



***Gambling with the Future:
The Evolution of Aboriginal Gaming in Canada***

Yale D. Belanger

- ⇒ **History of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal gambling**
- ⇒ **The evolution of Canadian gaming laws**
- ⇒ **The influence of US gaming operations**
- ⇒ **The impact of the Canadian Aboriginal gaming industry**
- ⇒ **Economic development and Aboriginal casinos**
- ⇒ **Is gambling an effective economic development tool?**

First Nations run casinos and other gambling activities have become a visible part of the Canadian landscape. Many people see such enterprises as an important tool of economic development for impoverished First Nations communities, while others view them with suspicion. Beginning with an examination of the role gambling and gaming played in pre-contact Aboriginal society, Yale Belanger traces the history of First Nations gaming institutions nationally. Early legislation designed to control gambling notwithstanding, First Nations leaders persevered and eventually capitalized on the gradual relaxation of the rules permitting lotteries, off-track betting, and the numerous forms of gambling that are legally available today. Stimulated by events in the United States, where super bingo and tribal casinos were adopted as a way of fostering economic development, Canada's First Nations soon followed suit.

At the heart of the book is an examination of the development of First Nations gambling across Canada, the resultant political battles fought in each province to establish Indian run casinos, and the kinds of agreements that were reached with provincial authorities to legally establish First Nations gambling institutions. Factors including the importance of casino location and management arrangements – which have led some casinos to become very successful and others economically problematic – are discussed in full.

Finally, the author looks at challenges First Nations gambling institutions face in the future and the question of the extent to which such institutions are an important engine for economic development of First Nations communities.

Dr. Yale D. Belanger is an assistant professor of Native American Studies at the University of Lethbridge. His doctoral work at Trent University focused on the emergence and evolution of Aboriginal political organizations in late 19th- and early 20th-century Canada.