts and adapted to the changes by redeveloping their housing stock through adaptive reuse strategies.

3. Demands on local government are greater if a town was already experiencing significant growth prior to the casino or was close to the capacity limits of their infrastructure. As a case in point, Norwich has had a hard time keeping up with the increased development and has had to hire more health inspectors and planners.
4. There are major shifts in the daytime population and many demographic changes within these communities that may not be measured entirely by the census data. People are consistently moving in and out of the Southern Connecticut region, but they are either temporarily living there or visiting.
5. The GIS analysis did show some spatial changes around the casino, but because of ambiguous data and consistent growth in each area over time, it is hard to tell definitively whether these changes were due to the casinos. However, even though it is arguable that in Connecticut the demographic changes are insufficiently determined, the spatial analysis did provide significant evidence that the percentage of whites decreased in each case study around the casinos, there were large increases in Non-relatives around each casino while their respective states decreased, and there was some change in the % change of Hispanic and foreign born people in both states. These findings support the issues of hot-bedding and cultural shifts within these communities that the planners explained in their interviews. However, further analysis is still needed to determine whether these shifts were caused by casino development.

6. Towns should take the time to thoroughly plan for casino development. In Connecticut, the number one suggestion from each planner was to think about the long-term impacts and issues that may occur over time from such development. If the town has the opportunity to contract and negotiate with either the state or the tribe, it is better to do it up front. The State of Connecticut failed to anticipate the types of impacts that may occur in the long term, and by not doing so the State did not get much in return from the tribes.

The topic of tax revenues and governance also came up repeatedly in my interviews and literature review. Although this study did not conduct a thorough investigation of the fiscal impacts of casinos on government revenues, here I offer a brief synopsis of my findings on this topic because of its interest to municipal officials. In short, the type of tax structure at the State level determines how much money is to be allocated to host communities. The tax system in Connecticut distributes money to all towns in Connecticut, and therefore the Southern Connecticut region does not directly benefit from the revenues although it bears the brunt of the costs. Therefore, if a tax sharing structure were to be proposed in Massachusetts, the tax revenues should be proportionally distributed to those areas in the state impacted more significantly from the casino(s).

The case of Rising Sun City, Indiana provides a superior model for a more equitable revenue sharing system as well as an active public role in casino oversight. Unlike Connecticut, in Indiana the tax system is set up to benefit those

communities that are directly or indirectly impacted by casinos. In addition, the authorizing legislation—the 1993 Riverboat Gaming Act—requires that casinos be re-licensed every year for the first 5 years and then every 3 years thereafter to ensure that the casino is in compliance with license rules and their negotiated contract. Independent evaluation and review is also structured into the re-licensing process. The Center for Urban Policy and the Environment of Indiana University’s School of Public and Environmental Affairs conducts reports for the Commission for review to re-license the casinos where it examines economic and fiscal impacts, community impacts, employment, business climate impacts, and the current financial position and future plans. The accomplishments and benefits from Rising Sun City’s approach to casino gambling support the idea that with a well-structured tax system, local governments can potentially offset many of the future impacts and possibly benefit from the development of casinos.

Recommendations for Palmer, Massachusetts and Similar Communities

- Local impacts are difficult to clearly identify in advance. Where and how the impacts will occur depends on the town’s and region’s infrastructure capabilities. Therefore, Palmer should critically assess its infrastructure to determine whether a significant increase in population or business activity could be supported within their community before committing to the casino.
- Prepare for population and cultural changes. Regardless of whether people stay or live within the region, cultural changes will most likely occur, as experienced in Connecticut. If a casino were to be developed the town should learn from history and address the cultural changes at hand by recognizing

- the different ethnic groups by developing strategies for effectively communicating with new immigrant communities.
- Palmer should be involved in the negotiating process with the developer and/or tribe. Town planners should consider not just the short-term benefits, but also the long-term impacts. Towns should negotiate whether and how the developer proposes to help the community address potential impacts, such as providing necessary infrastructure such as a new road or exit ramp or supporting programs similar to the economic development fund in CT, the Sachem Fund?
 - Host communities should lobby the state for impact-based revenue-sharing. Towns should encourage the state legislature to create a system where towns that are directly or indirectly impacted by casinos receive more tax revenues to allow for more dollars to be spent on capital improvements that are casino-related. An example to follow would be the tax-sharing system in Rising Sun City, Indiana.

Directions for Future Research

Overall, this study was successful in addressing its main goals and objectives to analyze the impacts of casino development. However, the GIS analysis did not provide any striking evidence of demographic and land use changes over time. The most valuable information came from the local communities themselves. While I believe that the approach used in this study can serve as a preliminary model for planners interested in understanding the possible impacts of casino development on

their community, I also offer the following suggestions that will greatly improve upon this method.

- Use a larger number of comparison cases. This study was limited from the outset by the lack of satisfactory comparison sites. Since many casinos were built in the 2000's, census data from 2000 and 2010 will be available for comparison in a few years' time, thus allowing for a greater range of comparison sites.
- Analyze data carefully and critically. Population data in the US census may be insufficient or indeterminate for some analytic purposes. It may be more useful to compare annual town censuses, although this information is rarely collected. The quantitative information obtained through secondary data sources, such as the census, should be reviewed by knowledgeable local officials to ensure that it coincides with their on-the-ground experience.
- Be cognizant of census boundary changes. Since boundaries do change from census to census, it is important to account for these changes as best as possible. If available, using block level data for the host communities would provide a more detailed look at where exactly demographic changes have occurred within these towns.
- Make sure that the data are interpreted in context. In both New York and Connecticut, some demographic changes had over 100% relative change over time. However, the absolute increases were very small and so did not represent a large portion of the population. For example, the percentage change in Hispanics and non-relatives in some cases doubled but still

represented less than 5% of the total population. It is important to carefully and critically weigh the changes in absolute numbers to decide how significant the changes actually are.

- Increase the number and depth of interviews. In this study, the interviews provided information that was not clearly indicated by the census data. Town officials provided useful qualitative perspective that improved the quality of analysis and assessment for this study.

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