

Re-articulating the Moral Economy of Gambling

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In "Pleasure: A Political Issue," Frederick Jameson (1992) argues that most critiques of the pleasurable activities found in capitalist society have equated pleasure with false consciousness. By focusing on the machinations of a monolithic culture industry, this strain of critical theory—epistemologically linked to elitism—has largely ignored the consideration of cultural process and change so central to an understanding of capitalism itself.

Framing capitalist society's relationship to pleasure in processual terms reveals that this relationship is subject to the nuances of historical context and is therefore bound to take many forms and undergo multiple transformations. From this perspective, it becomes apparent that pleasure is the product of a diverse and changing collection of cultural values, institutions and social actors, and not merely the reflection of a capitalist's will to power, or an instrument of his interests.

The pleasure we are concerned with here is gambling. In particular, this paper addresses gambling in the United States during the period between the turn of the century and the present. By writing the social history of American gambling—a history marked by the initial demonization of its pleasure, its subsequent regulation, and its consequent redemption—we aim to document the process by which rules for the game of power and pleasure vacillate, leading to the re-articulation of gambling's moral economy. In other words, we seek to illuminate the ways in which the American population's relationship to gambling has been governed and has evolved as a result of representational practices characteristic of modern society.

Judgments: The Demonization of Gambling

Amongst the perils of modern city life painstakingly documented by Anthony Comstock (New York Post Office Inspector and Secretary and Chief Special Agent of New York Society for the Suppression of Vice) in *Traps for the Young* (1884) are the evils of gambling. A work of unabashed advocacy, the preface concludes with the following imperative: "Let no man be henceforth indifferent. Read, reflect, act."

Gambling Traps. Their name is legion...The promise of getting something for nothing without the slow plodding of daily toil, is one of Satan's most fascinating snares. He sets his signboards along the avenues of honest trade and commerce and seeks to turn aside all classes by the glittering allurements of easy fortunes (Comstock 1884:56).

As a vigilante urban folk hero, Comstock's pastoral mission was to enforce the moral rectitude of his burgeoning flock; the pursuit of financial gain in the absence of a work ethic represented a grave threat to the population by undermining one of late 19th century America's most cherished moral and practical principles.

John Quinn, a reformed gambler and con man, wrote *Fools of Fortune* in 1890, which follows a similar rhetorical vein. A massive tome combining confessional, testimonial and autobiographical accounts with detailed historical studies of gambling, the book is presented as a measure to expiate his former sins, to “extenuate twenty-five years of gaming and systematic deception of fellow-men.”

Of all the vices which have enslaved mankind, none can reckon among its victims so many as gambling. Not even the baneful habit of drink has blighted so many lives or desolated so many homes. Its fascination is insidious and terrible, and its power is all the more to be dreaded in that it appeals to a latent instinct in every human breast (1891:7).

Here, the sin of greed is naturalized and universalized; religion is represented as the most efficacious civilizing force, one capable of identifying and repressing the manifestation of man’s original propensity to gamble.

While “Satan and Speculation” were inextricably linked in the cultural/moral imagination of late 19th century American society, contemporary attacks on gambling were not limited to scathing religious condemnations; Thorstein Veblen, an early American social scientist, secularized the morality of the work ethic with a teleological theory critical of the American leisure class. He argued that conspicuous consumption, leisure, and games of chance were vestiges of an outdated and predatory Victorian aristocracy whose pecuniary standards were incompatible with the demands of industrial capitalism. According to Veblen, the drive of natural progress instilled in the industrial working class a thrifty, utilitarian rationality that accommodated egalitarianism and was therefore socially adaptive. His “scientific” form of advocacy posited that gambling was antithetical to modern adaptation:

The gambling propensity is [a] subsidiary trait of the barbarian temperament...It is recognized to be a hindrance to the highest industrial efficiency of the aggregate in any community where it prevails in an appreciable degree (1979:276).

While perhaps for Veblen souls were not at stake, the human species itself was placed in evolutionary jeopardy by gambling. Ultimately, the conclusions of this 19th century social scientist were not so different from Comstock and Quinn’s religiously influenced rhetoric.

Whether through Veblen’s enlightened reason or through religious fulmination, the interrelated prohibitive discourses that dominated official, public and published opinions on gambling unmistakably derived from the same puritanism. Gambling, of course, persisted despite such thought, especially thriving on the American western frontier where cultural convention often remained (literally) at the geographical margins of prevailing American values. Yet even here, legal stipulations reflecting institutional attitudes oftentimes confined gambling to inconvenient spaces—to “sinks of iniquity,” to use the words of a fellow English martinet (Churchill 1905)—out of the public eye where only the informed and the truly degenerate would care to seek it out.

Juxtapositions: The Valuation of Gambling

The contrast of gambling's relationship to the American population between the 19th and 20th centuries is marked; a crucial component of this transformation involved a shifting and expansion of discursive boundaries—what could be said about gambling had qualitatively and quantitatively changed. In 1975, Robert Broadbent, Chairman of the Board for the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, testified before the United States Commission on the Review of the National Policy Toward Gambling,¹ a clearinghouse for diverse opinions, statements, and views toward the activity:

...despite the national publicity Nevada receives as a gambling mecca, it ranks only fifth in State gambling tax collections. This fact demonstrates that all types of betting and gambling are readily accepted throughout the United States, and are becoming an integral part of American life. Las Vegas, with its entire gambling-entertainment product, is an important segment of the growing entertainment market (U.S. Commission 1976:362).

The Commission's final report, *Gambling in America*, revealed that the activity was not an aberration, but a widespread and multifaceted popular pastime. Yet, Broadbent's declaration of gambling's social importance foreshadowed an even greater acceptance of the activity.

Today, the majority of work published about gambling is of a very different tone than that of the 19th century. The prevailing discourse on gambling has shifted from disparaging religious commentary and secular critiques extolling the social benefits of a Protestant work ethic to tempered, pragmatic statements epitomized by, among other things, the economic argumentation of image consultants for the gambling industry.

People want to gamble, and many have not had the opportunity to do so before—that is, the product has not been available in a legal, socially acceptable package before (Thompson and Comeau 1992:19).

Here, the market principles of supply and demand override considerations of morality.

Another set of voices that have been brought into this discursive game—notably absent in the past due to paternalistic attitudes—are those of common individuals, the gamblers themselves as choice-exercising consumers. In 1991 a New York Times reporter questioned a mother leading her small son through the maze of slot machines on a casino floor as to how often she frequented the “resort,” in response, she claimed to visit the casino twice a year and stated that: “We like gambling and this is a nice family place...Sometimes we bring Grandma and Grandpa to take care of our boy” (Cohen 1991:D5).

What is presently known as the *gaming industry* has moved far afield of the baneful 19th century characterization of gambling and its spaces to become, if not the paragon of omnipotent business, a fully legitimate operation subject to all the vicissitudes (and respect) of other national industries. In the 1980's, Commercial gaming in the United States grew fifteen percent per year, from \$6 billion in 1980 to \$21 billion in 1989 (Allen 1992:3), and finally to \$30 billion in 1992—more than was spent on books, movies, recorded music and attractions, combined (Yoshihashi 1993).

Currently, more than 100 sites on Indian Reservations in over 17 states offer gambling. The political economy of American gambling has become globalized; in 1991 the Mashantucket Pequots secured a 55 million dollar loan from a Malaysian company operating hotels and casinos throughout Asia for purposes of building the Foxwoods casino—a project whose revenues not only will allow them to “educate tribal children in their history and language,” but has assuaged the anxieties of Connecticut politicians hoping that as a result of the project “southeastern Connecticut might be able to reinvent itself as military spending collapses” (Johnson 1991).

Thus, despite the seeming opposition between 19th and 20th century discursive formations of gambling, there remains an analogous relationship. The theme of salvation has persisted as a residue of earlier discourse in the twentieth century. What is meant by salvation has, of course, drastically changed over the course of a century; today, what is to be saved is not so much the souls of misguided urban flocks as it is the stability of financially exhausted states. Indeed, when *faith* is spoken of today in relation to gambling, what is implied is the *full faith and credit* of companies like Mirage Resorts. If allowed to enter states with faltering economies such as Connecticut, these gambling corporations promise astronomical state revenues. In the minds of policy makers whose states are reeling from recession, gambling and social welfare are no longer diametrically opposed, but intimately tied. Unlike most other industries, the casino/gaming industry has proven to be recession proof. Las Vegas, a city organized around the business, leads the state in the creation of new jobs from 1987 to 1991 (Gabriel 1991).

The stark juxtapositions between 19th and late 20th century discussions about gambling—produced in the same country but separated by a century—attest to the rearticulation of a multitude of cultural characteristics by the probing of commodification into formerly delicate cultural realms, thereby testing the limits of capital’s unrelenting expansion into and reconfiguration of cultural convention and taboo. What connects the stark historical discontinuities presented here? The spectrum characterizing this collection of historically isolated statements made about gambling and its relationship to the American population is the malleable object of this anthropological interrogation. How did the expansion of what can be said about gambling unfold? How is it that gambling can occupy such distinct positions in the relational matrix known as society?

Las Vegas and the Origins of Legal Gambling

The history of gambling as an American cultural practice extends as far back as the pre-independence colonies which were partially maintained with the revenue generated by crown sponsored lotteries. Treatments of this history have primarily documented the change and increase in games played, and one recent work has argued that gambling provides the most direct, visible expression of the driving force in the history of a nation populated by, romantically enough, “people of chance” (Findlay 1986).

Here we move away from approaches that seek either to provide an inventory or to essentialize a national character, and begin our historical account with the watershed legalization of casino gambling in America. This starting point is not arbitrary—the

development of Las Vegas as the nation's first localized and visible gambling mecca provided the reference point for future considerations of legalization and experiments in the social legitimation of the activity.

