

EXPLORING INFORMAL GAMBLING IN GAUTENG TOWNSHIPS

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for the Gauteng Gambling Board



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Executive Summary

This study was designed to explore the nature of informal gambling in townships, to investigate what motivates people to participate in gambling in townships and to attempt to isolate factors associated with recreational gambling as opposed to unhealthy, self-destructive gambling practices. This knowledge is useful for policy makers, regulators and social service providers.

A series of focus group workshops was conducted with individuals who had participated in some form of township gambling. A total of 63 people participated in a series of 5 workshops in Gauteng. Two workshops (25 people) consisted of individuals who had grown up in townships, subsequently left as adults and who currently gambled regularly at casinos. The other three workshops (38 people) comprised people who regularly gambled in townships (and possibly also frequented casinos). The workshops explored individual and group responses using a variety of approaches to assist participants to articulate their views on gambling.

Gambling for the township residents was a far more frequent activity than for non-township residents and consumed substantially more of their time. 51% of the township residents we considered classified themselves as unemployed. 41% classified themselves as partially employed, some of this employment related to gambling activities (being a Fafi runner, running a cards or dice venue, etc). Of those who were unemployed, most people indicated that gambling was a major source of their income; some even described it as their only source of income.

The most significant difference between what township and non-township residents expressed as wanting and getting from gambling was that the former indicated quite clearly and unanimously that what they sought and gained from gambling was money. The ex-township participants sought both money and entertainment from their gambling but largely did not indicate that they actually benefited financially from their gambling activities. Township residents were far more likely to indicate that they used gambling to balance their budgets than ex-township residents who gambled primarily at casinos.

It appears possible that individual perceptions of financial returns on gambling, in particular Fafi, are skewed by the fact

that winners frequently share their gains with losers (a kind of social re-distribution and income smoothing process, not unlike that associated with *stokvels*).

Fafi is the most widely spread and pervasive form of gambling and was unanimously portrayed as a necessary and beneficial form of support for the poor and unemployed. Despite the fact that Fafi is run by non-township residents and is identified as being a Chinese game, there was no hint of resentment for the wealth that this game has created for its owners. It was uniformly perceived as being fair despite the fact that the odds are changeable as the 'Chinaman' *chooses* the winning number *once the bets have been placed*. Part of this perception of fairness appears to be based on the fact that people often know and observe who wins and actually frequently experience winning for themselves, albeit possibly small amounts.

Lottery and Casino gambling were widely perceived by the township participants as being 'rigged' and unfair. This appears to be based on not often knowing anyone who has won the lottery and on the perception that the technology at casinos is somehow actively cheating people out of their money. Township dice and cards were perceived as being 'fairer' and as allowing punters to be more in control than casino gambling.

The downside of township gambling was reported to be the perceived violence, crime and insecurity surrounding, in particular, the game of dice.

Despite the fact that all township gambling is illegal, this does not appear to be a factor in curtailing gambling activities as police are apparently regularly and routinely bought off.

There was widespread inability to calculate rates of financial return or odds, and an apparent belief that these were not particularly helpful skills for gamblers. In Fafi the reliance on dreams to guide the choice of numbers appears to eradicate any interest in the odds or of playing strategically.

The findings of this study are preliminary but have serious policy implications for education and for gambling regulation.

1. Introduction

This research arose as a follow-up to the research project: “An In-Depth Enquiry into the Reasons People Gamble, the Perceived Benefits and Associated Patterns of Gambling” submitted to the Gauteng Gambling Board in August 2011. That project proposed a set of screening questions intended to differentiate between those who gamble for entertainment and those at risk of gambling behaviour which is problematic and negatively affects them and society. A further result was a tentative sense of the different nature of township based gambling as captured in the following: summary points on *informal (township) gambling* emerging from workshops held across a broad (race, class, age, gender) spectrum of *casino* gamblers:

- *Gambling appears endemic to township life, from fondly remembered games played by children, through to more sophisticated games of dice, cards and the enigmatic iFafi*
- *Gambling in townships represents a potent and pervasive form of entertainment and socialisation*

- *Gambling is perceived (at least by some) as linked to savings, financial management and access to cash*
- *There is a substantial risk of violence associated with township gambling and (what appears to be) a complicated protocol around protection from violence/theft for participants (mainly those engaged in higher stake forms of gambling)*
- *Casino gambling represents a safer form of gambling for those who are used to gambling in townships*
- *iFafi is linked to mythology around dreams, numerology concepts and, for some at least, is associated with stories/habits passed on from the older generation*

A recommendation of the “**reasons people gamble**” project was that further workshops be convened specifically to explore the nature of gambling in townships. It was further recommended that the proposed set of screening questions be refined and updated in the light of the information emerging from these workshops.

