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The Moral Dilemma of High Stakes

Gambling in Native Communities

by

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M.A. in Humanities

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of Master of Arts in Humanities

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Sudbury, Ontario

September 9, 1997

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0-612-31450-2

Abstract

In Canada today, Native people grapple with an increasingly bleak economy. According to Statistics Canada, only forty-three per cent of Aboriginal people have jobs; whereas, the employment average for other Canadians is sixty-one per cent. The Canadian average annual income is \$24,876 but Native Canadians receive \$16,560 per annum. Eight per cent of mainstream Canadians receive social assistance; twenty-nine per cent of Natives do (Fisher 16). This perpetual marginalization has spurred many First Nations communities to pursue commercial gaming as a source of economic salvation. In this paper I will examine the legacy of gambling in Native culture and the ethical dilemmas facing bands who attempt to use gaming operations as a solution to economic ills.

Table of Contents

Abstract	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Introduction	v-ix
Chapter One	Historical Overview of Gaming Practices 1-33
Chapter Two	The Need For Economic Self-Sufficiency 34-60
Chapter Three	The Moral Dilemma of High Stakes Gambling 61-76
Chapter Four	The Community Interviews 77-102
Chapter Five	Discussion and Conclusions 103-133
Endnotes	134-155
Works Cited	156-168

Introduction

The objective of this thesis project is to explore the moral dilemma facing Native communities that use commercial gaming as a tool for economic development. The purpose of the study is to assess the positive and negative outcomes of high stakes gambling in First Nations communities. The intent of the project is to facilitate further discussion on a topic of utmost importance to bands throughout Canada.

In the process of examining this issue it is important to remember that First Nations people are not a culturally homogeneous group of people and that there is great diversity among the 444,000 Natives of Canada. It is hoped, however, that the findings will be relevant to some of the 577 bands of various sizes that exist on 26,000 square kilometers of land in this country (Frideres 79). Although there are six cultural categories and ten major linguistic groups in Canada, I believe some of the issues arising from this discussion will be of national significance. In examining the transcontinental phenomenon of gambling, I have included Native American experiences with gaming. Since many Native people view the Canada-U.S. border as an

artificial European invention, I have acknowledged this attitude in my discussion.

This work has been conducted with the awareness that First Nations people do not adhere to a single life philosophy, religious belief or moral code. There are considerable differences in community codes throughout the continent; however, it is generally accepted that Aboriginal people do hold fundamental world-views that are different from those of the dominant Euro-Western culture (Sharing the Harvest 94).

As I set out to research the history of gaming practices in Native culture, I did so with the knowledge that history is not an exact science. I was cognizant of the fact that "past events have been recorded and interpreted by human beings who have understood them through the filter of their own values, perceptions and general philosophies of life" (Looking Forward Vol. 1, 32). This reality is apparent in the journals and letters left by Europeans who observed Native gaming practices. Because the non-Native historical tradition is rooted in Western scientific methodology and emphasizes scholarly documentation and written records, it is often perceived as biased by First Nations. Non-Native scholars attempt to deal in "objective historical truth" or to marshal facts to support a particular interpretation of

past events (Looking Forward 33). I have pored over the work of prominent Western historians in order to discover whether or not gaming is a Native tradition. This is "the Western humanist intellectual tradition" as I understand it (33). It stresses the march of progress and the inevitability of societal evolution. In preparing this thesis I have attempted to honor both the academic tradition of the university and the oral tradition of the Native community.

The Native approach to history is neither linear nor immersed in the notions of progress and evolution. One of the challenges of conducting research of this nature is to balance the reliance on the oral and the literate forms of knowledge. As Vine Deloria maintains in his essay, Red Earth, White Lies, only ten per cent of the information that First Nations possess is presently in print and available for discussion (11). In the dominant culture "the written archive" has historically held primacy over the oral tradition, according to James Clifford (340). This reliance on the written record has made it more difficult for investigators, such as myself, to argue the legitimacy of the unwritten tribal record. From respected mainstream researchers such as Stewart Culin, Alex Whitney, Reven Brenner and Keith Thomas, I have gathered information on

documented cases of Native gaming involvement. This is the accepted literate form of knowledge that is valued and demanded in the Euro-Western tradition. I have discovered the eye-witness accounts of voyageurs, missionaries, traders and explorers detailing Native gaming customs. In the Euro-Western university setting, the field notes provided by non-Natives have been valorized over the largely undocumented tribal life. Clifford refers to this as the "invisible (or unheard) in the surviving record." Frequently, the "historian's methodical recitation of particulars" is the record that sways opinion in the classroom, the courtroom and the boardroom (340).

For modern Crown attorneys prosecuting First Nations who operate gaming outside of provincial sanctions, gambling would have had "to exist or not exist as an objective documentary fact persisting through time." Yet, as Clifford has claimed, oral societies leave "only sporadic and misleading traces." There is no way to "give voice to the silences in these histories," he says, because most of what is central to their existence is never written (340).

Clifford's perspective is echoed by Robin Ridington in his work, "Cultures in Conflict." Ridington believes that the oral tradition of First Nations people constitutes "a form of discourse that connects them to the land and to the

generations that have gone before" (276). Furthermore, he says that the oral tradition "allowed them to be remarkably flexible, adaptable, and ready to take advantage of variations in the resource potential of their environment" (277).

It was this consciousness of the disjuncture between the oral and literate modes that prompted me to incorporate a series of ethnographic interviews in this study. I am aware of the dangers of relying on a limited textual record; therefore, I believe the living voices of contemporary First Nations people will lend depth to this exploration of gaming practices. Further notes on methodology will be provided in Chapter Four.

Chapter One

Historical Overview of Gaming Practices

One of the first questions critics of gambling often ask is: "Has gambling been an integral part of the distinct society of Natives?" I believe that the historical record clearly illustrates that gaming has deep roots in Aboriginal culture. Recently First Nations, especially in Ontario, have engaged in legal battles to win a portion of the lucrative gambling market; provincial governments have been challenging the claim of Natives to the inherent right to run gaming houses on reserves without provincial licenses. The Crown has argued that there is nothing in the records to suggest that gambling as a commercial money-making activity forms any part of the culture of Native people (Sudbury Star A16). Although it is true that First Nations have not documented their gaming practices in writing, there are non-Native archival records describing the important role gambling has always played in the Native way of life. The games were not profit-making ventures as we understand

gaming today but valuables and necessities for survival were won and lost in the betting rituals.

The Supreme Court of Canada has also taken the position that Indian bands do not have a constitutionally protected right to operate casinos on reserves. The court ruled in 1996 that bands cannot claim an activity as a right unless they can prove that activity is part of their culture or heritage. Because gambling is not an integral part of the distinctive cultures of Aboriginal people, the judges believe, gaming cannot be considered an issue of self-government (Toronto Star A18). In the following historical overview of gaming practices it is demonstrated that gambling in Native communities dates back many generations and spans many geographical regions.

Archaeological Evidence

As Alex Whitney reports in Sports and Games the Indians Gave Us, archaeologists have found dice artifacts in Aboriginal communities from Canada to Panama. These items have appeared in various sizes and shapes and substantiate gambling's universality among Aboriginal people. Whitney says the gambling disks were made of wood, pottery, bone, horn, river and seashells, halved nutshells, fruit pits, and sticks carved out of deer bones, reeds and animals' teeth.

"Unlike the six-sided cubes we use today, Indian dice were almost always two-sided objects" (Whitney 51).

Methods of Play

The methods of play were forerunners of modern casino techniques. The players would toss their dice in a shallow basket or in a wooden cup or bowl. They would stake their belongings including arrows, blankets, pipes and horses on the flip of a gaming piece. It is known that the women of the Kiowa and Wichita tribes, for instance, played a game similar to parcheesi; Aztecs were noted for their version of backgammon, a popular betting game still (Whitney 51).

Similar gaming activities are described in the 1791 field notes of John Long, a British commentator on the manners and customs of the North American Indians. In his publication, Voyages and Travels of an Indian Interpreter and Trader, Long appears fascinated by a Chippeway game called Athtergain (miss none but catch all). He records that the game was played with a number of hard beans, black and white, one of which had small spots, and was called "the king." The beans were put into a shallow wooden bowl and shaken alternately by each party, who sat on the ground opposite to one another; whoever was dexterous enough to make the spotted bean jump out of the bowl, received of the

adverse party as many beans as there were spots. The rest of the beans did not count for anything (Long 52).

The universality of gaming is emphasized in the work of historian Stewart Culin as well. Dice games existed among 130 tribes belonging to 30 linguistic stocks, and from no one tribe does gambling appear to have been absent (Culin 44). In the 1992 edition of Games of the North American Indians, Culin asserts that precisely the same games were played by tribes belonging to unrelated linguistic stocks. From testimonials dating from 1744 to 1903, he notes that "there is no evidence that any of the games described were imported into America at any time either before or after the Conquest. On the other hand they appear to be the direct and natural outgrowth of aboriginal institutions in America. They show no modifications due to white influence" (Culin 32).

Quebec

To illustrate how far-ranging gambling was among Native people, Culin examined gaming activities across the continent. For example, the game of the dish, favoured by the Algonquian people of Quebec, employed nine little flat round bones, black on one side, white on the other. These were stirred up and shaken in a large wooden dish. Loss or

gain depended upon the largest number of one colour. A similar game, paquessen, required that the little bones be thrown in the air with one hand; they fell upon a robe spread on the ground like a carpet. The number of one colour determined loss or gain of the previously assembled stakes (Culin 49).

New Brunswick

In New Brunswick disks of caribou bone and wooden counting sticks were used by the Amalecite Indians for the game altestagen. The disks were placed at random in a plate which was held in both hands and struck sharply on the ground to make the bones fly in the air. A player would continue as long as he was scoring, taking wooden counter sticks from the pile according to his throw. When the pile of sticks was exhausted, each having obtained part, the game continued until one player won them all. Three plain sticks counted one point; the three carved sticks counted four points each and the snake-like stick was kept till last. It was equal to three plain sticks and a throw that counted three points was necessary to take it (Culin 50).

Saskatchewan

In Saskatchewan the Cree people fashioned implements for a game called pahkasahkimac. Their equipment consisted

of four small bone diamonds and four hook-shaped objects of bone (claws) and a wooden bowl eight and a half inches in diameter. The dice were two-faced, one white and the other black; they were accompanied by a small beaded bag of red flannel. The game was played by any number of persons, either singly or in partnerships. The dice were placed in the bowl which was given a sharp downward movement with both hands. The count was determined as follows: All white sides up counted 100; all dark sides up, 80; seven white and one dark up, 30; white sides of all hook-shaped dice and of one diamond-shaped die up, 8; white sides of four diamond-shaped dice and of one hook-shaped die up, 4; each hook-shaped piece on edge, 2. One hundred points constituted a game (Culin 69).

Nova Scotia

These patterns noted in Quebec, New Brunswick and Saskatchewan were not unique to those regions. The Micmacs of Nova Scotia put a similar spin on their games. Players met in the wigwam and sat opposite each other with their legs crossed. The rock maple platter for the dice was placed between them, usually on a thick piece of leather or cloth. Score was kept with counting sticks. The bone dice had one plain face and one with a dotted cross. The six dice were

placed in the dish with marked faces down; one player would take the dish in both hands and raise it an inch or two off the ground. Then he would bring it down again with considerable force thus turning the dice. Counter sticks were used to indicate scores and unpaid winnings (Culin 76). Items to be lost or won included utensils, clothing, hunting weapons and household goods.

Manitoba

In Manitoba similar rituals revealed the creativity of the gamblers. The Ottawa Indians called their game buggasank or boggasah. The game pieces were small pieces of wood, bone or sometimes brass made by cutting up an old kettle. One side was stained black and the other side kept bright. The number of pieces varied, but was never fewer than nine. Players, sometimes twenty or thirty, sat opposite each other in a circle. The play consisted in striking the edge of the bowl in such a manner as to throw all the game pieces in the air. The manner in which they fell into the tray determined loss or gain (Culin 82).

British Columbia

Evidence of a gambling tradition has been documented in British Columbia as well.¹ The Niska tribes played a game

using a number of maple sticks marked with red or black rings or totemic designs. Two of the sticks were trumps. The object of the game was to guess in which of the two bundles of sticks (which were wrapped in cedar bark) the trump was hidden (Culin 240). The wooden gambling sticks were often ornate with inlaid disks and rectangles of abalone shell. Some of the cylindrical sticks were also carved in human figures (Culin 249).

Resourcefulness and Creativity

Native people employed a great variety of natural objects and appeared to be very resourceful in creating these games of chance. Both dice games and stick games were popular depending upon the locale. It is known that the Beaver, Sarsi and Cree manufactured stick-dice out of elk antlers; the Chippewa, Wyandot and Ottawa tribes of the Lakes region carved gambling sticks into elongated bird and animal shapes (Whitney 52). California tribes developed a game with four stick-dice, each with a different pattern. Each player tried to be the first to throw in sequence the full set of sticks with the patterned sides up. The first to reach a score of twelve points won the game. The same game was played with plum or peach stones, each marked on one side with dots numbering from two to twelve (Whitney 53).

The gaming patterns of the American Southwest were interesting as well. The Pueblo and Pima Indians created a stick-dice game with a counting board made of stones placed on the ground in a circle. The circle had four divisions of ten places each with openings at the four points of the compass. According to each player's toss of the dice, he moved a small twig around the circle. The winner was the first player to get his twig around the entire circle and back to its starting place (Whitney 53).

In Central Idaho the Nez Perce participated in a game using four flattened plum stones painted black on one side and unpainted on the other side. Each player was allowed only four tosses. There was only one scoring toss: four black sides up counted four points. A toss of four plain sides up, or any combination of plain or marked sides up disqualified a player. The first tosser to score twenty points was the winner (Whitney 54). These accounts prove that gaming activities followed similar themes no matter what the geographic location.

Festivals and Celebrations

Games of chance were sources of amusement during Native religious councils, festivals and celebrations. Europeans who witnessed the games often left hypercritical and

culturally biased judgments of the activities they observed. For example, the potlatch tradition in British Columbia was viewed as a type of gambling and dubbed a "curious donative festival," according to Johan Huizinga, author of Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture (58).

Europeans who witnessed the interaction among the Kwakiutl and Tlinkit tribes painted a negative picture of the ritual. Huizinga describes the potlatch as "a great solemn feast, during which one of the two groups, with much pomp and ceremony, makes gifts on a large scale to the other group for the express purpose of showing its superiority. The only return expected by the donors but incumbent on the recipients lies in the obligation of the latter to reciprocate the feast within a certain period and if possible to surpass it" (58). Contemporary Native critics claim that writings such as Huizinga produced in the 1930s misrepresent the purpose of First Nation gift-giving. They contend that the potlatch is not for "the pleasure of parading their superiority" but for the re-circulation of goods among the clan members. What Europeans interpreted as hostile and competitive is in actuality an exchange that reflects generosity and respect.

Huizinga writes that potlatches are held for all important events including birth, death, marriage,

initiation and the erection of a house or totem pole. Sacred songs, masks and ceremonies by medicine men are all part of the ritual. "But the main thing is the distribution of goods," Huizinga says. "The feast-giver squanders the possessions of the whole clan" (58). Throughout his discussion of the potlatch, Huizinga judges the process to be "wholesale destruction of one's possessions" or "frivolous destruction of one's goods" (59). He interprets the Native demonstration of "studied indifference to material values" as an adolescent contest which hinges on "winning, on being superior, on glory, prestige and ... revenge" (59). It is also suggested in his research that the communities who practiced potlatch are like "big gambling dens where, as a result of bets and challenges, reputations are made and whole fortunes exchange hands" (61). Of course, the use of such words as "squander" and "frivolous" underscores the lack of knowledge of the Native value system.

Although the conclusions drawn by the newcomers present questionable interpretations of Native culture, their detailed descriptions do give a colourful portrait of early festival life. Archaeologist David Boyle relates in his 1898 report that it was "only in connection with the midwinter and fall festivals that the practice of public

offerings was permitted. On these occasions there was high revelry" (Boyle 68). The favourite game of the Iroquois, gus-ka-eh, was played with a bowl and peach stones. "It was always a betting game in which the people divided by tribes. By established custom it was introduced as the concluding exercise on the last day of the Green Corn and the Harvest festivals, and also of the New Year's Jubilee" (Culin 114). And as Norman Bancroft Hunt points out in North American Indians, traditional powwows have generally always included betting games. "Powwows were occasions of feasting and gift giving, accompanied by singing, dancing, gambling and contests of skill" (Hunt 90). Festivities at the Sun Dance ceremony practiced by Plains Indians also featured gambling, according to historian Matthew W. Stirling. "Gambling often gripped the Indian with an intensity rivaling religious fervor," he concludes in his book, Indians of the Americas. "The Indian was fond of games of chance and skill. Not only man-to-man competition in foot racing and wrestling, but sports requiring team play and mass participation were widespread," he says. Sketches by W. Langdon Kihn accompanying Stirling's text depict Sioux warriors betting high stakes on a "sport which resembled the old pea-and-shell game" (Stirling 77). Elsewhere, singing Menominee men are pictured as gamblers compelled to stake their blankets,

pipes, even wives, on the flip of red and white disks. "The final winner of all counters takes the stakes, including the saddle, perhaps even the watching wife. In some tribes the losers become slaves of the winner" (Stirling 42).

In The World of the American Indian, we are told that "betting was heavy" on stickball or lacrosse (Grovenor 142). The Woodland tribes enjoyed a "wild ball game" where as many as three hundred young men slammed a hide covered clay sphere, and sometimes each other, with curved sticks. Elderly umpires guarded the stakes on the side; players piled up moccasins, bows, arrows and horses to bet on the game. "High stakes -- perhaps even an offer of slavery to an opponent -- were risked on many games. Some women were so addicted to gambling that they wagered household goods, children's clothing, and husbands' possessions -- a bet that could win the bettor a beating" (Grovenor 286).

Grovenor states that the Woodland tribes participated in a wide variety of games based on dexterity or on chance -- shooting arrows, playing a kind of soccer, tossing lances at a rolling disk, guessing which moccasin held a stone or marker, gambling by tossing split lengths of cane for scores determined by the number of convex or concave surfaces turned up, cat's cradle and others" (Grovenor 142). He adds that in New England, Natives worked hard at clearing land

and shaping articles from wood and stone, but "at leisure they sat and smoked, played games or gambled" (Grovenor 121).

Among the Cree, Missisauga, Nipissing and Ottawa tribes (circa 1896), passion for a contest called the moccasin game seems to have known no bounds. "This game was conspicuously a gambling game and was quite similar to the sleight-of-hand games of the whites," Culin states. A deer hide was spread upon the ground and the moccasins were arranged in a semi-circle. A player would hold up a bullet and then quickly thrust his hand under each moccasin in turn, leaving the bullet under one of them. This had to be done skillfully so the other players would not be sure which moccasin held the bullet. "The gambling consisted in betting where the bullet was" (Culin 343). So engrossed in the action did many players become that they staked first their guns, then their steel traps, then their implements of war, then their clothing and lastly their pipe and tobacco. This left the player "Nah-bah-wan-yah" or, as Culin explains, wearing "a piece of cloth with a string around his waist". This image from 1886 is clearly reminiscent of the contemporary reference "to lose one's shirt" while gambling.

The Apache apparently reveled in similar pastimes. Author Thomas E. Mails calls the people of this tribe

"inveterate gamblers." He writes that "wherever a few men gathered, games and wagers were the order of the day. Men and women alike bet on games, horse races, foot races, and wrestling matches" (Mails 192). All in all, the Apache were "good losers," he says.

Complexity of Gaming

The purpose and complexity of Native gambling activities often perplexed white observers, Culin notes in Games. This confusion and sometimes misguided interpretation led the outsiders to record culturally biased value judgments in their letters and journals. The Cheyenne of Montana reportedly created a game of dice complicated "by a system of counting so curious and arbitrary that it was almost impossible for a white man to learn it" (Culin 61). There were gender designated games as well and women's games were often scenes of intense ardor. The plum-stone game, for instance, was played with eight polished pieces, some blank and some marked with different hieroglyphics. The pieces were shaken in a tin cup and then tossed on a blanket. Every possible combination of hieroglyphics and blanks gave a different count (Culin 61). Gaming activities collected from diverse regions of the continent illustrate that gambling was a sophisticated and widespread preoccupation.

