Gambling is a fascinating subject which for many centuries has attracted public interest. Yet, despite its ubiquity, gambling (or gaming) leads a marginal existence within the boundaries of scholarly research. Providing a longue durée survey, this volume promotes a historical understanding of the subject enriched with a diverse academic approach that draws upon sociology, economics and psychology.

Each chapter in the collection is the work of a renowned scholar with a long standing interest in gambling research. The contributions offer historical analyses of the medieval origins of the ‘Gambler State’ and of mathematical risk calculation. They cast light on the roles of different stakeholders in gambling including the playing public, business and the state. They provide a controversial discussion of the alleged ‘pathological’ nature of chance games and the reasons for either regulating or freeing them from state control. Last but not least, two authors deal with country-by-country specifics in gaming cultures and gambling markets.

Taken as a whole, the chapters in this volume chart the development of European gambling culture from the medieval to modern times. In so doing it provides essential context for both historical and current debates about the nature of gambling and lotteries, addiction to gambling, poverty and social degradation on the fringes of the welfare state.

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Random Riches
Gambling past & present

Edited by
Manfred Zollinger
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Manfred Zollinger, Vienna, March 2016
Dealing in Chances—An Introduction

Manfred Zollinger

Disregard and Oblivion

In 1934, the French historian Marc Bloch identified what was both a hitherto neglected and a potentially promising field of scholarly interest: “Gambling [le jeu], although an activity on the margin of economic life, surely does not merit the virtuous disdain generally shown by historians.”1 Also in the early 1930s, the Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences featured entries on gambling and lotteries, calling the latter “a problem of almost all branches of the social sciences.”2 Academics were not completely blind to this. From the 1880s to the 1930s a limited range of studies took up the issue of chance games. But as late as 1967 sociologist Roger Caillois, one of the most influential games theorists, could reasonably deplore the small number of historians and sociologists dealing with the issue. For Caillois, gambling and lottery studies were exposed to a modern version of ostracism.3

The situation has improved since. To begin with, a general trend of widening horizons in historical research certainly helped to eliminate whatever prejudices may have stood against gambling studies. In addition, from the 1960s onward, major changes in gambling policies notably in the Anglo-Saxon world spurred on scholarly research in the field. Those changes can be summarized under the headings of legalization (followed by rapid expansion) of off-course betting, commercial bingo, casinos and machine gambling; the reintroduction of state lotteries; and, ultimately, the overall growth of the global gambling market. As early

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1 Marc Bloch, “Autour de l’histoire de la société espagnole,” Annales d’histoire économique et sociale 6 (1934): 616. My translated version is an abbreviation of the original: “En étudiant le droit du jeu, Eugen Wohlhaupter attire utilement notre attention sur un mode d’activité qui, pour être en marge de la vie économique, ne mérite certainement pas le vertueux dédain que lui témoignent, à l’ordinaire, les historiens.”


as in the late 1970s, Lord Rothschild stated that gambling was “an enormous industry.”

In many countries and regions, and in contrast to late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Europe, growth rates of public gambling revenues are faster than that of GDP, making gambling one of the world’s largest industries. Gambling has moved from the margins toward the core of economic life.

There are, however, imbalances. The changes in Britain, Canada, the United States and Australia have led to a preponderance of studies from, and about, these regions. Moreover, publications are dominated by economics, law and political sciences, and medical research. To a lesser degree, (economic) sociologists manage to maintain their position, while historiography is present even less and not always in appropriate quality. Yet, history matters. More and more authors have recognized (or at least paid lip service to) the importance of historical contextualization for a better understanding of contemporary gambling. Nonetheless, scholarly approaches to chance games are preponderantly concerned with practical aspects rather than the historical perspective.

The social sciences, and history in particular, may serve the useful purpose of countering reductionist views held, for example, by some economists. Such views include the treatment of state lotteries either as consumer goods pure and simple, or merely as sources of public income. It is grossly misleading to put gambling services on the same level as a box of cereals bought in the grocery store. Not only economists, but also politicians and spokespersons of the gambling industry are prone to occasional oversimplification. In 2002, the British Department for Culture, Media and Sports claimed that regulating the gambling business would ensure that “gambling products are fair to the consumer.”

Did anybody remember


5 For example, in 2011 there was an increase in global Gross Gambling Yield of 9 percent over the previous year. “Les jeux d’argent se déplacent vers l’Asie,” Le Figaro, August 21, 2012. For some European countries’ figures, see Carmen Gruber, Marie Ramisch, and Manfred Zollinger, “Sur quelques aspects de l’économie des loteries,” in Créateurs de chances: Les loteries en Europe, ed. Ulrich Schädler (La Tour-de-Peilz: Musée Suisse du Jeu, 2012), 190–97. For a comparison of nineteenth-century data, see Roberto Garvía, Loterías: Un estudio desde la nueva sociología económica (Madrid: CIS, 2008). Some assert that the gambling market has grown on a long-term basis in proportion to the growth in GDP, but provide no data. See, for example, Barbara Baarsma, Matthijs Gerritsen, and Jorna Leenheer, Better Chances for Charity Lotteries: Study on the Regulation of European Lottery Markets (Amsterdam: SEO Economic Research, 2007), 35.

6 See, for example, Michael North, “Lotterie,” in Enzyklopädie der Neuzeit, ed. Friedrich Jaeger (Stuttgart and Weimar: J.B. Metzler, 2008), vol. 7.


Dealing in Chances—An Introduction

Adam Smith’s notorious quip that “the world neither ever saw, nor ever will see, a perfectly fair lottery”? Historians are here to remember. They are capable of proving that games of chance are, and always have been, very different from other tradeable commodities. This is because they are the result of a mix of cultural, social, political, and economic influences. Here, I attempt to lay bare some of the roots in the past both of modern gambling as such and of the ambiguities which still surround it. It has been stated that there is “persistence of past understandings” of gambling, and there are echoes of the past. In order to understand their meanings it is important to look behind these echoes.

The Nature of the Game

“Almost everyone knows intuitively what gambling is,” stated the British Royal Commission on Gambling in 1978. However, the problem lies in identifying the object of research, in definition rather than intuition. Consequently, several attempts to “define” gambling resulted in the creation of more or less narrow semantic fields. In part this is due to historical linguistic shifts. In Britain, the term gambling came into use in the first half of the eighteenth century as a substitute for the term gaming. However, the two terms co-existed and are applied in the English-speaking world without differentiation to practically all games played for stakes. “Gambling” can also be used as a generic term embracing several activities. In this context “gaming” is one of them.