2. Objectives of this project

The objectives of this research project are to explore:

- what forms of gambling are available to people in Gauteng townships,
- what motivates people to participate in the identified types of gambling,
- how gamblers (particularly in townships) perceive their gambling activities, and
- how people's lives are affected by their gambling.

It is hoped that this understanding will assist in isolating those factors which identify healthy as opposed to problematic patterns of gambling, and consolidating a proposed set of screening questions.

3. Design and Methods

Five workshops were held at the Markinor offices in Randburg, Gauteng during the period 30 October to 2 November 2012. A total of 63 participants attended these workshops which were constituted as shown in Table 1:

Those participants who did not live in townships were recruited on the basis that they had been raised in a township and had spent at least five years of their adult lives living in a township, and were also regular (at least once a month) casino gamblers. The reason for including two workshops with these participants

was to explore the views of those who were familiar with township gambling and who now chose to gamble in casinos (and who may or may not also have continued to gamble in townships). Those participants who lived in townships came from the following areas: Mndeni South, Soweto, Emndeni, Vosloorus, Zondi, Alexandra, Mfolo, Meadowlands, Palm Springs, Diepkloof, Pimville, Braamfischer, Kagiso, Central Jabavu, Dobsonville, Sigodiphola, Kagiso, White City, Molapo, Phiri, Snake Park, Zola, Naledi, Doornkop, Dube, Tladi, Klipspruit.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Workshop Participants

Workshop	Date	Number of Participants	Township residents	Ages	LSM group
A	30 Oct	12	Yes	24-55	4-6
B	1 Nov	12	No	25-52	9-10
C	1 Nov	13	No	21-44	9-10
D	2 Nov	13	Yes	23-60	4-6
E	2 Nov	13	Yes	30-60	4-6

4. Agenda and Workshop Plan

- (1) Welcome and refreshments.
- (2) Discuss agenda for workshop and explain rationale for research. The focus of this research is on exploring what sort of gambling people engage in, in townships. There are no 'right' or 'wrong' responses or thoughts (except to say things you don't personally believe!). We are interested in extracting some views on gambling but not on identifying individuals who hold those views.
- (3) Introductions: participants introduce themselves and explain what kinds of gambling they personally participate in (spending time along the way to explain the logistics of each game).
- (4) Post-it Sessions
 - (i) The following questions are written up on large sheets of paper. Each question is pasted on a different wall space and has blank space below it for responses from the participants to be posted:
 - Question 1: "What satisfactions/benefits do you hope to get from gambling?"
 - Question 2: "What satisfactions do you feel you actually receive from gambling?"
 - Question 3: "Is there anything you dislike about your experience of gambling?"

How to participate in this exercise: (Dealing with one question at a time). Think quietly and carefully about the question posed and then write down as many thoughts as you can (as they come into your head) in response to this question. Write each separate thought on a separate sticky paper (Post-it notes). Be as clear and concise as possible. Once you feel you have exhausted a question, please put up your Post-its on the blank paper below the question on the wall. Then move on to the next question. If there are already other Post-its on the wall when you

come to post your thoughts, consider whether the idea expressed on your Post-it is saying something different (in which case position it a little further away from the other Post-its), or the same (in which case you should stick yours next to the ones that seem similar). Rules: A Post-it cannot be removed (except by unanimous consensus). You may go back and add Post-its to previous questions if you like. (You may see something someone else has written which reminds you of something you would like to add.)

- (ii) As a group exercise: Obtain clarity on each concept and complete the clustering of 'like' concepts. Facilitator ensures that concepts are legible and are correctly understood. Attempt to cluster together concepts which have a common theme. Then obtain views on the relative importance of the different clusters of concepts.