From their outsider status, Europeans found the Native games intricate and ingenious.² "One game's variations looked to whites like a merger of dice and poker. Its markers -- beaver or woodchuck teeth, walnut shells, peach or plum stones, bone, pottery or shell disks -- were incised or painted, sometimes only on one side. They were either thrown by hand or tumbled in a basket, their array the basis for scoring. Playing in turn, gamblers might toss six plum stones, four in a spotted 'suit', two in a striped. If one tossed all blanks, his 'hand', like a straight flush in poker beat four of a kind. Three spotted and two striped, like a full house, topped three of a kind" (Grovenor 286).

Given the many descriptions of the ubiquitous nature of gaming activity among the indigenous people of North America, there is ample evidence to support modern Native claims that gambling is an on-going tradition. What is downplayed in contemporary casino proposals is the intimate link between gambling and religious practices among First Nations at the time of contact. Tales of gambling exploits are interwoven with Native myths, legends and creation stories. Magic and superstition are inextricably intertwined with Native attitudes towards gambling. Modern proponents of high-tech gambling do not take into account the religious significance and spiritual implications associated with

gaming in Native culture. As Huizinga states, it may be "that for the human mind the ideas of happiness, luck and fate seem to lie very close to the realm of the sacred" (56).

Role of Magic and Religion

To understand the link between gambling and magic it is useful to look at European gambling practices in the 16th and 17th centuries as well. In England, for example, "men gambled on cards, dice, horses, foot-races, bear-baiting, cock-fighting and a host of similar pastimes" not unlike the Natives of North America (Thomas 24). In his work Religion and the Decline of Magic, Keith Thomas reminds us that the practice of drawing lots was then viewed as "an act of religion." At that time the lot was regarded as a "direct appeal to divine providence" (Thomas 142). And Johan Huizinga speculates in Homo Ludens that "luck may have a sacred significance; the fall of the dice may signify and determine the divine workings" (56). For example, when it had to be decided whether or not Methodist preachers could administer communion, the Methodist Council prayed and then drew lots. This method asked God to make a determination on controversial decisions.

Native tribes looked to gaming for answers to questions about divine will as well, according to the theories put forth by Reven Brenner. In Gambling and Speculation, he states that "bones, sticks, arrows, and lots were shuffled and thrown by the tribal seer, who then disclosed the message for the future, a message revealed by the supernatural spirit who controlled the throw." Early American Indians believed that "their gods were the originators of their gambling games with coloured stones and that the gods determined the outcome" (Brenner 3). In Europe dice were "sacramental objects" similar to the stick-dice used by Native people in their rituals. There is a kinship between the beliefs that divine will is reflected in the fall of lots or in the fall of the peach pits.

Gamblers today often believe in magic and good luck charms much the same as their ancestors. In the 17th century, charms with Christian and astrological symbols were used to "win at cards, to defeat one's opponents, to escape arrest" (Thomas 275). Familiar spirits supposedly locked in rings and stones could "guarantee success at dice" (Thomas 275). Native people in the passion of gaming would invoke genii (spirits) and throw tobacco on the fire in their honour (Culin 106). It was common for players to request "lucky dreams" and they would fast and observe continence

hoping to receive a favourable dream. Like their European counterparts, some Natives carried pouches with good luck charms inside and others rubbed the gaming pieces with a certain ointment to guarantee a win (Culin 109).

Gambling was undeniably linked with magic or the supernatural in the Native tradition. In the ghost dance ceremony in Oklahoma (circa 1896), the Kiowa and Zuni Indians referred to gambling in the chorus of their songs: "Let us play the awl game; let us play the dice game" (Culin 126). For the Comanche and the Apache of the southern plains the games were played even in "the spirit world" (Culin 127). The Iroquois displayed reverence for their peach bowl game and believed "that this game would be enjoyed by them in the future life in the realm of the Great Spirit" (Culin 114). Gaming was thus linked to the belief that fate was not capricious and that gambling could reveal divine will. In both the European and Native traditions, gaming, it seems, often had the approval of God.

Healing Practices

Indian healing practices also reserved a prominent place for gambling. Sometimes games were held at the request of a sick person and the holyman of the area would order that a game of dish be played for the ill individual (Culin

110). Around 1862 the game was still part of the healing ceremony; later it became merely a distraction for the patient.

Funeral Customs

Further evidence of gambling's connection to the supernatural can be seen in Native mortuary and funeral customs. Like Cardano, the ancient astrologer, mathematician and Renaissance physician, Natives believed that "in times of great anxiety and grief, gambling was considered to be not only allowable but even beneficial" (Brenner 139). This example from the South Dakota Wahpeton and Sisseton tribes serves to illustrate. After a wealthy person had died, a relative would take charge of the personal effects and divide them into piles. The community members would then gamble to win something from the pile of goods. One Indian would be chosen to represent the ghost and he played against all of the others. The game, according to 1881 records, took place in the lodge of the dead person. If a player beat the ghost, he took one of the piles of possessions. The game took place four or five days after the death and was played with plum stones (Culin 183). The game served as a means of resolving grief and redistributing wealth in the community.

Divination Process

The act of gambling was also a process of "divination" for war and rain for many tribes. Zuni dice games were particularly oriented towards this purpose. The game of sho-li-we was played only by the priests of the Bow, "members of the esoteric society of war shamans" (Culin 215). They played semiannually at the festival of the Twin Gods of War, Ahaiyuta and Matsailema, "patrons of the game by virtue of their vanquishment of the creational god of gambling Mi-si-na, the Eagle star god, whose forfeited head now hangs in the Milky Way and whose birds are the god servants of war and the plumers of the canes of war" (Culin 215). In such games it was indeed dangerous to lose; either the loser became a slave, stripped of all possessions or forced to hang decapitated in space forever.³

The Zuni game utilizes four cane dice six inches in length. The sticks are thrown with the right hand against a suspended blanket and allowed to fall on another blanket. There is a pool with twelve markers and he who wins the markers wins the game. "The winner takes the twelve markers up into his hands and breathes on them. This is because they have been good to him and allowed him to win. It is wholly a game of chance and horses, guns, saddles and everything are staked upon the throw." (Culin 212). The purpose of this

1891 cane game was to forecast war or peace, prosperity or adversity. With tribes of New Mexico it took place in a shrine dedicated to the game in the uppermost room of the pueblo.

The title of the cane game is shos-li meaning gambler or cane rubber or cane shuffler. During play the gambler grasped the cane dice lengthwise between the palms, breathed deeply and rubbed and shuffled the canes vigorously (Culin 216). To this day gamblers in Las Vegas or other casino meccas continue blowing on their dice and rubbing them vigorously between their palms for good luck.⁴

The fact that gaming and spirituality have always been intimately linked is also underscored in Teachings from the Longhouse by Chief Jacob Thomas. Handsome Lake, a Seneca prophet born in 1735, relayed messages to his people that he had been given by four celestial beings. Part of the Good Message passed down by Handsome Lake included a description of the peach stone and bowl game (Gayendowa:nen). The Iroquois were told that the fourth great ceremony the Creator gave them is called the Great Betting Game. "You will entertain and honour Him by loud cheers when you play this game. You will honour Him by betting the most valuable and precious things you have. You will thank Him with the turtle rattle, lacrosse stick, or ceremonial clothing"

(Boyle 67). The people who lost in the peach stone game were assured that they would see their possessions later in the spirit world. It is likely that losses were great since six men collected goods for stakes before the game. These were piled in two heaps with the items tied or pinned in pairs; for example, two pair of moccasins or two shawls. The peach stone game often went on for two or three days (68). Again, gaming rituals ensured that goods were equitably shared in the community.

Gaming and Mythology

The aforementioned gaming practices reveal gambling as part of the Native quest for spiritual guidance. Gaming was often a reflection of the tribe's attempt to connect with the positive or good forces in the universe. Gambling motifs were very significant in Native creation stories. For example, the game of kesitce, as practiced by the Apache and the Navaho of New Mexico, was related to primitive battles between light and dark, good and evil. Kesitce was a kind of moccasin game with an elaborate mythology attached. Kesitce was "sacred in its nature", according to Culin's account. It was played in the winter when the most important ceremonies were conducted (only during the dark hours). "He on whom the sun shines while he is engaged in the game will be struck

blind" (Culin 346). One wonders if those who scheduled the twenty four hour a day treadmill of modern casinos have been intimidated by this cautionary tale from 1889.

According to the myth, it was dark in the underworld.⁵ The people and the animals that go about by day wanted more light but the night animals -- the Bear, the Panther, and the Owl -- wanted darkness. They disputed for a long time and at last agreed to play the moccasin game to decide the matter. If the day animals were to win, there would be light but if the night animals were triumphant, it would always be dark. And so began the battle between the nocturnal and the diurnal sides.⁶ In the course of the game they invented gambling songs which are sung to this day. As they played, some of their genii (familiar spirits) joined in the contest. The luck changed back and forth between the two factions; the moon-loving players took the advantage and then those who longed for eternal day got the upper hand. After a long period of playing, singing and wrestling with luck, the players grew tired and indifferent to the game. Suddenly it was morning and the game was undecided so everyone packed up his counters and his blanket and fled home. That's why the original alternation of day and night has never been changed (Culin 349).

Gambling imagery is interwoven throughout the creation stories, legends, myths and songs of many diverse Native bands. As Dennis Tedlock says in his introduction to Games, the magic element is very compelling for Native people. They pit their wishes against chance "in momentary acts of magic" whenever they toss the peach stones or the cane sticks.

This primordial relationship between gambling and religion has also been analysed by Francis R. Guth. In a report on Western value considerations in gambling, Guth notes that the deep cosmological ties between gaming and religion can be traced in many different cultures including Aboriginal. According to a theory advanced by Alf Hildebeitel, "Gambling recreates and relives the establishment of cosmos and meaning out of chaos" (Guth 5). In gaming a miniature cosmos is created with certain elements of the game symbolizing aspects of the cosmos. Guth theorizes that Native gaming practices fall into Hildebeitel's model of "deep play" in that they display a consuming passionate involvement drawing upon deeply ingrained cultural codes and strategies. In other words, gambling is not just a superficial amusement or pastime, but has deep and religious significance (Guth 5). Whitney's description of the Pueblo Indian circle game illustrates this cosmos design theory. In the circle there were four

divisions and four openings symbolizing the four seasons and the four directions. Movement in the game signified the human life journey in miniature (Whitney 53).

Compulsive Gambling

Although it is abundantly clear that gambling was widespread among the Aboriginal peoples of the North American continent, it is equally clear that betting games sparked many conflicts. Those who are under the impression that compulsive gambling is a twentieth century phenomenon should examine some of the chronicles of gambling fever from the seventeenth century.

It should be reiterated that contemporary Native critics consider many of these chronicles inaccurate and replete with questionable interpretations. For instance, the journal of Charlevoix provides a glimpse into what he perceived as gambling mania among the Hurons of Michigan. Charlevoix wrote that the Indians were very fond of the game of the dish (as previously described) and that they sometimes lost their rest, "and in some measure their reason. At this game they hazarded all they possessed and many did not leave off till they were almost stripped quite naked and till they had lost all they had in their cabins" (Culin 106). Again, the bewildered and judgmental tone

expressed by Charlevoix shows a strong cultural bias. However, this perception of gambling losses as an abandonment of "reason" echoes some of the contemporary theories about compulsive gambling.⁷

The deceptive simplicity and seeming lack of sophistication in gaming events was no guarantee that suffering and relationship problems would not occur. The tendency of gamblers to play until all is lost was also recorded by Nicolas Perrot in his journal. "Entire villages have been seen gambling away their possessions, one against the other, and ruining themselves thereat" (Culin 107). And Gabriel Sagard added that Native men were "addicted not only to the game of reeds but were also addicted to other kinds of games" (Culin 107). Father Louis Hennepin marveled in his writings that "there were some so given to this game that they would gamble away even their great coat. Those who conducted the game cried at the top of their voice when they rattled the platter and they struck their shoulders so hard as to leave them all black with the blows" (Culin 108). What appeared to the newcomers as a violent display may well have been a method of enriching rather than "ruining" individuals in the community. This passionate engagement with the action is very akin to the scenes of euphoria visible at gaming tables in modern Vegas Kewadin or Casino Rama.

The Jesuit missionary Jean de Brebeuf also witnessed acts of gambling fever. He claims to have seen a great crowd returning to their village "having lost their moccasins at a time when there was nearly three feet of snow, apparently as cheerful, nevertheless, as if they had won" (Culin 109). The missionaries were viewed as powerful sorcerers and often cajoled to include prayers for good fortune in their religious ceremonies. But misfortune was frequent, according to de Brebeuf. He described an incident where one village lost "thirty porcelain collars each of a thousand beads" which it is estimated would have been equal to 50,000 pearls in France (Culin 110). He expressed disbelief as the Natives chased their losses by staking "tobacco pouches, robes, shoes, and leggins, in a word, all they had. So that if ill luck attacked them, they returned home naked as the hand, having sometimes lost even their clouts" (Culin 110). Some contemporary Native critics believe Europeans, such as the Jesuits, failed to understand the primary value of sharing in Native communities and misinterpreted the spirit behind the gaming process.

From our modern perspective it is misguided to assume that such excesses are a fairly recent occurrence.⁸ Many historical records demonstrate that not only was gambling a routine diversion among Indian men and women, it was also a

spectacle of zeal, "high revelry and reckless indulgence" (Culin 116). Reports on Iroquois gaming practices reveal that "it often happened that the Indian gambled away every valuable article which he possessed; his tomahawk, his medal, his ornaments and even his blanket. The excitement and eagerness with which he watched the shifting tide of the game was more uncontrollable than the delirious agitation of the pale face at the race course, or even at the gaming table. Their excitable temperament and emulous spirits peculiarly adapted them for the enjoyment of their national games" (Culin 116). These historical interpretations of gaming demonstrate the clash between the European and Native value systems. While acknowledging the condescension and ignorance of the outside observers, it is evident from their anecdotes that betting was a traditional pastime and that it did lead to extreme behaviour.

So serious about gaming were the Keres Indians of New Mexico, for example, that they paid tribute to Gau-pot, the inventor of their stick-dice game. According to legend, Gau-pot "was the greatest of gamblers, and lost everything. He played against the sun and was beaten, and lost his eyes and became blind" (Culin 120). Gambling was such an integral part of the Keres culture that there was a society, the Bish-i society (named after the game), devoted to it (Culin

120). In fact, numerous European observers of Native gaming comment on the reality that gambling and ceremonies were inextricably linked. In tribal lore it was considered a noble thing to risk all that is precious in the passion of the moment. Escapism was encouraged as "the players seemed totally oblivious to all things in the world beside" (Culin 140). These characteristics of gamblers are, of course, frequently remarked upon by modern non-Native therapists who tend to label this type of behaviour as diseased or pathological.

Similar excess seems to have been present in Mexico as well. According to museum archives, the Tarahumare Indians favoured a gambling game called quince. Endurance and persistence were the traits required for this contest. "If he had the wherewithal to pay his losses, a Tarahumare might go on playing for a fortnight or a month, until he had lost everything he had in the world except his wife and children; he drew the line at that" (Culin 152).

What was judged to be "recklessness" in gambling appeared among the Assiniboin of North Dakota too. According to letters by Edwin T. Denig, "most of the leisure time, either by night or by day, among all these nations was devoted to gambling in various ways, and such was their infatuation that it was the cause of much distress and

poverty in families." The stigma of being a desperate gambler created a great obstacle in the way of a young man getting a wife it was said. Many quarrels arose among them from this source, Denig wrote, and "we were well-acquainted with an Indian who a few years since killed another because after winning all he had refused to put up his wife to be played for" (Culin 74).

Denig went on to describe the "intense fierceness" of the dice game where an Indian might "lose everything -- horse, dogs, cooking utensils, lodge, wife, even to his wearing apparel, and be obliged to beg an old skin from someone to cover himself" (Culin 176). The newcomers were shocked by these perceived excesses since they were not accustomed to people putting such a low value on material possessions.

Women and Gaming

European values emerge in descriptions of Native women engaged in their traditional games as well. Women were as much addicted as the men, Denig claimed in his manuscript. They reportedly spent the entire day at the game "chunkadee" and neglected their household chores. Some men would respond by prohibiting their wives from gambling. Denig said, "Most of the women would gamble off everything they possessed,

even to the dresses of their children and the passion appeared to be as deeply rooted in them as in the men. They frequently were thrashed by their husbands for their losses and occasionally had quarrels among themselves as to the results of the game" (Culin 177). These scenes conjure up recent sensational newspaper headlines across North America revealing that certain addicted mothers have abandoned their children in cars in casino parking lots while gambling. It is also a poignant reminder that wife battering is also a long standing practice. From these testimonies it appears that compulsive gambling knew no gender boundaries in the past and that the domestic violence and hardship disrupted community life.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Native claim to an inherent right to gamble is strongly supported by the historical record. Some of their conclusions may have been misguided, but observers from Canada to Mexico have recorded instances of complex Native gaming practices in diverse tribal communities. Native bands in Canada who propose expanded gaming operations on reserve are justified in claiming gambling as an integral part of Native tradition and custom; however, compulsive gambling, as it is now understood, was

undoubtedly a concern in Native communities in the past. There is no reason to believe that it will not resurface as a problem in the modern context. Pro-gambling leaders need be aware of this danger and institute prevention strategies.

Chapter Two

The Need For Economic Self-Sufficiency

In chapter one I presented an overview of gaming traditions in Native culture in North America. As John W. Friesen states in his 1991 essay, "Native Cultures in a Cultural Clash," the reliance on the oral tradition may delude observers into thinking that Native peoples do not have a history (23). Written accounts of gambling activities have been provided by missionaries, archeologists and voyageurs. Natives have passed on the living patterns of their culture through the mechanism of storytelling and it is through this mechanism that the legacy of gaming has survived. In the following section I will explain why economic development is so crucial for Native communities and why high stakes gambling is so attractive as a means of producing urgently needed revenue.

The immediate need for economic self-sufficiency is self-evident, according to James S. Frideres. In his 1991 essay, "Indian Economic Development," he points out that sixty per cent of Natives have incomes below the poverty line (77). Linked to the unemployment rate are other problems needing immediate attention. Housing is frequently

in poor condition; often plumbing and electricity are lacking. The mortality rate for young people is three times that of the mainstream population; the average age of death is forty-six compared to over seventy for the national average (79). Exacerbating these deplorable conditions, is the fact that the Department of Indian Affairs controls and monitors every aspect of life and keeps reserve Indians in a state of "domestic dependency" (80).

For a long time First Nations have experienced "development exclusion," Frideres says. "Their poverty does not allow them to alter their way of life. Economically, Indian communities have been stagnant for decades" (83). It is frustration with this "exclusion" that is prodding many Native bands to draft casino proposals. By establishing gaming operations on reserves, First Nations strive to assume control of their resources, generate capital to revive the stagnant economy and avoid outsider control.

"History has shown that when Indians have given up control of their resources to outsiders, they have lost economically in the long run," Frideres states. He contends that several key criteria are necessary for economic development projects to be acceptable. First of all, the project must be of a scale that can be controlled by the band. Secondly, the development must be the type that

creates more jobs at moderate pay rather than few jobs at high pay. Above all, development should be consistent with Native lifestyle (85).

The Appeal of Gambling

Gambling would appear, at first glance, to fit the above criteria. It does not force people to relocate for jobs; it does not destroy fish and wildlife; it does not create physical health problems and it is a good option for those territories lacking gas, oil, timber or mineral reserves to provide employment. As John Snow observes in his 1991 analysis of Aboriginal rights, the pressure for such institutions as Native-run casinos comes as a backlash against the government policies whereby "non-Indians with no background in Indian societies have decided our future" (Snow 142).