More interestingly, the term gaming is said to have been promoted by the Nevada gambling business from the mid-1950s onwards as a substitute and euphemism to avoid unsavoury associations. Such efforts are part of the moral and legal history of gambling and lead us to an even more important distinction. John Ashton, the historian of English gambling, who opposed it out of principle, distinguished gambling from gaming or playing, and described it as “an indulgence in those games, or exercises, in which chance assumes a more important character” and “the money motive increases, as chance predominates over skill.” To some, its outcomes “lie in the realm of pure chance, or luck.”

10 Miers, “Gambling Histories,” 51.
12 See, for example, also Jan McMillen, “Understanding Gambling: History, Concepts and Theories,” in Gambling Cultures: Studies in History and Interpretation, ed. Jan McMillen (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 6–42 (6): “Gaming was so popular with soldiers … that … King Richard I forbade gambling.”
13 See the chapter “Gaming” in Roger Munting, An Economic and Social History of Gambling in Britain and the USA (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1996).
Thus, in technical terms, gambling can be defined by the element of chance, “in the sense of randomness” inherent in certain games—Glücksspiele, jeux de hasard, giochi d’azzardo, juegos de suerte, or de azar. This has been an important distinction in law and is also an issue in debates on probability, rationality and gambling behaviour. This definition, applied in the present volume, corresponds with the medieval category of ludus aleae or ludus azardus (represented by dice or lotteries) as opposed to games of skill and judgment (represented by chess, merels / nine men’s morris, and so on). “Mixed games” (ludi mixti), involving both elements of chance and skill (games of the backgammon family, for example), constitute a twilight zone. Poker—to some “essentially” a game of skill—falls into this category, and its ambivalent status becomes a matter of discussion from the nineteenth century onwards.

Games in which the element of chance prevailed made them perfectly suitable for commercial exploitation. Although “social” card games such as bridge, whist, solo, Panguingue, stud and draw poker would be licensed in some venues, whist or bridge were never Monte Carlo’s sources of income. Nor was anything ever heard of like a roulette tournament or a lottery competition (although Monty Python could have thought of that). Apart from traditional draw lotteries, among the games of chance ranking highest in commercial interest were, and are, those requiring a capital fund out of which the punters’ winnings are paid. These “banker’s games” (eighteenth-century Banquierspiele) or banking games—which includes the old-style Genoese lotto—are characterized by a “structural inequality” known as the “house edge” or “house advantage” resulting from the difference between the odds of a game and the odds used for payouts. In French roulette, for example, the advantage is 2.6 percent. In the 1720s, John Law showed that the game of bassette in the city of Turin was played with an “edge” of 40 percent to the bankers who, to no one’s surprise, willingly paid 50 Louis d’or for the right to hold the bank during Carnival. In some games, the “house edge” can be overturned by skill, for example by card counting in blackjack. The “house” factor remains a distinctive feature, although to some it is incompatible with the very notion of gambling.

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19 Nicholas Tosney, “Gaming in Britain and America: Some Historical Comparisons,” Occasional Papers Series 8 (Las Vegas: Center for Gaming Research, December 2010), 6 (available online). Panguingue, for example, remains played as a “house game” in several casinos. See Parlett, Oxford Guide to Card Games, 145.
The Cultural Construction of Gambling

Gambling has constantly been a matter of dispute and hegemonic discourses concerning morality and desirable economic behaviour. Religious opponents labelled it a sin, seeing it as a manifestation of avarice, greed, and usury, and as a profane misuse of (divine) lot (the desacralization of chance took some time). More often though they condemned it due to the consequences it entailed—blasphemy, superstition, violence. In this respect, many scholars still distinguish between Catholics and Protestants—notably Puritans—attributing a more permissive attitude towards gambling to the former. However, John Dunkley has shown that Catholic and Protestant theorists coincided on this topic.23

At the core of the problem were, and are, questions concerning work, leisure and earnings. Gambling, as an economic activity, clashed with the long lasting quest for the “ethical transcendence” of work (Michel Foucault). Orderly life, industry and thrift were to become an ever more important precondition for the accumulation of wealth, the antitheses of which were waste and idleness. Those who gambled (mostly to make their living) were depicted as “busy idlers” adhering to the same category as beggars, alchemists, and treasure hunters thriving to get rich without work. A general objection to gambling was based on its alleged economic sterility. As Francis Hutcheson (1694–1746) put it, in gambling “some citizens are enriched by the loss of others, in a way wholly useless to the publick.”24 Both eighteenth-century physiocrats and modern economists (Paul Samuelson, for example) followed this line of argument which, besides, was also used against financial speculation. The traditional antagonism between alea and industria took on economic, social and political forms. Gambling was troublesome because it involved the dissociation of work and wealth and ran counter to the traditional association of these values.25 Although even most conservative commentators admitted that, for the majority of the population, hard work generally did not guarantee a substantial portion of wealth, the problem was sudden and unearned wealth.

In line with the philosophical tradition, fickle Fortune, or Chance, are opposed to reason, steadiness, rational calculation, and planning. Chance, therefore, had to be banned from the economic institutions of the rising industrial society. Fortune was made the Goddess of the vile and lazy,26 who increasingly

24 Francis Hutcheson, A System of Moral Philosophy (Glasgow, R. and A. Foulis, 1755), 2: 75.
were “those at the bottom end of the social scale.”²⁷ Those on top produced different arguments. In the discourse on the similarities and differences between gambling and speculation, “common” gambling was made the touchstone for the respectability of certain economic activities. Under certain conditions, though not for the poor, Chance was here to stay. In 1783, Richard Hey suggested “that the line is not so drawn as to exclude all appeal to Chance in the Transfer of Property, but only in cases where it is idle and unnecessary.”²⁸ Thus speculation could be “domesticated” by purging it from the stain of gambling.²⁹ As a result, the forms of alea which Roger Caillois had identified could take on differing values. While lotteries, betting, and casinos came to be seen as “cultural forms on the margins of the social order,” stock-market speculation pertained to “institutional forms integrated into social life.”³⁰

Chance or Fortune were equated with Fate, contrary to the exigencies of life under modern capitalism, while luck remained a residual by-product of diligence. Roger Caillois’s theory of games mirrors this conception. According to Caillois, alea is tantamount to passivity, agon, in turn, to activity and competition. “Progress” consists in developing the latter and in eliminating the former. Jean Baudrillard went so far as to state that gambling (le jeu) “flourishes in direct accordance with underdevelopment.”³¹ This assertion is unproved and appears to be ideological reductionism. At best it lacks a differentiation between various categories of games.

