

# Review of: "[Review] Effective Strategies for Combating the Crime of Gambling in Batam City"

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**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.

The text seeks to argue about the “problem” of gambling in the city of Batam.

The moral perspective of gambling is ambiguous and paradoxical as an activity that is harmless to many, but potentially harmful to others, which makes it a legitimate sociological object to be studied and analyzed.

However, there are very serious problems with the text.

In the summary it is already possible to point out problems in the definition of gambling.

Roger Caillois, a French sociologist, will present a definition that, beforehand, dismantles the view presented that there are games exclusively of luck and others of skill. He points out that, among other things, there is an intertwining of luck and skill in games. It would take, for example, a specific degree of skill to bet on horses and, likewise, a certain degree of luck to play a football match. Thus, the dichotomous view of the game is, in principle, weak and in disagreement with the basic bibliography of the subject.

Already in the body of the text, the authors make tough statements about the role of crime and technologies in the behavior of subjects, which is at odds with the most elementary contemporary bibliography. Crime is presented as a pathological action similar to Positivist statements made by thinkers of the late 19th century and which have long since been outdated.

Basic readings of classical sociologists and anthropologists such as Emile Durkheim, Bronislaw Malinowski and more recent ones such as Howard Becker and several others have already proven that the dichotomous view between crime and order is unproductive and, in many cases, presents a punitive view of some groups, which may be a source of legitimization of repressions and maintenance of social inequalities inherent in its context. Honestly observing the practice of any activity (including those legally classified as a crime), depending on the point of view of the actor who commits it, can lead to a new reading of the inherent disputes in its social context. Thus, the text presents outdated assumptions that contribute nothing to the academic field.

When the authors refer to the “urgency” of the issue of gambling, it is equally worrying due to the same arguments previously presented, which in the issue of gambling, fails to consider the recreational issue and the action of governments and multinational corporations involved in the production and stimulation of these practices.

Phrases like:

“Thus, gambling has a negative effect because it is an inhibiting factor for national development, viewed from material spiritual aspects”

They are of extreme concern, due to false and scientifically unproven premises on which the text is based.

Rebecca Cassidy, a British anthropologist who has been dedicated to gambling for many years, will present an analysis regarding the moral, political, economic, and social issues surrounding these practices.

The author presents the “Gambling Industry” in line with the capitalist market (in addition to its financialization processes) in which certain activities are stigmatized and associated with organized crime, while others are released and widely accepted. The anthropologist also argues about the political consequences of reductionist visions of betting, pointing her observation to the way in which the betting industry developed from the direct action of governments and multinational institutions that expanded across national borders in the pursuit of economic growth. Thus, it is not possible to point out the game as an activity that is not involved in the economic and social development of nations. The similarities with capitalist motivations are manifold. Thus, the point in the text is not taken into real consideration, but from a previously consolidated perspective, and cannot be taken seriously by any journal that is really interested in the production and dissemination of scientific knowledge.

The moralistic perspective imposed in the text is harmful to any serious analysis that can be made regarding the different game practices. The authors make a mental mess by putting together bets on horses, football, cockfights, among others, as the same harmful activity and that somehow should be extirpated from the entire social fabric. Without taking into account the specificities in which each of them can adopt, or the economic, political and social dimensions that involve them. An extremely harmful attitude to anyone interested in the subject and who wants, honestly and without prejudice arising from false and moralistic apriorism's, to study and understand the subject with the scientific rigor that the subject requires.

In addition, religious discourse is considered here as a “solution” to this social “problem”, which once again completely loses its meaning when inserted in the middle of the discussion. Once again, they point to gambling as a problem whose given solution is more religion and repression by public agents. A conservative and biased view that does nothing to contribute to the real analysis of the issue of betting, a legitimate sociological object to be studied and analyzed.

The methodological discussion made in the text is incipient and does not indicate anything about how the data were obtained. Thus, we can raise a question: the text does not present itself as a sociological, anthropological, criminological work or any area of production of legitimate knowledge. So, what would be the real purpose of the authors anyway? What seems to me to be a pamphlet proposal by authors who are not willing to seriously study the issue but reinforce their religious values and seek scientific legitimation of their previously established discourses. Thus, once again it must be stated that the text does not meet the minimum conditions to be included in any academic journal.