Friesen expresses admiration for what he calls "the survival techniques of the Indians." He says that their long history has "demonstrated they are capable of a wide range of maneuvers and adaptations, even those induced by the impending forces of assimilation and modern technology" (27). Perhaps the move to be proactive in high stakes gambling is a demonstration of what Friesen terms "emerging sophistication" among First Nations. This "sophistication"

involves developing weapons for fighting back in a technological age (36).

The materialism and the artificiality associated with casinos have often been interpreted as incompatible with Native values such as collectivity and sharing.⁹ But, even traditional Elders who might be expected to balk at the idea of casinos on First Nations land, are becoming receptive to gaming development. As far back as autumn 1972, Elder Louis Crier, a Cree from Hobbema, Alberta was voicing this acceptance. "In order to survive," he says, "we must come to grips with White ways. We must stop lamenting the past. The White man has many good things. Borrow. Master and use his technology" (Couture 205). This is the type of advice proponents of such money-making machines as video lottery terminals are taking to heart. In this Elder's vision, it is prudent for the Indian leaders to be "bilingual and bicultural" in order to forge a new and stronger sense of identity.¹⁰ "We have always survived. Our history tells us so," Crier says (Couture 205). Philosophies such as the one expressed by Crier may inspire band economic development officers to aggressively pursue gaming.¹¹

Native leader George Erasmus has underscored the urgency of economic progress in his speeches as well. Edward J. Hedican, author of Understanding Aboriginal Issues,

quotes the former Chief of the Assembly of First Nations in 1995: "We have a vision of the sort of country we want to live in and to build in collaboration with other Canadians," he said. "It is certainly not the sort of country we have now, one in which our people have been relegated to the lowest rung on the ladder of Canadian society; suffer the worst conditions of life, the lowest incomes, the poorest education and health; and can envision only the most depressing of futures for our children" (14). With seventy per cent of Aboriginal people living in remote, rural areas, the necessity for well-conceived economic planning is obvious (13). Treaties and government policies have eroded the land base of Native bands; therefore, gaming has emerged as a means of making efficient use of a small tract of land.

Environmental Concerns

High stakes gambling is an increasingly attractive alternative because, in the past, some types of economic development in Indian country have been viewed as extremely destructive.¹² Enterprises such as open pit coal mining, uranium mining and hydro-electric mega-projects have led to pollution, flooding and loss of livelihood (Hedican 134). Many Indian leaders have become disillusioned with development which they view as "incomprehensible white man's

activity--illogical, destructive and disrespectful of the natural world" (133). Gaming is viewed as benign and not toxic to the environment, gambling supporters claim.

Ironically, gaming is allowing Native bands to do exactly what government officials have always urged them to do, become capitalists. The fervour with which First Nations have embraced gambling has caught bureaucrats off guard. In the past, Department of Indian Affairs agents were exasperated when Native people just did not "get the idea of progressing themselves" (135). Scholars were stumped as to why Natives resisted "incorporating into their culture the basic elements of science that would allow them to make that leap into the rational, capitalistic scheme of things" (135). The preoccupation with the notion of progress is, of course, "deeply rooted in Western socio-economic thought," Hedican states. Many Native lands have been blighted in the name of progress and development so that few options remain.¹³ Casinos promise to deliver tremendous sums of cash without the accompanying abuse of the land. The challenge is for Native economic visionaries to address accompanying social problems such as crime, addiction and family turmoil.

Colonial Attitudes

Gambling is now viewed as a possible antidote to domestic dependency. History demonstrates that the early

colonizers were only interested in the Aboriginal populations as potential markets for the products of the European manufacturing industries.¹⁴ "They were also interested in using Native people as primary producers for the fur industry, and Natives were only incorporated into the European commercial system at these basic levels" (Hedican 136). With commercial gaming, the roles are reversed; non-Native gamblers are used as primary contributors to the Native economy through losses at bingo, blackjack and roulette.

Dependency and powerlessness resulted from the Royal Proclamation of 1763 which forced Natives into "a landless proletariat, hemmed in economically, socially and politically by the institutions of the larger Euro-Canadian society," according to Hedican. Some Native leaders appear determined to throw off this "peasant class" mantle that continues to stifle initiative (137). Paradoxically, other Native leaders simultaneously interpret the proclamation as a statement of constitutional rights.

"Aboriginal people have always been quite capable of managing their own internal affairs without the dubious interference of colonial administrators," Hedican says. He criticizes the unusual powers exercised by the Department of Indian Affairs over the years. The economic development of

reserve Indian communities has been "severely restricted," he concludes, by a "multitude of legislative encumbrances" (179). He deplores the actions of a government that would pen Indians up on reservations and then tell them to observe the Protestant ethic or work ethic: "a narrow competitive, individualistic code of conduct that has served American capitalism well" (137). An Indian Act that has been coercive, restrictive and debilitating has placed a smothering, paternalistic hand over Indian autonomy. Establishing casinos today may be a way for "Indians to carve out and define their own experiences on their own terms" (160).

The Need For Change

David R. Newhouse echoes these concerns in Sharing the Harvest, a 1993 Royal Commission report. He believes Aboriginal societies are modernizing and developing new institutions. These institutions will be "primarily Western in nature and will be adapted to operate in accordance with Aboriginal traditions, customs, and values" (91). In keeping with this reasoning, First Nations would not reject capitalism outright; they would take traditional gaming practices, for instance, and adapt them to a modern context.¹⁵ As always the challenge would be to incorporate

Native primary values into the management policies of casinos. Planning would need to stress collective action and responsibility. For those bands for whom agriculture, sawmills, ski resorts, manufacturing or resource development are unrealistic, gambling remains a viable option. Newhouse concludes that "the forces of modernization are much too great to resist" (98). This viewpoint is difficult to dispute when the astronomical profits from gaming are examined; the revenue is tempting and the legal loopholes irresistible to bands fighting for economic survival.¹⁶

Another observer of the historical use of land and resources in Native communities is Lester Lafond. In his presentation to the 1993 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, he claims, "Canada's reserve economies are in ruin" (64). He cites excessive poverty, unemployment, welfare dependency, low education and skill levels as evidence of the crisis. At the time of contact, he notes, the economy of the Aboriginal people was traditional in the sense that the economy was based upon the land and its capacity to provide a continuous supply of natural, renewable resources. Today the land is depleted so traditional modes of survival have been abandoned (64). Casinos enter the picture as a last chance to gain a foothold in mainstream prosperity.

The 1993 Royal Commission also heard from Richard-Marc Lacasse on the subject of self-sufficiency. "Aboriginal communities are living in a time of crisis," he says. "Too many aboriginal peoples are still outside the circle" (202). He condemns the paternalistic system that treats Native people as "passive recipients of expertise and supervision" (204). Like other critics of the current state of affairs, Lacasse calls for dramatic action to alleviate the suffering. It is because of this crisis or siege mentality that bands are increasingly desperate to try the gambling route as a means of bringing people into the circle.

Stumbling Blocks to Development

Harold Cardinal, author of The Rebirth of Canada's Indians, believes that the term "economic development" has itself become meaningless. He feels that too many bureaucrats have used the concept to further their own interests. For him, "the best ideas come from the grass-roots" (42). He says that recurring stubborn myths hinder Native economic development. The most damaging myth is the false notion that Natives want to sit home on welfare and do nothing. The other prevalent idea is that Natives are too isolated and backward to benefit from economic development. Cardinal argues that economic development programs have not

worked because they were set up to meet the needs of the government and not the needs of the Indian people (47).

Cardinal reiterates the need for urgent action to make changes on reserves. First Nations are desperate for genuine economic development, in his view. "Our people are no longer dying because someone gave us smallpox-infected blankets; they are dying because of social problems compounded by the actions of leaders both white and Indian" (34). Many Natives are saying "to hell with it" and rejecting government programs in favour of self-rule (34). Casinos become very attractive in the face of this frustration.

Poverty is spurring risk-taking, according to Cardinal. "People who have nothing have no freedom of choice," he says. "They can only choose between life and death and that's no choice, that's no more than all people are born with. Once they are born they have to die. Between those two points people should have the freedom to choose how they live. Indians and other poor people don't have that choice" (36). From this despair is bred first desperation and then hope. Commercial gaming may offer a way for more equitable sharing of resources.

Economic issues take centre stage in the recommendations made by the 1996 Royal Commission as well. In Gathering Strength, the commissioners comment frequently

on the fact that "economic factors (personal and community poverty or comfort) play a particularly important role in determining health" (3:221). Gambling proponents have been quick to grasp the significance of these references in the report. The Commission reiterates the reality that "the general prosperity of a nation also affects the health status of its people" (3:217). In addition, the report emphasizes that "the availability of jobs also contributes to health" (3:217). It is no surprise to First Nations people that economic, mental, physical and spiritual health are linked; it is the holistic vision that has always been present in Native worldview.

Native Control Sought

Various Native activists have raised the alarm over the years. For example, in 1971 the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood issued a report entitled "Wahbung--Our Tomorrows." It speaks for Cree, Ojibwe, Chipewyan and Sioux. They call for an end to federal control over land use and complain of the "meagre, substandard land" left to the bands. "The poor quality of the lands assigned to Indian people require adjustments to meet their economic and social requirements" (2:195). The marginalization created by this "meagre" land base has directly influenced bands to gravitate to

commercial gaming since it does not require a large or productive tract.

Again in 1979, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians published their demands. The Federation recommends exclusive Native management of economic resources on First Nations land. They also request technical help in establishing a self-sufficient Indian economy (2:217). In the same year the National Indian Socio-Economic Development Committee repeats these requests. They ask for Native control of economic resources and the revision of the Indian Act. They emphasize "investment" in Indian communities and Indian self-government(2:219). Since the government has failed to act on commission recommendations, bands have formed partnerships with private investors to launch commercial gaming on reserves.

In 1990 this same issue is taken up by the Canadian Human Rights Commission when it criticizes the Canadian government's failure to "provide policy options to Aboriginal peoples that would allow them to share in the economic prosperity of this country" (2:148). It also rebukes the government for allowing the "shrinking of the land bases of Aboriginal peoples through expropriation" (2:150). In addition, the Commission recommends that the Indian Act be replaced and that the government "work

vigorously to ensure that the fundamental needs of all reserve communities be met in this decade" (2:150).

Another report entitled Restructuring the Relationship appears in 1996. This Royal Commission re-states many of the conclusions from previous commissions. For instance, it says that "treating Aboriginal people as wards of the state" must end, and that mainstream institutions must make way for Native design of their own solutions (2:1015). Again, they call for "a new deal" with respect to sharing the country's lands and resources. Aboriginal title would have to be returned to the land lost over the years through appropriation. Reallocation would see "significant expansion" of lands wholly controlled by Aboriginal nations (2:1022). This is, of course, a long term process; in the meantime, many bands have run out of patience and have gone ahead with the appealing interim solution. The Scugog First Nation east of Toronto, the Rat Portage First Nation near Kenora, the Chippewas of Rama near Orillia, and the Shawanaga First Nation south of Sudbury are just a few of the bands currently running commercial gaming.

The Commissioners revisit the same conclusions reached by government bodies before them. "The reality is that a large percentage of Aboriginal people today face a bleak economic future," they say. "Their prospects of breaking out

of the cycle of dependency and despondency are slim unless methods of education and skills acquisition efforts are greatly improved" (2:1023). Bands such as the Kwakiutl in Prince Rupert, British Columbia and the Chippewa of the Thames near Windsor, Ontario have reacted by sending interested Native youth for casino skills training. Other bands have established their own educational academies such as the Kenjewin Teg Educational Institute in West Bay, Ontario to train Native youth to be blackjack dealers.

Concerns about this universal lack of opportunity are not confined to Canadian reserves. In the United States similar wake up calls have been issued. "Economic stability must be established and maintained if Indians are to survive as distinct and healthy communities," Vine Deloria and Clifford Lytle write in 1984. "The reservation economy must be recognized as uniquely Indian but it must also be efficient in today's world," they note in The Nations Within (245). They warn that the old combination of subsistence agriculture supplemented by social welfare programs and seasonal work has vanished, forcing tribes to search for alternatives. "Finding the solution to Indian economic problems is a desperate task," they conclude. Impatient tribal organizations have already felt this desperation and have joined in the casino craze. For example, in Deming,

Washington, the Nooksack Indians jointly operate a \$4 million casino modelled after a Salish longhouse. A management company takes 40 per cent of the profits currently but the band hopes to eventually take full control (Sudbury Star A3).

Sovereignty Claims

Tension and unease surround the proliferation of casinos as many bands open gambling venues without official sanction. Indians are declaring that sovereignty gives them the right to use the land as they see fit. Sovereignty is a strategy used "to free themselves from external intrusions into their society" (Boldt 277).

According to Brian Slattery, author of The Hidden Constitution, Native peoples were "the real masters of North America" when the Europeans came. By arguing that they have the inherent right to operate gaming, Natives are demonstrating their innate ability to adapt to adverse circumstances. The internal development of rights was not "arrested at the time the Crown acquired sovereignty," Slattery explains. This means that "the customs of a Native group were not permanently frozen at the time the Crown first asserted sovereignty" (123). Under the Royal Proclamation of 1763, the terms were that Aboriginal peoples

were to hold continuing rights to their lands except where these rights have been extinguished by voluntary cessation (122).

Bands who establish gaming operations cite this proclamation as evidence that they have the right to use the land in any way they deem appropriate. Since customs are not "frozen," it leaves the door open for customs to remain "responsive to changes in group behaviour and attitudes" (123). Since "the right of self-government was not tied down to institutions and arrangements prevailing at some distant historical period," bands are free to adopt new structures. In principle then, opting for commercial gaming enterprises just indicates that bands are using this "inherent flexibility, allowing for adaptations to new circumstances" (122).

The new circumstances, as has been mentioned, include environmental pollution, contemporary social dysfunctions, and erosion of traditional ways of making a living. Aboriginal title, according to Slattery, does not confine Native groups to any particular mode of land use, much less to "traditional" uses. The Proclamation does not weld Native people to certain historical practices. Instead, it provides leeway for bands "to adapt to new conditions or exploit their lands more productively" (124). This is an

interpretation that supporters of high stakes gambling choose to promote.

Harold Cardinal stresses the importance of sovereignty in his discussion of economic development too. Prior to colonial settlement, he says, the Indian people had "uncontested dominion over their tribal territories and all the people therein. They could govern, make laws, wage war, and had their own political, social, cultural, educational, economic and property systems" (137). Furthermore, he claims that each tribe had "absolute control" over the resources of the land. This he interprets as "political sovereignty" and when the colonial powers entered into treaties with Indian people they were acknowledging sovereignty and Indian rights to the land (137).

In 1993, a Royal Commission report entitled Focusing the Dialogue warned that opening casinos "independent of Canadian law or social institutions" would lead to rifts with the Canadian state, confrontations with police and loss of public sympathy (22). As the end of another century under Canadian law approaches, many Native bands do not seem too worried about the loss of public sympathy. They are more concerned about the lack of positive economic change in many communities. In Nova Scotia for instance, thirteen Micmac bands joined forces in 1995 to try to speed up economic

renewal. They pressured the provincial government into sharing half of the profits from the ITT Sheraton Casino in Sydney (Halifax Chronicle-Herald A5).

Addressing the 1993 Commission, Chief Jerry Fontaine of Sagkeeng First Nation, Manitoba, sums it up this way: "Throughout the country First Nations find themselves in the midst of a silent war. Instead of soldiers dying, there are children starving. Instead of millions wounded, there is massive unemployment and poverty. Instead of the destruction of bridges and infrastructure, there is the abrogation of treaty and Aboriginal rights" (21).

Native Self-Government

Despite the warning issued by the commissioners, they did confirm:

Aboriginal self-government is an inherent right, not a privilege granted or delegated to Aboriginal peoples by other governments. This right does not depend solely on whether Aboriginal peoples were the original occupants of Canada and were self-governing before European contact. It is a principle affirmed by the spirit and intent of treaties with the Crown, by the terms of the Canadian Constitution, by unwritten conventions of British common law, by decisions of

Canadian courts and by the provisions of international law and practice (20).

Many Native leaders agree with the Commission's findings that self-government is a prerequisite for ending the cycle of poverty. They are testing this recognition of First Nations as sovereign powers by opening gambling casinos on reserve lands. As Leonard Nelson of the Roseau River First Nation tells the Commission in December 1992, "We have the right to be Indians and live like Indians. If you want to talk about self-government, then you had better be prepared to include the word *bemahdezeyun*, our way of life" (29). And for many Natives, gaming is an integral part of that lifeway.

Sovereignty still tops the agenda in 1996 when the government issues still another report: Looking Forward, Looking Back. The age-old plea resurfaces. The commissioners say they are really serious this time about doing away with "the remnants of the colonial era" and the idea that mainstream society has "sovereignty over Indigenous peoples and land" (609). Canadians must "recognize the Aboriginal nations were historically sovereign, self-governing peoples" and restore that status. Aboriginal governments must be allowed to exercise sovereign powers in their own sphere.

This is further encouragement for many bands to step up planning for expansion of gaming.

The American Model

Bands in Canada often look enviously to the steps taken by their American counterparts to establish self-sufficiency. On both sides of the border the aspirations and the needs of First Nations are similar. For example, the Seminoles of Florida were the first to assert independence by entering the gaming industry in 1979. Others followed suit and by 1985 eighty tribes were conducting games of chance (Johansen 28). Then Congress passed a law in 1988 guaranteeing tribes the right to run gambling enterprises on their reservations and tribes from North Dakota to Florida jumped on the bandwagon (Segal 113). Like Indians in northern communities, those in the United States were equally "desperate for money" to combat unemployment, illiteracy, lack of electricity and sanitation. As David Segal says in "Dances with Sharks," tribes were eager "to translate blackjack and bingo into better education and opportunity" (113).

Gambling has been welcomed as "the promised land" and a symbol of long lost hope in many states, Kim Eisler claims in "Revenge of the Indians" published in 1993. In 1976 the

U.S. government ruled that an Indian Reservation constituted "a sovereign nation" (144). By 1993 Indians controlled three per cent of the \$600 billion gambling industry in the country. By 1998 that figure is expected to triple (141).

Trend monitor Jon Magnuson, reports in "Casino Wars" that "in 1992 Americans spent more on legal games of chance than on films, books, amusement attractions, and recorded music combined. That same year Americans spent three times as much money at Indian gambling casinos as on movie tickets." According to Wall Street forecasts, spending on gambling would double within a decade (146). Native Canadians are betting that these predictions will hold true for them as well after the Ontario government announced \$43.5 million in gross revenue taken in during one month alone at Casino Windsor (Sudbury Star B10).

After the law recognized American tribes as "domestic independent nations" who were "sovereign within their territories", tribes moved quickly to use their land for large-scale commercial gambling designed to attract non-Native players. By 1992 twenty states had Native-run gambling; fifty-eight tribes were involved and Minnesota had more Native-run halls than Atlantic City (146). Also in 1992 Indian gaming took in \$15.2 billion and observers were projecting that Indian gaming would grow by \$500 million a

year. In his 1994 article, "Gambling Boom," Richard Worsnop estimated that in the same year, eighty-eight tribes in nineteen states had negotiated ninety-two gaming compacts (25). After gambling created 10,000 jobs in Minnesota, tribal governments realized that gaming gave them "a means to achieve what no other federal economic development program has been able to in more than two hundred years-- the return of self-respect and economic self-sufficiency to Indian people" (Magnuson 148).