At the turn of the century, national gambling restrictions gradually made inroads into the American West. This was the case in Las Vegas during the early 1900s—a mining and railroad town where, while not illegal, gambling was confined temporally and spatially by law. In 1910 moralistic local and national pressures exerted themselves, and gambling was outlawed in the region.

By the late 1920's, the moral fervor that had culminated in the criminalization of Nevada's gambling had waned; while still illegal, gambling establishments flourished along downtown Las Vegas' Fremont Street and the activity continued unabated behind closed doors, on second floors, in back rooms and basements. This situation resulted in lost revenues for local and state governments and the corruption of local law enforcement authorities who were paid off to protect the illicit economy. Pragmatically minded politicians had repeatedly tried to remedy this by reversing the 1910 ruling, yet had to wait until a more favorable environment surfaced (Lillard 1942:324–326).

Ironically, it was the Great Depression that provided Las Vegas with the impetus necessary to legalize the underground gambling economy. While most states struggled to keep afloat during this period of extreme privation, Las Vegas became one of the first (indirect) beneficiaries of New Deal largesse. In 1928 the Coolidge administration announced its plans to harness the energy of the Colorado River by constructing an enormous dam located in Boulder Canyon, a site approximately thirty miles from Las Vegas. Assuming that Las Vegas would be the beneficiary of this statist project, local businessmen and politicians eagerly awaited the influx of 5,000 construction workers, families, and their Federal paychecks into the railroad town (Moehring 1989:14–18).

In 1929, after a visit to survey Las Vegas as a possible housing site for Dam workers, Raymond Wilbur, Secretary of Interior of the new Hoover administration—whose moral stance on minor vices had been hardened through futile attempts to enforce the Prohibition on alcohol—shattered local expectations by scathingly denouncing the town, known for its laxity in these matters. Asserting government's social role as an advocate of state-directed capitalist utopianism, he declared: "it is the intention of the government that the bootlegger or other law violator shall not interfere with the well-being of its workmen assigned to the task" (Moehring 1989:15).

To enforce moral probity and instill the seriousness of the New Deal in these federal workers, the Hoover administration announced plans to create Boulder City and forego the dangerous ramifications of Las Vegas' illicit environs. Wilbur admonished: "Instead of a boisterous frontier town, it is hoped that here [in Boulder City] simple homes, gardens with fruit and flowers, schools and playgrounds will make this a wholesome American community" (Moehring 1989:15). The goal of keeping Boulder City's inhabitants morally upright occasionally spilled into nearby Las Vegas; on one occasion it was raided by a troop of prohibition agents led by a Colonel George Seavers of San Francisco who declared, "We're going to make this place safe for Hoover Dam workers" (Lillard 1942:320).

Delivering a further insult to Las Vegas, the Federal Government decided to include a Federally contracted general store stocked with retail goods as part of Boulder City's master plan—this denied Las Vegas the chance to profit even from the workers' daily consumer needs (Moehring 1989:17). Realizing, however, that Boulder City's stern administrators had excluded from their plan spaces for diversionary activities such as those that existed in their antipodal town, Las Vegas businessmen and politicians quickly mobilized to make the best they could of these adverse conditions. In February 1931, the month before the dam contract was awarded and construction crews arrived to build the government town, Nevada's legislature legalized gambling (Moehring 1989:13–21; Elliott 1973:273–285).

Ironically, Las Vegas set out to capitalize on precisely those attributes of their city's ethos that Wilbur had disparaged; although it did not help Las Vegas secure federal support, the town's frontier boisterousness did cater to the American tourist's nostalgia for Westernism. Not only would their entertainment offerings attract the workers of Boulder City, but the casino operators also eventually captured the market of tourists who pilgrimage to witness the latest icon of American modernity as manifested in the Dam—going as far as christening Las Vegas as the “Gateway to the World's Greatest Engineering Project” (Findlay 1986:116–117).

However, although legal restrictions on casinos had been lifted, by no means did gambling establishment owners consider themselves free to take advantage of this fact; there persisted both a dominant moral discourse which attributed a pariah ethos to gambling, and an accompanying public perception that complimented the official one. For instance, the nationwide response to the legalization was unequivocally hostile. Newspapers across the nation condemned the immorality of the state government and a cover story in the *Chicago Tribune* “urged that Nevada's statehood be canceled” (Findlay 1986:43). Such vituperative reactions also emanated from other western states that sought to distance themselves from potential association.

The *Dallas Morning News* talked of flushed and shaken men, women, and youths at the gambling tables: “These will Nevada gather in, to suck them dry and fling away the husks of humanity, quite careless of whether they live or die” (Findlay 1986:41).

Under such precarious conditions, the operators of gambling establishments and city politicians did not openly promote the activity—they remained cautiously silent, and initially gambling made only marginal contributions to economic growth. In effect, managers of Las Vegas saloons and back rooms accepted the marginal (or immoral) status of the gambling activities they offered and accommodated this status vis-à-vis dominant public and governmental views:

During the first few years after gambling was legalized, the gaming-room managers made almost no attempt to publicize their establishments. To most of them, operating within the law was a completely new experience, and it took them some time to accustom themselves to the tremendous opportunity it offered (Lewis 1953:130).

Whereas some might expect that an intractable capitalist logic alone was enough to drive aggressive advertising campaigns once gambling was permitted by law, the situation did not

represent such an immediate, simple adaptation with a purpose of greater profit. The existing cultural field—a force that was to be reckoned with—included a public perception of casinos as illegitimate:

Men who had long held forth behind locked doors in rooms discreetly hidden away from the public gaze felt—understandably enough—an certain uneasiness at finding themselves ensconced in ground-floor quarters facing the busiest streets of town. The cautious habits formed during years of secret, undercover operations were hard to break. Few could bring themselves deliberately to court the public attention they had long been at pains to avoid (Lewis 1953:130).

Thus it was a gradual process that led to changes in the traditionally cautious actions of casino operators; they began to develop slowly the aggressive marketing tactics for which Las Vegas is known today. As the city and what was to become its most important resource became more visible and accessible to an increasingly affluent, pleasure seeking West Coast populace, so did the many casino owners unwilling to comply with federal laws become subjects of a different gaze—that of the federal government. The unabashed brightness and the loud, inviting appeals of the strip were matched by the audacity of its operators with regard to the Federal stipulations.

Although casino gaming had become more available to the consumer on various levels, gambling activities and the casino entity itself were not officially legitimate with regard to being sanctioned by political figures as an acceptable pastime for the masses. A paternalistic circumscription remained manifest in continuing laws, the ethics of the allowable that hindered the expansion of casinos into public life and discourse, and the treatment of the casino as an underprivileged financial entity within the mainstream economy—a *pariah* industry. We turn now to see how this negative position was overcome through a process of economic legitimation within the mainstream economy.

The Casino Incorporated: Achieving Economic Legitimacy

The influx of organized crime into Las Vegas may be attributed to various factors. First, the repeal of Prohibition in 1933 had dispossessed many sophisticated crime syndicates of a very profitable enterprise. Gambling, illegal in all states but Nevada, became the next logical source of lucre for this collection of illicit entrepreneurs. The growth of underground gambling in the Western part of the country was particularly rapid; with many sources of competition in Los Angeles itself, tourism to Las Vegas remained at a steady, yet unremarkable level. This situation changed drastically as a result of anti-vice crusades taken up by many local governments in the late thirties.

Most significant for Las Vegas amongst these local initiatives was that led by Los Angeles Mayor Fletcher Bowron in 1938 to close illegal gambling establishments in his city. In addition, a federal crackdown on gambling ships anchored off the Southern California coast between 1939 and 1942 prompted an exodus of professional gambling establishment operators and their largely Hollywood based clientele into Las Vegas. The dramatic entrance of gangsters, including the infamous Bugsy Siegel, facilitated the construction of new strip

casinos through the use of underworld ties to secure loans and financing from organized crime at a time when other funds were unavailable.

The response of the Federal Government to these circumstances is interesting. Prohibition, although a failed experiment in morality enforcement, provided a valuable lesson to American lawmakers—namely, that centrally organized repression and support of stigmatization were not effective law enforcement strategies.

Thus, while the measures taken against organized crime involved in gambling during the 50's and 60's were not devoid of repressive and puritanical overtones, they were considerably more restricted in their focus. The general population's morality was no longer the primary source of concern; the government focused on the providers of the vice offered in Las Vegas. This group was not only easier to keep under surveillance because of its small membership, but were also easily located through their investments in fixed capital—the casinos themselves.

As prohibitory measures against the general population were no longer viable, regulation turned to this handful of operators. The Federal government set out to limit organized crime's movements and used the media to depict them as subversive and different from other entrepreneurs. The goal was to normalize them by subjecting them to a scopic regime whose primary purpose was to regulate and discipline—not to eradicate. Eradication was not possible, due to demand on a popular level and Las Vegas' position as a large and profitable city. In sum, the overriding trend seems to be a transition from interdiction based on moral grounds to legal regulation based on political, economic expediency. The period between 1877 and 1977, 87 acts were passed with regard to amending or repealing acts relating to gambling as well as introducing new ones—sixty five of these acts were passed after 1951, registering an increased concern with legislating the operation of gambling activities (Cross 1979:172).

It is interesting to compare the content and tone of these gambling related legal measures with 19th century prohibitive discourses. There is a conspicuous lack of concern for morality in legislative measures after the 1950's. They dwell on more mundane themes pertaining to, amongst other things, the circulation of gambling devices, the monitoring of movement by those in the gambling industry and most importantly, tax evasion. The proliferation of legislation mainly served to strengthen existing laws intended to prevent the influx of the gangster underworld into the casino industry. It was assumed that this would prevent the practice of *skimming*, or not reporting income for purposes of tax evasion and financing other illegal commerce. Ironically, the federal government's disapproving gaze led to local political actions, that, while increasing restrictions, simultaneously paved the road for a gambling expansion like never before, heralding a new treatment of this formerly suspect entity within the realms of government and business.

