

COMMON GOOD AND GAMBLING IN EUROPEAN HISTORY AND CONTEMPORARY TIMES – SNSUS conference, Tampere, July 4th 2019



NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE

Introduction

- Gambling has been used for centuries to finance public projects in Europe and it continues to produce crucial funding for welfare states and welfare projects (Marionneau et al. 2018)
- These funds have played a significant role in making gambling socially more acceptable, which is why they can be called “welfare justifications” (Marionneau et al. 2018)
- Lotteries were the first form of gambling that was promoted in Europe as a means to collect funds for charitable causes and public purposes, and the early Europeans settlers even brought this funding custom with them to colonial America (Kingma 1996; Selby 1996)

- For the past ten years, the idea of common good has been eroded by criticism concerning the use of gambling proceeds (e.g. Casey 2008; Adams 2008; Cassidy et al. 2014)
- The aim of this presentation is to examine the essence of common good in relation to gambling and the difference between common good and public interest

Content of the presentation

Introduction

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3. The end of good causes?

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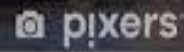
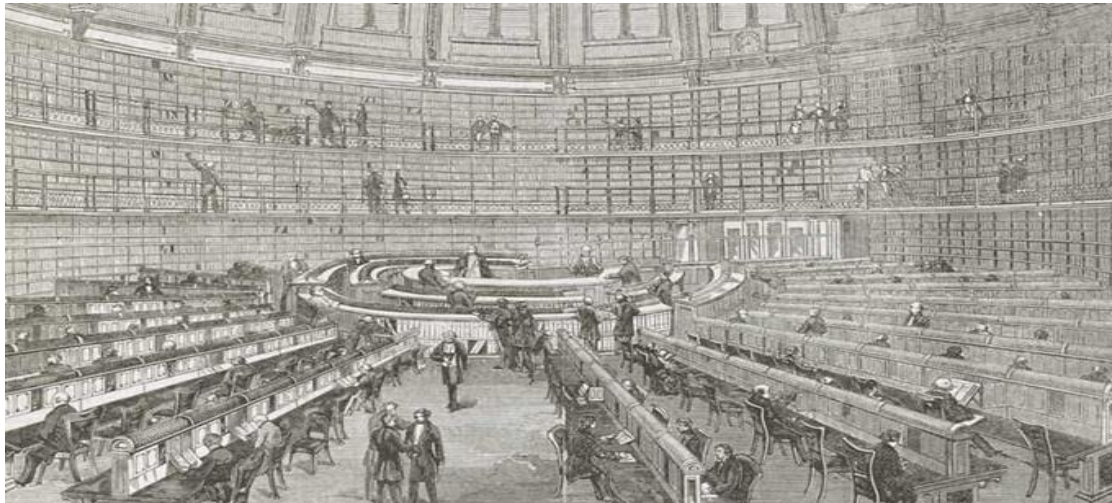
1. What is common good?

- The general idea of the common good is that it is something that 'more than one individual can pursue, achieve, possess, benefit from, value, or enjoy (Rehg 2007)
- The idea of common good, in relation to gambling operations, originated from the need to raise money for public works and charitable causes (Järvinen-Tassopoulos & Eräsaari 2018)
- Charity preceded social welfare in many European countries, especially in Catholic countries. It can be seen as an early conception of the common good, which had its roots in religious beliefs and in altruism (Järvinen-Tassopoulos & Eräsaari 2018)
- The advancement of charity has been one of the reasons for the increased acceptance and tolerance of gambling in the past (Järvinen-Tassopoulos & Eräsaari 2018)



2. From public purposes to unwanted contributions

- Lotteries were the first form of gambling that were promoted in the name of the common good in a community (Järvinen-Tassopoulos & Eräsaari 2018)
- In order to fund various public purposes through lotteries, individuals from different social backgrounds had to be encouraged (and enticed) to participate in an activity that was generally forbidden (Järvinen-Tassopoulos & Eräsaari 2018)
- In France the royal lottery was used as a form of ‘voluntary tax’, while in Denmark the taxation proceeds of a gambling licence were used towards the poor and the needy (Valleur 2009; Linnet 2009)



- Common good may not be accessible to everyone, especially to those who are marginalized from a community or are outsiders (Murphy & Parkers 2016)
- In Fiji, money won from gambling becomes ‘bad’, because the winnings are useless for the traditional economy but available for personal consumption (e.g. alcohol, tobacco, take-away food) (Presterudstuen 2014)
- The chief risk with (the) arrangement is that the agency that administers the funding begins to benefit itself from dispersing the money: It begins to derive direct and indirect benefits from the activity and thereby risks building reliance on that source. The strongest temptation for governments is to use such funds to support community services that they would have had to fund out of a personal income tax base. (Adams 2008)