Note that the responses to these questions were not used to develop cognitive maps in this study. These were produced in the report preceding this one but this exercise was not repeated here as indications were that participants found this a very demanding exercise, particularly in the light of language being a potentially confusing factor. Although an interpreter was on hand who could intervene or be called to translate if necessary, a decision was made early on not to work through a translator unless strictly necessary as this changed the dynamic of the workshop substantially. Thus, it was decided to

BREAK FOR PARTICIPANTS

- (5) Questionnaire based Ranking/Scoring exercise: Here are some reasons other people have given for gambling. Are any of these true for you? Score each of them on the scale shown (1-5). This exercise is intended to stretch participants to consider the importance/relevance of some motivating factors that people engaged in extensive research on gambling have identified.

5. Summary Results of Workshops

5.1 Characteristics of participants:

Those residents who lived in townships were largely unemployed (51% unemployed, 41% partially employed) whereas as those who had moved away from the townships and who frequented casinos regularly were largely employed (75% in full time employment). The non-township residents were generally *happier* (average score 4.4 compared to 3.8 for township residents) and *healthier* (average score 4.7, compared to 4.0 for township residents).

Non-township residents were more likely (64%) to have thought they should stop/reduce their gambling than township residents (55%).

Gambling motivation:

Township residents were more enthusiastic about all of the reasons given for gambling in the “Reasons Why I Gamble” (Table 2) except “*Gambling opens up a fantasy world for me*”. Township residents were significantly more likely than non-township residents to state the following:

- *I only feel alive when I am gambling*
- *Gambling helps me to balance my budget*
- *I gamble when I need cash*
- *Gambling improves my skills at interacting with people.*

Table 2: Strength of support for different motivators for gambling

Motivation for Gambling	Median Township response	Median Non-Township response
I get pleasure from playing the particular games I choose to play	5	4
I love thinking about what I might do with my winnings	5	5
I love the fact that for a while I have the chance to be much wealthier than I am	4	4
<i>Gambling opens up a fantasy world for me</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
Gambling is a way of spending time with people I like to be with	3	3
Gambling lets me escape from the negative parts of my life	3	2.5
When I gamble I don't think about things that stress me in life	5	3
I only feel alive when I am gambling	3	1
Gambling helps to balance my budget	5	1
I gamble when I need cash	5	3
When I am bored or depressed, I gamble	2	2
I enjoy the excitement and thrill of taking risks	4	3
Gambling helps me to develop control over the way I take risks	4	2
Gambling allows me to demonstrate my skills to myself and others	3	3
Gambling improves my skills at interacting with people	4	2
Gambling improves my skills at analyzing situations	3	3
Gambling improves my ability to work with numbers	5	4

Scale: 1=No support ... 5= strong support

5. Summary Results of Workshops (continued)

5.2 Responses to workshop questions:

The responses of the workshop participants were grouped into common themes or factors as follows:

Money: expressed as *...”extra cash; to be rich; have quick cash; money to buy food; money to make ends meet; I gamble because of poverty; to put food on the table; to be independent; generate income; money to support my child; some sort of income for kids; to win and be able to maintain myself like buy things that I need; money to fulfil my needs; money for living; money to support my church; make a living; to have something in return so that I can have a living at the end of the day; to make a profit for a living; to win and support my family; to become rich; I get to make a living; gambling is my means of income; I want to make it through this situation of unemployed through gambling ; money to build my house...”*

Fun/Entertainment: expressed as *“sometimes meeting people there you become relieved of your problems; satisfaction; fun; outing; pleasure; fulfilment; sense of belonging...”*

Positive outcomes: expressed as *“ hope; room for dreaming; get good communication skills; desire; respect; feel alive; stress release; brain/mind stimulation; satisfaction that your earnings do not include hurting other people;it is like therapy; victory ...”*

Negative outcomes: expressed as *“experience what is wrong; stress; sometimes you stress because gambling is a winning or a lose; sometimes I become stressful if I lose; feelings of loss; fights at home; discouraged; anger; grief; disappointment;*

anxiety; illness; feel withdrawn; vow to change and never go back; bit of heart break; depression; don't really enjoy it; pain; guilt; addiction; not being honest ...”