The Paradox of Regulation: The Construction of a Corporate Ethos

In *House of Cards*—a title alluding to the fragile and precarious position of the Las Vegas casino industry—Jerome Skolnick (1978), focusing primarily on the political and legal dimensions of the Las Vegas casino industry's search for respectability, concentrates on the

regulatory tactics that the Nevada legislature employed to placate the Federal government and ensure the industry's continued growth. William Eadington summarizes the net effect of intensified state controls and the concomitant demands of the industry.

It can be argued that the fundamental objective of Nevada regulatory control over gaming has been to preserve the state's autonomy over gaming control vis-à-vis the federal government in order to preserve the gaming industry's strong influence over industry profitability and the direction of regulatory policy in Nevada (1984:30)

Skolnick notes that the state

derives a sizable percentage of gross gaming revenue, which in turn, provides an even more sizable percentage of the state budget: enterprises and state officials sometimes act like real business partners, suggesting ways of improving profits and actually being pleased when casinos are crowded, fretful when they are not (1978:98).

He saw the crucial problem for Nevada and other states considering the legalization of casino gambling as lying in the transformation of this profitable business into a respectable one.

The Kefauver Committee's nationwide hearings on organized crime in 1950 and attorney general Robert Kennedy's similar crusade in 1961 catalyzed image polishing periods for the casino industry; after the meeting between Nevada Governor Sawyer and the Kennedys in Washington, Sawyer

met with the casino owners, and told them that Nevada now "stood alone," that Congress could be moved to end its gambling. Kennedy's interest thus forced a new policy for the Las Vegas gamblers: "They might compete for Dean Martin, Barbara Streisand, or Sinatra, but they knew they must now be as close as oil companies, as well-knit as the farm lobby." Moreover, they would have to become discreet, subtle, and self-disciplining businessmen (Skolnick 1978:126).

The casino owners mobilized:

They suspected that they had pushed their luck too far. They were at war with Congress, were loathed by the FBI, and were called hoods by the nation's press. They feared that so much national hatred must have some fall-out that they could be closed. That year they organized. They put aside their rivalries, their inter-casino feuds, and formed the Nevada Resort Association (Vogiotti, former director of the Nevada Resorts Association, in Brock et al. 1992a:46-47).

Federal intervention forced the adoption of new practices, including the implementation of substantial controls such as stringent licensing requirements, strict penalties for operational irregularities, regular and unscheduled audits, the monitoring of internal gaming controls and security measures, and the systematic collection, analysis and publication of information relating to the Nevada casino industry.

Although these procedures would have been intolerable to other industries, Nevada casinos welcomed the legal incursions and many expressed satisfaction that the industry was the object of so much attention and sophisticated regulation. During the 1976 Commission hearings one casino owner proudly summarized this position:

No business is controlled more effectively than gambling in Nevada. No person in government or in any other business comes under closer scrutiny than do the people in Nevada who apply for a gambling license (U.S. Commission 1976:315).

State officials were now responsible for preventing immoral, criminal characters from entering the industry. Indeed, the idea of responsibility is key; by deflecting the responsibility of enforcing gambling's legal codes onto Nevada—which in turn displaced this onto the gambling operations themselves—the Federal government relieved itself of this role. Ironically, the casino industry was to derive considerable benefit from this downward diffusion of responsibility. Despite the newfound freedom implied by this process, prior to 1970, casino

gambling growth was limited because of the difficulty of raising capital through traditional financial sources like banks and insurance companies...Nevada also effectively discouraged publicly traded corporations from getting into gambling (Liggett 1989:24).

These financial limitations forced the industry to borrow from pariah lenders—most notably Jimmy Hoffa and his Teamsters' Pension Funds, who by 1977 had 24 percent of their entire investment portfolio in Las Vegas casinos—further tarnishing the image of the industry (Eadington 1980:16).

Big business first infused a much needed dose of legitimacy into the Las Vegas casino industry when business magnate Howard Hughes purchased six casinos in 1966, buying out several disreputable owners with his public monies (Laxalt 1977:117–120; Skolnick 1978:134–140). He initiated what governor Paul Laxalt was later to refer to as “the Hughes effect.” In 1969, the Nevada legislature passed the groundbreaking Corporate Gaming Act, ushering in a new era of public approval and unprecedented growth. The act made it possible for corporations to purchase and build casinos without subjecting every stockholder to the thorough background checks formerly required of each licensee by the State Gaming Control Board and State Gaming Commission (Eadington 1980). The infusion of respected public corporations promised to confer respectability upon Las Vegas itself, and eventually to incorporate the casino industry into the legitimate economy.

No doubt due to a persistent ethos of economic illegitimacy, the rewards were slow to come. William H. McElnea, Jr., president of Caesar's World, Inc. gave the following testimony to the Commission 1975:

...the experience of Caesar's world with the financial community was [not] successful at first. Several major investment banking houses declined to co-manage the financing of the Caesars Palace purchase because they feared involvement with the gambling industry. It has taken Caesars World a number of years to educate members of the investment banking community

to the nature of the hotel casino business. Within the past two years the financial community has begun to accept the gambling business. Caesars World has succeeded in instituting a relationship with one of the largest investment banking firms in the country. Financial establishments have begun to treat companies engaged in gambling as they treat all other companies (U.S. Commission 1976:358).

This author portrays the casino corporations as educating larger, ignorant economic entities to enter into a mutually beneficial relationship. In 1975, this process was by no means complete, and a voluntary show of openness on the part of casinos was a part of the struggle to gain full legitimacy in the economic world:

Caesar's World is attempting to end the misunderstanding about the operations of gambling establishments in Nevada, particularly those operated by public corporations. Its attitude always has been to encourage government agencies, financial institutions, the press, and the public to delve into its operations and learn what it stands for. But the goal of education requires more than a willingness of those in the industry to open their operations to inspection. It also requires a willingness by those who ought to learn about the industry to spend the time and effort necessary to do so (U.S. Commission 1976:359).

Again, the casino representative indignantly claims that the larger financial community ought to learn what his misunderstood and persecuted industry really stands for. Hilton's purchase of the Flamingo (which, although not owned at the time by a mobster, was still emblematic of organized crime's infiltration of Las Vegas) epitomized the transition from disrepute to legitimacy. This purchase also opened the eyes of other corporations: Hilton's entrance into Las Vegas, for example, turned out to be a sound career move for the corporation—to date more than seventy percent of its profits come from Nevada alone (Jefferson 1989).

Thus, changes in the casino industry may be attributed not only to external pressures from the federal government, but also to the opening of the business to stockholders. For purposes of appearing as acceptable as other businesses, casino executives were forced to adopt standards imposed and expected by both consumers and the corporate world. For instance, evolution in both heightened regulations and corporate laws has had a tremendous effect of introducing detailed accounting rituals whose meticulousness reflects not only the financial documentation of any legitimate corporation, but also the strict hierarchy and concern with an impeccable image which the casino industry has had to adopt and uphold. George Drews, a Harrah's executive, describes the elaborate accounting procedures and the self-disciplining which a modern, managed corporation maintains.

In the computerized monthly management report are 190 different profit and loss centers...Each automatically sums to the next higher management level...and so on to the top level of the company...The detailed departmental reports for the entire company behind this summary are two and one-half inches thick, and the computer is programmed to give each manager an individual package for his own area of responsibility...In

addition to the computer schedules, by the tenth of each month a management financial white book is prepared. This goes to the finance committee, the board of directors and our internal and outside auditors. It starts with a written financial review or analysis of performance. Following are month and year-to-date profit and loss statements down to earnings per share for the month and year-to-date...appropriate relationships with prior year and volume are made. A balance sheet, footnotes and funds flow or change in financial statements are also presented. This monthly book is, therefore, a complete and permanent record of the financial performance and statistics. Perhaps the most important part of the financial picture (and this is no doubt true of many other major casinos also) is not merely the availability and timeliness of the reporting, but management's attitude toward and use of the data. Management makes active and immediate use of this data whenever indicated. Deviations in trends, changes from budget, out-of-line expenses, changes in gross margins and hold percentages all must be explained in detail by the responsible manager, and prompt remedial action is expected where indicated (Drews 1976:167-169).

McElnea, as well, stresses the sophistication of such internal controls:

Public corporations have introduced numerous modern management and financial techniques to the gambling industry. Caesars World has an elaborate corporate security system designed to prevent illicit practices. It hires only highly qualified individuals of high integrity (U.S. Commission 1976:359).

Although slow to spread in influence, the period in Las Vegas from 1980 to the present has been clearly one dominated by corporate capital and its accompanying practices, notably the rationalization of casino business through the standardization of many of its economic procedures. Eadington noted that "the gaming industry was entering a corporate era, where it would become more like other businesses and where its unsavory past would become less important than its future potential" (1984:27). An enthusiastic member of the industry remarked,

In the 1980's, gaming became a legitimate industry, national in scope; corporate in nature. Having achieved respectability and acceptance, prejudice and regulations that discouraged responsible, large scale financial investment in gaming disappeared. The boom was on! (Liggett 1991:24).

Economic Legitimation within the Mainstream Economy

A process had unfolded whereby casino enterprises presented themselves as being part of more palatable businesses and as a result benefited from the status or symbolic capital of that greater entity. Conversely, the relationship of other legitimate corporations with the gambling business conferred respectability by association. As Macomber advocated,

Lobbying efforts need to take place with the government, law enforcement agencies, bankers, Wall Street, and other influence groups. This needs to be done by individual companies as well as on an industry-wide basis. The effort needs to take place in existing gaming areas, proposed gaming areas, and nationally (1984:90).

There is a crucial distinction between legalization and legitimization.

