

Talking About Casino Gambling

Community Voices From Boston Chinatown

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Outline

- ▶ **Part I. Research Aims and Background**
- ▶ **Part II. Research Approach**
- ▶ **Part III. Interview Findings**

I. Research Aims: Why Prioritize Chinatown for Gambling Research?

- ▶ Large Asian American customer base - as of July 2019, 18 Asian line runs were listed from the Boston metropolitan area and Lawrence to Mohegan Sun; and 27 to Foxwood
- ▶ 2007 Interview with Sr. VP Marketing Mohegan Sun (Peters, 2007):
 - ▶ 25 percent of the casino's table game revenue
 - ▶ 20 percent of its business.
 - ▶ Grew by 45 percent in 2 years
 - ▶ "It is our most robust segment in terms of growth... It is easy to spend capital on a fast-growing market." (Peters, 2007)
- ▶ Proximity of Chinatown to Encore Boston Harbor casino
- ▶ Lack of culturally appropriate services for Asian Americans.

Targeted Marketing: Mohegan Sun Website in Chinese



Targeted Marketing: Mohegan Sun Advertisement in Chinatown



Business Practices: Specialized Transportation Options

► “Asian Bus Lines”

坎昆(Cancun) → 原居地(Home) DAY 6 坎昆(Cancun) → 原居地(Home)



The image shows a bus schedule sign for Foxwoods Resort + Casino. The sign is dark blue with white and yellow text. It lists the bus schedule for four locations: Boston, Quincy, Dorchester, and Malden. Each location has a table of pick-up locations, departure times, and return times. The sign also includes a promotional offer for \$45 Match Play* + and the website www.foxwoods.com.

FOXWOODS
RESORT + CASINO
THE WOODS DO IT ALL

Bus Schedule (Daily) 賭場巴士時間表 (每天)

| Location | Pick Up Locations | Depart (出發) | Return (回程) |
|------------|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Boston | 波士頓唐人街上車點 85 Bedford St. (In front of Chicken and Rice Guys) | 10:00 A.M. 12:15 P.M. | 5:00 P.M. 7:00 P.M. |
| | 31 Harrison Ave. | 9:15 P.M. | 4:00 A.M. |
| | | | |
| Quincy | 昆西市上車點 733 Hancock St. (In front of New York Mart) | 9:15 A.M. 11:45 A.M. 9:00 P.M. | 4:00 P.M. 7:00 P.M. 4:00 A.M. |
| | President Plaza (219 Quincy Ave.) | 9:30 A.M. 11:30 A.M. | 4:00 P.M. 7:00 P.M. |
| | | | |
| Dorchester | 多徹斯特上車點 1616 Dorchester Ave. | 9:00 A.M. 8:45 P.M. | 4:00 P.M. 4:00 A.M. |
| Malden | 摩頓上車點 T Station (Pleasant St.) | 9:30 A.M. | 5:00 P.M. |

\$45 Match Play* +
• FREE Buffet or
• \$10 Food or
• \$15 Match Play or
• \$10 Retail Credit
* Bonus packages are subject to change without notice.

www.foxwoods.com

A Culturally Diverse Community

- ▶ The Chinese immigrants are part of an ethnic group with heterogeneous viewpoints, generational and educational backgrounds, income levels, regions of origin, immigrant experiences, and differences in young people's exposure to gambling in home or community settings.
- ▶ For many, gambling problems occur after immigration, not before, particularly not in China

Immigrant Experience:

- ▶ **Gambling mostly illegal in China**
- ▶ **Greater risk for gambling disorder in U.S.**
 - ▶ *“His parent shipped him back to China to go to school because in China, gambling is illegal....”*

Mixed Views on Gambling:

- ▶ **Culturally-influenced views**
- ▶ **Some approve and others disapprove**
 - ▶ “So you lied to family about going to casino back then?”
 - ▶ *“I still do, because Chinese traditional culture considered gambling is bad. When it comes about going to the casino, it’s not a very good sign for most Chinese.”*

Chinese Not Born as Gamblers

- ▶ *“They said that gambling is in our blood ... I do not think that we are born as gamblers.”*

No Culturally
Appropriate
Prevention or
Treatment Services
are Available

- Where culture matters?
- Interview with executive director of Chinatown clinic
 - Fear of stigmatizing whole community
 - Limitations of services with state reimbursement.

Part II. Research Approach



Academic-community partnership and research team



Training of interviewers



Recruitment and convenience sample



Interview protocol



Recording, translation, transcripts



Coding and analysis

Part III. Selected Interview Themes

Gambling Together: At Risk Together with Friends

- ▶ “Has your gambling ever caused serious or repeated problems in your relationships with any of your family members or friends?” (NODS PERC 4)
 - ▶ *“Yes, my friends too. We went together and it happened to all of us. You lose, you’re not happy. If you’re not happy, you make mistakes at work and get yelled at. You can get depressed and not be able to sleep.”*

Difficult, Low-wage Jobs

- ▶ **“Why do you think so many Chinese get into gambling after coming to the US?”**
 - ▶ *“Maybe because they work so hard and make so little...Our jobs are hard and we make little after working for more than 10 hours daily. We have to take a lot of flak. You go to the casino, you get to gamble and get a free meal. It’s enjoyment.”*

Social Isolation

- ▶ **“If there are more other recreational activities for Chinese people, do you think they would gamble less?”**
 - ▶ *“Yes, like in China. Not many people are addicted. Here, there are really a lot. They just work in a restaurant with no recreational activities available. We need more other things like stores, buffet, hot pot, Chinese movie theaters, dim sum. People can go eat, shop and have no time to go to casinos. There are places like that in China and Hong Kong.”*