As regards lotto, for example—which Honoré de Balzac labelled “opium of misery”—public participation in gambling activities is at least partly due to imbalances within a given society. According to Edith Saurer’s seminal studies on nineteenth-century lotto, the poor’s lotto-playing indicates economic resignation, indeed “a very realistic hopelessness” with regard to the promises of the competitive achievement-oriented society.³² In 1840, to an author hostile to lotteries, the main causes for the growing predilection for lotteries were in fact both the increasing difficulties in overcoming hard-pressed situations by work and “the widened gap between the propertied and proletarians, between those full of hope and the hopeless.”³³ However, the reliance on chance had its economic limits. The most destitute usually could not afford to gamble. This holds

³⁰ Caillois, Les jeux et les hommes, table II.
true even with regard to the relation between economic crisis and the propensity to gamble. Some consider it countercyclical, others cyclical, but almost no studies on this topic have been published up till now.

Yet, another question is how players deal with random events. Historical studies have shown that lottery players tended—and still do tend—to reject or even deny chance the role as a constitutive element and developed strategies and practices, which in turn were criticized as superstitious or irrational. The Austrian writer Adalbert Stifter employed a wonderful phrase of self-irony to conciliate the opposition of Reason and Chance. In 1855, he hoped that selling his new novels would enable him to quit his job as an official, “unless Chance comes to Reason earlier and sends me the first prize in the lottery loan.”

Historically, gambling has served as a paradigm for the moral construction of socio-economic segregation. The lines separating the licit from the illicit were drawn alongside the degree of social and cultural capital attributed to the practicing of certain games (and financial transactions). It was the gambler’s social status that reflected and underlined the value of the game, and vice versa. The disapproval of the infamous medieval dice player (a twofold infamy) and that of the irrational poor playing lotto (from the seventeenth century up to now) can be compared with later judgments on the frequenters of bingo halls or gambling machine venues. Early modern legislation offers examples for this negative kind of perception. To some paternalistic minds it was “of infinitely more consequence to society to restrain the spirit of gambling among the poor than to check it among the opulent,” because of the different effects of this spirit on society at large. What was regarded as dangerous and illicit gambling for the poor, the peasants, and even the bourgeois, could be conceived as a “disinterested” recreation for the wealthy and privileged. From an elitist perspective, gambling was constructed as a legitimate “noble passion” provided that there was no threat to wealth, the only risk being that of losing one’s time—which would be wasted anyway.

The socially defined dimension of gambling brings us back to the discussions about the very nature of games of chance and their functional quality in terms of recreation on the one hand, and commercialization on the other. They reveal a profound ambiguity surrounding the “money motive,” the influence of which is continuing. True, games of mere chance have been considered the most relaxing ones. In the world of the European noble courtier, a world traditionally prone to

34 Saurer, Straße, Schmuğel, Lottospiel, 310.
36 Review of R. Houlton’s A Letter ... containing a critical Examination of the Plan, Scheme, &c., of the new Lottery system, in The Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine (London 1802): 316.
37 See Saurer, Straße, Schmuğel, Lottospiel, 306; Zellinger, Geschichte des Glücksspiels, 23 and 34.
38 Peter Binsfeld, Commentarius theologius et juridicus in titulum juris canonici de usu ris (Trier: Heinrich Bock, 1593), 541: “Quanto autem magis ludus fortunae inmuittur, caeteris paribus, tanto magis recreat.”
Manfred Zollinger

gambling though evidently not devoid of material interest, chance was perceived as the soul of gaming (“le hazard estant l’ame du Jeu”). According to some fifteenth- and sixteenth-century theologians and moralists, chance games could be played “innocently,” that is, devoid of serious material interest. But then, also in the fifteenth century, Gabriel Biel and others identified the quest for profit to be the most salient (and despicable) characteristic of games of chance.

The medieval habit of contrasting convivial gambling with the commercialized quest for gain or with what, in the nineteenth century, was labelled “the industrial exploitation of gambling,” repeats itself in modern misconceptions of what gambling once might have been. Swan songs lament the loss or disappearance of culture accompanying the advent of state-sponsored lotteries and the multiplication of casinos in the United States. State involvement as a response to revenue needs is said to have entailed “radical changes in the nature of gambling games and gambling situations” or even “a radical transformation of the original meaning of gambling into an institutionalized activity.” Gambling markets allegedly shifted “from consumer-directed to supplier-manipulated.” “Self-limiting indigenous ‘play’ activities like the ‘old-style craps game under the boardwalk’ where the winner ‘could walk away with the pot’ are opposed to ‘profit-making ventures on a vast commercial scale’ such as casinos, where the ‘play element is being denigrated.’ To say that modern American gambling represents “pure capitalism as an enterprise and conspicuous consumption as a game” amounts to the assertion that “the real value of games is lost in progress.” However, cultural scepticism of this kind, whether recent or of nineteenth-century origin, seems to ignore historical facts. It fails to see a time-honoured tradition of institutionalized, state-sponsored and commercialized forms of gambling (lotteries, casinos), and therefore contains more than a trace of romanticism. The “romantics” may, at least in part, have been inspired by Erving Goffman’s conceptions of “action” and “character”—“romantic conceptions,” as James Cosgrave put it. However, a study on roulette players has shown that some of Goffman’s agonistic “character contest elements” with their

39 Jacques de Caillière, La fortune des gens de qualité et des gentilhommes particuliers (Paris, Estienne Lyson, 1661), 262.
potential for social and cultural relevance may well have survived into the new era of rationalized and commercialized gambling. But any attempt at answering the question of whether or “why traditional gambling cultures are being colonized by a global gambling culture”\textsuperscript{46} remains dependent on the prior identification of just these “traditional gambling cultures.” Again, with regard to their cultural, economic and political implications, meanings, and values it is important to distinguish both between the various gambling categories and their organizational forms. Thus, the recreational or leisure impact is arguably more evident in the case of casinos and machine or even online gambling than with lotteries—although traditional drawings were a time-consuming, and therefore often criticized, spectacle attended by the crowds.