The legalization of gaming is an event that takes place at a specific moment in time, as it did in New Jersey on November 8, 1976. But the legitimization of gaming is something else. That happens over a period of time, when gaming is assimilated into a community and a completely accepted by that community. That will involve a resolution of all the opposing forces that are created by gaming. Legitimization will arrive when the industry is completely accepted by the institutional financiers—when you see Equitable and Prudential making 25-year term loans for constructing casino/hotels (Abt, et al. 1985:179).

Importantly, as Wynn notes (1980), not only did the process of legitimization implicate the ranks of powerful state and business organizations, but it involved a concomitant and interrelated process of public and cultural acceptance. A reconfiguration of historical definitions of respectability was essential to the cultivation of an environment hospitable to the economic growth of the gaming market. Macomber gives a succinct opinion of how this pivotal transformation should occur:

...the casino industry needs to legitimate itself in the eyes of the public...If the public could only be hypnotized to forget the early Nevada years and the Hollywood characterization of casino operations, the perception of the industry would no doubt be different...Of course, perception is often more important than fact, and it is clearly [the public's perception of the industry] that the industry must combat. The gaming industry must make an effort to establish its image as at least neutral...As gaming continues its legitimation and assimilates itself into the culture of today's society, the spread of casino operations will undoubtedly accelerate (1984:89-90).

This statement resounds today, in the midst of a multiplication of profitable new casinos in other states. Perception, it seems, has been successfully countered (or realigned) on both the economic level and the public. Such a shift in attitude is manifest in the attention Las Vegas' new image has received in media's popular coverage. In a recent *The New York Times Magazine* article entitled "From Vice to Nice," Trip Gabriel writes,

Today many of the hotels are owned by squeaky-clean, image-obsessed companies like Hilton and Holiday Inn. They are staffed by bean counters and micro managers who live in the same suburbs and sport the same dress-for-success suits as Jim Bingham, the stockbroker from Iowa (1991:79)

NBC's David Brinkley claimed in a televised report on gambling,

A business that used to be discussed in back rooms with somebody guarding the door is now a matter of interest on Wall Street—the absolute center and bastion of establishment in America. Gambling stocks are legal, they're hot and they're public corporations of impeccable probity and rectitude. Their books always open to government inspection. Now, men who would refuse to wear silk ties and white-on-white shirts sit around and discuss what they call the "gaming industry" (NBC 1980, recording).

Drews proudly notes that

Many people, including astute financial analysts and bankers who have never been taken behind the casino floor, [are] astounded to find that the business is run with some very sophisticated business methods (1976:159).

And Dan Rather of 48 Hours reflects,

there is a striking similarity between Wall street trading rooms and...modern Las Vegas...involving rows of data banks and specialists...It's a corporate game (48 Hours 1988).

The casino gaming industry continues to grow; companies that were born in Nevada, once limited to operating within its confines, are expanding their businesses. Caesars World is the primary contender in initiatives to build casinos in New Orleans' French Quarter and in the Palm Springs area. The Hilton has floating casinos slated for Kansas City and New Orleans. Mirage Resort, Inc. plans to enter the Connecticut area to compete with the Pequots' Foxwoods casino, adding an additional 140 million in tax revenue to the state's coffers. Hilton Hotels Inc., Circus Circus Enterprises Inc., and Caesars World Inc. are in the planning stages of a joint venture to build a three million square foot, two billion dollar casino/entertainment complex in Chicago. Casinos are now legally open in Nevada, Atlantic City, California (card play only), Iowa and Illinois (restricted to boats), Connecticut and Colorado (Fenster 1992).

The perception of the gambling economy has for many come full circle—whereas in 1931 it was the bane of the country, with the statist project of Hoover Dam defined as its moral and economic antipode, today gambling is a legitimate and efficacious alternative for recession stricken states to remedy social ills caused by economic problems. This speaks to the intensity of the incremental historical shift.

Las Vegas is drastically transforming its image. The city that was once perceived as the moral sinkhole of the country...now feels, incredibly, like an acme of wholesomeness. In part, this is due to an ambitious casino industry bent on cleaning up its act to attract a larger, family crowd (Gabriel 1991:68).

The strategic, discursive processes of cultural legitimation² which accompanied the incremental move toward an increased presence of gambling in the American economy are examined next. As both Wynn and Macomber stressed, the emergence of this discourse enabled both the corporate transformation of the casino industry to succeed, enhancing its profit seeking imperatives, and itself grew out of this economic re-populating of the casino industry. In other words, the processes of corporatization and public legitimation were, as they

are today, inter-dependent and mutually reinforcing phenomena. The gambling proponents' co-optation of the political and economic spheres is both dependent on and necessary for changing of the general population's perceptions of gambling activities. Dean Macomber, former vice-president of casino administration at Bally's Park Place in Atlantic City, concisely sums up what the industry sought in regards to economic and cultural legitimacy:

In all, industry must address the following areas: human resource development and motivation; refinement of management as fair and consistent; development of marketing as a creative, planned, and profit-oriented process that is integrated into all aspects of a casino hotel operation; completion of the corporate and casino cross-culturalization; and legitimation of casino gaming throughout society (1984:82).

The Production of Gambling's Truth

William H. Briare, the mayor of Las Vegas in 1975, testified in front of the Commission:

It is ironical, and interesting, to note the vast change in attitude toward gambling that has occurred in recent years due to momentous changes throughout the Nation' social and economic structure. The fact that numerous sociologists, economists, and government officials are presently reevaluating gambling reflects this change in values and, more significantly, the economic plight of government entities. The economic aspects of gambling no longer appear to outweigh all other considerations (U.S. Commission 1976:326).

We locate our investigation of gambling's cultural redemption at the point in time when discursive formations surrounding its constitution and value for Americans proliferated—a period dominated not by religious moralizing, but by governmental and economic reasoning, which incorporated and re-configured morality as an indispensable facet of their reasoning. How did the limits and forms of speaking about gambling shift and grow? Which statements were recognized as valid and which were excluded?

What makes gambling so interesting is that it has occupied such a malleable, unstable, and ambiguous position in relation to so many loci and sites of investment of power, particularly that of morality. Here we will attempt to examine the emergence, vacillations, gradual shifts and reconfigurations of moral discourse on casinos establishment as a space of leisure within society. By *morality* we do not mean a body of essential truth that arises from transcendental principles, but rather a historically contingent and emergent construct—a perception rather than fact—which shifts along with power relations. We stress that neither the demonization and prohibition nor the positive valuing and encouragement of gambling is more moral or humanitarian a process than the other. Indeed, the morally guided and socially conscious anti-gambling discourses of the past were deeply implicated in the development of capitalism and the regulation of the working class. Despite common functions, however, it is informative to contrast the starkly divergent composition of past and present truths of gambling.

In England, at the turn of the century, Lieutenant Colonel Seton Churchill expressed a view on gambling that represented, until recently, a dominant, but not always practiced, public perspective in the United States:

Gambling is not only opposed to religion, it is anti-social. The gambler produces no wealth, and further, his influence tends to unsettle others and impair their powers of work. It is, therefore the duty, not of religious people only, to wage war with this growing evil, but of every philanthropist, every statesman, every legislator, every magistrate, every patriot (Churchill 1905:70).

Using this statement (and by implication, the context which made it possible) as a foil for our analysis of a pro-gambling discourse, we ask: how do each of these social actors—the philanthropist, the statesman, the legislator, the magistrate, and the patriot—today engage in a dialogue with gambling?

Overwhelmingly, businesses and state governments have recently worked to publicly represent the activity in a refashioned, positive light. This is not to say that discussions of immorality and sinfulness have been repressed; rather, there has been an efflorescence of active, strategic and public operations working to oppose and devalue this strain of discourse—it has been a productive reworking, with actors investing in institutions of legalized gambling on interdependent practical and cultural fronts.

The 1953 legislative motion, for instance, on the state's power to license entry into the Nevada casino industry, in order to restrict the influx of gangsters to the market (which, ironically, allowed the gambling industry to expand), was presented as a measure meant "to better protect the public health, safety, morals, good order, and general welfare..." of Nevada's inhabitants (Skolnick 1978:115). Here the strategy is to portray the expansion of gambling in a moralistic light—it can "protect" citizens.

Frederic Jameson claims that the historical progression of capitalism has always involved the concomitant and gradual anesthetization of the public at large to new cultural forms purveyed. This habituation is achieved through the normalization of an ethos which was previously regarded as "variously ugly, dissonant, obscure, scandalous, immoral, subversive, and generally 'antisocial'" (1990:4). With regard to gambling this process is clearly exhibited in the statements presented earlier by gambling proponents Wynn and Macomber.

As we have seen in the case of economic legitimation, the discourse generated around formerly unofficial practices of gambling takes advantage of the existing discursive field as its symbolic capital—drawing from it, synecdochically inserting itself within, synchronizing with it. For instance, arguments developed by the industry and deployed for purposes of legitimating its expansion and attracting additional clientele have been influenced and buttressed by historically particular cultural/political circumstances within the United States. A current example would be the latest campaign by casino image makers to receive G-ratings. Catering to the family no doubt coincides with the family values rhetoric that has emanated from the White House over the last twelve years.

While the moralization and consequent spread of commercialized casino gambling can be attributed to the strategic concatenations between moral and political discourses, we are

not implying that these validating arguments were developed specifically for the purpose of legitimating the casino industry. The complex of discourses which today contributes to the proliferation of the gaming industry is largely the result of a piecemeal accrual of previously disconnected rhetoric with diverse historical and institutional origins and which operate according to their own dynamics. The arguments constructed in favor of widespread, legalized gambling selectively appropriate their components from this wide-ranging body of nonetheless interrelated discursive formations and constructs that have arisen for various historical reasons. These strings of borrowed associations served to legitimize gambling.