Canadian bands have benefited from the head start of tribes in the U.S. As James Clifford notes in his study, "Identity in Mashpee," the U.S. government seemed open during the late 60s and 70s to a certain measure of "recompense through the law" and many tribes were encouraged to push for land claims settlements (284). Many were astonished to see that "it now paid to be Indian" as all over the country tribes were "acting aggressively" and "doing sophisticated, non-traditional things" claiming exemption from state regulation (284). One of the enterprises embraced in "violation of state law" was high stakes bingo games. This trend was turning stereotypes inside out as the image of the Indian as "proud, beautiful and vanishing" was itself banished (284). "Indians had long fulfilled a pathetic imaginative space for the dominant

culture; they were always survivors, noble or wretched" (284). Non-Natives who imagined Natives to be quaint artifacts in "museumlike reservations" have been shaken by First Nation attempts to regain land lost in the mid-nineteenth century (288).

The assertive stances adopted by American tribes provide incentives for Canadian bands to pursue similar strategies. Although there are many models to follow, the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin is one of the most successful. In 1969 the annual budget of the Oneida Nation was \$50,000, Tim Johnson tells us in "The Dealer's Edge" (17). At that time virtually all funding came from the federal government. Unemployment was seventy-five per cent. After the tribe had chosen the gaming path, an estimated six million day-trippers attended their casinos annually. This turned the tribe's fortunes around dramatically. In 1995 the annual budget increased to \$158 million; unemployment was reduced to five per cent. The Oneida Nation became a powerful economic contributor and partner in the state economy (22). In addition, the gaming facilities saved the state \$2.2 million in welfare in 1993 and provided 30,000 jobs directly or indirectly linked to gaming (22).

According to Johnson, the Oneida example is "shattering stereotypes of Indians that are rooted historically in the

fabric of American society. Notions that Indians are incapable of managing resources and market opportunities are vanishing amid a strong record of success" (17). "Gaming is," he says, "simply a profitable business upon which economically dormant Indian nations can regain lost territory, cultural prerogatives, and community structures built upon respect" (18).

The other resounding success in the gaming business is the Foxwoods Casino in Connecticut. It has been judged to be "the single most profitable casino in the Western Hemisphere, raking in an estimated \$600 million in profits in 1993" (Riconda 25). Foxwoods is owned by the Mashantucket Pequots, an indigenous nation of 350 members, on 2000 acres. To many observers Foxwoods is "economic empowerment for Indian nations" on display (Johnson 22). It is the largest resort casino in the United States with 3,900 slot machines, fifteen restaurants and food courts and 190,000 square feet devoted to gaming (Johnson 22).

Foxwoods opened in February 1992 after bitter legal battles and went on to negotiate a pact with the state that eventually saw the tribe contribute \$150 million to the state treasury. They even helped Connecticut balance its state budget. Furthermore, they built a modern museum to tell their own history, bought back more of their land and

invested in other businesses (Johnson 23). The Pequots handle the most substantial gaming operation in the U.S.; naturally, bands to the north seek to emulate their success.

Economic development that skyrockets in this manner draws immediate attention. Canadian bands witness seventy per cent of the population being taken off the unemployment and welfare doles and put to work (Johnson 25). They see a chance to get out of the trap of being perpetual victims. Above all, they perceive the potential to do it without compromising Native values (Johnson 25).

With many land claims talks in limbo and economic progress stalled, casinos continue to beckon. Land claims battles may be disruptive to the community and energy draining, but gaming can, in the right circumstances, provide unity and economic renewal. As Deloria and Lytle write, Indian people have to stop blaming "the white man for destroying this paradise" and take more responsibility for education and various aspects of social welfare. "Refusing development schemes that would injure lands beyond repair," they say, "all seem to be steps toward creating a better reservation society that hints at the idyllic vision of the traditional people" (261). This statement furthers the argument that so-called clean industries such as commercial gaming are the way to rebuild nations.

As this chapter demonstrates, economic development is a priority for most First Nations and establishing a gaming industry is a possible solution. Most communities have a sense of what doesn't work but there is disagreement as to what other options are acceptable. The Native American positive experience with gambling has impressed and influenced Canadian bands. Even former Indian Affairs Minister Ron Irwin has been quoted as saying that "the biggest obstacle to self-government is funding" (Newell 85). He has asked for suggestions as to where the money to run such governments would come from. Many First Nations are responding that gaming is the answer. The move to establish more and more gaming venues is undeniably underway on reserves in every province. Now it is imperative to consider the social implications of this commitment to gaming.¹⁷ Are there dangers associated with serious immersion in high stakes betting? Will there be an unforeseen price to pay for the influx of easy money?

Chapter Three

The Moral Dilemma of High Stakes Gambling

Part two of this paper demonstrated that many Native bands see the potential to use gaming for economic development without compromising Native values (Johnson 25). In chapter three I will examine the existing literature to determine if this balancing act is possible. One of the key issues to contemplate is whether or not gambling is destructive to individuals and communities. Another vital concern is the clash between mainstream capitalistic principles and traditional Native principles of conduct.

The Mohawk Experience

Perhaps the most dramatic illustration of the moral dilemma associated with gambling has been visible in the Mohawk community of Akwesasne.¹⁸ In his 1993 book, Life and Death in Mohawk Country, Bruce Johansen documents the violence that erupts when warriors establish illegal gambling on the reserve in 1989 and 1990. The Iroquois Council Chiefs argue that the warriors have no business invoking the rhetoric of sovereignty to justify their gambling operations. In their view, the concept of

sovereignty is being perverted and corrupted by outlaws and smugglers (Johansen 66).¹⁹

The elders of the community deem gambling to be "inconsistent with Iroquois culture" and condemn the warriors for promoting "illegal and immoral activities" (68). According to their moral code, all conduct should be rooted in the teachings of the Tree of Peace.²⁰ "We believe in family and community and peace," one elder explains during the conflict which pitted family against family in open warfare (121). The warriors were criticized for breaking the Great Law of the Nation and failing to seek "genuine community consensus". The Council stresses that "issues affecting the Nation or Nations must come before the people and there must be a unanimous decision by the Council of Chiefs before an issue can be sanctioned" (Johansen 66).

Doug George, editor of Akwesasne Notes, points out that the Mohawks are an ancient, agricultural people who have endured economic, political, and cultural upheaval.

"We have had to tolerate the corruption of our people by bands of organized Indian criminals involved in such reprehensible activities as gambling, gun-running, narcotics peddling, and cigarette smuggling. These criminals have tried to hide behind our treaties and our Great Law of Peace. They have used every

opportunity to make money, corrupt tribal officials and deliberately prevent our people from unifying the three Mohawk Councils into one national government. By anarchy they thrive" (qtd. in Johansen 67).

The Mohawk Nation Council brands the pro-gambling people as "a lawless and terrorist cult" and reiterates their peaceful stance. The Council passes legislation only when its effect on generations to come has been considered. "Gambling is not only illegal, but it makes a few very rich. When this happens, all people are corrupted" (Johansen 34).²¹ Again, gambling is perceived as an evil force which attacks the moral fibre of the nation.

Corruption or Salvation?

Jon Magnuson supports Johansen's observations in his 1995 article entitled "Casino Wars." Magnuson states that "for many Native peoples gaming has become the method of building the strong economic base that they claim they need for their independence. For others, the proliferation of gaming is a spiritual cancer eating away at what is left of the soul of Native American communities" (147). In both the United States and Canada, thoughtful people are wondering if gambling is actually destroying Native communities rather than revitalizing them.²²

For Magnuson the moral quandry remains complex. He acknowledges that gambling is viewed as a corruption of the Sacred Circle in some quarters.²³ For example, is the image of a bear holding a deck of cards on a totem pole a sacrilege? After all, cards were rejected by some tribes as contaminated and evil, symbolic of European vices. Another casino, for instance, is built with a circular design to symbolize "the great circle of life, the four seasons, and the three cycles of life" (147). The incongruity of a tacky, glitter palace being passed off as a cultural centre offends some gambling opponents. As Magnuson comments, "Mysticism of a kind abounds here, but I'm not sure it is exactly what Black Elk had in mind" (147).²⁴

"The foundation of Indian society is spiritual", John Snow Jr. emphasizes in his 1991 work on Understanding Aboriginal Rights and Indian Government (135). Formulating gambling proposals undoubtedly creates dilemmas in First Nations communities. Major tenets of the "Indian way," according to Snow, include the belief that we help one another and don't expect payment; we share what we have. The measure of success is "how much service have I rendered to my people" (137). He stresses that this criterion clashes with the non-Native value of property acquisition and

materialism.²⁵ "These extremes are difficult to reconcile," he concludes (137).

Another concept of paramount importance in Native tradition is the idea of "collectivity," according to the 1996 Royal Commission report entitled Looking Forward, Looking Back. Family, clan, community and nation are all important to an individual's health and self-worth. Collective rights and collective action and responsibility are all important in the choosing of economic initiatives (1:612). When First Nations people forget these values, civil war may erupt over gambling, as in the case of Akwesasne.

Capitalism and Materialism

A values clash is also evident when First Nations try to reconcile capitalism and Native moral codes.²⁶ Since capitalism is a political-economic system as well as a way of life, choosing capitalistic ventures may chafe the collective conscience of Native leaders. Under capitalism, "progress is measured through a continual improvement in individual material position," according to Sharing the Harvest published in 1993 (Newhouse 92). Capitalism equates to constant striving for economic gain and this competitive spirit is not compatible with the life philosophy of many

First Nations people. Native people often express discomfort with inequitable distribution of wealth (Newhouse 93).

Richard-Marc Lacasse, in his paper entitled "Toward Strategic Management of Self-Sufficient Aboriginal Economies," feels strongly that aboriginal socio-economic development policy must emerge from "circles of talking and sharing." Leaders must, he says, be guided by the lessons of their mothers "to learn to share and care and cooperate" and then they won't make bad decisions. He believes that "a decision which reflects the values and morals of the community is a decision that cannot be wrong in the eyes of our community" (qtd. in Newhouse 204).

The Concept of Sovereignty

Although it is common for traditionalists to argue that capitalism and materialism are inconsistent with Native ways, there are those who claim that sovereignty itself is non-Native. The discussion of sovereignty is relevant since many bands are claiming the sovereign right to establish casinos. Authors Menno Boldt and J. Anthony Long contend that the European concept of sovereignty is incompatible with Native ideals of equality and consensus. They say that European sovereignty has roots in feudalism and a basic belief in the inequality of people. The Western concept of

sovereignty appears contrary to Native traditional beliefs. Since Native people historically defined themselves communally in terms of a "spiritual contract," then the general good and the individual good were inextricably intertwined. Sharing and cooperation were valued, not private property and competition. In the European model a hierarchical political authority prevailed but in tribal society "all members of the tribe shared and participated equally in all privileges and responsibilities" (Boldt and Long 278).

The embracing of the European sovereignty model represents "a complete rupture with traditional indigenous principles," Boldt and Long claim. Casinos, viewed from this perspective then, would be incongruent with Native thought. In fact, those who take the position that they have a sovereign right to operate unlicensed gaming halls are playing right into the hands of those who would assimilate them and convert them to Euro-Western values. Proponents of the inherent right to gamble are, therefore, bringing "alien authority structures" into First Nations communities.²⁷ In some minds this is a concession and a compromise that violates custom and conscience (Boldt and Long 280).

Thus, as James Clifford proves in his study of "Identity in Mashpee," First Nations are in a moral

predicament--how to maintain their moral code and still find "a different way" through capitalist society (343). In examining the moral dilemma inspired by casino gambling, it becomes clear that "two powerful ways of looking" are in direct conflict. The Euro-society world view collides with the traditionalist Native world view and the clash becomes inescapably problematic²⁸ (289).

Clifford's court observations reveal medicine man John Peters' admission that "the art of making money is probably inconsistent with being an Indian. It all depends on how you do it" (293). Many cultural revivalists yearn to protect Native communities from the "coercion and enticements of white society" and casino gambling could be regarded as one of those enticements that progressives find hard to resist. It cannot be determined with any certainty yet whether gaming can be offered without jeopardizing Native principles (308). For more cynical observers, the move to endorse gaming may be part of an opportunistic wave to take advantage of "pan-Indian revivalism and the prospect of financial gain" (301).

These moral issues intrigue David Segal as well. In his 1992 article, "Dances with Sharks," he grapples with such questions as whether gambling is a short cut to prosperity or a way to kill community life once and for all. Is

gambling destroying what is left of Indian culture? He offers no definitive answers but he does document a pattern of troubles since high stakes gambling appeared on reservations in the late seventies. "Tribes with gaming operations have been beset by difficulties ranging from graft to fratricide," he says. "What Congress envisioned as a fast track out of poverty and unemployment for American Indians evolved into a billion-dollar-a-year industry that has added precious little to social services" (114). In many cases non-Native management companies took the lion's share of the profits. In other instances naive tribes were duped by those more experienced in "a slick and crime-infested business" (115). Segal concludes that wherever gambling has been introduced, it has been accompanied by "a dramatic increase in violent and property crimes, alcoholism and drug abuse" (115). The track record could be indicating that economic efficiency is not achieved without moral decay.²⁹

The Indian Revenge Theme

A recurring theme throughout the debate on the morality of gambling is the so-called "Indian revenge theme." In the 1920s it was common for Bureau of Indian Affairs agents to stage midnight raids on houses where people gathered for games of chance. And white missionaries and teachers

70
routinely preached against the games. "One of the reasons for white opposition was that many of those games had bets riding on them" (Culin 24). As Dennis Tedlock points out, the 1990s reveal an ironic twist to this history of oppression. "Whites now find themselves spending large sums of money in reservation bingo parlours." There may be a certain "justice" in this irony, he says (Culin 24).

American Indian Movement activist Russell Means touches upon this same motif in his essay "The Same Old Song." He insists there are many gaps between the European mind set and the Native pattern of thought. He perceives Europeans as being on a quest to despiritualize the universe in their materialist tradition. He believes the process is similar to the one whereby soldiers dehumanize the enemy so they can kill or corporations dehumanize their employees so they can send them into unsafe working conditions. For Means, the process of dehumanization "makes it alright to kill and otherwise destroy other people" (Means 22).

Those who promote gaming as a righteous revenge against imperialist abuses are using this mental process as well.³⁰ It's alright to exploit white senior citizens or white blue collar workers because they are "other." If the victims (casino patrons) are mentally converted into non-humans (sources of easy cash), "then you can proclaim violation of

your own commandment as virtue" (Means 22). In other words, gambling can be converted into an acceptable enterprise and the violation of Native values is rationalized.

Means goes on to say that "it is very possible to grow into a red face with a white mind." He deplores the materialism he sees in the European tradition; to him Indians are all about "being," whereas Europeans are all about "gaining." He maintains that "Being is a spiritual proposition; gaining is a material act." He says that part of the Native spiritual process has always been to give away wealth, to discard possessions, in order not to gain.³¹ Material gain is an indicator of false status among traditional Native people, while it is "proof that the system works" to Europeans (Means 22). Using these standards, the mechanized, money-devouring casinos of today would be an anathema to some First Nations people.

Those who have bought into gaming as salvation hail casinos as a victory over oppression but are they really just participating in mainstream materialism? For Native philosophers like Means, it doesn't make sense to resist "being turned into a national sacrifice people" by making someone else the sacrificial lamb (25). In any case, a visit to gambling meccas such as Vegas Kewadin in northern Michigan will show that many of the patrons at Native-run

casinos are frequently African and Asian Americans, not the target white population at all.³²

Those who favour casinos often dismiss people like Means as hopelessly out of touch. They ask, "What good are these traditional values when Native people are cold, hungry, unemployed and lacking education?" Sometimes the traditionalists are rejected and labelled as "economically retarded" by those already on the gaming bandwagon (Means 26).

Turning the tables on white people has also been a prime motivation of gaming supporters in Akwasasne. In his 1993 investigation, "Incident at Akwasasne," Daniel D'Ambrosio quotes one warrior who feels revenge is sweet. "Outside governments have screwed us left and right, every chance they got," he says, "Stole our land, whittled it down to nothing. We're living on a pillowcase, basically and finally, because of the white man's greed for gambling, his addictions, cigarettes, cocaine, drugs, guns, whatever, suddenly, we're able to make a profit off their misery. That's a potent argument. We're shoving it back down their throats" (D'Ambrosio 129).

Journalist Kim I. Eisler also entitled one of her pieces "Revenge of the Indians." In her article she states: "Indians were historically cheated out of their land because

of alcohol. Now they are taking advantage of their old adversary's vulnerability. As the stream of customers continues, it is gambling that may secure the Indians' belated triumph over the white man" (135). She too sees gambling as the edge that will give First Nations the upper hand in society.

Jon Magnuson reaches this same conclusion in "Casino Wars." It is a delicious irony that the people who were "defeated by imported alcohol and disease", then corrupted by paternalistic management, now find themselves, through a legal loophole, able to erect institutions to corrupt their oppressors (Magnuson 149).

Even some Native fiction writers are portraying this "pay back time" morality. Louise Erdrich's novel Love Medicine tells the story of Lyman Lamartine, a Chippewa Indian, who hits upon an alternative way to provide employment on the reserve after a riot destroys his factory. He would try bingo. He rationalizes his resort to gaming by railing against white people: "They gave you worthless land to start with and then they chopped it out from under your feet. They took your kids away and stuffed the English language in their mouth. They sent your brother to hell, they shipped him back fried. They sold you booze for furs and then told you not to drink. It was time, high past time

the Indians smartened up and started using the only leverage they had--federal law" (326).

In this passage, entitled "Lyman's Luck," Lamartine tries to recover from the mutiny at his factory by telling himself that past abuses can be paid for with gambling revenue. Then he goes on to dream of even bigger enterprises:

"Not only that, go on from there," he says, "Try gambling casino, try monolith of chance. Try a draw for prizes so vast that Canadians would leave their homes, forsake their families and crops and drive down fifty and a hundred miles, two hundred miles, to sit on a high chair sinking money in a slot machine or throwing twenties-for-par down on green felt, before the blackjack dealers, watch it disappear. It was going to be an Indian thing too, a place where people mixed and met, a place that provided steady employment" (326).

Lyman relished "one of history's small ironies;" he would start his own training program and teach the Chippewas the proper ways, "the polite ways to take money from retired white people who had farmed Indian hunting grounds, worked Indian jobs, lived high while their neighbours lived low, looked down or never noticed who was starving, who was lost" (327).

This fictional character, like many real life Natives, was told that "money was the key to assimilating." So he asked himself, "Why not make a business out of money itself? Appeal to frenzy, appeal to purpose, appeal to the Gods of Chance" (327). His vision ends with a picture of "revenue trickling and then rolling and flooding into the tribal bank accounts. He saw the future and it was based on greed and luck" (328).³³

As Lyman's story illustrates, casino gambling symbolizes resourceful bootstrap development to some observers; to others it is an insidious cancer destroying Native communities. Some commentators such as William Thompson, a professor of public administration at the University of Nevada, believe that "the public is worn out on the morality question." He says that moral objections to gambling generally fall on deaf ears because people are more concerned about other issues such as abortion or school prayer. "Gambling's pretty low on the morality crusader's list," he concludes (qtd. in Worsnop 11). This apparent apathy makes it urgent that the moral dilemma be explored more intently.

In chapter four I will present a series of ethnographic interviews with a cross-section of First Nations people in Northern Ontario. In these interviews my hope was to

discover whether professor Thompson's opinion is valid or not. Is gambling a morally significant issue for contemporary First Nations people?

Chapter Four

The Community Interviews

Note on Methodology

To find out if gambling is an acceptable form of economic development, I interviewed a cross-section of First Nations people in Northern Ontario. This research involved a survey of some prevalent attitudes towards casinos on reserve.

Research Methodology

As I stated in the introduction, the key concern of this study is to explore the moral dilemma facing Native communities that use commercial gaming as a tool for economic development. My research methodology relies not only on the existing literature and research relating to these perspectives and the ongoing negotiation between governments and First Nations, but also on the "living voices" elicited via the ethnographic interview. When I refer to the "ethnographic interview" as a research methodology, I am referring to a methodology well-entrenched in the Western academic tradition, evolving from the

a thorough description of what people say and how they talk about their perspectives on a particular topic, utilizing quotes and passages from the interview dialogue. Once the initial research is completed, the relationships and links between and among what people have said and the themes that have emerged can be more fully explored.