**Commercialized Public Gambling**

As a rule, public games of mere chance fell under a legal ban. Yet, the process of shaping modern commercialized gambling oscillates between exclusion, marginalization and integration, between overall prohibition and licensed regulation. At the core is the making of what Gherardo Ortalli has named the “Gambler-State,” the European\textsuperscript{47} origins of which can be traced back to thirteenth-century licensed public gambling venues. To other scholars, however, it is a Renaissance-phenomenon, manifest in state-licensed lotteries (from the fourteenth century) and the taxation of playing cards (from the sixteenth century). In any of these cases gambling served as a privileged means for raising revenues. The main drivers for this kind of regulation were urgent financial needs of cities, institutions and organizations, costly wars and bureaucracy, ubiquitous poverty, the lack of an efficient tax system and the centralizing efforts of political powers. Everywhere, organization, regulation and exploitation tended to take the form of a monopoly. Contrary to what has been suggested, states or governments have always been key players in the gambling scene, in that they stimulated and/or taxed demand. Although private entrepreneurial profit was never excluded and private entrepreneurs were essential for the setting up and expansion of lotteries and casinos in Europe, the State sought to maximize revenues either by claiming the biggest possible shares of profits or by organizing gambling directly without intermediaries, thus in some cases turning from the farming-out system to state-led games. As late as 1969 the Prévost commission in Quebec wanted gambling to be socialized—“Il faut socialiser le jeu.”\textsuperscript{48} Defining time, space and


\textsuperscript{46} McMillen, “Understanding Gambling,” 23.

\textsuperscript{47} On monopolized, state controlled gambling in India in the fourth century B.C., see Charanabail Panduranga Bhatta, *Dice-play in Sanskrit Literature* (Delhi: Amar Prakashan, 1985).

extent of licit gambling ultimately served the purpose of a more efficient control and exploitation. The underlying logic was economic, the aim was to maximize revenue, not to minimize gambling. Notwithstanding the impact of religious and moral concerns, the rhetoric of orderly life and ethics more than once served to conceal the economic imperative. New taxes on playing cards illustrated this. In Castile (1568), Naples (1577) and Valencia (1604), the prohibition of dice games coincided with the introduction of such taxes.49

As regards their appeal, legalization and organization, games of chance should not be treated as a unity. Gambling practices not only differ over time, they are also characterized by synchronic diversity. Clifford Geertz’s influential study “Deep Play,” for example, clearly distinguishes core (betting on cockfights) and peripheral gambling (“sheer-chance gambling games”).50 In another context, the Diet of the German Confederation could reasonably argue in 1845 that, after the abolition of casinos, the vast majority of those frequenting them would not turn to lotteries. I therefore distinguish three categories. One is spatial, and two are game-specific.

The “Ingenious Lot”51

As to lotteries, the fiscal logic underlying the promotion of public gambling is obvious. From their appearance in the fourteenth century—in the “classical” form of draw lotteries with money and/or merchandise prizes, but also, at the latest from the sixteenth century, as “instant” schemes—lotteries became the most important market in services in early modern European commercial and financial centres probably next to the trade in indulgences.53 The game quickly stripped off its original link to the drawing by lot of official functions, and became a vehicle of fundraising in its own right. The history of lotteries is also one of almost constant expansion. By the end of the eighteenth century, the entire range of European territories and the Spanish-American colonies operated public lotteries, many on a regular basis. In spite of setbacks during the nineteenth century, when state lotteries were abolished in Britain, France, and Sweden (as well as in the USA), other countries introduced them. In 1966 there were 50 countries with state lotteries, and there are over a hundred today (regional lotteries included). Only recently have lotteries ceased to be the most important sector of legalized public gambling, responsible for the largest share of global gambling revenues.

51 Pierre Richelet, Dictionnaire françois (Geneva, 1680), defines the lottery as “sort ingénieux.”
53 Garvía, Loterías, 16. On technicalities, see the chapter by Thierry Depaulis in this volume.
The lottery-principle was even introduced in state financial affairs such as loans. A project for the repayment of shares of a loan as they were drawn randomly in instalments was discussed in Genoa around 1300. Loans took the form of lotteries, and vice versa. The often-mentioned Florentine lottery of 1530 was in fact a forced loan. From 1694 to 1769 the English state lotteries were loans raised by means of a lottery. While domestic (and sometimes even

55 On Florence, see Giovanni Rezasco, “Il giuoco del lotto,” Giornale Ligustico di archeologia, storia e letteratura 12, 3–4 (1884): 196–225 (209); on Britain, see James Raven in this volume.
local) lottery markets were protected and strictly regulated, each “national” lottery aspired to open foreign markets for itself. Regardless of several examples of reciprocal, cross-border authorizations, competition by foreign lotteries, unlicensed domestic “under-lotteries” or so-called “blue lotteries,” side-bets, and lottery-like games (biribis, for example) usually were outlawed. Secondary markets evolved. In nineteenth-century Naples the Camorra competed with the State in accepting lower stakes than those requested by the official lotto.56

Even at occasions when state expenses, civic or charitable purposes and works and the like were to be financed by way of lotteries, the organizers and promoters addressed the materialistic spirit rather than some “play element.” As a sixteenth-century chronicler put it, people staked “their money in the hope to make more out of it.”57 To late medieval and early modern theorists however, the best was to combine the spes lucri with good causes. Various schemes, in which both economic and psychological considerations merged, were worked out and fine-tuned to attract as many players as possible. To be successful, lotteries had to be “bien subtillement inventée,” as the Spanish Netherlands’ governor Margaret of Parma put it in 1565.58 One hundred and fifty years later Lord Halifax stated that the schemes and chances had to be “finely contrived, for in a lottery where the hopes of good fortune is the chief allurement, the more scope and swing is given to people’s expectations and fancies the more certain you are to draw them in.”59 A range of schemes was invented and introduced, sometimes explicitly designed to bring the game into the reach of the less well-to-do (the Genoese-style lotto was to become the most notorious of all “cheap” lotteries). Class-lotteries consisting of a series of draws aimed at continued participation for unfortunate ticket-holders—after having paid for each class. To the Prussian king Frederick it was a matter of fact that a lottery of different classes makes more impression on the people than a lottery drawn at once (“une loterie de différentes classes . . . fera plus d’impression sur le public, qu’une qui se tire tout à la fois”).60

Nevertheless, like other economic innovations, lotteries challenged the traditional conceptions of order, politics and ethics. In 1522, the Spanish Habsburg ambassador in Venice heaped scorn on the (politically untrustworthy) Venetians for their greed which drove them so far as to “have an institution which they call lotto.”61 And as late as 1612, when England resorted to lotteries to finance