In addition to actively producing re-configured norms of legitimacy, these rhetorical appeals often work to lessen the shock of newly sanctioned institutions by conveying an impression of harmony between these and existing cultural norms. In other words, the forming system of statements establishes a compatible, conciliatory relationship with the body of past statements so as to suppress contradictions that could potentially arise when, for example, official legislating bodies disjunctively condone lotteries and casinos.

Discrepancies and paradoxes of changing policies are circumvented by crafting a discursive presentation that accommodates previously scandalous or offensive activities within the realm of legitimate practice. There is a mainstreaming of cultural elements which in the past have been negatively associated for another set of political, social and economic reasons (not, we emphasize, because such elements are naturally antagonistic—a truth to that effect must be historically produced). For example, those who administer or invest public money in casino enterprises have replaced words of negative connotation with euphemisms; an industry member writes: “It’s no accident that the state authorities refer to ‘gambling’ as ‘gaming.’ The implications are that gaming is ‘recreational’ and ‘respectable’” (Crevelt 1988:48).

The myriad rhetorical motions of dominant spokespeople together managed to transform prevailing public opinion and by extension, to re-direct the actions of Americans (and even leaders of social reform) who originally may have declined to morally tolerate or participate in gambling (Burnham 1993:230–231, 266). Burnham suggests that the effect of the positive valuing of gambling and casino institutions was that over time, those who had previously embodied the moral ethos of the nation came to appear as the social deviants, even labeled as setting a bad example (1993:4). John P. Adams, for instance, notes that people opposing governmental sanction of gambling have gradually been positioned as an anti-social force by those who advocate the activity. As individuals:

...they resist a phenomenon that society has been conditioned to accept. “We must fight those with self-serving interests—those who promote anti-gambling,” a state gambling official stated (1977:30).

Just as gambling has been linked to such negative things in the past, anti-gambling is posited as embodying greed and self-interest. Bourdieu writes:

Strategies aimed at producing “regular” practices are one category, among others, of officializing strategies, the object of which is to transmute “egoistic”, private, particular interests...into disinterested, collective, publicly avowable, legitimate interests...On that condition, they may enjoy...the advantages accruing from...the symbolic profits secured by the

approval socially conferred upon practice conforming to the official representation of practices (1991:40).

As with the processes of gradual economic legitimation unfolding primarily through the corporate colonization of the industry, the active strategies utilized in adapting the public market to the pecuniary needs of casinos and state governments as capitalist entities should not be seen as having an entirely conspiratorial, centrally organized, or monolithic force. Rather, the incremental change in public perception of gambling should be addressed as emerging from a set of individual actions that drew upon a variety of cultural means to achieve the ends of their profit seeking logic (but which were dependent upon the cultural field in which they operated for inspiration).

To frame our understanding of how the piecemeal process of gambling's positive valuing (its officialization) was effected in strategic ways through the medium of public rhetoric, we explore the relevant context as it has evolved. The content of the public discourse which arose around gambling advocacy was not randomly comprised; not only was it composed in dialogue with other discourses, but was also in a relationship of dependency with a whole play of economic, political, and social change that provided the matrix in which the discourse located itself and from which it emerged.

Thus, a moment within the flux of a larger process of continual adjustment is what provided a ripe ground for the moral alignments discussed here—ones that would nurture the blossoming casino industry—to take root and grow. Specifically, we look at the context provided by the historically relative constructs of leisure time, the individual consumer and liberalist free choice. How do casinos accommodate and how are they accommodated by these evolving cultural notions?

Consuming Constructs: Leisure, Liberalism and the Individual

At the turn of the century, Lieutenant Colonel Churchill declared,

The nation which possesses the largest number of hard-working, pain-staking people, and the fewest gamblers, must sooner or later assert its superiority... Honest work is the discipline of life, and everything that tends to unfit men to take their share in the duties of life, is a curse to a country (1905:76).

This moral stance extends well into the twentieth century, where "unproductive" activities are seen as appealing to desires for easy, immediate gratification and are thus regarded as anti-social forces. This is opposed to pro-social actions and attitudes whose (modern) purpose is to improve the social environment through the implementation of general (universal and essential) ethical norms. In reference to American gambling, one only has to think back to Secretary of Interior Wilbur's 1929 vilification of Las Vegas as a threat to the well being of the Hoover Dam workers.

That one continues to encounter such an argument does not mean that it retains its potency as a dominant tenet of social opinion makers, or, for that matter, of the middle and working classes. We propose that this particular moral construct—of the incompatibility

between national strength and leisure activities of the poor, especially gambling—currently lacks resonance, and this corresponds to a historically relative loss of mooring in economic realities. In liberal capitalist America, it is obvious that many deep-seated inequities exist, that many people do not hold power because they have worked for it in the Protestant way.

For example, the idea that “only suckers work for their money” is grounded in a reality that most powerful, wealthy people do not work for their money, but essentially gamble (a Wall street broker does not produce, but rather, shifts money from hand to hand).³ Salient models of success (and failure) in our society are held by gamblers. The Federal government’s recent actions to bail out the financially negligent Savings and Loans industry and the bouncing of thousands of dollars worth of checks by State Representatives have made any statements that reproach irresponsible financial speculation on behalf of the American public unequivocally hypocritical.

Many contemporary social analysts argue that the United States’ economy in the late twentieth century is primarily controlled by people who gamble for a living. David Harvey (1989), for example, calls the workings of contemporary capitalism—with its frenzied speculation and untraceable flows of cash—the workings of a casino economy. According to this argument, corporate executives are not so much interested in producing goods as they are in producing money, or fictitious capital.⁴

In such a context, does the work ethic of Churchill’s day become obsolete in public discourse? In the words of gambling advocate Charles Bahmueller, in an argument prepared for the Commission on the Review of National Policy Toward Gambling (U.S. Commission 1976):

A further weakness of the “work ethic” argument is that it is assumed that in the late 20th century in the United States and other industrialized countries it is somehow necessary for the state to shore up the work ethic. Such arguments befit the 19th and early 20th centuries, when the need to create work discipline was a legitimate concern in building the economic base for industrialized society. But there is far less need to intensify the work ethic or to be overly fearful of it once the economic base has been firmly established (1976:752).

The shift away from the representation of (working and middle class) gambling as a “curse to a country” lies in a simultaneous reconfiguration of what constitutes the political subjectivity of American citizens; the well-being of the present economy (and thus the superiority of the nation) demands not that people work harder, but rather is measured by how much they consume. Thus, what contributes to making a discursive reorientation possible lies within a changed economic context. Gambling as a form of consumption is no longer targeted as the evil which threatens the predominance of our country, because, one can argue, it simply does not.

According to Harvey, the 1960’s heralded the creation of a “throwaway society” whose “primary effect...has been to emphasize the values and virtues of instantaneity...and of disposability.” Disposable income has acquired literal significance for the average middle and working class citizen. In accordance with Jameson, Harvey argues that this effect has

permeated more than the consumption of commodities itself: this throwaway society not only disposes of commodities, it has also been able to “throw away values, lifestyles, stable relationships, and attachments to things, buildings, places, people, and received ways of doing and being” (Harvey 1989:286).

What is not explicit in Harvey’s account is that in the context of such a prodigal system, disposing of one thing—either a commodity or a set of ideas—implies acquiring another to substitute for it. A number of problems arise: if the work ethic is discursively portrayed as obsolete—if it is disposed of—does a leisure ethic replace it? What would such an ethic look like? Whereas for Churchill “honest work is the discipline of life,” does Bahmueller’s rhetoric imply that a type of “leisure discipline” is what must be intensified as a “legitimate concern to building the economic base?” By extension, is it a moral stance of anti-gambling that is now seen as what threatens to “unfit men to take their share in the duties of life” —that is, those obligations of consumption, of leisure? Such questions provoke the following discussion, where we address how the definition of what “curses” a country, is inverted in a public discourse that revolves around the construct of leisure, adapting this construct to a political-economic context of consumer culture.

Indeed, consumer culture provides the general backdrop for all of the legitimating operations and expressions on the part of casino advocates, institutions and processes examined in this paper; the values and meanings of gambling as they have been configured and re-configured in the public discourse considered here are one example.

Leisure and Gambling

Leisure time as an escape from the daily discipline of work has acquired value as a commodity that is necessary to living a full life—leisure in its many forms is today seen as a universal need. One’s *own* time is a time when one exercises personal freedom in choosing what one wants to engage in. Baudrillard has explored the implications of this recipe for leisure, arguing in *Consumer Society* that needs are “nothing but the most advanced form of the rational systematization of productive forces at the individual level” (1988:43). Here, he does not equate the exploitation of industrial workers to those of a post-industrial consumer; rather, he suggests that the practice of consumption is in many instances analogous to the practice of production. Consumers produce—their products are not material commodities but their very own consumer subjectivities. The “individual producer-consumer is in a novel sense not just an enterprise, but the entrepreneur of himself or herself” (Gordon 1991:44). The conditions of consumer self-production are as much characterized by discipline, imposed rhythms, and the imperative to meet quantitative and qualitative standards as are those of the work place.

The pursuit and consumption of leisure activities is intimately tied to the efforts of becoming a meaningful, well-balanced and normal person in modern society. Leisure time is meant to be used wisely, reasonably, and (most ironically) productively. Nowhere is this better illustrated than the standardization of corporate vacations where business is mixed with pleasure. The conventional dichotomy between work and leisure is therefore blurred under late capitalism, and we are faced with a most counterintuitive overlapping of pleasurable business and business-like pleasure.

Late 20th century leisure is not carnival-esque in the Rabelaisian sense of subverting social structures. Quite to the contrary, it is constrained and institutionalized not just as a citizen's "right or enjoyment, but as the citizen's duty...one is obliged to be happy, to be in love, to be adulating/adulated, seducing/seduced, participating, euphoric, and dynamic" (Baudrillard 1988:48). It would appear, then, that the duties of life to which Churchill referred at the turn of the century have arrived at a new meaning today—that is, one's obligation to the state is equated with an obligation to the self—the duty to fulfill one's own needs (for pleasure, excitement, and fun) through the avenue of consumptive leisure, such as gambling. Leisure and the importance attributed to it provided valuable material to draw upon in order to concoct a pro-gambling discourse.