When doing research with Aboriginal people, qualitative methods have proven to be most welcome by the people themselves, as well as the most revealing, according to research conducted by Schuyler Webster and Herb Nabigon in 1992. The willingness of the researcher to share the results of one's research and to participate in the real lives of the people involved in the research is very much a prerequisite in most First Nations contexts. It is important that common interest and mutual trust are able to emerge between the researcher and the ones involved in the research. With such an approach, the quality of information that is acquired is representative (rather than, as is often the case, misrepresentative) and beneficial for the people themselves.

Qualitative research offers another benefit for researchers--the potential for capturing the richness and complexity of particular situations being evaluated. The reason behind this is that qualitative methods, and

75
discipline of anthropology, and a research method which gives respect and credence to the oral tradition and the intuitive analyses of Aboriginal people themselves.

As James Spradley notes in his 1979 work The Ethnographic Interview, the essential core of the activity of ethnography aims to understand another way of life and thinking from the point-of-view of a cultural outsider. His view is based on the notion that:

A large part of any culture consists of tacit knowledge. We all know things that we cannot talk about or express in direct ways. The ethnographer must then make inferences about what people know by listening carefully to what they say (9).

I believe that an ethnographic approach to understanding how people think about something is a valuable tool for exploring an issue such as gaming. One of the most effective ways to discover and describe the thinking of cultural members of the same group is to use qualitative methods such as the ethnographic interview. The benefits of these methods are outlined in Experience, Research, Social Change: Methods From the Margins, 1989, and How to Use Qualitative Methods in Evaluation, 1987. The job of the researcher should be to first describe and then explain. The first part of the research findings should normally include

particularly interviews, provide a framework within which people can express their own understanding in their own terms. The purpose of doing ethnographic interviews is to allow the researcher to enter the other's perspective and come to appreciate the other's point-of-view. As such, open-ended questions (such as the ones I use considerably in this study) allow for the participants to generate any answer they want by selecting from their own personal experience and thinking.

After completion of the ethical review process at Laurentian University, written invitations to participate in the research project were extended to students at N'Swakamok Native Alternative School in Sudbury. The student counsellor at N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre served as liaison and contact person. I selected the Native Alternative School as a research site because the school is home to students from a wide range of reserves in Ontario and I hoped for a variety of perspectives. Since I had completed my practicum placement for the MA in Humanities program at the school, the prerequisite trust and respect had already been established. In addition, the Friendship Centre provides a supportive environment with counselling services available for people dealing with their personal or family addiction issues.

Anonymity and confidentiality have been maintained throughout the interview and research process. All participation was voluntary and all respondents received copies of the signed consent forms. The interviews took place at the N'Swakamok Alternative School and lasted 35 to 45 minutes. In the interview summaries to follow in this chapter, fictitious names have been used to protect the identity of the participants. During transcription of the taped interviews, identification numbers were used instead of the subject's name.

The Questionnaire

Through the interviews participants were given an opportunity to voice concerns about gambling in their home communities and to clarify cultural values and development principles. Respondents were offered a chance to reflect upon traditional values and provide input on a topic of great relevance to many First Nations. The following questions were posed as approved by the Laurentian University Ethical Review Committee:

- 1) If your community was considering opening a casino, would you be supportive? Why or why not?
- 2) If a casino opened up in your community, what do you think would be some of the positive things about it?

- 3) What do you think would be some of the negative things about it?
- 4) What do you feel are the most important traditional values in your community?
- 5) Do you feel that high stakes gambling is compatible with these traditional values? Why or why not?
- 6) Would you say that having a casino in your community would help your community to achieve economic self-sufficiency? If so, in what ways?
- 7) Could you describe some of the positive outcomes and some of the negative outcomes you have observed with gaming (such as bingo) that already exist in your community?

The Living Voice

As anticipated, many Native people experience mixed emotions when confronted with the idea of increased gaming opportunities in their home community. In keeping with the confidentiality of the interviews, only pseudonyms are used in the following passages.

Don

Several people interviewed expressed opposition to building a casino on their home reserve. For example, Don, a

thirty-six year-old from Wikwemikong, says he would not be supportive of a casino:

"I don't think it's right; it's not a way to make a living to have people working there and making money off of it. The moral dilemma bothers me; I just don't think it's right. I even told one of our councillors one time that I'd go out protesting door to door if they ever tried to bring one (casino) in there (to Wikwemikong). I don't think it's right to take money out of the community. A lot of people already have problems with gambling at bingos and such."

Don rejects the casino idea because he fears an upswing in addiction. "People that don't normally gamble would end up gambling if the casino came in," he predicts. He believes that increasing the opportunity to gamble increases the population of problem gamblers.

He also doubts that a casino would be welcomed in the present climate in Wikwemikong since the band council is cutting down on the number of licensed dances allowed and trying to keep alcohol consumption to a minimum. The band has tightened up on things by banning alcohol at beaches and ball parks and trying to promote a healthy lifestyle, Don observes. "I think those are good moves," he says. "It needed to happen."

All in all, Don views gambling in a negative light and disapproves of it as a drain on the people. "I don't think a casino has any part in Wiky's economic development plan," he says. "It's a small community and they'd expect people to come out from other towns to gamble but still a lot of people who live there would go gambling and they would lose their money." He points out that there are other resources in the community for economic development including a dolomite quarry, a marina, a mini-mall and some logging operations.

Family issues also concern Don since he has witnessed "kids left by themselves while their parents are at bingo. Kids are left to run around and fend for themselves; they're not raised properly," he feels.

Paula

Another Wikwemikong band member, Paula, age 18, expresses similar concerns. "I wouldn't support the casino," she says. "It would cause too many problems among the residents. People get hooked on the games and they get addicted to gambling and start to neglect their families by sitting at a slot machine all night. I've seen children neglected; I have been one of those left babysitting while others were out at bingo."

Paula worries that casinos will reinforce the materialism that is already influencing First Nations youth. She is grateful that most of the elders she knows are "very traditional and into healing and traditional medicines. They want to teach their grandchildren all these things, but if others have their way, they'll be too busy getting a job at the casino!" She deplores the fact that there's a lack of interest on the part of the younger generation. "Many of them don't find the old ways very interesting," she says. For her the advent of gambling interferes with the teaching of intergenerational values.

The casino boom is doomed to die down, according to Paula. She cites the "competition" among reserves for the gaming business as proof that it means only short term gain for bands. She predicts saturation of the market within a few years. "There will be more and more around us," she says. Also, in her eyes, promotion of casinos defeats the purpose of going to school and getting an education. "Why go to school to become a blackjack dealer?" she asks.

One of the biggest objections she has to gambling is the pollution she believes is attached to casino developments. She feels that too many trees and too much land is sacrificed to accommodate the grand gambling resorts. And just to demonstrate how strong her convictions

are, she says, "If a casino opens up in the community I see kind of like a civil war happening; that's what I see happening."

Jack

Matching Don and Paula's disapproval is Jack, a twenty-six year-old from Fort William. He reports that a large number of people on his home reserve play bingo at the present time and he foresees many of them heading for the blackjack tables and slot machines if a casino comes in. "I would not be supportive of it," he says, " There would be a lot more violence and resorting to alcohol just to fill up the void." The morality of the people would be affected because they are focusing on gambling, he feels. And, in his opinion, traditional activities such as pow wows would be "wrecked."

For Jack the casino would bring conflict. He feels that currently his community is closeknit and that "people care for one another. Casinos would bring in strangers, outsiders, and the large crowds would have a negative effect on impressionable youth." An influx of strangers coming to gamble would, in his view, drive people to stay isolated in their homes and this would have a detrimental effect on community life.

In essence, Jack senses that the atmosphere of the reserve would be changed by the casino. "The high-spirited gamblers would most likely leave the casino mad," he says. "And this would lead to vandalism and violence." It would necessitate hiring more police. Traditional community activities would take a back seat to the casino. Regular social events would die when the casino takes over as the focal point, in his estimation. For him the inevitable "dependence" on the casino would be unhealthy for the community.

Jack says the temptation with a casino development is to go "big." It is very hard to limit the impact of the project and "there's always the danger that people will get comfortable with the casino and gradually they get greedy and go for more expansion." Before long the operations grow and stay open longer, he says. It becomes an insidious process that gradually takes hold of the community.

Meanwhile, alternatives such as fishing, agriculture, and nurseries remain underdeveloped because all the energy goes into the casino. He thinks it is unfortunate that people aren't willing to wait for the smaller enterprises to pay off. Casino profits provide instant results and that fosters dependence.

Linda

An anti-gambling stance is also expressed by Linda, a sixteen year-old from Golden Lake. She concedes that a casino might bring money and jobs to the community. But, she says, "People would be spending money going there and there's always a chance of getting addicted to gambling; I definitely do not support it." Job creation aside, she believes a casino would be negative publicity for the community.

Social problems associated with gambling concern Linda most of all. "If a casino was established," she says, "there would be an effect on responsibility. People would spend their money gambling when the rent is due. People would think they could win twice as much and then have money to pay their rent for two months." Too many people would think they could "get rich fast," she feels, and that would lead to addiction problems.

Linda opposes materialistic attitudes among First Nations people and urges young people to treasure the old ways. She is adamant that "money is nothing but material objects" whereas "traditional values go back centuries and have been brought down to us; so in no way is gambling compatible with traditional values. Gambling is something

man-made; traditional values were sent to us from the Creator." She questions why people keep congregating at bingo and casinos to fulfill their need for unity and a sense of belonging.

In acknowledging that many communities are in need of healing, Linda warns that change doesn't come from getting people together through material things like casino gambling. Instead, she says, people have to change the patterns in their communities; they have to do wholesome things like hold picnics, baseball games and recreational events. Change is like "a chain reaction," in her opinion; it comes individual by individual, family by family, and she sees no place for gambling in that process. Above all, her wish for her community is for "fun, peace and happiness."

Janice

While Linda is staunchly against casinos, Janice, a forty-seven year-old from Whitefish Lake First Nation is torn in two directions. She feels uneasy about the prospect because she senses it would "cause family breakdown and children would be neglected. Some people would end up financially poor because of the gambling. Most families do gamble now and some families are hurting because of the gambling," she says.

In Janice's home community a lot of families are involved in "the healing movement" and she fears that the expansion of gambling might drive some families back into denial. This would be a regression in the recovery movement that has been so carefully nurtured.

She anticipates some conflict with established traditions in her community. For instance, the annual pow wow is very important to the elders of Whitefish and the organizers don't like to use gambling to support the event. "They fund raise constantly to raise money for the honorariums and the grounds. The pow wow is a most valued gathering so there could be a clash there," Janice says. "There might be a conflict if outsiders came to gamble and violated the sacred grounds. The gambling might not be compatible with the goals of the community."

A recurring problem that Janice has observed is the matter of "unsupervised youth." Young people are clamouring for programs to meet their needs while the adults do not always listen because they are involved in their own leisure pursuits. She notes that some community members drive twenty minutes to Sudbury to play bingo where games continue till midnight. She speculates that the addition of a casino "might lead to an increase in break and enters, vandalism of

homes and cars. The safety of elders and children is also a concern with the increased flow of traffic."

Janice also worries that a casino might affect the people involved in hunting and fishing activities. Would they be lured to give up their occupations? She would not like to see displacement of such traditional livelihoods.

Despite her reservations, Janice is drawn to some of the economic benefits that a casino would bring. "Looking at it economically," she says, "it would provide employment and take families off the general welfare system. There would be some positive outcomes; probably new Native businesses like a store, hotel management and services." There would be some spin-off benefits, she believes. "Something has to be done for the backlog of people wanting housing," she adds. Right now many people work off reserve in Sudbury agencies and businesses.

Since she herself is ambivalent about the issue, Janice feels certain that the community would be "divided" over the prospect of a casino. "The community is in the midst of reviving traditional values of the elders and picking up the cultural heritage and teachings," she says. "Some members will oppose gambling and some will welcome it. It is a recent phenomenon that we are walking the sobriety road and gambling might interfere with the healing process."

Jesse

Jesse, a thirty-five year-old member of the Whitefish band supports some aspects of Janice's point of view:

I definitely wouldn't support a casino. Casinos contribute to an addiction; it also brings with it the service of alcohol and alcohol is definitely not allowed on the reserve. You're going to be bringing in drug and crime factors; you're going to be bringing in squabbles over who controls which jobs at the casino, who runs the casino and who gets the biggest house on the reserve. Those issues will follow when money comes into the picture.

He draws a parallel between what happened at Akwesasne and what could happen again in other communities. Like Janice he sees the potential for divisiveness over gaming. "Greed is not one of our values," he emphasizes. "When you have the immediate need to get everything quick then that is greed and greed is not one of our values."

Although Jesse has doubts about the positive impact of a casino, he brings an open mind to speculation on the benefits of high stakes gambling. He notes that a casino cannot stand alone as the ultimate "quick fix" for economic difficulties. In his view, other secondary industries would

have to be created as well. He pictures hotels and restaurants being part of the package. He would push for alternative "avenues" to raise money such as textile plants and manufacturing. He advocates tax breaks for the corporations who come in and provide employment and training programs for band members. Some reserves have already used casino profits to build housing, establish health clinics and ambulance services and bring in water and sewage treatment facilities. When he sees bands develop fire protection services, educational funds and improved roads, Jesse admits that gambling can be beneficial. "It depends on the well-being of the community as a whole," he states. "If the community is spiritually strong, then it's viable. If the casino is not supportive of the people, then I'm against it; I am against things that would hurt the people. There's been enough pain and suffering already."

It might even be advisable, he suggests, "to grab as much money as possible while this is the on-going fad. Take as many people's money as possible and make sure we use it to the benefit of the community first and then the communities around us as a whole. The money should not belong to just one band or single reserve. Because we're drawing crowds from additional areas, we should help others who are in need."

He would dispute Paula's contention that gambling will be a short-term boom. On the contrary, he says, "It will always be here. Once you invite gambling in, it will never disappear. Gambling goes on above and below the table. Gambling has been here since Man has decided he wants something for nothing. There will always be people to move in and take a chance."

Stan

While some people feel uneasy about casinos, others react with enthusiasm to the idea. Stan, a twenty-six-year-old from Wikwemikong is one of those who whole-heartedly endorses a casino proposal. "I'd be really supportive of a casino," he says. " I see it as a whole, big, gigantic economic boom. It would bring in tourists, hotels, and all this money would be generated for the community." For him, the casino would be the "centrepiece" of the community. "I think a casino can go a long way in helping the rez support itself," he says. He pictures a riverboat-type casino and is very keen about seeing "a little Las Vegas happening on Manitoulin Island."

As for concerns about addiction, Stan says the problem has been exaggerated. He would support providing counseling services from the proceeds of the casino but "I just see

nothing wrong with a casino, other than the addiction. People choose to be addicted. There are a lot of bingos on the reserve now and there are a lot of good parents with morals who know how to keep things in perspective."

"You can't please everyone," Stan stresses. "We'd have to learn to compromise." He says the band would have to put money into social help to offset any problems caused by gambling. The target is strictly tourists, in his view, and the workers at the casino would be too tired after a shift to gamble. "They'd just want to go home and enjoy all the things they bought from their high paying jobs at the casino," he laughs. "We can't all live on roots."

"People who oppose casinos are really close-minded," Stan feels. "Worries about people robbing their children's piggy banks are blowing it all out of proportion." He claims people would be too busy working in the tourism industry to have time to gamble and there would be money to train any displaced workers for "the new opportunities in tourism."

Of more concern to Stan is the preservation of natural resources in the community. He sees the depletion of the forests through logging practices as more of a danger to the community than gambling. He envisions a "wasteland" in the near future if conservation isn't taken more seriously. "I want to be able to see my children go partridge hunting in

their back yard," he says. He believes that more of a focus on tourism would help "save a whole lot of trees."

Lisa

Joining Stan in his pro-casino stance is Lisa, a sixteen year-old from Sheguiandah First Nation. She predicts that a casino would create jobs and draw more people into her community. "It would put Sheguiandah on the map," she says. People would come from other parts of the Island to play there and it might help the reserve grow. She expects it would mean publicity for the community.

On the subject of compulsive gambling, Lisa speaks of degrees of addiction. For her, "being addicted to gambling might be a little better than being addicted to drugs and alcohol." Right now she observes community members spending their money on alcohol for recreation. "A casino would give people something else to do," she says. "We already have casino nights at Sheguiandah a couple of nights a month and so far things are turning out okay there."

In a paradoxical way, Lisa perceives casinos as a unifying force for her community. She speaks with sadness of the feuds and grudges that divide families now and longs for a mechanism to heal long standing rifts. "I wish my community could get together without the use of material

objects," she says. "But with us it's the only thing that works." She reports that her own family spends a lot of time socializing at bingos.

Helen

Another person who is very confident that gambling would be a welcome addition to the community is Helen, a twenty-two year-old from Whitefish Lake. "I've never been to a casino so I really don't know what goes on," she says. "For myself, I don't see what is wrong with having a casino in the community. I can't see the conflicts that would happen with it."

Helen feels certain that "it would bring a lot more jobs" and that there "would be more money for housing, schools and teaching staff." She sees it as one way to develop Native-run schools.

Helen is aware that some people have difficulty controlling their gambling urges but she deems unemployment levels to be a more pressing concern. "To bring a casino to the community is going to cost a lot of money," Helen says. "The addictions that people have to it, that's another big thing. I've actually seen some people that really have addictions; they have to go. I know that would be a big part of it."

Velma

Nor has the downside of casino gambling been overlooked by Velma, a thirty-two year-old from the Whitefish Lake First Nation. She acknowledges that some unpleasant fallout accompanies a casino, but she favours trying it anyway. "It generates money for the reserve for housing and community centres," she says. Her solution is to "limit" the gaming; she doesn't want it to be grandiose, just a modest operation to fund worthwhile assets to the community. Workers would not be allowed to gamble while they are employed at the casino.

Velma is realistic about the aspects of gambling that must be monitored. She says, "If the casino was in Sudbury, it would be bad; it would attract and guarantee prostitutes and that sort of thing. There's more supervision on a reserve; they watch that kind of thing. There would also be a big time effect on the environment with traffic, noise, litter and vandalism." Furthermore, she worries about a negative effect on the youth population and lack of money for families.

Although Velma favours casino development, she cautions that certain safeguards need to be in place. For example, she claims that First Nations people often end up with low

end janitorial jobs at casinos. They may not get the career-oriented positions. She also stipulates that managers of the huge profits from casinos need to be scrutinized closely. Resentment and rivalry can result, she says, if reserves with casinos do not share with other bands in need. Even with these drawbacks, she still supports the concept as long as economic planning doesn't revolve around the casino entirely.

Jackie

Thinking along the same lines is Jackie, a thirty-nine year-old woman from Michipicoten. She lauds casinos as a catalyst for community-building. "It would create jobs for the community," she says, "It would attract more tourists which would also bring in more money to build up the reserve. Perhaps more people would move back to the reserve. I'd like to see schools, stores and a strip mall on the main drag. There's a harbour there and the casino would bring in the monies to support the stores such as a bait and tackle shop, a marina and build up a cottage industry."

Like many First Nations people who have travelled to the cities of the North for education and work opportunities, Jackie speaks with great affection for her home community. She recalls that "Michipicoten used to be

100

pretty popular with its harbour and marina. Their main source of income in the 50s and 60s came from the mines. There were two or three mines that employed people and brought money to the harbour. But since the 60s the mines have been closed down and the harbour has lost a lot of its money from those workers. A lot of people moved away. Bringing a casino in would lift the spirits of the people back up. As it is now, there's not much going on there in terms of employment or any kind of entertainment. People have to travel for miles to Wawa to find any kind of entertainment. A casino would build up the town, bring people back and bring some kind of hope. A lot of people have left the harbour; it has lost a lot of growth and pride. It would be nice to go back and be a part of the growth, but, at the moment, there's nothing there."

The casino would have a dual role in the rejuvenation process, Jackie feels. It would attract new people and get the old people to come back. "It's going to take a long time to get on our feet if we do it on our own," she says. If we could get a casino just for a while to boost our sense of independence and growth and pride, that would really be helpful."

