

Section 7 – Amministrazione e Politiche Pubbliche

Chairs: Maria Stella Righettini, Federico Toth

Panel 7.6 The Politics, the Policy and the Polity of (anti)Gambling

Recent decades have seen the progressive legalisation of gambling in many nation states, leading to the generation of an industry capable of influencing State policies (Pedroni 2014). Italy is, for many reasons, a crucial terrain of investigation in attempting to understand the transformation of gambling into a mainstream leisure activity (Pedroni 2018, Reith 1999) and the consequent challenges for society. From a regulatory standpoint, Italy is an international landmark. The State maintains regulatory control but the gambling activities are organised by private concessionaires within a competitive market. The State is thereby contemporaneously a monopolist and a promoter of a market which generates or favours excessive or pathological behaviours.

Gambling and anti-gambling policies are often the terrain for intense and complex public debate. Local politicians, the national government, citizens, non-profit organisations and market players are actors in a fundamental political confrontation over values. Early studies on this issue focused on the politics of morality rather than policies per se (see Mooney 1999, Knill 2013), otherwise they have a strong focus the exploitation of moral frames to increase political gain (Mucciaroni 2011). In the socio-political literature on gambling little role has been given to the issue of multilevel governance, even though the vast cost-benefit analysis suggests this features should be carefully taken into consideration: the social costs and the economic burden is carried by the local level, while the fiscal revenues are treasured by the national one. Therefore the most profound consequences of the increasing role of gambling and betting have landed in urban environments. Italian municipalities, supported by social movements and third sector organisations, have taken the lead in the rebellion against the national approach to this issue. The capacity to complement (or contradict) national gambling policy in a variety of way limiting time consumption or place of offer. On this regards, little research has been done as regards policy rescaling, multi-level governance and civil society activism.

This panel welcomes papers to develop that address the political and societal consequences of the contemporary gambling, with a specific attention to the roles played by the different level and the different actors involved.

This panel aims to explore issues from such perspectives as:

- The relevance of ideological categories in the agenda setting / in the framing of the issue
- Impact of morality in framing the issue
- The consequences of social movements for local policies ^[1]_{SEP}
- The connections between social movements, private concessionaires in the cities ^[1]_{SEP}
- Tensions between local and national political elites
- Multi-level governance of gambling policies
- Rescaling of gambling policies

The list is only for illustrative purposes; papers related to other aspects of the politics of local government – either comparative or single case studies – are very welcome.

Papers can be submitted in either English or Italian.

Chairs: Matteo Bassoli, Marco Pedroni