Leisure is often portrayed as being an active engagement—an activity as opposed to a time to do nothing since this would be considered boring. It is a time to expend oneself and of course, to spend oneself—free time is by no means *free*. Gambling fits nicely into this concept of leisure:

there was a whole mass movement that involved seeking sensational commercialized amusement during leisure time...in the late twentieth century, with the rise of Las Vegas and the Las Vegas package, gambling contributed heavily to forming ideas of what entertainment and leisure activities and aspirations ought to consist of in American society (Burnham 1993:275–6).

In *The Business of Risk*, the authors write,

Commercial gambling is entering the American social structure and assuming a place alongside sports, theme amusement parks, television, packaged vacations, and so on as a major leisure-activity industry (Abt, et al. 1985:148).

When gambling is successfully subsumed under the mantle of, and itself contributes to the definition of, *leisure*, it too acquires value, as do its characteristics. Bahmueller uses this discursive tactic. Quoting Friedman and Savage, "even a small probability of a large reward may have more utility than either a much larger probability of small loss or the certainty, if the risk be rejected, of staying at the same income level" (1976: 755), Bahmueller continues:

there is a chance of his or her removal from the necessity of labor; and for the worst-off segments of society this means the chance to escape sometimes dreary existence, a life suffused with constant worry over money. The dream of escape, it may be argued, has value. If one wants to buy a little fantasy, a little hope, a few dreams of a better tomorrow—however slim the likelihood of their becoming reality—why deprive him of it?...The hope provided by some forms of gambling is still quite real and therefore of value even though in the aggregate it cannot be fulfilled (1976:755–756).⁵

The idea that miserable workers and exploited people deserved some gratification, however flawed, was one attitude that lent to the positive-valuing of gambling and the diversification of a pro-social label. This view stands in marked contrast to that of Churchill:

The sudden loss, or equally the sudden gain, of gambling has a most injurious effect on the working man, producing an amount of excitement incompatible with steady painstaking labor...Excitement unduly indulged, brings about its own penalty, in making everything ordinary appear dull, insipid, and uninteresting...[the worker's] thoughts will be directed into a new and exciting channel, and he would find great difficulty in contenting himself with the old routine of work (1905:77).

Beyond disputing the moral correctness of either position, working class gambling habits did in fact threaten to upset Taylorian work rhythms in Churchill's day. It is also a fact that today certain corporations rely more upon inciting consumption than on disciplining work forces. That is, to advocate this indulgence does not at all contradict principles of social stability or threaten the base of the economy as it is composed today. In fact, Bahmueller notes that

some students of gambling believe that [gambling] may be an emotional aid to some, helping them to orient themselves to the problems and conflicts involved by the intrusions of chance, risk, and uncertainty (1976:754-5).

Thus, gambling is even seen as an *educative measure*—a type of social training that can prepare the unfortunate to compete on the free market. When articulated in this fashion, gambling accrues not only measurable value, but therapeutic value. For instance, Igor Kusyszen, after establishing his credibility as a university professor with a Ph.D. in psychology and was also called upon to participate in the Commission, claims in a popular gambling magazine,

...people continue to gamble. Why? Because it is healthy. Why? Because it satisfies basic human needs. What are these needs? (1)...There is the need to know and to understand, curiosity in other words. (2) The need for excitement, for emotional arousal. (3) The need to exercise decision-making powers, the need to solve problems...Another important need which is activated in gambling is hope. People don't gamble to win money. People gamble with the hope of winning the bet and with some fear of losing it. Gambling provides for the experiencing of a wide range of human emotions—joy, ecstasy, euphoria, enthusiasm, disappointment, frustration, sorrow, regret, pride, and courage. Gambling also provides an escape from our worries. It releases us from our pain and socially-inflicted anxieties. It allows us to dream. It allows us to be our own bosses. It gives us a sense of confidence in our actions and provides us with a feeling of freedom (1974:14).

Erving Goffman's oft-cited analysis (1967) of the contemporary need for action—consequential activity—to confront the “primordial bases of fatefulness” and alleviating the monotony and anonymous tendencies of modern life is exemplary of the academic arguments that are frequently drawn upon to buttress the process of legitimation.⁶

Risk, chance, hope, fantasy—to circumscribe the availability of an activity that has been articulated as such a benefit-laden product is to fail to operate from another set of legitimized discursive truths—those constitutional tenets that ensure every American the right

to pursue happiness (presented as pleasure). If gambling is allowed to exist on the free market, the line goes, we will all be *better off*. Here, consumer welfare is measured—as with other commodity markets—in terms of access to goods. Gambling is presented as having potential utility for society in general. Frederic Stocker, an economic professor, describes this argument:

If gambling is simply an ordinary consumer product, consumers individually and collectively are clearly better off if allowed to spend their money on [it] than they would be if prohibited by law from gratifying their penchant to gamble. Consumer welfare, in other words, is increased (1977:34).

Within a liberal democratic discourse, then, anti-gambling becomes deprivation, paternalism, and regulation of that crucial entity—leisure time—conceived of as belonging to each person, their rightful property as individuals.

Liberalism, the Individual and Gambling

The laissez faire government depends upon the conduct of individuals who are parts of a population and subjects of particular, personal interests... This individual being, the subject of particular interests, represents a new figure of social and political subjectivity, the prototype of “economic man,” who will become the correlate and instrument of a new art of government (Burchell 1991:127).

Under liberalism, the primary forces shaping social subjectivity are an individual’s self interest and the economic rationality utilized to realize this interest. Liberalism posits “the subject’s liberty as the locus of governing’s efficiency... neo-liberalism’s ambition is to implicate the individual citizen into a market game” (Gordon 1991:36). The body of individualizing discourses and techniques that have been emphasized around the individual as owner of specific *rights* (a subject of interest) revolves upon “an area currently given highest moral value; the capacity to exercise choice” (Strathern 1992:193):

Interest, then, functions as the principle of a personal choice which is unconditionally subjective or private... it makes the individual an isolated atom of preference-motivated choice and action. It is an immediately and absolutely subjective form of the individual will... (Burchell 1991:130).

The individual-consumer is “reconceived as a person in terms of ‘personal’ criteria, of which the ability to exercise choice became crucial” (Strathern 1992:124). The “positing of the fundamental human faculty of choice” (Gordon 1991:43) is a strategic element of liberalism, leisure as consumption, and of gambling discourse:

Through all of these strategies and arguments on behalf of [gambling]... ran a theme that provided a rational argument for partisans; behavior in the area of the attractive vices was strictly a matter of personal freedom, like any taste or style... Spokespersons of [gambling] attempted to cast the world in personal terms, not only their own individual freedom but personal actions of other people... Those proponents of [gambling] who assumed the mantle of righteousness emphasized ethics, standards, and morals in terms of

the individual...[they] cited and praised anyone who argued for individual liberty (Burnham 1993:283–287).

Liberal government is, therefore, privatized government—it radiates from individuals who remain free to pursue happiness as long as the resultant actions do not infringe upon another individual's capacity to exercise choice and thereby act in his or her self's best interest. These principles are frequently invoked by members of the gambling industry. Engaging in gambling has been discursively portrayed as a rational decision by a responsible person; the constructs of free will, personal choice and responsibility being produced in the cultural field were harnessed to the needs of business interests, posited in such a way as to raise the construct of the individual to an almost holy level. Anti-gambling is depicted as violating this sacred unit. "Both consumers and providers of services...reacted with indignation to the suggestion that gamblers were mindless victims" (Burnham 1993:285).

Corporate casinos, capitalizing on the notion of the individual, often present themselves as discrete, individual entities and thus deserving of the same rights to choice and freedom as people:

Super-private, super-individualistic, [corporations] seem only larger versions of the private individual. There is, we might say, no perceived change of scale (of different orders or domains) between the individual person and private company, only a magnification or diminution along the same scale of virtues (Strathern 1992:141–142).⁷

The privatization of government within the individual is starkly divergent from the organizing principles of pastoral figures such as Anthony Comstock and Seton Churchill, who are characterized by their propensity to act in others best interests. Within a government of liberalism, such advocates of social morality are governmental obstacles and are attacked as strident paternalists. When motions that emphasize common values and protective measures are put forward in opposition to gambling, the discursive properties of free will lead to the logical implication that personal choice should not be dictated by the condescending legislature of a paternalistic government.

Such rhetoric forges an alliance with the masses, arguing from a morally righteous position that equal access to legalized gambling must be enacted in defense of common persons' constitutional right to choose how to spend their leisure time. For example, when psychologists protest that more legalized gambling will result in a higher instance of compulsive gambling (and thus debt, crime, and so on), advocates of the exercise of personal judgment and responsibility

warn against what [they] called the "new paternalism" of health advise and regulation, appealing to the liberties of both those in business enterprise and consumers (Burnham 1993:286).⁸

Posing the debate in such terms operates as does Bordieu's officializing strategy—egoistic, self-serving concerns are conflated with collective interest. Christo Anton, executive director of the Maine State Lottery Commission, testified at the Commission hearing: "[we] believe that the fairest way of deciding the people's will is by referendum, and

that the Federal Government should not disenfranchise those who saw fit to vote for lottery in their various States" (U.S. Commission 1976).

Those who object to the social ramifications of institutions such as the lottery, accusing it of being a regressive tax, encounter a discourse which treats the lottery as a purchase, "a form of discretionary spending—beyond the realm and responsibility of the state" (Kaplan 1990:294). Again, leisure time is not discursively considered to be the concern of society, but rather the property of the individual, and not to be meddled with.