Violence/ Crime /Aggression expressed as: *“...police harassing us when we try to make a living; when people start cheating; fights; be against one another; to fight when you gamble; someone who win and go with you and drink alcohol and fight; taking risk at night; crooks; casino owners are crooks; township gambling dangerous because fights break out all the time; dices because of the fights; quarrels;when you win with people you do not know they will try to rob you; sometimes it gets violent; sometimes it can be very dangerous; I don't like to be robbed...”*

Losing expressed as: *“...losing; losing my money; not winning; takes a lot of money out of you; lost more than I won...”*

Addiction/'Bad' Gambling expressed as: *“...always in debt; gambling with my salary before paying the bills; borrow money; planning to play with only R100 but ending up playing with R1000; I hate the part when you just can't stop even when losing; to see myself leaving the game of dice early in the morning as if I have no place to sleep; breaks up families; breaks up marriages; losing pride; throwing your hard earned money away; regret; losing money is painful as we do not have it but were hoping to get it legally; fear of addiction; addiction; conflicts at home and fear of going home broke; bankruptcy; addiction; unhealthy compulsion to gamble; I don't want to steal money for gambling; using someone else's money for gambling; ...”*

Table 3: What participants HOPED TO GET from gambling

Question: What do you <i>hope to get</i> from your gambling experiences?				
Group	Demographics	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
A	Township	Money		
B	Non-township	Money	Fun and Entertainment	
C	Non-township	Money	Fun and Entertainment	
D	Township	Money	Fun and Entertainment	
E	Township	Money		

5. Summary Results of Workshops (continued)

Table 4: What participants ACTUALLY RECEIVED from gambling

Question: What do you <i>actually get</i> from your gambling experience?				
Group	Demographics	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
A	Township	Money	Positive feelings	Negative feelings
B	Non-township	Negative emotions	Positive feelings	
C	Non-township	Fun and Entertainment	Negative feelings	
D	Township	Money	Positive feelings	
E	Township	Money	Positive feelings	

Table 5: What participants reported they DISLIKED about gambling

Question: Is there anything you <i>dislike</i> about gambling?			
Group	Demographics	Factor 1	Factor 2
A	Township	Violence/Crime/Aggression	Addiction/ 'Bad' Gambling
B	Non-township	Losing	
C	Non-township	Losing	Addiction/'Bad' Gambling
D	Township	Violence/Crime/Aggression	Losing
E	Township	Losing	Violence/Crime/Aggression

5.3 Participants' views on Fafi (MaChina, Fah-fee,iChina)

Fafi is by far the most common form of gambling in Gauteng townships. Apparently originating in China and brought to South Africa in the early 1900's, it was first played by miners in the old Transvaal province. It is a mobile form of lottery in which punters select a number from 1 to 36 and the dividends paid to the winning number are 1:28. The bets are placed and the winnings drawn in a luxury car with tinted windows which cruises the township streets and arrives at a designated *station* (shop, house, street corner). In many townships it can be played 3 times a day: morning, afternoon and evening; and participants reported that the car can even be seen driving round the wealthy northern suburbs of Johannesburg during the daytime, taking bets from domestic workers. The lottery is traditionally run by Chinese people and the driver of the car

is referred to as Mo-China or the Chinaman. A *'runner'* (who may be the owner of the station if it is a private house or shop) is employed to collect the bets and disburse the winnings. The Chinaman visits the different stations at the same time each day. The runner collects the bets on a board which has the numbers 1 to 36 on it. Runners could potentially manipulate the game so the Chinaman (in the car) holds up his hand and makes a symbol so that people watching and waiting for the runner will know what the winning number drawn was.

However six numbers are 'blocked' (bets cannot be placed on these numbers), making the apparent odds 1 to 30. The numbers which are blocked are the three numbers which have been 'drawn' in the 3 previous draws and their partners. The partners are shown in Table 6 below.

