



# Indigenous Issues Related to Casinos and Gambling

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# Overview

- North American Indigenous Casinos & Gambling
  - Social, political, economic & cultural context
- Gambling before colonization
- Colonized context of Indigenous Peoples
- Indigenous gambling in the present
- Objective: unique gambling issues facing Indigenous peoples
  - Reference to Ontario Indigenous casino research



# Indigenous Gambling

- Culin (1992[1907]):
  - Indigenous gambling:  
229 tribes, 36 games
  - 2 types: guessing, dice
- Ojibwa/Anishinaabe:
  - 2 types: chance,  
dexterity (Densmore  
1979)
  - Chance: moccasin game
  - Dexterity: lacrosse

“an Indian will stake first his gun; next his steel-traps; then his implements of war; then his clothing; and lastly, his tobacco and pipe, leaving him, as we say, ‘Nah-bah-wan-yah-ze-yaid’; a piece of cloth with a string around his waist”  
(Copway 2001 [1850]: 48)

# Colonized Context of Indigenous Peoples

- History: allies to obstacles
  - Treaties: land sessions (reserves CAN, reservations US)
    - E.g. Anishinaabe divided US/CAN (Belfry 2011)
- Legacy of colonialism:
  - Power & control over Indigenous peoples
  - Transformation: marginalized economy, politics, religion
    - Consequence “culture of poverty” E.g. Frideres & Gadacz (2001)
- Post 1970s: decolonization/self-government
  - Political & economic change (Dickason & Newbigging 2010)
  - 1990s neoliberal reforms: Indigenous casinos (Manitowabi 2011)

# Indigenous Gambling in the Present

- US: Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (1988)
  - Tribal/State compacts (NIGC: N.D.)
  
- CAN: Criminal Code of Canada (1969, 1985)
  - Provincially-regulated
  - First Nations-Province Agreement (Campbell 2009)
  - E.g. Casino Rama ON
    - 1996: mechanism for self-determination (Manitowabi 2011)



Source: Wikipedia Commons (2010)

# Unique Issues

- Indigenous Problem & pathological gambling:
  - 5x higher (CAN)  
(Belanger 2014)
- Indigenous gambling “double-edged sword”:
  - 1. Mechanism for socioeconomic development
  - 2. Problem & pathological gambling

“There’s gambling addiction, it is silent but here. I see it, when I did research, in the general public, I see the same people all the time... ..became severe gamblers. On the positive side, it is a small portion, I estimate 75% don’t use the casino, 25 % use it.” (Re: Casino Rama, Manitowabi 2007: 58)

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