

PERCEPTIONS OF GAMBLING AND THE SHAPING OF CIVIC VALUES

- William Ramp
- Kerry J. Badgley
- Robert Williams
- Thomas Klassen
- James Cosgrave



Thinking about gambling

Thinking with gambling

- PERENNIALS
 - the use of moral language
 - the creation of narratives
 - moralizing the effects of gambling
- MAKING MORAL SENSE TOGETHER
 - what kinds of moral statements are seen to be valid, and why?
 - how can research inform moral judgments?
 - how can we study the 'moralization' of gambling as a topic? To what ends?



FROM 'PROBLEM GAMBLING' TO GAMBLING AS A PROBLEM

- How is/was gambling construed as a problem?
 - As what kind of problem?
 - In relation to what other problems?
 - By whom?
 - When and where?
 - In terms of what symbols? stories? values?

*How do people 'think with' gambling as well as
'thinking about' it?*



CASE STUDIES

1. Moral reform in early 20th-century Canada
2. On-the –ground moral reasoning today: community non-profits and funding from gambling revenues

(Historical ‘in-between’: the 20th-century welfare state)



KEY QUESTIONS

- How have 'effects' of gambling been thought about, discussed, argued for?
- How have ideas about gambling helped shape or drive civic and moral discourse?
- In what contexts?



CASE STUDY 1: MORAL REFORM DISCOURSE

- **Background –**
 - contending civic visions in the cultural formation of the modern nation state
- **Elements –**
 - the ‘co-operative commonwealth’
 - the dignity of the primary producer
 - personal values: autonomy and responsibility
 - civic values: co-operation, equality, citizenship
 - emblems of virtue and vice



VILLAINS AND VICTIMS



HEROES AND VILLAINS

[GII] GamblingIssuesInternational@yahoogroups.com 22/04/06, Nigel Turner post

Prize-winning entry, National Anti-Gambling League' hymn - writing competition, 1905. (Sung to 'Old Hundreth', *Hymns Ancient & Modern*, 166 (From Michael Flavin, *Gambling in the 19th century literature*, 222-223)

A Leprosy is o'er the Land

A Leprosy is o'er the Land,
And calls for thy redeeming aid;-
O God of Britain, may we stand
True soldiers in this great crusade.
The war is long, hard is the fight,
The foes are many and are strong;
Uphold, O Lord, our feeble might;
As Thy poor servants face the wrong.

Thou knowest, Lord, the fell disease
Has smitten myriads, rich and poor;
The workman's hour, the wealth of ease
Are squandered for the gamble's store

Palace and cottage, works and mart
Are suffering from the fatal bane;
Prison, asylum, refuge, home,
Are peopled with the victims slain.

May our weak efforts and our grief
Not vainly call upon Thy will;
Thou didst not ask the Syrian chief
For potent deeds or works of skill.
"Twas but to cast the warrior's pride,
To trust in thy forgiving love,
To wash in narrow Jordan's tide.
And Thy forbearing mercy prove.

Lord of the forest and the kine
That wander on a thousand hills,
Look down upon this land of thine
and heal it of these mighty ills.
The guilty nation wash, O Lord,
As Naaman was cleansed of yore;
Rescue it from the gambler's horde,
an honest, godly realm once more.



VILLAINY AND ITS EFFECTS

- Unproductive wealth, undeserved poverty
- Negative competition and territoriality
- “Partyism” and sectarianism: the politics of inflammation & mass delusion
- Patron-client bondage; institutionalized extortion
- Speculation and gambling



THE RURAL DIMENSION



THE RURAL DIMENSION

- Farmers and risk
- The demographic watershed of 1911
- City vs. country: shared anxieties
- Pressure points
 - horseracing
 - fairs and carnivals
 - when is a 'den' not a 'den'?
(small-town back-room gambling)



THE MORAL REFORM LEGACY

- What was lost?
- What persisted?
 - *(the Banff Centre...)*
 - *'social' legislation*
 - *moralized ideas and images about economic, civic & personal responsibility*
 - *'residual' ideas about vice*
(now medicalized as 'addiction')



CASE STUDY 2: NON-PROFIT FUNDING ISSUES

- **Dismantling the welfare state**
 - downloading, contracting-out, restructuring
 - moral de-regulation
 - moral reconfiguration
- **Non-profits and the new civic order**
 - expanded mandates
 - accountability hurdles
 - competition for funding
 - lack of a civic forum



GAMBLING AND NON-PROFITS

- The operating funds dilemma
- The siren call of gambling revenues
- Reliance on gambling revenue and its perceived moral harms
- Cost-benefit calculations
- Optics and moral harms
- Occasions for discussion



GAMBLING AND NON-PROFITS

- **Survivals and fragments: old wine in new wineskins**
- **Old questions, new occasions**
- **Sleeping giants**
- **Key studies on effects of gambling on non-profits; civic aspects of funding & service-delivery regimes :**

Jason Azmier, Canada West Foundation

www.cwf.ca



OLD QUESTIONS IN NEW CONTEXTS

- What is genuine wealth?
- What is good stewardship?
- What are genuine benefits?
- What are valid individual rights? Corporate rights?
- What are valid individual responsibilities? Corporate responsibilities?
- What are valid civic goods?
- What is the 'social fabric'?
- What are valid civic obligations?
- What defines public opinion?
- What is taxation?
- What are property rights?
- What is the proper role of government?
- What is a citizen?



RECOMMENDATIONS

Bringing non-profits in from the cold

- Engaging non-profits in civic conversations
- Giving non-profits a voice in funding policy
- Investigating the conditions under which non-profits do their (our?) work



RECOMMENDATIONS

Engaging the 'subjective'

- Misconceptions
 - the subjective is just subjective
 - the subjective is just individual
 - the subjective is airy-fairy
- Re-conceptions
 - The subjective is real in its consequences



RESEARCH AND CIVIC CONVERSATION

- **Test statements against research**
- **Compare, compare, compare**
- **Don't ignore the moral dimension; subject its terms & frames to explicit examination**
 - *how are costs and benefits defined?*
 - *how are stakeholders decided on?*
 - *how are 'problems' parsed from the non-problematic?*
 - *how are ways of seeing/saying legitimated?*
Or delegitimated?
- **Location, location, location: Who are we, where are we, in relation to what we study?**