56 Marco Monnier, _La Camorra: notizie storiche_ (Florence: G. Barbèra, 1862), 63.
58 Louis-Prosper Gachard, _Correspondance de Guillaume le Taticurne, prince d’Orange_ (Brussels, Leipzig, and Ghent: C. Muquard, 1850), 2: 114 (Margaret to King Philipp II, July 22, 1565).
the colonization of Virginia, the Spanish ambassador in London referred to that move as “a generall kynde of begging.”62 Already in the fifteenth century, Johannes von Breitenbach perceived, and condemned, the lottery as a voluntary yet regressive tax, an implicit and subtle exaction from the poor (“implicita et subtilis pauperum exactio”).63

Lotteries were disapproved of mainly for economic and social reasons. In 1715, the gambling and finance expert John Law summed up the current arguments against them as follows:

Public lotteries do less harm than private ones but are contrary to the interest of the state; they wrong the public, taking the little money that they earn from their work, rendering them unhappy with their condition, and giving them the desire to enrich themselves by resorting to chance and fortune [à la chance], the servants having no more money are tempted to steal from the master so as to have funds for the lotteries, and the bourgeois spend money on these lotteries that they should use for their business and to pay their creditors. It is certain that these projects should not be permitted in well run states.64

Ironically, in France, the lottery of the Compagnie des Indes—a lottery loan with annuity prizes and no blanks—was established to remove from the market the shares issued by Law.65 Yet objections of the kind that Law made were regularly raised by bourgeois critics as advice to feudal lords or other critiques of various forms of misgovernment.

Besides resorting to the “good causes” and “publick exigence” (Francis Hutcheson) arguments, advocates of the game tried to prove that lotteries were neither illicit divinations (sortilegii) to forecast things hidden in the future, nor amounted to gambling at all but instead represented a legitimate use of lots for distribution. Others advocated lotteries as just another kind of commercial activity or, more specifically, a purchase of hope (emptio spei) like the buying of the future haul of a fisherman’s net.66 If they were to be considered games of chance, they still differed from cards or dice in nature and circumstance, above all because there is a time-lag between the acquisition of a ticket and the drawing which was said to have a tempering effect on “passions.” The debate about lotteries’ exact nature continues, quite remarkably, to this day. Even the “perverse view” which denies lotteries their gambling character

62 Ewen, Lotteries, 76. It was not until 1763, that the Spanish crown resorted to permanent lotteries.
66 Claude-François Ménestrier, Dissertation des lotteries (Lyon: Laurent Bachelu, 1700), 34. For earlier references, see Ceccarelli, Il gioco e il peccato, 413.
Manfred Zollinger ("perverse" since they operate on a pure chance basis) shows a surprising degree of resilience. Recently, with technological innovations like Video Lottery Terminals, electronic Keno as well as other forms of machine supported lotteries and high-frequency games, the notion of lotteries being very close to other gambling games seems to gain crucial support. As a matter of fact, the

Figure I.2  In front of a lottery (lotto) office in Vienna. Men and women from the lower and middle classes check the latest lotto draw results. Coloured engraving by Johann Wenzel Zinke after a drawing by Joseph Cajetan, published in Theaterzeitung, January 1845 (Editor’s collection)

(“perverse” since they operate on a pure chance basis) shows a surprising degree of resilience. Recently, with technological innovations like Video Lottery Terminals, electronic Keno as well as other forms of machine supported lotteries and high-frequency games, the notion of lotteries being very close to other gambling games seems to gain crucial support. As a matter of fact, the

68 Miers, Regulating Commercial Gambling, 452.
market-shares of such games have risen considerably within the framework of an overall restructuring of the gambling market’s composition.

**Betting Habits**

The Genoese lotto, by far the most popular lottery in many parts of Europe until the nineteenth century—and still alive in Italy and Austria—originates from bets on the names of future holders of government drawn by lot.\(^6^9\) In Genoa, this variety of chance games contributed to the relative decline of other betting habits which, throughout Italy, had become a large scale business during the sixteenth century. In Florence and Rome betting turned into an institutionalized, regulated and licensed business. Commercial agents (sen-sali)—brokers, or bookmakers avant la lettre—were managing it, sometimes in cooperation with merchants and bankers.\(^7^0\) Future events liable to cause betting included the scheduled arrival of galleys (here, the stakes partly functioned as insurance premiums), the election of Popes and the nomination of cardinals, or, most frequently, the sex of an unborn child. This latter sort of betting was extremely popular among the well-to-do in Flanders, where, according to a treatise on Exchanges published in 1542, merchants used it as a paragon for gambling on exchange rates.\(^7^1\) To quote Fernand Braudel, “the real games of commodity trading mingled with the artificial games of money trading.”\(^7^2\) Trade and risk (periculum sortis) merged with gambling practices. Betting and insurance, commerce and “adventure” became almost synonymous. But legislators as well as theologians remained anxious to draw a line between them, sometimes condemning betting while applauding insurance on merchandise in the same breath, thus making the gambler the antithesis of the merchant.\(^7^3\) In 1567, betting on price differentials in the corn market was prohibited in the Kingdom of Naples, since this kind of “gambling” (giuocare) was said to raise the price.\(^7^4\) As in all subsequent discussions about the connection between gambling and speculative businesses, the dangers of gambling were opposed

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71 Cristóbal de Villalón, *Provechoso tratado de cambios y contrataciones de mercaderes, y reprohabion de usura* (Valladolid: Francisco Fernándes de Córdoba, 1542), xxiii–xxv.


73 See Marcantonio Savelli, *Pratica Universale* (Venice: Paolo Baglioni, 1697), 284, with a 1464 Florentine prohibition; see also Ceccarelli, *Il gioco e il peccato*.

74 Domenico Vario, *Pragmaticae edicta decreta interdicta regiaeque sanctiones Regni Neapolitani* (Naples: Antonio Cervoni, 1772), 4: 60.
to, and separated from, the respectability of mercantile or financial transactions involving risk-taking.