The mood around gambling and the individual, clearly reinforced by the de-regulatory, neo-liberalist Reaganite dogma of the 1980's, is characterized by a prevailing attitude that "rules embodying moral standards [are] not appropriate for social action" (Burnham 1993:284)—enacting morals into laws is labeled as an imposition of subjective, cultural and narrow-minded views on citizens—a violation of individuality as it has been defined.

The situation is radically different in other capitalist democracies; Eadington's contrast of the United States with the regulative policies and accompanying rationales in Great Britain illuminates the particularity of the discourse crafted through corporate America's rhetoric. In general, English policy regards advertising's stimulation of the gambler not as expansive of individuals' choice and convenience, but rather as having a diminishing effect on the capacity to choose (if one wants to gamble, it is assumed, one will seek the activity out; advertising is seen as creating needs rather than responding to some innate demand).⁹ In the States, however, maximizing exploitation of the consumer goes hand in hand with the assumption that individuals are rational and thus responsible for their own choices;

...whereas homo economicus originally meant that subject the springs of whose activity must remain forever untouchable by government, the American neo-liberal homo economicus is manipulatable man, man who is perpetually responsive to modifications in his environment. Economic government here joins hands with behaviorism (Gordon 1991:43).

Writing in Thatcher's more recent England, Marilyn Strathern notes that

the individual does not just follow convention or have it imposed but "does" convention, that is, shows his or her capacity for morality, and thus makes explicit the fact that moral behavior is contingent on the capacity for choice. But what the choice should be between, the norms and canons of behavior, no longer need lie in institutions outside the individual. The person is his or her own reference point, a position that requires no negotiation or bargaining wit others, least of all with a collective will (1992:162).

Bahmueller's narrative grounds the rhetorical utilization of the construct of democracy and choice within the discourse of gambling.¹⁰

In a democratic society it does not seem appropriate that government, Federal or State, direct the use of leisure time. No doubt some critics would call many leisure activities wastes of time, and perhaps much leisure in America could be better spent; but forbidding what some find wasteful and

others pleasurable in a democracy is seldom a matter of public policy but something left instead to private debate and choice...it would seem contrary to democratic practice for the Federal government, in the absence of overwhelming reasons to the contrary, to attempt within its own limited authority to countermand such choices [i.e. to gamble]; and opponents should be prepared to answer why these small springs of hope ought to be plugged up (1976:751,756).

One of the most potent arguments gambling advocates garnered from the evolving field of resonant constructs surrounding choice and individual responsibility was revealed in the term *victimless crime*, coined in the late twentieth century. The label was applied to “bad habits” such as drinking, swearing, and gambling, implying such acts were “only socially opprobrious, rather than seriously harmful” (Skolnick 1978:30)—they suffered from being thought of in the public eye as deviant, and if any harm were incurred by them, it would only affect the acting individual and would have no negative impact on the general public. This rationalization for removing social sanctions from acts such as gambling professed that persons who suffered were at fault for not exercising proper judgment and rationality—for choosing to abuse what was mere relaxation and entertainment for responsible individuals.

Skolnick notes that an “aspect of the victimless crime is its commercial potential as a legitimate business enterprise. The classic victim crimes enjoy no such potential” (1978:31). The victimless crime construct thereby absolved those in the gambling business from social responsibility, and placed individual responsibility on those who chose to consume what the businesses offered them; gambling advocates “blame the victim, a tactic well known by that name: those stupid enough to believe advertising should be cheated” (Burnham 1993:271). This reasoning constituted a strategy that succeeded in gaining not only active supporters but also tolerance on the part of those who came not to care what others did: it was *their* choice.

Burnham notes a further ramification of the cultural stress on the individual and her/his will.

Particularly in the late twentieth century, a secular version of an individual moral outlook, the so-called therapeutic view, was also markedly serviceable for merchandisers...socially disruptive behavior...became an individual illness of maladaptation...(1993:285).

Problems manifest in society were not to be regarded as social ills but rather as individuals' disease—treatable through therapy and consequently not a concern to the realm of policy making when thus deflected:

Large numbers of ordinary citizens gambled repeatedly for recreation. This social condition created by states in their efforts to generate revenue without taxation also allowed the argument that if most people could control their gambling behavior, those who could not must be suffering from a behavior disorder, perhaps even a disease (Abt et al. 1991:664).

Harrah's Employee Task Force, mobilized to confront the potential profit-threat of compulsive gambling, displayed this attitude:

It is important to point out that most customers and employees of Harrah's casinos are normal adults enjoying recreation...Again, it should be emphasized that the vast majority...are responsible adults (Sherman 1991:674,677).

In 1980, when allowed into the DSM-III-R manual by the American Psychiatric Association as a Disorder of Impulse Control, "the disease model has been accepted as a legitimate explanation for inappropriate gambling" (Rosencrance 1989:147).

A further strategic rationalization on the part of those who sought to legitimate the industry they advocated was to fund and actively encourage self-help groups. The Harrah's Task Force was proud to contribute a founding grant to the Nevada Council on Compulsive Gambling in 1989 "to allow the group to establish its first ever office in Las Vegas and create the first toll-free telephone referral number for problem gamblers in the state of Nevada (Sherman 1991:675) thereby not only maintaining what can be seen as an actual extremity to the apparatus that sustains the casino entity,¹¹ but in the process, conferring upon themselves a further ethos of civic virtue as demonstrated by their philanthropic actions.

The new base for pro-gambling self-righteousness, then, lay in the idea that individual standards, and not those of the community were to be the basis for judging conduct. The discursively formed notion that pre-existing, natural standards embodied in the individual should inform legislative and economic changes in policy was a powerful means of deflecting attention from and obscuring the processes actively undertaken by government and business to bestow a positive moral ethos upon a legalized, expanding gambling industry at both the state and corporate levels. Rather than characterizing the purpose of such re-articulations as being to incite and direct behavior, they were seen as ultimately responsive to the real voice of consumer demand—of justice.

But policy makers found more practically grounded sites of rhetorical investment upon which to rationalize the increased legalization of the lottery and gambling industry as the right thing to do. A New Jersey State Senator stated,

For those with little education and few skills, poor credit and scant hope of salary advancement, playing the numbers may be the only non criminal opportunity they have to get some bread to supplement a disgracefully low wage...(Bahmueller 1976:756).

Here a politician has presented himself as the white knight to his constituents—providing to them deserved opportunities to become rich through gambling. Through characterizing the industry he supports not only as commercially innocuous but as civically virtuous, he himself comes to sound like a social reformer, a friend to the people. In the 1970's, Burnham notes,

it became acceptable for someone to go into business to make money on such habits, as well as to "argue from high moral ground and even self righteously, not only invoking 'freedom' but particularly the family..." (1993:270).

That is, not only did advocates portray themselves as responsive to the fundamental desires or needs of Americans to choose their rightful mode of leisure time; eventually, an

argument became that casinos were too important an industry to undermine, and that such a motion would incur great social costs. Within the discursive formation, casinos not only cater to the construct of the individual, but ironically, also become socially beneficial, community oriented philanthropic projects. Residual emphases on democratic common good are not contradictory to a process that operates by drawing on any culturally resonant themes available for its utilization. For instance,

emphasizing creation of jobs becomes the ultimate reply to those whose work ethic has caused them to oppose gambling on the bases of principal. Gambling is described as a producer of jobs rather than a parasite sapping the resources of those who work (Adams 1977:28).

In the Commission hearings, testimonies repeatedly referred to jobs—as well as the types of people who benefited from these jobs—as legitimating forces for the industry. A casino owner claims,

Many men and women use the gambling industry as a means of financing their education. Judges, nuclear scientists, doctor and lawyers have worked as gambling employees to pay their college tuition (Nelson in U.S. Commission 1976:315).

Kenny Guinn, Superintendent of Schools in Las Vegas' Clark County stated, "Many of the teachers have paid for their education by working in casino. Many work during the summer vacation as keno runners" (U.S. Commission 1976). The fact that such (perhaps extraneous) references are invoked during these proceedings attests to their resonance as symbolic capital within the discursive formation of pro-gambling.

Additionally, a virtuous ethos is attributed to casinos through highly publicized philanthropic endeavors. In 1950, McDonald wrote:

The gambling establishments...in order to impress public opinion, are the largest contributors to every civic endeavor, from the community chest to the erection and maintenance of churches. One establishment spends 120,000 per year for scholarships for high school students who want to attend the University of Nevada (McDonald in Sanders 1973:98).

In 1986, several members of Nevada's gaming industry formed the Nevada Gaming Foundation for Educational Excellence, which aids schools, students going to college, and teachers: "the list of contributors to the foundation reads like a who's-who of the casino-hotel industry" (Legato 1986:22–23).

A self-congratulatory tone is evident throughout the gaming business. The president of the National Association of Off Track Betting conveyed a positive image at the Gaming Conference:

We're not in the gambling business. We're in the public revenue business. We're in the anti-crime business. Ours is a marvelous, wonderful industry, and we can do a real job for government (Adams 1977:29).

The notion that casinos help the public by providing regulated versions of gambling activities once offered by less visible, less accessible crime groups is exploited to its fullest in the following testimony by Charles Carella, executive director of the New Jersey State Lottery Commission:

New Jersey envisions lotteries not only as revenue-raising devices but as a method of combating organized crime by legalizing one of its major sources of income. It believes that present Federal restrictions severely hamper this effort...positive action must be taken to reassure the public that it is legal to purchase a lottery ticket (U.S. Commission 1976:36).

Regarding the 1976 Atlantic City pro-legalization, Abt, Smith, and Christiansen wrote:

Issues...do not become social issues unless they are so identified—and the manager of the campaign, a California political consultant named Sanford Weiner, carefully framed the debate to shift the discussion from the possibly adverse effects of casinos to the economic benefits of legalization (1985:145).

