

Frontiers in Chance

Gaming Research Across the Disciplines

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UNLV Gaming Press

Editor's Note

The papers in this collection were originally published as part of the Center for Gaming Research's Occasional Paper Series. Started in early 2010, this series is intended to make current research into gambling accessible to a mainstream, non-academic audience. We all have a great deal to learn about gaming, and the series seemed as good a forum as any for popularly-oriented papers on a diverse array of topics.

Many of the papers were delivered by Gaming Research Fellows. This program, started in 2007, brings scholars from all around the world to UNLV, where they conduct residencies at UNLV Special Collections and, using the rare and unique materials of the collections, push the boundaries of gaming research. The fellows represent a mix of disciplines ranging from philosophy to mathematics. As part of their fellowship, they deliver a public talk (which you can listen to in the UNLV Gaming Podcasts) and they write a paper touching on the research they conducted while at UNLV.

This collection also includes papers submitted by non-fellows as part of the Occasional Paper Series. Authors of these papers include scholars and those in and around the gaming industry who have addressed issues in a way that speaks to the mission of the series.

The papers are reprinted here in rough chronological order; every currently-published paper for which we could get copyright clearance has been reprinted here.

The first chapter in the collection, my exploration of the rise in slot hold percentage seen in Nevada casinos through much of the 2000s, is a document of the Nevada gaming industry about one year into the recent recession. In the appendices, you'll find several tables with primary data on Nevada slot hold from roughly 1992 to 2009.

Following that is "The Powerful Mythology Surrounding Bugsy Siegel," an analysis of the image and reality of the notorious gangster

whose name is inextricably tied to Las Vegas history by 2008 Gaming Research Fellow Larry Gragg.

Chapter 3, written by casino surveillance expert (and current Aria surveillance director) Theodore Whiting, tackles the history of baccarat with a brief summary of the shrouded past of this popular casino game.

In chapter 4, anthropologist and April 2010 fellow Theodor Gordon writes on how tribal casino employee relations play a significant role in transforming public policy and perceptions of tribal government in the United States.

Chapter 5, by May 2010 fellow Laura Cook Kenna, takes on the role of organized crime in the Sinatra/Vegas mystique, particularly as it was seen during the Rat Pack years at the Sands.

Chapter 6, written by sociologist Fred Krauss, examines how sports book regulars use the environment for much more than the instrumental task of sports betting.

Historian and May 2009 fellow Nicholas Tosney in chapter 7 compares the development of gambling in Britain during the late 17th and 18th centuries with the emergence of gambling in Nevada during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

In chapter 8, geographer and January 2011 fellow R. J. Rowley examines the geographical, economic, and social patterns that underlay the spread of neighborhood casinos in Las Vegas.

Chapter 9 features the work of attorneys Robert D. Faiss and Gregory R. Gemignani; the pair catalog the structure and processes that constitute the gaming licensure system in the state of Nevada.

Chapter 10, by attorneys Glenn Light, Karl Rutledge, and Quinton Singleton, sheds light on the US sports gaming legal framework with an analysis of the preeminent US laws that regulate the sports gaming industry and a brief review of various sports gaming businesses that fall within the US legal rubric.

In chapter 11, February 2011 fellow Darryl Smith develops a philosophy of play through an analysis of the foot wager of the Sphinx. Applying a construction of the cosmology of Plato along with a Socratic etymology of her riddle's answer, it provides a reading of Sphingian contestation consistent with contemporary practices of deception found in modern games like poker.

Chapter 12, by September 2011 fellow Kah-Wee Lee, examines how the casino industry was transformed by slot technology between 1950 and 1990.

In chapter 13, April 2012 fellow Lynn Gidluck provides a cross-

national comparison of how governments around the world distribute revenues from state-directed gambling and how these choices have been justified by proponents and vilified by critics.

Casino consultant Dean Macomber considers the impact of the financial crisis on Las Vegas Strip casino fiscal and operational structures in chapter 14.

Chapter 15, by March 2012 fellow Jessaynn Strauss, chronicles the history of public relations by the gaming industry in Las Vegas and drawing on archival materials from over 30 casinos and gaming corporations, identifies four ways in which public relations is practiced in the gaming industry and four macro-level trends in the evolution of casino public relations in Las Vegas

In chapter 16, Oliver Lovat examines the strategic frameworks used by Las Vegas casino resorts and identifies the drivers for competitive advantage moving forward.

And in the final chapter of the collection, April 2012 fellow Chrisopher Wetzel considers the failure of Nevada to legalize a lottery despite its proliferation of other games, and theorizes about the lottery's absence in Nevada, focusing in particular on the role of the state, both operationally and as a regulator.

Taken as a whole, these papers are a good representation of the kind of work that's been conducted at the Center for Gaming Research over the last several years. In addition to being valuable in its own right, I hope that the present collection is a call for future research (and future fellowship applications) that will lay the groundwork for a series of volumes from the UNLV Gaming Press.