By the eighteenth century betting was identified as a typical British habit infesting the European continent like other symptoms of Anglomania (the game of whist, for example). But only after the suppression of the English State lottery, and certainly not before the late nineteenth century, betting transgressed the boundaries of a social minority directly involved in horse breeding and horse racing. According to Eric Hobsbawm, the “illegal but almost totally honest network of financial transactions” of betting which spread from the 1880s onward was “spectacularly proletarian.” Popular gambling practice was in fact driven into illegality by the 1906 Street Betting Act, a striking example for class determined legislation which outlawed off-course cash betting. As Ross McKibbin put it, mass betting was “the most successful form of working-class self-help in the modern era.” McKibbin even argues that it was popular betting that made horse racing the “national” sport of the British. Yet, not unlike early modern Italy (and Catalonia), Britain remained faithful to betting as a “very much cross-class activity.”

As a rule, commercial betting was operated by bookmakers. A serious challenge to their business developed from around 1865 onward, when Joseph Oller invented the pari-mutuel (mutual betting) system, also known as “totalisator.” However, Britain never embraced this pool-betting system as much as other countries did. In France, it was made into a monopoly. A New York Times article on “French Lottery Schemes” (July 11, 1887) stated, that “recent attempts to stop betting on race courses only ended in the institution of betting with a machine instead of by lists.” Some opposed the allegedly more rational (and exclusive) form of traditional horse race betting to the pure gambling character of the machine, where virtually anything could be bet on. In fact, that happened after the Second World War, when modern lotto based on the totalisator-principle was invented.

Undoubtedly a mass market phenomenon in Britain, betting became popular on the Continent with the adoption of football (soccer) pools (Sweden 1934, Switzerland 1938, Finland 1940), usually called Toto (from totalisator). It contributed considerably to the rise of the betting industry which was characterized by a heavy concentration of ownership. However, modern lotto proved a strong competitor to football pools. Its market share grew at their cost—as well as at the cost of traditional lotteries. Even in the United Kingdom the introduction of the National Lottery (that is, lotto) in 1994 had a severe impact. On the other hand, online betting increased participation. Globally, betting is the largest sector of interactive gambling (48.3 percent of Gross Gambling Yield [wagers minus payouts] in 2013). But with a 14 percent share of global gambling revenues (admittedly a problematic indicator), betting is behind lotteries, casinos, and gambling machines.

Gambling Reserves

Public casinos are the most ostentatious socio-spatial reserves of commercialized, regulated and supervised gambling. Operating them always required a license subject to payment. According to the size and volume of the “bank,” financing could be provided either by individual entrepreneurs who were also...

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Figure 1.4 Football pool betting advertised as a family activity in 1935. Littlewoods was one of the major British pool betting companies (Reproduced with kind permission of the National Football Museum, Manchester)
active in day-to-day business, by pools of investors or by joint-stock companies, thus providing the business with a more and more corporate structure. Historically, there were various forms of public and semi-public gambling houses, but modern casinos owe most of their characteristics to the emergence of recreational tourism focused on luxurious spas. Parisian gambling tycoons played an important role in the development of most of Germany’s best-known casino-spas. It was clear from the outset that gambling casinos represented venues of both profit and leisure. François Blanc (1806–1877), who made Homburg one of the most notorious nineteenth-century European gambling places, was said to have, in a masterly fashion, “concealed the green cloth of the gambling tables under the veils of glamour and elegant amusements.” When taking over Monte Carlo in 1864, he continued to do so on an even larger scale. In view of the current discussion about the euphemistic linking of gambling “with the idea of entertainment,” the leisure and entertainment factor in casino gambling is hardly a recent invention.

Since the nineteenth century, casinos have been surrounded by clichés and myths, a good deal of them connected with Monte Carlo. Literary or journalistic accounts lamenting the presence of petty bourgeois and folks on Cook’s Tours only reinforced the perception of an exclusive gambling exclave. Monte Carlo served as a model, if only in terms of marketing. Las Vegas, the other emblematic casino city which had superseded Reno’s former leading position, lacked Monte Carlo’s air of aristocracy and “high society” (which it tried to emulate at least superficially), but compensated for it with the frontier mentality, Hollywood-style entertainment, and megalomania. Following the elimination of organized crime’s visible involvement in Las Vegas’ business, stock exchange-listed corporations began to dominate the gambling industry. The globalization of casino gambling is mainly driven by transnational operations led by a few enterprises. Ostensibly it is a western-dominated process. When Macau in 2002 lifted its gambling monopoly and admitted new gambling venues, Las Vegas Sands and MGM opened resort-casinos in 2002 and 2007 respectively. As a result, the share of gross income of the biggest domestic company, Sociedade de Jogos de Macau, fell from 75.5 percent in 2005 to 24.4 percent in 2008.

84 Quoted in Egon Caesar Conte Corti, Der Zauberer von Homburg und Monte Carlo [1932] (Graz and Vienna: Styria, 1952), 217.
87 Zhidong Hao, Macau: History and Society (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011), 76–7.
found in Macau—“Asia’s Las Vegas.” Both in terms of its gambling market’s size and annual growth, Macau (previously known as the “Oriental Monte Carlo”) swiftly surpassed its American homologue. While global gambling revenue’s growth is led by Asian markets (Macau, Singapore and Cambodia), 2013 statistics reveal a global market share for casinos of 35.1 percent (32 percent in 2007), as compared to 28.4 percent for lotteries and the above-mentioned 14 percent for betting.

At the same time, most European casinos face a crisis, attributed by many observers to increased regulation but also to shifts in preferred gambling habits: some say the “great age” of the casino in the Old World is over. Doubtlessly, the economic recession is another factor. While the Gross Gambling Yield of Spanish land-based casinos rose from 273 million Euros in 1998 to 557 million in 2007, it fell to 302 million (including tips) in 2013. Returns from Greek casinos increased from 547 million Euros in 2001 to 804 million in 2007, but fell to

89 European Gaming and Betting Association, Sports Betting: Commercial and Integrity Issues (available online).
339 million in 2012 and to 306 million in 2013. However, three more casinos licensed for Austria in 2014 and new licenses for casinos in France, where their number will rise to over 200, point in another direction. Also, in 2013, the construction of “Eurovegas,” an “integrated casino resort” planned by Las Vegas Sands near Madrid, was hailed as a remedy for Spain’s severe economic crisis. The project was cancelled that same year.