For Jackie, the casino is almost a necessary evil since there seem to be few other choices for revitalization.

programs. "I'm not sincerely for casinos," she admits. "I'm against bingo altogether. If I want to see my mother, I have to visit her at the bingo hall. I'm against bingo altogether. However, it seems like a casino would be the only answer at this time. It's a way of luring the people back to the reserve and getting them to put their money into the community instead of wasting it in the cities where they're not happy in the first place."

In accepting the casino proposition, Jackie still maintains a caring and maternalistic attitude toward the community. She stresses that it doesn't have to be a big casino, just large enough to provide employment. She says it would not be worth it unless the money stayed in the community. She recognizes some negative impact would be inevitable. "Of course, wherever there's more money, there's more crime," she says. "There would be more strangers travelling through and we'd lose that sense of safety and security. One of the biggest negative things would be low-income families spending all their money gambling and leaving their children alone. This would lead to juvenile problems and drug and alcohol problems," she anticipates. She sees this possibility of child neglect because it already happens with bingos. According to Jackie, "A lot of teenagers and younger children are left alone without the

support and guidance of parents between the hours of seven and ten at night. That's when parents should be there, not at bingo."

In Jackie's vision for Michipicoten she sees the casino as a vehicle to gain a sense of pride and responsibility. If that could be achieved without harming the youth, she'd be satisfied. "If everything could be balanced out where the people could enjoy the casino and at the same time carry on the traditional ways, then it could be fine," she concludes.

As these comments illustrate, high stakes gambling on reserves is a contentious issue. Both the pro-gambling and the anti-gambling factions appear to have the best interests of the community at heart; great affection and care for the well-being of First Nations is apparent in all discussions of the dilemma. One fact both opponents and proponents agree upon is that First Nations have seen their options whittled away over the years. In a sense, many First Nations feel forced by economic privation to adopt mainstream materialistic trends that may distort everything they value most. In chapter five I will discuss further the negative and positive aspects of gaming outlined by the respondents and analyse the options open to First Nations.

Chapter Five

Discussion and Conclusions

When I first began this research, I was intrigued by the headlines of the day. For example, in July 1994 the Sudbury Star ran a story entitled "Gambling not a native tradition, argues Crown" (Sudbury Star A6). In August 1996 an article entitled "Court rulings set boundaries for self-rule by aboriginals" appeared in the Toronto Star (A18). I was curious to discover if gambling is an integral part of the distinct society of Natives. Is it true, as the Crown attorney alleges, that "there is nothing in the records to suggest that gambling as a commercial money-making activity forms any part of the culture, traditions or practices" of First Nations?

In chapter one I have documented that gambling dates back many generations and is as much a part of Native culture as fishing, hunting and trapping.³⁴ In this final segment I will address both the pro-gambling and anti-gambling arguments raised by the interviews in chapter four. First of all, I will review the negative social costs that were catalogued by the respondents.

Of primary concern to all participants in the discussions is the spectre of addiction. Recent studies of

pathological gambling in Native communities confirm that this is a legitimate concern.

Research on Compulsive Gambling

Pathological gambling has been defined as chronic and progressive failure to resist impulses to gamble and gambling behaviour that compromises, disrupts, or damages personal, family or vocational pursuits (Cozzetto 80).³⁵ Both Canadian and American researchers have demonstrated an interest in this problem in recent years.

A report issued by the Nechi Institute of Edmonton in October 1994 suggests that "the prevalence of problem and compulsive gambling among Natives may be twice that of the general population" (1). The study, entitled "Spirit of BingoLand," surveys Native Albertans over the age of 15 who are identified as being heavily involved in gambling. The interviews are conducted by Native workers who have previous community development experience. The purpose of the study is to plan treatment and prevention programs for Aboriginal communities.

The study shows that 44 per cent of the respondents feel they have a problem with gambling and 42 per cent say they want to stop but are not able to do so. The level of current problem gamblers is estimated to be 22 per cent. The

report concludes that "gambling addiction is a serious problem in Native communities which needs to be addressed. Unfortunately, legalized gambling, seen by many as a new economic saviour, may supplement or possibly even replace drinking as the new addiction of choice in the Native community" (Bingoland 1).

The trends identified by the Nechi Institute also emerge in similar research in North Dakota. The lifetime prevalence rate of problem and compulsive gambling is 14.5 per cent compared to a rate of 3.5 per cent in the general population. Thus the rate among North Dakota Native Americans is almost four times that of the general population (Bingoland 1).³⁶ Although research has not revealed why Natives appear more vulnerable to compulsive gambling than the general population, Don A. Cozzetto and Brent W. Laroque suggest a possible reason. They say that despite the prevalence of gaming in Indian communities in the past, people did not depend upon it the way some tribes do now. Historically gaming was linked to ceremonies and was not a source of livelihood. In traditional culture the competitive element brought by commercialized gaming was absent. The "non-continuous" forms of gambling favoured in pre-contact times were not as problematic as modern "continuous" versions. Reven and Gabrielle Brenner make the

same point in Gambling and Speculation. They say that ancient gaming had no repetitive aspect and no profit motive attached. Today's repetitive types of gambling such as pull-tabs, bingo and video lottery terminals are more likely to hook people with their monetary prizes (5). The casino culture found on some reserves today may contribute to compulsive gambling (76).

In a 1995 article, "The Economic and Social Implications of Indian Gaming," Cozzetto reports that from 1993 to 1995 the number of individuals calling the compulsive gambling hotline seeking assistance for an addiction has "increased dramatically." All of Minnesota's compulsive gambling treatment centres are full and the state is considering allocating additional resources to meet the demand for treatment (126).

Cozzetto and Laroque say that three studies conducted in the past two years indicate an alarming rate of pathological gambling behaviour among Native people.³⁷ In their 1996 paper, "Compulsive Gambling in the Indian Community," the authors point to work completed by the Indian Health Services in the Upper Midwest states. A study with an Ojibwe band in Minnesota finds "significantly higher rates of pathological gambling in the Indian population than in the non-Indian population" (78).³⁸ The report also notes

that "there appears to be a correlation between alcoholism, poverty, and unemployment rates on reservations and the potential for increased gambling problems" (79). The probable rate of addiction is 14.5 per cent in the Native population and 3.5 to 4.5 per cent in the non-Native population (79).

These findings illustrate that those who feel distressed about the expansion of gambling have a right to feel concerned. The studies underscore the need to have prevention strategies and treatment programs organized before casinos are established. Enhanced social services must be a priority as revenue starts to be generated by gaming.

Negative Consequences of Gambling

Beyond addiction fears, participants in the research voice several other worries. Negative environmental consequences such as noise pollution, traffic congestion, depleted natural resources and sleazy or shabby casino buildings are all cited as undesirable. In addition, respondents express anxiety about disrupted family life, child neglect, juvenile crime, and loss of personal security. Finally, apprehension about the loss of

traditional community and cultural values is uppermost in many minds.

This spectrum of concern is summarized by three Alberta researchers who wrote about the fallout from legalized gambling in that province in 1988. Professors Gary Smith, Bonnie Williams, and Robert Pitter stated:

There can be no doubt that when legalized gaming opportunities are available, more people will gamble. And presumably, more gambling, in turn, leads to an increase in social problems associated with gambling. These problems include: compulsive gambling; theft; embezzlement; loan sharking; money laundering; bankruptcy; alcoholism; and family breakdown (329).

Currently most observers look to the American model for guidance since most states have experienced growth in gambling. Researcher Jan McMillen recommends that casino developers examine the Australian experience as well. In her essay entitled "The Future: Golden Goose or Trojan Horse," she says the most serious flaw in the pro-casino argument is the premise that gambling is a major force for economic development (382). She claims that expansion of gaming in Australia did not make much difference to that country's tourism flows. In fact, gambling facilities made at most

"only dubious contributions to rates of growth in tourism" (283). Consumer protection safeguards have been ineffective and public officials have proven vulnerable to manipulation by industry lobbyists. The experience Down Under might serve as a warning to some of the chapter four respondents who expressed high expectations for expanded tourism.

McMillen reports negative news on the employment front as well. She says "casinos were initially promoted as offering new employment opportunities for young workers in an exciting, glamorous industry" (386). The promise of quality jobs has proven to be misleading and many workers are unhappy with working conditions in casinos. She cites the many labour disputes in Australia as evidence that social justice issues are on the back burner in this industry.

It is true that casino wages are modest in North America with a base rate of \$4.25 plus \$6 or \$7 an hour in tips but many former welfare recipients are grateful for the employment (Sudbury Star A3). Labour unrest has also surfaced in Ontario's Casino Windsor as croupiers press for improved working conditions.

Institutionalized corruption has also become a problem in Australia, McMillen contends. She views the gaming system as open to fraud and abuse with many opportunities for crime

and misconduct. She maintains that regulations are lax, auditing procedures are inadequate and abuse of trust is tempting (388).

Respondents who fear the crime associated with casinos receive little solace from researchers in the field. According to Henry Lesieur, an American expert, gambling obsession impairs social, educational and occupational obligations. This impairment leads to crime such as insurance fraud, embezzlement, family violence, theft and forgery (156). There is a great need for more research into these problem areas.

Making a Difficult Choice

Granted that these problems do exist, my research leads me to believe that it is far better for First Nations to risk an uncomfortable period of adjustment than it is to resign themselves to an unacceptable status quo. High stakes gambling may not be a "new economic buffalo," as Cozzetto has remarked, but it is far from being the Trojan horse that many fear (119). When the unemployment rate on many reserves ranges from 33 to 53 per cent, bands can ill afford to passively wait for a better day to come.

The need to improve existing circumstances is critical. Native people are twice as likely to be murdered or to

commit suicide, three times likelier to die in automobile accidents, and five times more likely to die of cirrhosis of the liver than the mainstream population. Rates of alcoholism on some reserves reaches fifty per cent. Fifty-five per cent of young Native people drop out of high school (Bordewich 16). Again, the urgency of economic revitalization is emphasized.

The American experiment with casinos on tribal lands demonstrates that operating gaming can be empowering for Native communities. For example, the Pequots of Connecticut are the single largest employer in the eastern state with a staff of 9000. Each tribal member is guaranteed a job with an annual salary of \$50,000 to \$60,000 a year (Bordewich 74). In Mississippi too the income level has risen. The Choctaws who opened the first inland casino and resort complex in 1994 have been hailed as "a model of entrepreneurship and self-reliance" (Bordewich 310). The Prairie Island Sioux pay their members between \$1500 and \$3500 per month from gaming revenues (Cozzetto 119).³⁹ Shareholders in the Little Six Casino near Minnesota's Twin Cities receive dividend cheques of \$2000 per month. The facility has meant many benefits for "formerly impoverished" Native people (Johansen xxix). The revenue has been used to

develop homes, jobs, health insurance, day care and scholarships.

Many Native organizations believe that gaming is working as an economic catalyst; the Indian Business Association, for example, now represents more than 5000 Native American businesses. In addition, in Minnesota casinos employed 10,000 people by 1995; secondary job creation in the service sector was estimated at 32,700.⁴⁰ Many Natives feel encouraged that gaming revenues have reduced welfare dependence and given band members dividends besides. They credit gaming with providing college scholarship funds, child care centres, health and dental plans for members, new schools, health centres and nutrition programs for the elderly (Cozzetto 123).

The Minnesota success story is paralleled by the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin. According to "The Dealer's Edge," a 1995 study of Native American gaming, the tribe manages to drive forward "the capitalistic machine of economic growth and progress" yet remain true to Native values (Johnson 17). The Wisconsin Oneida retain their principles of "peace, respect, and friendship" as they navigate "in the midst of sweeping economic change" (19). The foundation of their economic development policy is the Oneida moral code. According to Oneida tradition, no one is above the interests

of the community and leadership is more successful when it accommodates diverse viewpoints. A tribal mission statement outlines ten national priorities that are intended to preserve their heritage through the seventh generation. By merging Native cultural traditions with sound corporate practices, the tribe avoids the conflicts that have disrupted other communities (17).⁴¹

In Wisconsin seven of the top ten largest minority-owned businesses are owned by Natives. American Indians own fifteen casinos in the state (22). The Oneida steadfastly promote family values and healthy community development by putting children, elders, nutrition and health at the top of their budget deliberations (25).

By studying some successful casinos and some common Native moral codes I have drawn up a set of guidelines that appear to be effective in making community projects successful:

- 1) The foundation of economic development policy must be a strong and clearly articulated code of conduct governing all band operations. Development must take into account all four elements of human health: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.

- 2) First Nations must maintain control of their enterprises and not allow imported management companies to take over. The advice of the Elders must guide the planning.
- 4) The traditional value of collective rights and collective action and responsibility must be preserved for gaming to succeed. Economic development must be collaborative, not competitive. The community must be behind the project.
- 5) The traditional value of sharing and communal redistribution of resources must be evident at all times.
- 6) Economic development officers must never lose sight of the concept of the general good and the individual good being inextricably intertwined.
- 7) All members of the band must share in and participate in the privileges and responsibilities of band enterprises. Native youth must have access to career oriented jobs and not be channeled into maintenance type positions.
- 8) An attempt must be made to combine First Nation cultural traditions with sound financial management in order to avoid disruption of community life. Community consensus and accountability are prerequisites to successful projects.

Striking a Balance

It is possible then to achieve a balance that allows alleviation of poverty and yet does not abandon cultural priorities. This ideal is described in Focusing the

Dialogue, the 1993 Royal Commission Report. "Despite centuries of intense pressure, Aboriginal peoples have refused to abandon their own cultures in favour of mainstream Canadian culture. Even those who function most comfortably in non-Aboriginal settings often feel a deep commitment to their roots and traditions" (19). It is this deep caring for cultural roots that inspires many Native leaders to ensure that casino developments are uniquely conceived and operated.

Hugh Braker, a Native lawyer in Port Alberni, B.C., recognizes the evolution of First Nations. During a 1996 court battle he argued that "Aboriginal people are not static; they are like everyone else. Their culture evolves as time goes by" (Toronto Star A18). He told the Supreme Court that Native bands have a constitutionally protected right to sell fish or to operate casinos on reserves. Court decisions have so far tended to exclude so-called "modern activities" that were traditionally not part of the life of Aboriginal communities. Again, the impact of such decisions is to freeze Native culture at a static point in history.

One tribe that resists being frozen in poverty and stunted growth is the Chippewa Nation of Michigan. In the early 70s the tribe members were scattered around Sault Ste. Marie with faulty electricity, wood stoves, no telephones,

no sewer and water connections and unpaved roads. By 1996 gaming had brought "an economic renaissance" (Globe and Mail A6). In their operation of five casinos and twenty-one businesses across the state, the Chippewas make sure that they retain control of their enterprises. They want to deter the criminal element and to avoid "unwittingly hiring the Mob" (Segal 117). Like the Oneida, they promote community dialogue and family values.⁴² "We make sure we're dealing with family," states Bonnie McKerchie, the casino manager. "When you talk about nepotism, we're real proud of it. This is the tribe's business. It is owned by 22,000 people. It's like family" (Globe A6). Some of the fears expressed by respondents in chapter four have been addressed by the Oneida and Chippewa models. It is undeniable that some negative fallout will occur but a clear code of behaviour and community vision policy can assist in healthy economic development. The secret to both profit and community harmony appears to rest in band control and the preservation of the value of collectivity.⁴³

First Nations generally hesitate to adopt economic development that is harmful to the environment or to the health of the people. The impulse is usually to resist exploitation of resources by non-Indian corporations. Gambling seems to be perceived differently. As Vine Delora,

Jr. and Clifford Lytle assert in The Nations Within, "industrial wage work and energy exploitation do not have roots in tribal society and produce a sense of alienation in the people" (259). They contend that Natives need to have "a feeling of familiarity" with their means of making a living. Natives want their employment to have a "substantial relationship with previous activities," they say (259). Gambling apparently falls within this sphere of familiar and thus acceptable practices.

Deloria and Lytle say that opponents of large-scale development on-reserve have had difficulty articulating the basis of their objections. "They have generally phrased their opposition to projects with religious arguments and appeals to the religious mission of the tribe to protect the land" (258). Although this is certainly "a worthy and moral stance," it is hardly effective in convincing First Nations accountants under pressure to keep the band solvent.⁴⁴

The significant factor in achieving economic self-sufficiency seems to be found in the ability to develop programs that are judged by band members to be "natural extensions of things they are already doing" (259). It is clear from the historical record that gaming is perceived as fitting into this category.

Contrasting Perspectives

The issue of gambling elicits intense emotional responses in both Native and non-Native communities. The interviews in chapter four illustrate that First Nations representatives have widely divergent views. And some mainstream analysts, such as Felicia Campbell, take a radical departure from the usual condemnation of gaming.

In a 1976 article, she argues that gambling is a positive activity since it gives powerless people a chance to participate in decision-making.⁴⁵ "It is time we view gambling both as realists and as humanists and consider the positive effects that it may have both for the individual and for society at large," she says (218). Many academics deny or ignore "gambling as a normal part of human behaviour" and bring cultural bias to their analysis of gambling behaviour (218). Furthermore, she claims gambling is beneficial because it allows people to engage with life and to dream.⁴⁶

Dr. Igor Kusyszyn of York University agrees with Campbell that "gambling will pleurably take the average man out of reality, suspend him at a comfortable level of arousal and allow him to test his powers of decision making. Gambling also allows the individual to be a leading actor--a hero in a drama of his own making" (qtd. in Waller 103).

Examining the contrasting views on gambling brings a more balanced perspective to the complexity of the dilemma. I believe it is time to pay attention to Joseph E. Couture when he says that the challenge is to learn "how to think paradoxically" (Couture 54). Gambling may not be inherently corrupt as some opponents have contended; perhaps it is paradoxically a blessing.

While Native people grapple with the moral dilemma associated with gambling, Euro-American observers also find it hard to reconcile the general Native moral code with a Protestant-based ethic.⁴⁷ Perhaps a theory put forth by Lucien Levy-Bruhl in his treatise, How Natives Think, can be helpful in coming to a better understanding. As Levy-Bruhl puts it, Native thought "does not bind itself down as our thought does, to avoiding contradiction" (xv). To the Western philosophical mind, allowing gaming on reserves is not logical since it may lead to disharmony in some families and may create a new population of addicts. Some First Nations people, on the other hand, are able to accept gambling with all of its contradictions because they act on a "logic of sentiments" (xxiii). The fundamental differences in worldview are highlighted in discussions of this moral issue. Native have the capacity to see both the benefits and the drawbacks and generally avoid black and white thinking

on the issue. This logic of the heart is evident throughout the interviews recorded in chapter four. Some of the respondents appear to make self-contradictory statements as they grapple with the desire for economic well-being and the fear of negative aspects that a commitment to gaming entails.

When Custom is King

Of course, the moral quandary that I present in this paper is not new. Philosophers and historians as far back as Herodotus (485-430 B.C) have wrestled with questions of what is wrong, what is right, what is permissible. Herodotus, the Greek historian, suggests that "custom is the king o'er all," meaning that cultural relativism holds sway (Pojman 19). In reference to gaming, it is a traditional custom so it is permissible to carry on with it.

William Graham Sumner, author of "Folkways and Ethical Relativism," is convinced that Western historians and philosophers who apply condemnatory or depreciatory adjectives to the people whom they study are applying their own standards to a different culture (Sumner 20).⁴⁸

According to Sumner, societies are shaped by "folkways" or practices that spontaneously arise from basic needs and interests. "Folkways" become the mores that legitimate the

society and are based on faith not law. There is no universal standard of right conduct; immorality most often means contrary to the mores of the society.

In terms of the high stakes gambling argument, it may be that mainstream moralists are unaware of or oblivious to the "folkways" in Aboriginal culture. They are applying Western European mores to Native culture. Labelling the expansion of gaming on reserve as immoral is meaningless, in this theory, because it fails to take into account the "folkways" or gaming practices that shaped this cultural tradition. These practices have been amply documented as part one of this paper details.