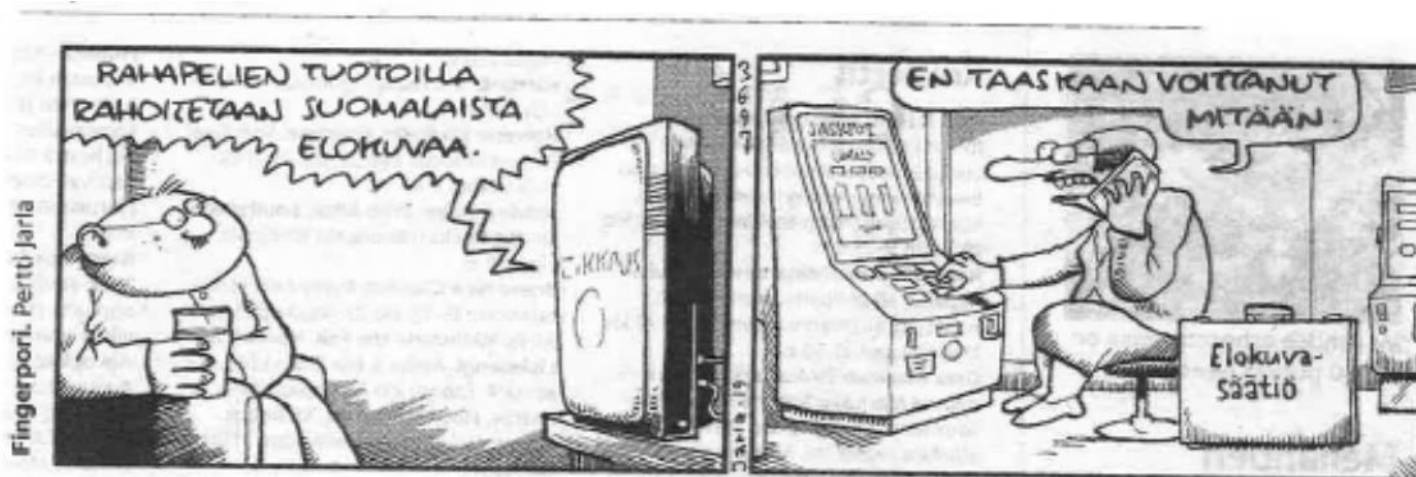
3. The end of good causes?

- In modern European societies, gambling can still be a prohibited economic activity, but its operation has become subject to being licensed (Järvinen-Tassopoulos & Eräsaari 2018)
- Concepts such as ‘good causes’ and ‘just causes’ have become more indefinite (Kingma 2004; Nikkinen & Marionneau 2014)
- The term ‘good causes’ refers to objects, projects and organizations that are funded with gambling revenues (e.g. Casey 2008; Raento 2011; Binde 2013)
- Previous studies have indicated that the good causes would not have an effect on lottery ticket sales (Clotfelter & Cook 2009; Owens 2009)

- Previous research has also questioned whether gambling is an ethical or even a cost-effective way to fund public projects (Nikkinen & Marionneau 2014; Adams 2016)
- "The public or common good, and the public or common interest, are frequent formulations of these (regulative) aims, which are often used interchangeably but in fact they cover underlying principles that are quite different and often contradictory." (Sulkunen 2018, 276)
- "...a public interest approach encompasses a wider agenda of policy justification than conventional notions such as public health, which singularly depend on evidence of causality." (Sulkunen 2018, 276)

Voice on the TV: Finnish film production is funded with gambling proceeds.

The Finnish Film Foundation: Once again I didn't win anything.



Conclusion

- The common good is still widely linked to approval and support for the welfare state, even if the welfare state is not often grasped as a companion to the common good (Järvinen-Tassopoulos & Eräsaari 2018, 266).
- The outcome of the organization of the common good depends on how social equality and welfare are comprehended in the near future (Järvinen-Tassopoulos & Eräsaari 2018, 266)
- Good causes are vestiges of a more universal conception of the common good, but they are not always seen as beneficial for the community and they do not represent solidarity towards those who would need support the most from the public sector (Järvinen-Tassopoulos & Eräsaari 2018, 270)