**Machines**

One major change in the field of casino gambling concerns slot machines. In the 1930s, the Austrian casino company’s *Officielle Casino-Zeitung* praised them as part and parcel of modern gambling. These so-called “Vorsaalspiele” (entrance-hall games) were depicted as “noble ‘hors-d’oeuvres’” to the “big” table-games. By contrast, in 1991 a British Minister of State rejected “the Las Vegas style serried ranks of gaming machines . . . as alien to the character and atmosphere of casinos” in Britain. Machines “have transformed entirely the architecture, ambiance, and cultural reality of the casino.” The change that occurred since can be illustrated by the 94 percent of Gross Gambling Revenues produced by machines in French casinos in 2006. In 16 out of 23 European countries slot machines made up for 50 percent or more of casinos’ gross gambling revenue. Machine gambling in casinos follows the logic of industrial mass production and consumption. As one representative of “Européenne de casinos” put it: “A casino is run like a super-market with slot-machines as a loss-leader which distributes little yet often.” In Macau, US-Companies try to “westernize” Chinese gambling “habits” by increasing the share of slot machines, at the same time “asianizing” the gambling design.

Outside the casinos, slot machines have invaded pubs and cafés. Arcades and other specialized venues have mushroomed in less fashionable quarters of European cities. In Australia, “poker machines are ubiquitous across the social landscape of . . . club and leisure venues,” attracting 60 percent of total revenues.


92 Quoted in Miers, *Regulating Commercial Gambling*, 500.

93 Kavanagh, *Dice, Cards, Wheels*, 218.


gambling expenditure by 2005 (continuing on to 2012). In 2009 and 2010, some 60 percent of “problem gamblers” contacting a Finnish helpline reported slot machines as the main type of games played. The Norwegian government has imposed drastic restrictions on slot machines. Slot machine gambling is not only a major topic in the discussion of “problem gambling,” it also raises fundamental questions about the quality of gambling. When judged in view of the (modern) “colonization, rationalization and commercialization” of gambling it may appear “characterless and mindless,” entailing no agonistic type of action. Reichertz et al. oppose this view. In search of meanings attributed by players to slot machine gambling, they analyse this activity as a means of staging and experiencing the agonistic.

A Lasting Challenge

Gambling has changed some of its appearances and instruments, and probably faster in the past decades than in previous centuries, but its basic schemes, regardless of technological innovations, can be traced way back into the past. Some of the assumptions and analyses in contemporary academic research do seem to lack awareness of this historical heritage. It pays to reconsider them. For example, mass consumption of gambling may not be a unique feature of “late modern capitalism,” especially when compared to the standardized and rationalized mass culture of lotto emerging in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Likewise, doubt should be cast on the validity of the notion of a “McDonaldization of gambling” associated with the spread of gambling machines. Even if gambling can be approached as any other legitimate, even “highly respected,” industry the impression of “moral neutrality” caused by the “continuing decline of moral condemnation of gambling” is probably misleading. There are still people and interest groups who consider gambling

99 Arto Kuuluvainen et al., The Gaming Market in Finland (Turku: Turku School of Economics, 2012), 26 and 29–30 (available online at The Gaming Market in Finland.pdf).
101 Reichertz et al., Jackpot, 215–27.
immoral (let alone irrational). Still, as a general rule it is important to ask for vested interests whenever ethical motivation and moral concerns are at issue.

Gambling may no longer be perceived as an “enchanting witchery” (Leather-More, Or, Advice Concerning Gaming, 1668) or as “the infernal counterpart to the music of the heavenly hosts” (Walter Benjamin)—problems connected with it are now increasingly discussed in clinical terms—but it is still an important cultural, social and economic medium surrounded by much of the ambiguity which constitutes its cultural legacy. “Dealing in Chances”107 has been a matter of concern, business, and passion, not only for governments, entrepreneurs, and gamblers but also for those who have left behind the attitude of “virtuous disdain” in order to deal with that still puzzling challenge to academic research.

The analysis of gambling confronts social, cultural and institutional phenomena at work in different periods. Paolo Macry, in his suggestive study of Neapolitan lotto, reminds us of what is at stake: manifestations of categories like randomness and calculation, risk and utility, rational behaviour and behaviour based on “magical” beliefs, the relationship between the circulation of material and immaterial commodities, the confrontation between state and society. These categories are located at the crossroads of disciplines and methodological approaches.108 The purpose of their analysis lies in the better understanding of how societies, or parts of them, have been dealing with these categories, and with the competing concepts of skill and chance associated with games, entertainment, leisure, work, and the correlated quest for gain. The questions as to what degree gambling in its different forms reflects—sometimes plainly and sometimes distortedly—or contradicts the making of the modern world, of how participation is associated with economic growth and the distributive patterns of wealth, of how societies have dealt and deal with random riches still leave much open space for further research.

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This book does not aspire to fill every gap left by older literature, or compensate for all the scholarly shortcomings mentioned above. However, its contributors—renowned scholars from a broad range of disciplines—deserve our gratitude for providing a deeper understanding of many of the problems and challenges related to gambling. Their analyses, covering a wide topical and chronological space, undoubtedly will advance our knowledge of the complexity of the past and present of that phenomenon called gambling, and underscore its ongoing importance in as many aspects as the chapters deal with.

Part I focuses on pre-modern gambling practices and discourses, from the middle ages to the nineteenth century. Discussing the relationship between morals and economy, Gherardo Ortalli, in his chapter, “The Ancient Roots of