Summer observes that in Native culture there is a "right" way to catch game, to treat strangers, to behave when a child is born, to behave in community council and so on. The "right" way is the way which has been handed down. The tradition is its own warrant. It is not held subject to verification by experience. The notion of "right" is in the "folkways." It is not outside of them, of independent origin, and brought to them to test them. In the "folkways", whatever is, is right. This is because they are "traditional", and, therefore, contain in themselves the authority of the ancestral ghosts (Summer 22).

When Native bands claim the inherent right to gamble, they are referring to the authority of legend, tradition, and custom. Many might argue that the "folkway" of gaming is a legitimate way to satisfy band interests because it is an established tradition. Even the gods of Native mythology gamble freely; consequently, gaming is perceived to be a "right" way to help First Nations people today.

Cultural Evolution

Summer's fellow anthropologist, Edward Hecican, holds a somewhat similar view. He poses several pertinent questions: when non-Native moral philosophers criticize Native commercial gambling enterprises, are they not being hypocritical and desirous of keeping Native people in a museum culture? Shouldn't Native people be able to change like anyone else, "rather than be locked in a temporal-cultural setting of flint-tipped arrows and birch-bark canoes? Shouldn't Native bands be capable of maintaining a grasp on the salient dimensions of their original culture-- on the family, kinship, and natural settings that have always given meaning to their lives" (Hecican 153)?

Hecican insists that cultures are not static and that Native bands are ready to make a constructive leap in order to end economic dependency. Gaming, then, should not be

considered a retrogression or a sell-out but merely a symbol of a dynamic, changing society. Most people accept that development has to offer expanded choices and options. Native people recognize the importance of combining traditional and modern factors in their choice of development.

Fergus Bordewich's recent publication, Killing the White Man's Indian, supports this conclusion. He warns that we must be careful not to interpret "present-day reality through the warping lens of the past" (11). Both non-Natives and Natives will have to overcome the "false polarity" that has influenced them to see the relationship between whites and Indians as one of "irreconcilable conflict between conqueror and victim, corruption and innocence, Euro-American "materialism" and Native "spirituality" (341).

He opts for discarding the myths of the Indian as untamable savage, child of Nature, steward of the Earth, the white man's ultimate victim. Instead, he recognizes that Natives are "not poignant vestiges of a lost age, but men and women of our own time, struggling to solve twentieth-century problems with the tools of our shared civilization" (343). The casino controversy reinforces the fact that there is no single tailor-made Indian future and no one-size-fits-

all economic development formula that can apply to all communities.

Linda Oxendine, an anthropologist at Pembroke State College in North Carolina, says that "adaptation is the essence of being Indian. Before contact tribes borrowed from each other. After contact they borrowed from the whites. Tribes were always changing" (qtd. in Bordewich 79). She believes that Native people did what was necessary to make life good for themselves. Perhaps First Nations are continuing to "borrow" as they emulate mainstream society's reliance on gaming to stimulate dormant economies. Gambling may be the mechanism that is necessary to foster survival in distressing times.

The concept of culture's evolving and adapting appeals to Sally Weaver as well. In her 1985 essay, "Federal Difficulties with Aboriginal Rights Demands," she accuses the Canadian government of being bogged down in what she refers to as "the hydraulic Indian" image. This out-moded view depicts a Native person as a "cylinder" which, at some undefined point in history, was full to the top with "Indianness". As time passed and Indians adopted non-Native ways, the level of "Indianness" dropped to the point where "the cylinder now is nearly empty."

Weaver argues that this archaic view shows a "truncated and static understanding" of Native culture. This viewpoint "fails to comprehend that ethnicity is a process that unfolds over time as groups continually select and reinterpret diverse cultural forms around them in defining themselves as distinct from the larger society" (146).

Historians Culin, Whitney, Grovenor and Stirling have demonstrated that gaming has always been an integral part of the distinct society of First Nations. Non-Native opponents of gambling may have fallen into the trap of seeing Native gaming initiatives as incongruous and inappropriate. This may be due in part to the tendency of some non-Aboriginal people to freeze Natives in a sort of museum culture, a static, and out-moded stereotype. The Native bands who pursue economic development via gaming could be considered examples of Native organizations reinterpreting the cultural forms around them. Far from being paralysed by Euro-American notions of "Indianness," they are clearing new pathways for Native independence.

Weaver concludes that Native demands for Aboriginal rights show that the development of Native culture is an "ongoing process" and that the "frozen time-lag" notion of culture is unrealistic. "Aboriginal rights demands will continually change in the future as Native groups

reformulate their ethnicity in the context of the broader societal changes that impinge on them," she states. The fact that bands must come to grips with pressing socio-economic realities, forces many of them to approve casino development. In the past many may have condemned card playing as an imported vice, but today poker is just part of the move to negotiate in a modern context (147).⁴⁹

Jon Magnuson too addresses morally significant questions such as "How could Indians be involved in commercialized gambling?" For him this query smacks of racism since it shows a point of view called "nostalgic imperialism" (150). In this mode of thought, Natives are viewed in an "emblematic" way; others in the culture can gamble but not the "noble American Indian" (150).⁵⁰ A look at First Nations people at the time of contact shows that gaming was very popular. There is no pure, unblemished, gambling-free culture to be preserved. Those of Protestant background are perhaps sentimentalizing the past and refusing to see First Nations people in their modern context.⁵¹ Rick Hill, Native American Indian Gaming Association chairman, hinted in a 1994 interview that much of the moral outrage currently expressed in the media might actually be disguised racism. "What critics of Indian gaming

are really afraid of is organized Indians," he said (Worsnop 26).

Reven Brenner offers a similar theory as to why some groups oppose the sanctioning of Native gaming. "Legal permission to play may enable a whole new sector to develop, a sector that provides opportunities for both employment and entrepreneurial venture. Legalization provides new opportunities for the relatively poor" (Brenner 140).

To expect Natives to hold themselves back from the lucrative casino market would be to ask First Nations to commit economic suicide. Why should Natives remain pure in principle when the world around them dictates a need for new strategies? As James Clifford points out, "survival in changing circumstances meant participation, wherever possible on their own terms" (26). In the struggle to adjust to the dominant society, casino gambling is a way for Natives "to control, not reject, outside influences" (302). With casinos springing up in cities from Edmonton to Halifax, why would First Nations want to be passed by in this economic boom?

The Native way, according to Clifford, has always been "outward agreement and inner resistance" when it comes to assimilation. Is there an element of this agreement/resistance paradox in the embracing of gambling?

Is it possible that setting up gaming outside of state licensing is a way of walking this fine line? Perhaps it is not "giving up the old ways" but merely bringing a new form of resistance into the repertoire, one with financial clout. In any case, as Clifford reminds us, "Neat analytic categories such as 'political organization', 'kinship', 'religion' and 'economy' do not reflect Indian ways of seeing things" (303). Those who criticize and moralize about First Nation gambling patterns might do well to remember this. Is it choice or coercion that makes bands chase prosperity in this manner? Clifford says Indian tribes have to be "opportunists, taking advantage of propitious historical contexts and undergoing external influences" (309). At a time in Canadian history when casinos are growing at a dramatic rate, it seems foolhardy not to seize the moment.

First Nations and Technology

I believe that economic philosophy has sociological and cultural overtones. In considering the moral dilemma of high stakes gambling, we cannot treat economic activities as divorced from moral and spiritual questions. We must be cognizant of the fact that, as James Frideres tells us, "technology's influence is not a neutral investment." First

Nations must recognize that embracing video lottery terminals and mechanized gaming means certain societal structures will change. "Thus modern technology brings with it certain values and challenges existing traditional values" (80).⁵² First Nations have to be strong enough to face this challenge without jeopardizing their principles.⁵³

Philosopher George Grant's analysis of modernity can also shed some light on the moral predicament facing First Nations people. When Grant observes that technology "has come to be our comprehensive destiny" he could have foreseen the proliferation of video lottery terminals in North American society. Many Native people have accepted that "technology is a pervasive fact of our world" and have, therefore, decided to live in the "technological regime" (Mathie 157). As Grant warns, "Those who dissent from the aims and character of this society must themselves argue within the assumptions of technology or become powerless" (Mathie 158). In a bid to avoid the powerlessness of the past, some bands choose to embrace the VLTs as foreign as they may seem to traditionalists.⁵⁴

A caution about technology and its dangers is also issued in Gathering Strength, the 1996 Royal Commission Report. The commissioners acknowledge that Aboriginal peoples have survived for millennia because their cultures

are "dynamic and able to adapt to changing circumstances" (665). But the commissioners also warn that "a good life, a fulfilling life is gained through knowledge and ethical choice; it is not dictated by technology" (665). It is this philosophy that First Nations leadership must keep uppermost in their minds when planning casino development. They must be aware that some band members are not hostile to change and growth; on the contrary, they feel a deep yearning to bring hope and pride to their communities. Yet, they feel threatened by "systems and relationships that negate their understanding of natural and spiritual law" (665).

This reality is acknowledged in Restructuring the Relationship, the 1996 Royal Commission report. The commissioners feel that "given the choice, most Aboriginal people would likely want to participate in the market economy" (1023). They also perceive that Native people want economic initiatives that allow them to "retain their values and collective identity. They are struggling to make their participation compatible with those values" (1023).

Accepting the Costs and the Benefits

Native activists applying for gaming licenses have become sensitized to the fears of both the people at home and the bureaucrats in charge of licensing. Groups such as

the Ontario Metis Aboriginal Association have met the potential problem of gambling addiction head-on. In their presentation to the Standing Committee on Administration of Justice, August 20, 1996, Michael McGuire and Harry Daniels assured the committee that problem gamblers would be assisted. The Metis representatives assert that "a strong network of support services designed to combat addictions" has been established among Native organizations. "We are prepared to accept both the costs and the benefits of this new initiative," they pledge (5). As the respondents in chapter four stressed, the network must be strengthened and adequate revenue from gaming must be channeled to treatment centres.

Even with the most sophisticated safeguards in place, there is no guarantee that gaming will not be a disaster in some areas. Always we should heed the direction of the Elders in these matters. An excerpt from a paper by Fikret Berkes and Helen Fast may serve to illustrate. In the 1997 book Achieving Sustainable Development, these authors relate that a group of Yukon Elders was asked to define "development." After some deliberating, they said that development is "spirituality." They were then asked to examine the meaning of "economic development" and they concluded that it is "respect" (Toronto Star E6). Clearly,

respect would involve protecting the integrity of the environment as well as the relationships in the community. Keeping this spirit in mind will give First Nations a greater chance of success in gaming ventures.

In the beginning of my inquiry I asked, "Is gambling inherently corrupt and likely to corrupt those who promote it?" I have concluded that First Nations have the capacity to build nations in accordance with their cultural values. Gaming works if Native economic growth is steered by traditional Native principles. It works if there is open, fair and equitable distribution of resources. Above all, communication and dialogue are key ingredients in developing community enterprises.

Of necessity this thesis inquiry cannot be exhaustive in researching every issue associated with gambling. I hope that I have provided a springboard for further discussion and guidelines for problem-solving in the community. The field is wide open for further research into an number of areas including child neglect prevention, addiction treatment methodologies and youth training opportunities. Future research may focus on gender differences in gambling activity, effective models of community consensus-building and workable community codes of conduct. Of particular importance will be intensive grief work with individuals

mourning the premature and traumatic death of loved ones and the abuses of the residential school experience.

As we look to the past and to the future of First Nations communities, I am drawn again to the words of Dennis Tedlock. In his introduction to Stewart Culin's Games, he speaks of gamblers "pitting their wishes against chance in momentary acts of magic" (23). I believe that the age-old link between gaming and magic is very much alive and it could help explain why Native people find gambling the natural choice for economic development. As Arthur C. Clarke has observed, " Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic" (Financial Post 62).

Notes

¹ In their submission to the First National Symposium on Lotteries and gambling, Vina A. Starr and Micha J. Menczer relate that two tribal councils in British Columbia assert that gambling is an existing Aboriginal right. The Kootenay Indians spell their gambling game "katgahat" which means Kootenay stick game. The Gitksan on the Skeena River still observe and maintain a traditional chieftain position whose Indian name is "Gambling Chief." His power and position of Chief derive from his skill and cunning in the bone game. This chief participates equally with other Gitksan chiefs of high rank in their potlatch which is the Indian institution equivalent to a legislative council.

The Kitimats call the bone game "Lahal" and it is still practised as a cultural sport along the Fraser River involving whole communities competing against each other in teams. Traditionally, the Gitksans gambled for the right to win spoils of war which then became the common property of the house (or clan) of the chief who won it. The communal ownership of gambling winnings is in keeping with the fundamental and unique Indian philosophy of communal ownership of property (Starr and Menczer 175).

² When Europeans observed the complexity and intricacy of gambling games and counting systems, they were forced to change many of their preconceived notions. As Vine Deloria

says in "Science and the Oral Tradition," these games banished "the old stereotypes of Indians being primitive and ignorant savages" (58).

³ Adrian Waller notes in his book The Gamblers, that Nero, the Roman Emperor, conducted lotteries in which the prize was often a slave. The ancient Egyptians drew lots for wives, while the Greeks raised money for roads and temples by organizing raffles (97).

⁴ Modern gamblers are still "superstitious in the extreme," according to Horace C. Levinson. In his book on the science of chance, he writes that today's gambler "is like primitive man in his regard for the favor of gods and devils; but he brings no gifts to the goddess of chance; he sacrifices no heifers." The contemporary gamester tries to "take the goddess unawares" and win her favour in the most economical manner. Levinson says that "perhaps he has less faith than his primitive brother" (23).

⁵ Greek mythology and Native mythology have many parallels. Darrell W. Bolen explains in his history of trends in gambling that the Greeks had a specific goddess of gaming called Tyche. The Romans called her Fortuna. One Greek story tells about three brothers who shot dice for the universe in the highest-staked crap game of all time. Zeus won the heavens; Poseidon won the oceans and Hades lost and was sent to hell as master of the underworld (Bolen 8).

⁶ There are many links between Roman mythology and Native mythology. Roman legend tells a tale of Mercury playing the tables to win a share of the moon's light. This is similar to the Native battle between the day and night animals.

⁷ American gambling expert Henry Lesieur claims that gamblers seek "action" as well as money or a means of escaping their problems. He says they are addicted to the aroused euphoric state comparable to the "high" derived from cocaine or other drugs. The desire to remain in "action" is so intense, Lesieur contends, that many gamblers will go for days without sleep, without eating and even without going to the bathroom. Being in "action" pushes out all other concerns (Lesieur 154).

⁸ Julia D. Harrison describes the gambling exploits of the Metis community of the Canadian West in the 1860s. The Metis people were "passionately fond of roving about, visiting, card-playing and making up gossiping parties," according to Alexander Ross, a prominent member of the Red River colony. Metis hunters kept prized horses for racing and were described as "competitive" by Dr. W.B. Cheadle. He wrote that the the Metis would "leave themselves and their families without the common necessities of life to become the envied possessors of a handsome suit, a gun, a horse or a train of dogs" (Harrison 27).

In card games the Metis players used traps, rifle shells, matches, fishing nets, or other personal equipment when money was scarce. Both men and women were always keen to gamble, Harrison says. She reports that the occasion of a royal commission travelling through Alberta and Saskatchewan in the early 1900s inspired a gambling spree. The commission was visiting to deal with land claims in areas where Indian title had already been ceded. When the commission came to town, saloons reaped a regular harvest and horses and cattle changed hands at lightning speed. "Horse and dog racing and betting were rife all week during the hearings," Harrison writes (75).

⁹ Not all Elders have a positive response to gaming, according to interviews conducted by the Manitoulin Expositor in 1994. For example, Art Nahwegahbow, a Whitefish River First Nation Elder, says that he has "mixed feelings" about the casino proposed for his area. He feels it "is not a wise thing to have. People will get addicted," he states, "as has already happened with bingo. Families will be neglected." Sucker Creek Elder, Ernest McGraw is equally blunt about his opposition. "It would be no damn good," he says. A casino "would hurt Native people," Mr. McGraw claims, especially "affecting the younger people. They would gamble their money in the casino and they can't afford to do it" (Expositor 3).

¹⁰ John F. Bryde presents the famous Chief Sitting Bull in Modern Indian Psychology as being both receptive to and cautious of the European ways. Defeated and demoralized, the Great Chief issued this pronouncement: "I have advised my people this way: when you find anything good in the white man's road, pick it up. When you find something that is bad, or turns out bad, drop it and leave it alone" (Bryde 1). If he was to witness today's controversy, Sitting Bull would appear to support Louis Crier in his call to master technology but he would advocate prudence in doing so.

¹¹ Evidence that bands are enthusiastic about the prospects of gaming can be found in the flurry of recent casino proposals. For example, the Shawanaga First Nation north of Parry Sound and the Eagle Lake First Nation in northwestern Ontario have been fighting for the right to create their own lottery laws and run gaming houses without provincial gaming licenses (Sudbury Star A6). When the provincial government announced in 1994 that it would allow Ontario's first Native-run casino, several bands were quick to submit proposals. This included such organizations as the United Chiefs and Councils of Manitoulin, the Whitefish Lake First Nation in Walden and the Chippewas of M'njikaning First Nation north of Orillia (Globe and Mail B13).

¹² Vine Deloria and Clifford Lytle report that from 1961 on U.S. federal programs invested millions of dollars in

industrial parks, resort motels, recreation areas, schools and housing. American Indians had to pose as another "American domestic racial minority" in order to access the funds. It appeared that "no one trusted Indians nor believed they could reach the proper decision" as to the most appropriate type of economic development. In essence, the development programs of the 60s treated the reservations as a resource to be used and discarded and created "a rural slum" on some reservations (257). This approach must be avoided in casino development.

¹³ In Akwesasne the traditional land of the Mohawks has been nicknamed "The Toxic Turtle" because industrialization has caused an environmental disaster. The fish are inedible, the dump sites leak, mercury contaminates the water and spewing smokestacks blight the landscape. "The Mohawk's traditional economy based on hunting, fishing, and agriculture had been literally poisoned out of existence" (Johansen 3). This has been a major factor in influencing the pro-gaming factions.

¹⁴ The ideology of the age of European discovery is well-documented in The Law of Nations and the New World. In the introduction, Timothy J. Christian states that the Europeans justified their subjugation of the Native people by referring to Aristotle's doctrine of natural servitude. It was argued that the Indians were "naturally inferior" and could not qualify for the same rights as the Europeans (xi).

Thus, European domination was consistent with the natural order of things and the slave trade and exploitation of Native labour could be justified. The newcomers assumed the Native people did not enjoy legal, natural or divine rights but lived as "wild beasts in a forest" (viii). Olive P. Dickason argues that while historical evidence indicates that the First Nations people believed their trade alliances were a de facto recognition of their sovereign rights, the French never wavered in their view of the Natives as "hommes sauvages" (xii). The English likewise were concerned only with the New World wealth and not with the rights of the inhabitants.

¹⁵ As Harold Cardinal mentions in The Rebirth of Canada's Indians, it is necessary to adapt to the modern context but "economic development should not just be for materialistic purposes" (46). He stresses that economic development fuses both the realities of today and the principles that guided First Nations in the past. Economic development policies "should strengthen our identity as Indian people." They should be "in tune with the teachings of our elders and with the manner in which people in our culture traditionally organize" (46).

¹⁶ Operations such as Casino Windsor demonstrate the potential for instant profits, according to the January 13, 1997 issue of Maclean's magazine. Nine months after it

opened in 1994, the Ontario government collected \$315.9 million which was more than double initial forecasts. The combination of casinos at Windsor, Niagara Falls and Rama are expected to increase provincial gambling revenues to \$850 million annually. Three casinos in Winnipeg have netted the Manitoba government \$69 million in 1994-95. The Alberta government has taken in \$588 million in 1995-96. In Saskatchewan the White Bear Indian Band successfully battled the province in 1993 for a share of the profits from five casinos including Casino Regina which took in \$2.2 million in 1996 (Maclean's 14). In the U.S. tribal gaming has grown into a \$6 billion industry, according to Fergus M. Bordewich. The largest Native-run casino, Foxwoods in Connecticut, grosses \$800 million annually (Bordewich 108).