Need More Recreational Options

- ▶ *“Most of time, Chinese do not know how to plan their life, when you are in China, you may have other hobbies, such as watching ball games, or playing Go. There is no such thing in the United States. It’s hard to find anyone to hang out with you. Besides, people are very busy here, and everyone’s schedule is different. You could get very bored and depressed here, nothing to do on your off days.”*

Linguistic Isolation: No Other Entertainment

- ▶ *“Because in the United States, I didn’t know English at the beginning, what kinds of entertainment were there? There was no entertainment.”*
- ▶ A spouse on her husband’s experience:
“There’s no recreation. Immigrants don’t know English, like my husband... If you tell him to take a bus farther away, he’s afraid to.”

At Risk from Exposure to Targeted Casino Marketing and Casino Environment

- ▶ “Do you often see Chinese people at the casinos?”
 - ▶ *“Yes, a lot, I see a lot of Chinese people. Here, casinos give out cash coupons or buffet coupons that entice people into the casino. They don’t offer those coupons in Macau. That’s why I often see a lot of the uncles and aunties going to casino. They usually leave for the casino at night.”*

Ambience Inside Casino, No Seats

- ▶ **“Is there anything else you can do there when you go?”**
 - ▶ *“No, there’s nothing else to do. There’s not even a place to sit down. If you want to sit, you sit at the slot machines.”*
- ▶ **“Do you gamble too?”**
 - ▶ *“Yes, once you go in, the atmosphere, it’s hard not to gamble. You might hang around 1 hour, 2 hours, but by the 3rd hour, you’ll gamble.”*

Ambience Inside, It Makes You Go Crazy - Become a Different Person

- ▶ *“It controls you. There is something particular about the ambience of the casino that once you go inside, it makes you go crazy. It makes you a different person that you lose control of yourself when you are inside, even though once you come out you are back to normal.”*

Family Systems: Desire to Protect Children

- ▶ “Why don’t you go?”
 - ▶ *“Because of my kids. They’re older now. I want to go, but I have to work and take care of them. Even if you don’t eat, they have to eat. In the past, I didn’t like to work, and all I could think was to go there. But then after giving birth to kids, I don’t want them to know that I gamble. I don’t want them to follow my path.”*

Hiding Gambling from Family Members

- ▶ *“The family doctor let him to see a psychiatrist, but that can't help at all. The psychiatrist, just talk to him, useless, ultimately it is about the problem of money...[We] always fight, want to divorce. Sometimes I didn't know he went to gamble and he said he didn't go. Later on, someone came here and asked me for money, saying if I don't give him the money he owed, he will kill him (her husband). Recently five or six years, we started to go to church and we did not gamble at all. We were at church two times a week.”*

Thoughts on Opening of New Casino in Everett

- ▶ “Is it good or bad to have casinos?”
 - ▶ *“Casinos are good for people to have jobs, but there’s more bad than good. People lose their hard-earned money and have nothing. People who don’t gamble can save money to buy a house, buy cars for their kids.”*

Family-based Interventions

- ▶ Understanding and respecting family inter-relationships is vital in prevention and treatment.
- ▶ Conceptualize problem gambling as a family issue.

Facilitate Civic Engagement

- ▶ *“You people with power have to do something, not like us, who have no money, no power. You elect someone, they should do something. You educated people should do something. Get people’s kids to help. They are the real victims.”*

Recommendations

▶ *Culturally appropriate prevention and services for Asian Americans*

- ▶ (1) Public health campaigns, including youth and adults.
- ▶ (2) Treatment services and culturally appropriate wellness programs.
- ▶ (3) Preventive education and services for casino workers of Asian descent and immigrant background.
- ▶ (4) Provision of state-supported reimbursement for services.
- ▶ (5) Training of professional counselors in community settings.

Concurrent development of (1), (2), (3), (4), (5) is of critical importance.

Recommendations (continued)

- ▶ *Participatory deliberation in regulatory process:*
 - ▶ (6) Engagement of community-based organizations and professionals knowledgeable about Asian American communities in goal-setting for reducing the negative impact of legalized gaming on the low-income Asian populations.
 - ▶ (7) Community engagement at the grassroots level in public policy deliberations.
 - ▶ (8) Formation of a regulatory advisory committee to review the ethics of targeted ethnic marketing practices toward vulnerable populations, including low-income, racial-ethnic minority and immigrant communities.

Recommendations (continued)

- ▶ *Expanded scope of collaboration and services:*
 - ▶ (9) A co-learning and mutual support pan-Asian American coalition of community-based organizations that provide family support and wellness programs for immigrant and refugee communities in the region.
 - ▶ (10) Community-based efforts to provide healthy and culturally appropriate recreational alternatives to casino gambling in local neighborhoods.

Lessons and Strategies for Future Research

- ▶ *A five-year research program to develop:*
 - ▶ (11) Increased understanding of social-economic impacts of legalized casino gaming in ethnically diverse Asian Americans communities.
 - ▶ (12) Culturally appropriate health communication approaches for research dissemination and implementation in Asian American communities.
 - ▶ (13) Methods to obtain representative samples for hard to reach populations.
 - ▶ (14) Expansion of research on Asian Americans prioritizing for next steps study of gambling problems, prevention, and treatment in communities of low-income Vietnamese and Cambodians residing in Dorchester, Quincy, Lowell, Malden, and Worcester.