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Modern Gambling,” puts new findings on public gambling in medieval Italy into a wider context. He demonstrates how economic recovery from A.D. 1000 to roughly 1340 not only helped to develop the fundamental concepts and instruments of modern economics, but also led to a more permissive attitude regarding ludic behaviour and its regulation. In Italy, as in other parts of Europe, time and space for licit public gambling were granted with one eye on the possibility of transforming it into a source of fiscal revenue. Many of the issues related to chance games—for example motivations for their regulation and the organizing role of public authorities, the compromise between economic demands and those of morality—resurface in contemporary discourses and practices. However, as Thierry Depaulis states in his contribution entitled “Bingo! A Material History of Modern Gaming,” there is still much need for sound scholarly studies on the history of gambling. His analysis of the evolution of gambling media from the fourteenth century to 1800 no doubt falls into this category. Depaulis identifies intermittent phases of gambling expansion and regulated public gambling, as well as subsequent shifts in the geographical location of gambling hotspots. His range of subjects covers playing cards, lotteries and lottery-like games, as well as the origins of roulette and the rise of modern casino gambling. Jeroen Puttevils shows how betting and, above all, lotteries became an important feature of the culture of risk-taking and capitalism in the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Low Countries. Moving from aspects of participation to organization and professionalization, the author highlights the commitment of merchants and bankers to this particular branch of financial markets. Lotteries were indicative of pre-modern financial refinement, while those specializing in the business acquired the status of much-coveted financial advisers. As promoters of lotteries, private entrepreneurs and governments alike were involved in a drive to modernize state finances. At about the same time, a late Renaissance intellectual—and inveterate gambler—such as Girolamo Cardano failed to mention lotteries in his comments on gambling which, nevertheless, reveal much of the ambiguity still surrounding it. Sergius Kodera discusses the juxtaposition of “Gambling, the Art of Memory and Magic” in Cardano’s Liber de ludo aleae, and points to the author’s ambivalent attitude to chance games. Cardano provides medico-sociological and stochastic as well as divinatory expositions of his topic. The gaming table for him serves as a laboratory setting. Yet, as Kodera’s careful reading of two case histories delivered by Cardano shows, theory was not regarded as a sufficient prerequisite for the successful practice of gambling, and predictions on the outcome relied both on craftiness and astrological calculations. Turning to the eighteenth century, lotteries are the most visible and popular specimen of gambling across Europe. James Raven, in his “Debating the Lottery in Britain c. 1750–1830,” argues that the adoption and enforcement of national lotteries must be seen in relation to the character and growth of modern state power. Drawing attention to a hitherto neglected aspect, Raven analyses the practice of illegal lotteries in Britain and exposes both elements of popular recreation and attitudes of public policy. In a comparative European perspective, he discusses the tension between
fiscal expediency and moral—yet socially filtered—concern surrounding lotteries and other forms of gambling. British exceptionalism in protecting the state monopoly is made apparent. Discursive tensions of a different kind are analysed by Peter Schnyder in his article on gambling and subjectivity around 1800. The author argues that by the very fact of the exclusion which gambling faced throughout the centuries, it maintained its direct relationship with what can be called higher, or morally sound culture. In view of gambling, mathematical discourses established the problem of rationality and subjectivity, the latter becoming a matter of interest for enlightened anthropologists while the emphasis shifted towards questions about the passion for gambling and the psychological constitution of gamblers. Eventually, this enabled the gambler to become an emblematic figure for post-enlightenment romantic poets and artists—not at least for Fyodor Dostoevsky.

The contributions in Part II are dedicated to practices of and discourses about gambling mainly in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Using Michel Foucault’s concept of dispositif in her chapter “Cultural and Social Meanings of Gambling,” Riitta Matilainen compares the evolution of gambling cultures in Finland and Sweden. She demonstrates how discourses, practices, and regulations of gaming in these countries are influenced by the Lutheran church and monopolies as regulatory instruments, as well as by interpretations and formations of the welfare state. National peculiarities of commercialized gambling are analysed both as a constituent of national identity and part of everyday life. Roberto Garvía reminds us that understanding gambling is not an easy task for economic theory which has rational, risk-averse economic actors in mind. In his contribution on the consequences of syndicated play, that is to say the sharing of lottery tickets, he stresses that lottery play is also a socially embedded practice which can transform a lottery ticket from a purely economic asset into a carrier of interpersonal ties. This has economic and fiscal consequences which Garvía analyses for Spain—where syndicated playing has a long historical tradition—and for the United States. While on the one hand syndicate play affects the size of lottery markets by increasing expenditure, it diminishes the regressivity of the lottery tax on the other. As regressivity is one of the traditional charges levelled against cheap lotteries and the participation of the poor, Jens Beckert and Mark Lutter examine the causes of socially stratified demand behaviour in lottery markets. Their study on the inverse relationship between socio-economic position and lottery participation lays bare the factors that explain this pattern. Using survey data, they test structural, cultural, and network approaches and are able to demonstrate that self-perceived social deprivation and educational disadvantage, fatalistic value orientation and, most strongly, social context are relevant factors in explaining lottery consumption among lower income households. Interestingly, the absence or denial of the Protestant work ethic shows no significant effect on the poor’s lottery playing, whereas precisely this ethic seems to be a relevant cultural factor for higher income individuals who keep aloof from gambling. Lothar Hübl analyses a special segment of the public gambling market. He researches the structure and
performance of German casinos from 1989 to 2011 and provides evidence of a relative decline of this sector. His analysis is accompanied by a short historical account of casinos from the Nazi Period to the first decades after World War II.

The contributions of Part III deal with theoretical and practical issues related to gambling, even where it is absent. Thus gambling games did not fit into Johan Huizinga’s theory of the play element of culture. It may therefore seem odd to insert an article on him into a volume on gambling. Yet, his famous *Homo ludens* is one of the most influential books on play and has been discussed by philosophers and sociologists such as Georges Bataille and Roger Caillois, whose own theories owe a great deal to Huizinga’s. Willem Otterspeer, in his chapter on “games and passion,” while aware of Huizinga’s quasi-omission of gambling, focuses on the moral significance of passion—not alien to the discourses on gambling—in both the Dutch historian’s work and intellectual biography. Otterspeer comes to the conclusion that *Homo ludens* is a critique of culture in the modern age and basically an anti-modernist manifesto deeply concerned with the moral reductionism of modern psychology. In prevailing discourses passion has been replaced by pathology. Gerda Reith, in her study on “pathological gambling in an age of Chance,” focuses on the contemporary critique of gambling which is perceived as pathological. She does so not in view of the gamblers themselves, but rather targets western societies and their responses to gambling. The author stresses the crucial notion of the modern consumption ethic with its imperative of the “appropriate,” that is to say consumption which is individually self-controlled, taking place within a context of gambling’s proliferation and increasing economic deregulation. In this respect, the discourse of “pathological” gambling which is supposed to be checked by “responsible gaming” reveals much of the contradictory character of modern consumer societies. While exposing one’s money to the operation of chance is classified and rejected as “the other” by some scholars (Gerda Reith’s analysis aptly demonstrates this), Reuven Brenner, in his chapter “Gambling and Speculation: Perceptions and Reality,” aims to bring gambling back to the centre of the stage. He reminds us of the ubiquity of risk and uncertainty in human activities and argues that leaping into uncertainty, based on subjective probabilities, may offer rewards for the benefit of societies. Distinguishing gambling as a pastime from gambling as a financial option for getting rich “by chance,” it is the latter that leads to considerations about the motives for playing the lottery, the notion of “addiction,” the legitimacy of randomness in losing or gaining riches, the relationship between insurance and gambling, the links between gambling and capital markets, and, last but not least, the role of governmental regulations in the individual “pursuit of happiness.”