Among the benefits he stressed were funds for the elderly, diminution of crime, and the revitalization of a depressed community.¹²

Indeed, the argument that the availability of gambling activities provides a convenient source of revenue is a time honored incentive for further legitimating its expansion. This has

proven to be the most politically effective “cover” for legalization. By augmenting existing funds with “painless” and “voluntary” gambling taxes such measures acquire universal political, and popular, appeal: no one likes involuntary taxes (Abt, et. al. 1985:157).¹³

Gerald Patronite, Executive Director of the Ohio Lottery, subtly coaxes approval for legalized gaming.

When money runs out then taxes increase, and this endangers the life of politicians. Politicians don't like to tax. The last thing a politician wants to do is tax his constituents in a democracy (Adams 1977:28).

Bahmueller concurs, “Democratic principles call for legalization where majorities approve; illegality is impractical because it leads to bad public consequences and to loss of revenue” (1976:767–768).

Voting for casinos becomes a respectable thing to do—a vote for the casinos was a vote to restore a city...Who could vote no on the referendum question? Obviously only those who wanted to impose their narrow personal morals on the whole population and did not care for their community. Public-spirited persons would vote for the casino! It was the patriotic thing to do! (Adams 1977:26–27)

Again, we see an emphasis on public-spiritedness that is oddly parallel to that of Churchill and Comstock, although gambling is cast in a patriotic rather than demonic role.

The state of Nevada levies no personal income taxes on residents—the casinos pay it all. The situation becomes one in which it is easy to construct an argument that what is good for casinos is good for the constituents of the State of Nevada. This claim is one that is reinforced by the incredible growth of the city and the jobs available there. Today few newspapers would be inclined, or bold enough, to place the words “repeal Nevada’s statehood” on their front pages. If anything, Las Vegas has become an icon to imitate rather than an eyesore to nationally despise.

In this paper we have attempted to chart the process by which a pariah industry whose product was pleasure worked to overcome its illegitimate status and become an acceptable entity on both economic and moral fronts in American society. Essential to this incremental shift, was the close relationship between the new image attained on the state and business levels, and the changed public perception of gambling—they are recursive, re-producing each other. Advocates for gambling’s expansion culled a broad range of legitimating factors from the greater field, all of which converged upon the space of this argument, upon the gambling industry as a positive entity.

By presenting the historically contingent progression of the gambling industry’s arguments for expansion we aimed to open these cultural artifacts to close scrutiny and careful dissection. In the 1970’s, for a range of reasons, discursive strategies sought to re-articulate the moral economy of gambling by crafting a truth that was dependent upon the larger matrix of overlapping constructs of consumption, leisure, liberalism, choice and the individual-subject.

A particularly striking incremental process that implicated each of these elements was the downward diffusion of moral responsibility which transpired. It appears that federal government, claiming to relinquish a paternalistic role, handed such responsibility over to the states, who in turn displaced this onto prominent figures in the gambling industry. Casino owners, exercising responsibility for their own actions under an evolving liberal-democratic jargon of legal and economic subjecthood, then placed this responsibility upon individual consumers, representing them as freely choosing, rational units fully accountable for their own actions.

Here, notions of free will, choice and the precedence of the individual subject, whose economic self-interest is posited as that which ultimately drives the whole game, work to distribute responsibility in a manner that is revealed to be a multi-leveled deflection of accountability, motivated by a series of institutional self-interests which ultimately converge upon (and profit from) an atomistic, self-governing citizen.

Of course, this process of governmental privatization whereby moral responsibility is displaced onto the individual is not a perfectly linear trickle down effect; rather, discursive forces are exerted simultaneously from a variety of institutions and are reproduced in the public perception of modern political, economic subjecthood. We have attempted to elucidate how these forces played themselves out through representations of the activity of gambling. The intention of this case study was to provide a lens through which it was possible to evaluate larger themes in contemporary society.

Morality, as we have seen through our examination of gambling, is rendered irrelevant as a social concern when conflated with the responsibility of personal choice. The

“individual person comes to contain within him or herself the knowledge for right acting, and this becomes his or her own source of morality” (Strathern 1992:158). This dual process of moral privatization and its social abnegation are significant. Notwithstanding historical examples of corruption with respect to the “social concerns” of paternalistic governing, perhaps we should more carefully consider our hasty acceptance of the liberalist alternative of self-interest—presented as naturally free of other interests.

What concrete basis do we have for assuming that a historically produced and governed construct of choice is any more purely representative of an individual’s best interest than a government’s actions? There is no reason why a mode of governing that operates by encouraging us to govern ourselves does not act in its own interests, and thus should not be exempt from suspicion. Clearly, if we were to accept without question that the bestowal of a responsibility to *freely choose* is naturally liberating, we would have learned little from our study of the historically emergent re-articulation of such responsibility, revealed not to have essential properties but rather to be culturally constituted in different ways at distinct points in time and space.

Notes

1. Heretofore abbreviated as *Commission* in the text and as *U.S. Commission* in references.
2. By *cultural legitimation* we are referring to a process whereby shared meanings and values are actively produced, maintained, altered.

Culture is made up of rules of interpretation and symbols in which these rules may be carried and embodied. Once such rules are historically established, they become available for normal, everyday understanding... (Fjellman 1992:26).
3. Readers wary of such a statement might be interested in a quote from the early 1880’s:

American gambling, however, presents some distinctively characteristic features. In the first place it is mainly conducted on the floor of the exchange, rather than in public gaming rooms. The Stock and Produce Exchanges are sapping the very vitals of the country’s morality. For “stakes” are substituted “margins;” for “winnings” read “profits;” while the designation of “players” is changed into the more euphonious appellation of “speculators.” With these changes in nomenclature, the game is the same in principle; the same in the method of its manipulation; the same in its demoralizing results (Quinn 1883:185–86).
4. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to evaluate the aforementioned position, we acknowledge that the views expressed by analysts such as Harvey, if not entirely accurate, are accepted by many, and that their circulation is perpetuated by the heavy attention this country’s academics and media give them. While not necessarily valid, such notions do hold meaning for many Americans and lead to the formation of opinions, moral positions, and practices, and therefore generate palpable consequences.

5. Bahmueller's argument included the appeal that gambling's *hope-value* should be allotted to those whose real hope was slim: "Whatever the current mythology may be, it is a matter of fact that the vast majority of today's poor, unless social policy provides for a massive redistribution of wealth, cannot hope to escape the foul conditions of much of urban America, however hard they work" (1976:756).
6. Indeed, the academic and pseudo-scientific literature addressing gambling has been part and parcel of the re-articulation of gambling, especially as it relates to leisure and its social role. However, the studies of gambling are as wide-ranging as the political agendas. Veblen disparaged it from an social evolutionary standpoint, arguing that it stunted industrial society; marxists have similarly criticized it, arguing that gambling is integral to the perpetuation of the capitalist order—another opiate of the masses. Yet the major sociological-functional positions of the 1970's were laudatory.
7. In "Corporations and Free Speech," Mark Tuschnet asserts that positing the corporation as person has been a much-utilized strategy in recent years for conferring constitutional rights of individuals upon corporate bodies (1982).
8. Additionally, casinos have argued that to deny compulsive individuals access to their facilities would be to participate in *non-value-maximizing behavior* (sacrificing profits to fulfill other objectives). In turn, the property's stock's market value would drop—the firm would become a target for takeover by those who recognize the undervalued stock, pathological gamblers. Thus, unless a casino concentrates on bottom line performance, stockholders (and the revenue-receiving public) will suffer (Eadington 1989:178). Indeed, some argue that the money problem gamblers lose is "going to governments, to pay wages and to pay for other goods and services. In other words, many people are benefiting from their gambling" (Bybee 1988:302).
9. In Britain, casinos are thought to be parasitic and damaging to local populations: if judged appropriate, they are required to protect individuals from themselves by banning their entry; broad appeals are proscribed and advertising prohibited; signage is severely limited; one can only play when a member of a club, and must wait 48 hours after signing up to play—this is intended to prevent impulse gambling; there is no potentially-impairing alcohol permitted; no entertainment to provide ulterior motives for membership; no credit extended to players; no paycheck cashing (Eadington 1989:180–182).
10. In the 1940's, although no doubt scoffed at in his day, Lillard anticipated what was later to become a dominant and legitimate view.

The Nevada cities do not prohibit "indulgences" that belong in the Western towns of tradition. Law frees the individual instead of repressing him. The Puritan is out of power, the democrat in power. It is assumed that men are fundamentally good, that pleasure is justifiable, that necessity is no crime (1942:319).

11. The Ohio Council on Compulsive Gambling came out in favor of the casino gambling initiative for Lorain, Ohio, in 1990, since it would have meant increased funds for its treatment programs (Rose 1991:66).

Clearly, an organization such as this one reproduces the idea of individual disease—helping themselves is their ultimate initiative. An attorney and consultant for casinos calls for problem gamblers, researchers, and therapists to recognize that individuals need to take responsibility for their own actions because there is movement attempting to make society, corporations, or government responsible for everything negative and relieve individuals of responsibility. "Failure to resist impulses to gamble means to me that the problem—and the solution—is found within the individual" Gaming entities should direct more of their charitable contribution budget to this area. Not because they are to blame for the problem, but because it is a problem that affects people important to them—customers and their employees (Bybee 1988:301–307).

12. The authors continue: "Usually even this tactic is not required: the economic and political power for Big Gambling give it considerable ability to set news media agendas." They relate how a carefully and brilliantly executed campaign persuaded the voting public that the industry's failure to live up to projections was due to over-regulation (Abt, et. al. 1985:146).
13. In a maneuver that is "too subtle to constitute a defect within the generally imprecise nature of legislative discourse," States receive an additional benefit by taxing such sumptuary taxation on the grounds of discouraging immoral behavior (Abt, et. al. 1985: 158).

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