



# The Big Gamble: The Politics of Lottery and Casino Expansion

*Denise von Herrmann*

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While the gambling industry is indisputably large and powerful, it has received little attention from political scientists. Utilizing a variety of perspectives and techniques, von Herrmann analyzes gambling's recent expansion, finding public attitudes have been shaped both by government policies and the industry's attempts to create a family-friendly image.

Von Herrmann examines the politics of state and federal gambling policy, particularly policies relating to casinos and state lotteries. She considers gambling policy from a variety of perspectives, including the politics of adoption, the state and federal governments' role in policy formation and implementation, and the broad economic and social impact questions related to gambling. The inclusion of several state case studies provides insight into the largely successful reshaping of Americans' image of gambling?from seedy, sinful, and corrupt behavior to a benign, pleasurable entertainment experience?which ultimately has led to widespread availability.

While many have asserted that gambling policy fits well within the political models of morality politics, von Herrmann challenges this notion. Noting that true consensus has not been achieved in the area of gambling policy, she shows how supporters' economic arguments and opponents' moral concerns have effectively bifurcated the current debates on gambling policy; gambling is now viewed by many in two distinct and separate bodies of thought. As she observes, the challenge for the future of gambling policy is to find ways to bridge the gap. Of particular interest to scholars, students, and other researchers involved with public policy, particularly that relating to gambling.

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