¹⁷ Critics of rapid expansion of gaming opportunities, such as Jan McMillen, believe immediate riches bring with it "a bellyful of hidden troubles" (383). In her analysis of the gambling boom in Australia, McMillen notes that most governments around the world "have failed miserably to address the social implications of the current expansion of the gambling industry" (385). With at least eighty nations promoting gambling, McMillen claims that they are only paying lip service to the inevitable social consequences and the impact on community values (386).

¹⁸ Akwesasne is said to be a jurisdictional nightmare. It has been difficult to solve the animosity between the pro and anti-gambling forces because the reserve is split in half by the Canada/U.S. border. There are three Native councils vying for power over 8000 people on 28,000 acres of heavily polluted land astride the St. Lawrence River (Johansen ix).

¹⁹ In an August 1996 CBC documentary entitled *The Dark Side of Native Sovereignty*, investigators expose the devastating effects of the black-market, cross-border trade in tobacco and alcohol. The narrator explains how "cigarettes and liquor smuggling and other illegal activities, offered Natives across Canada and the United States their first release from dependency since the reserve system rendered them economically powerless and, in many cases, destitute" (Toronto Star E5). Film footage shows bullets flying between pro and anti-gambling factions in one of the bloody gun battles of 1990. It is a dramatic and shocking glimpse into the deadly values clash incited by casino development.

²⁰ The Mohawk moral code dates back to 1570 when "a saintly prophet named Deganawidah had a dream in which he saw a huge evergreen tree reach through the sky to the land of the Master of Life. This sturdy tree was the sisterhood and its supporting roots were the five Iroquois tribes" (Farb 97).

²¹ The Mohawk Elders are not the only ones to label gambling as corrupt. Two U.S. elder statesmen, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson found gaming destructive. Washington said that "gaming is the child of avarice, the brother of iniquity and the father of mischief." Jefferson was of the opinion that "gaming corrupts our dispositions and teaches us a habit of hostility against all mankind" (Worsnop 20).

²² There is potential for large scale corruption when gambling comes to a community, according to Margaret E. Beare. In her study of law enforcement issues in Canadian gambling, she reports that "gambling operations have a unique ability to corrupt both clients and operators in addition to attracting those individuals who are already corrupted" (Beare 179).

²³ One person who agrees that a casino can be a "mindless monstrosity" is John Bentley Mays, art and architecture critic for the Globe and Mail. "Casino Rama," for example, "sprawls over its Ontario cottage-country site with all the charm of a monstrous suburban shopping mall marooned in an endless parking lot, i.e., no charm at all," he says. However, his biggest objections to the casino have nothing to do with "the use or misuse of traditional First Nations imagery by the Chippewa band" that hired outside architects to design the building. "That body of sacred pictures and

ideas is an inheritance from the ancestors who created it, to be squandered or conserved as its heirs see fit," Mays states. The casino has a billboard of the traditional spirit animals who preside over the Chippewa clans including fish, bear, marten, loon and deer. It also displays a frieze of patterns borrowed from beadwork. Mays condemns the "offensive juxtaposition of art and site." He says the effect is "odious" and complains that "a casino will not become less noxious because somebody sticks emblems of profound spirituality on it" (Globe A8).

²⁴ The incongruity of juxtaposing sacred symbols with symbols of Mammon, also struck Bruce Johansen author of Life and Death in Mohawk Country. "Even though the Warriors donned the language and symbols of the Iroquois tradition, they practiced the ways of the shark" (168).

²⁵ In his presentation to the 1992 Royal Commission, James Dumont outlined the seven primary values of Aboriginal peoples. They include kindness, honesty, sharing, strength, bravery, wisdom and humility. These values often conflict with the motives of casino owners.

²⁶ If Native people were to adapt to capitalism, they would incorporate traditional First Nations principles, according to James Dumont. He explained this approach to the 1992 Royal Commission: 1) Development would have to take into

account all four elements of human health: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. 2) The economic development process would be seen as a journey; the quality of the journey would be important. People must not be hurt in the process. 3) Economic development would have to be collaborative, not competitive. The community would have to be behind the initiative. 4) Respect is key. Developers would choose projects and technology that do not destroy the life of the community. 5) The Elders would play an important role and scrutinize all effects of the development. 6) The wisdom of the Elders would guide the planning. 7) Accumulated wealth must be shared with the community. In summary, community consensus and accountability are prerequisites to successful development projects (94). Any moves to create casinos would have to honour these guidelines.

²⁷ Aboriginal rights is a "multivalent symbol," according to Sally Weaver. In her 1985 paper on Aboriginal rights, she claims that the term has many different levels of meaning depending on the speaker, the context and the time. Of course, multivalent symbols can be a unifying force or a focus of common identity in a political movement because they have a high level of "inclusiveness," she says. This generality or flexibility has great appeal since the symbols "can be changed over time to include new demands" (140). The

right to run gaming operations on reserve is one of the "new demands" being pushed under the umbrella of the multivalent symbol of Aboriginal rights. Bands who promote gambling are employing the symbol to their advantage. Weaver points out that multivalent symbols "can be operationalized or translated differently by diverse Native groups to serve their unique historical or regional purposes" (141). It is because of the multivalence of "Aboriginal rights" that some bands are more aggressive than others in expanding gaming venues. Clearly, gaming is not universally promoted by bands since some favor it more adamantly than others.

²⁸ The Native world view is summed up by John Boatman in his 1992 work Aspects of Western Great Lakes American Indian Philosophy. Like the Ancient Greeks, North American Indians believed that "all matter is (or was) alive," according to Boatman (2). "They saw all forms of existence as being endowed with life and spirit within a universe that was a kind of colossal organism created and supported by a cosmic force in the state of eternal becoming" (2). Natives saw the universe as dynamic and organic, driven by constant interrelations between spirit and matter.

²⁹ Many philosophers have railed against "the forces active in the world that are leading remorselessly to deterioration and decline," according to William Christian (167). In his

essay entitled "George Grant and the Terrifying Darkness," Christian says the decay may be caused by powers such as Providence or Fortune or it may be caused by choices made by men. The casino controversy might be seen in this light as communities face difficult choices. For First Nations both Fortune and choice play a role in their futures.

³⁰ The dehumanizing of the gambler is common, according to a study of Alberta gaming patterns. Gary Smith, Bonnie Williams and Robert Pitter say that since the goal of the casino operator is to "maximize" profits, "the gambler is not seen as a person but merely as a wallet to be emptied. As a result gamblers are held in contempt" (331).

³¹ In contrast with the anti-materialism expressed by Means, the Navaho moral code says that "riches are considered the mark of a good man." John Ladd, author of The Structure of a Moral Code, concluded from his field studies that "the Navaho culture places great emphasis on property" and that children are taught to "work hard." In interviews with the Navaho, Ladd discovered that the theme of getting rich is recurrent. A common saying is that "the good man is a prosperous man and the bad man is a poor man" (209). On the other hand, land was owned only in the sense that it was used and people were not paid for their labour or help; they received rewards but never wages, he says. In essence, the

Navaho moral code strives to show people how to "live a long life, not to be poor" (Ladd 337).

³² Reven Brenner has analysed the target groups of casinos in his work Gambling and Speculation. He reports that "blacks spend more than whites on lotteries;" therefore, efforts by Native casino operators to target white gamblers may be off base (26). In addition, Alberta studies conclude that patrons of casinos and bingos tend to be drawn disproportionately from lower socio-economic strata and various minority ethnic groups. The upper crust fly to Las Vegas, they say. Police report that the money that passes through Alberta casinos comes mostly from welfare cheques, drug and prostitution deals and sale of stolen property. Many casino regulars are unemployed or work in low paid, menial jobs (Smith, Williams, Pitter 329).

³³ Gambling has an image problem in that many consider it to be "of dubious moral worth," according to Charles Singer (280). In his article on The Ethics of Gambling, he questions the ethics of inducement. "At issue here," he says, "is the morality of using various techniques to promote behaviour which may prove detrimental to the individual involved" (281). For example, advertising lotteries induces people to overspend and fail to meet their primary responsibilities. Also, casinos use free food, free

alcohol, lavish decor and celebrity entertainment to induce people to gamble. Is it ethical to actively persuade people to increase their risk, he asks? First Nations proponents of gaming might also question the ethics of using Native artwork as inducement to gamble.

³⁴ Some critics would charge that Native activists are seeking to use historical data to establish images of the past that help to promote political causes such as gaming. For instance, Bruce Trigger mentions in his essay entitled "Ethnohistory: Problems and Prospects" that the temptation is always there to twist the findings of ethnohistorical research "to suit the aims of political movements" (28). In the campaign to acquire gaming licenses, Native bands have emphasized the gambling customs in Native culture. Whether or not this is revisionist history is the subject of debate. Is the gaming proponent's vision really an example of the "past-as-wished-for" as opposed to "the past as it really was?" (28).

³⁵ Many cultural analysts have marvelled at the excesses of gamblers. For example, Anatole France wrote: "Gamblers gamble as lovers love, as drunkards drink, inevitably, blindly, under the dictates of an irresistible force. There are beings devoted to gaming, just as there are beings devoted to love" (qtd. in Levinson 26).

³⁶ Reven Brenner points out that ancient gambling involved divination and a serious religious purpose in most cases. Profit was not the motive. Modern gaming, however, involves casting dice repetitively, gambling for entertainment and for huge monetary profits. This different focus may help to explain why gambling is more addictive in the modern context than it was in previous times (5).

³⁷ Some theorists suggest that since Native people experience more grief and tragedy than the general population, gambling is appealing as an escape from stress. Geralamo Cardano, a 16th century philosopher, said gambling relieved melancholy since it "lightened cares" that one would not otherwise be able to endure (Campbell 220).

³⁸ Maggie Hodgson of the Nechi Institute attributes the high rate of problem gambling to unresolved grief in the Native community. She believes that Native people suffer an inordinate number of premature deaths in their extended families. This contributes in many cases to an increase in gambling for escapism (Bingoland 2).

³⁹ Not everyone believes that the sudden influx of capital is positive. Henry Lesieur, author of many articles on compulsive gambling, acknowledges that the opportunity for self-reliance has improved the lot of some tribes. He notes that Native entrepreneurship has brought poverty relief

funded by gambling proceeds. On the downside, however, "Indian gambling has its victims as well" (Riconda 166). He claims that the rate of suicide among pathological gamblers is five times higher than the general population.

⁴⁰ Critics of gambling often complain that the jobs the industry offers are menial and not career-oriented. Some sources confirm that Native employees do have to start at the bottom in the casino business. An American report says "non-Indians make up 85 per cent of the workforce at the United States' 131 Indian gaming centres and account for most of the management positions" (Sudbury Star B2).

⁴¹ In Sharing the Harvest the commissioners emphasized the importance of formulating and promoting community moral codes. The primary values of First Nations culture "should be interpreted and translated into community processes, institutions and codes of behaviour" (Newhouse 95). The approaches used by the Oneida and Chippewa illustrate the effectiveness of this process.

⁴² The Oneida, Mohawk, Chippewa and Navaho all share a similar moral code. John Ladd writes that "talking it over" and consulting with everyone, especially Elders, is important in the Navaho tradition (203). Much emphasis is put on "public deliberation" and using the power of verbal persuasion rather than force. The Navaho believe that virtue

is knowledge and vice is ignorance, according to Ladd. They also value listening and "minding each other" (205).

⁴³ The collectivist orientation is an important part of the Native value system, according to Sharing the Harvest. The commissioners stressed that the needs of the clan, nation and family take precedence over the needs of the individual (95).

⁴⁴ Reven Brenner sees the condemning of gambling as a ploy for the rich to maintain the status quo. Sometimes moral arguments against gambling are just a smokescreen for keeping the poor (in this case Natives) in their place. "Inventing moral issues seems to be one of the preoccupations of members of powerful groups whose power is declining," Brenner states (82).

⁴⁵ Gambling is also beneficial, Campbell says, because it allows a man to feel macho and it adds spice to people's lives. Gaming permits people to get relief from boring jobs and make the kinds of decisions they are denied in the workplace (220).

⁴⁶ Some researchers are far from convinced that gambling fits the disease model. For example, Richard E. Vatz and Lee S. Weinberg have taken the position that heavy gambling is not an illness. They argue that there is no evidence to

support the claim that gambling addiction has a physiological basis. Furthermore, they contend that since there is no biological causation, there should be no moral or legal recognition of the disease model (168).

⁴⁷ George Washington's view, expressed in 1783, summarizes some prevalent sentiments. "Gambling has been the ruin of many worthy families," he said, "the loss of many a man's honour, and the cause of suicide. To all those who enter the lists, it is equally fascinating. The successful gamester pushes his good fortune till it is overtaken by a reverse. The losing gamester, in hopes of retrieving past misfortunes, goes on from bad to worse, till, grown desperate, he pushes in everything and loses all. Few gain by this abominable practice, while thousands are injured" (qtd. in Waller 98).

⁴⁸ This idea is echoed in John W. Friesen's essay entitled "Native Cultures in a Cultural Clash." He reminds us that "criticisms that appear valid in one cultural context may be entirely invalid in another" (26).

⁴⁹ The custom of card playing is not universally accepted in Native communities. According to Teachings from the Longhouse, the prophet Handsome Lake had a powerful vision of what happens to card players. He saw The Punisher call out two men from the crowd and tell them, "Now you will both

play cards. That was your custom and delight on Earth." He gave them a set of cards which seemed to be made of metal. Then they began to play. It seemed as if the cards were red hot. Sparks began to fly while they were playing. The Punisher said, "Stay with it, it was your custom and delight while you were still living on Earth." Handsome Lake said this "is the kind of punishment your people will suffer when they play card games and fail to repent of their sins on Earth" (Thomas 109).

⁵⁰ This image is reminiscent of European writings in the 16th century. European philosophers such as Montaigne and Rousseau viewed the Indian as the man who had been born noble and good but had been corrupted by the monarchy and European society. Montaigne canonized the Indian as the "quintessential Natural Man" who existed in a state "so pure and simple" with "no kind of traffike, no knowledge of letters, no intelligence of numbers, no name of magistrate, nor of politike superiorite, no use of service, of riches or of povertie, no contracts, no successions, no partitions, no occupation but idle" (Bordewich 33).

⁵¹ Protestant moralists insisted that people spend their time and money in "productive" ways. Gamblers might develop a "getting something for nothing" mentality. Wasting time and money ignored the "general welfare of the world." In

summary, gambling was a contemptible "lower class pastime" that reflected an interest in material things (Brenner 51).

⁵² Some of the existing traditional values have been summarized by John F. Bryde. He says that Native people generally judge a person more by his interior than by his possessions; material achievement is not a top priority. Native people put money-making knowledge second to "the getting-along-with-others type of knowledge" (157). Sharing, generosity and knowledge of nature are valued. In this way commercial gaming conflicts with the Indian way.

⁵³ In "Ojibwa Ontology, Behaviour and World View," Irving Hallowell explains a primary aspect of Ojibwa moral code. "A balance, a sense of proportion must be maintained in all interpersonal relations and activities. Hoarding, or any manifestation of greed, is discountenanced" (172). Like Bryde, Hallowell concludes that money-making ventures threaten traditional values.

⁵⁵ As Oren Lyons explains, Native people believe in natural law over man-made law; natural law is the final and absolute authority governing the Earth. It is timeless and cannot be measured by the standard of mankind. The basis of natural law is "responsibility" (21).

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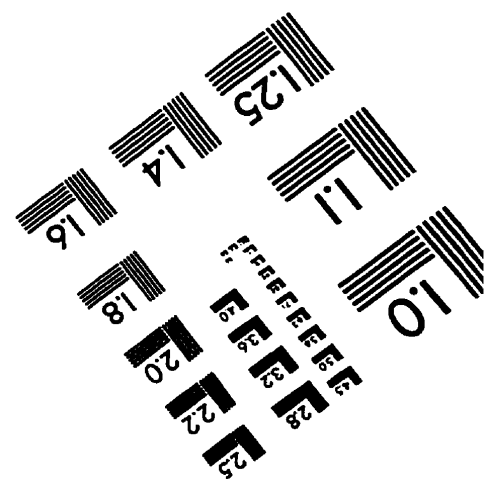
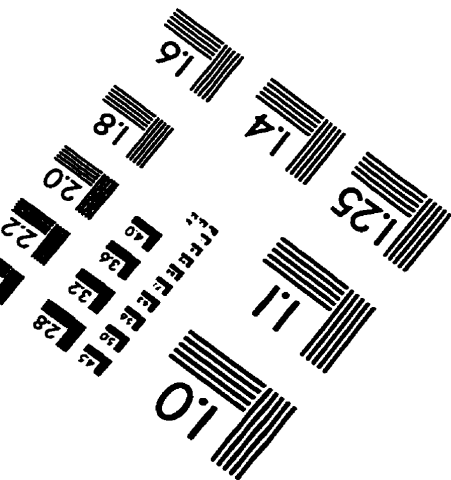
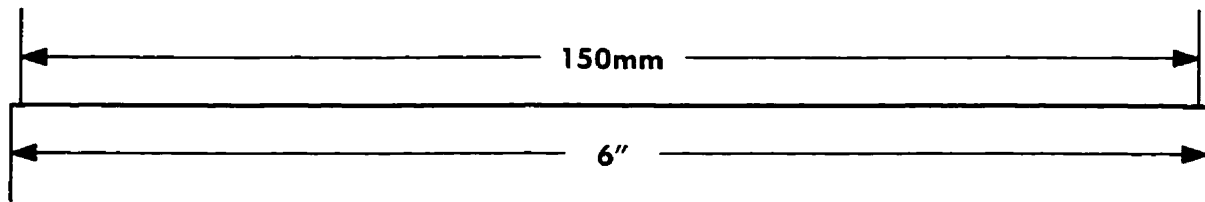
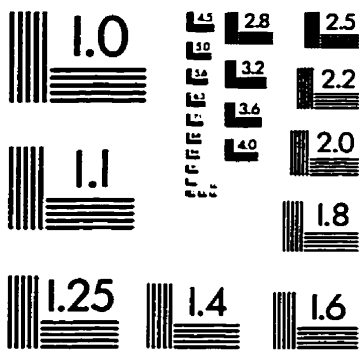
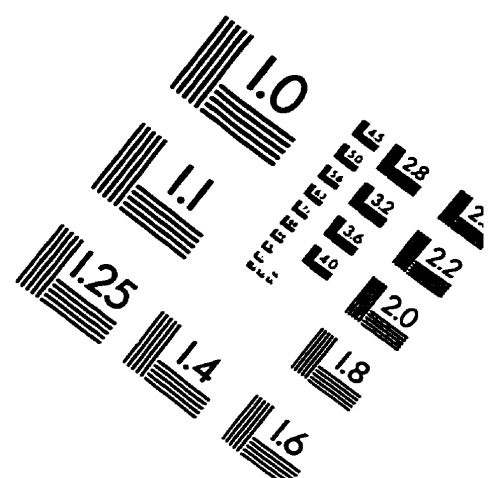
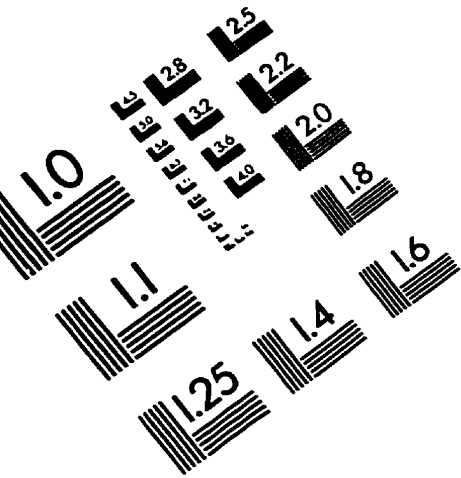
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