5. Summary Results of Workshops (continued)

Table 6: Fafi “partners”

1 : 36	7 : 13	13 : 7	19 : 5	25 : 20	31 : 18
2 : 29	8 : 3	14 : 34	20 : 25	26 : 11	32 : 12
3 : 8	9 : 17	15 : 16	21 : 24	27 : 22	33 : 6
4 : 35	10 : 23	16 : 15	22 : 27	28 : 30	34 : 14
5 : 19	11 : 26	17 : 9	23 : 10	29 : 2	35 : 4
6 : 33	12 : 32	18 : 31	24 : 21	30 : 28	36 : 1

The perceptions of the odds in Fafi is a curiosity which was only partially resolved through the findings of these workshops. Despite the apparent parallels with roulette (36 numbers), it transpired, after substantial probing of successive workshop participants, that the winning number in Fafi is not drawn, as one would assume, through some random, independent process. Many participants claimed they did not know how the winning number was drawn and also appeared to find the interest in the selection process to somehow be irrelevant. Participants of one of the workshops declared that the Chinaman himself *chooses* the winning number, on the basis of self interest and with full knowledge of the bets placed. When this was discussed with other workshops,

there was general concurrence that this was correct and was a completely reasonable model for generating the winning number. Even armed with this knowledge, i.e. that the Chinaman most likely selects the winning number based on the distribution of the bets, participants seemed to find the idea that this could influence the way in which they placed their own bets as misplaced. It was clear that there is a strong sense of (i) trust in the ability of the Chinaman and (ii) an investment in the metaphysical (through dreams) in the way in which individuals place their Fafi bets. People are influenced to bet on particular numbers through their dreams (each of the numbers is linked to different symbols), a selection of which are shown in Table 7.

Table 7 : Dream characters associated with numbers 1 to 5

Number	Dream characters
1	king, human blood, white man, left eye
2	monkey, native, a spirit, chief, copper, money, jockey
3	sea water, accident, frog, sailor, sex
4	dead man, turkey, small fortune, bed
5	tiger, fight, strong man

The reason why six numbers are blocked off (i.e. excluded from those which can be chosen by punters) was explained as “well of course those numbers [that were drawn in the

previous three draws] can’t come up again, otherwise we would know it wasn’t fair”.

5. Summary Results of Workshops (continued)

This gives us extraordinary insight into participants' perceptions of odds, risk and random outcomes. It also seems likely that the Chinaman has a good sense of the need for Fafi to be seen to be fair, which probably accounts for his generally being regarded as a benefactor rather than a businessman.

Thus despite the fact that it is clear that Fafi has led to people who do not live in the townships ('the Chinamen') becoming extremely wealthy through running the operation in a way in which many punters would not regard as 'fair', Fafi has the reputation of being 'for the poor' and there were no indications of resentment against the Fafi owners. Many participants cited the fact that they used Fafi 'to put food on the table' or when they needed "a bit of extra cash". This seemed a very contradictory position to hold, and when asked about how they managed to 'put food on the table' on the occasions when they didn't win and in contrast lost their last few rands, participants responded that this was not usually a disaster as those who won typically gave a little bit to those who lost. This apparent 'smoothing of the losses and winnings' appears to make Fafi operate more like a stokvel or social safety net than a conventional lottery. In addition, Fafi has the advantage that small denominations are played (usually R20 per number is the maximum bet and bets start at a minimum of 50c) so there are not big associated losses. "Its cheap and you always win something". Fafi is also a source of income for some regulars in that they have their personal betting purses in which they place their bets and they can, on occasion, allow others to use these bags for a small cut of the winnings.

Fafi, like other forms of gambling in townships, is illegal and can occasionally be disrupted by the police. However, also like other forms of township gambling, it seemed widely believed that the police are bought off and thus do not bother the Chinaman or punters. When asked whether Fafi should be legalized, opinion appeared divided. The unanimous view was that Fafi was a beneficial and healthy part of township life. It was viewed almost as a 'social service' in assisting the poor and unemployed to make ends meet. Because of this view some participants believed that it should be legalized. However, others expressed the worry that it would get more expensive because the Chinaman would then have to pay tax which would drive up costs of the game.

Crime associated with Fafi appears to be low as associated betting amounts are low. Runners are quick and careful, although there were reports of isolated muggings of runners. A big perception of the fairness of Fafi (in contrast to that of, e.g., Lottery) appears to relate to its delivering what people expect. It can be that there is no winner in Fafi but this appears to be an unusual event.

5.4 Participants' views on Dice

Dice are generally played on street corners or in other public spaces. The most popular form of dice played appears to be similar to Craps, however the player throws once to establish a number and then must repeat this number to win. The *knocksman* is the owner of the game, as well as the arbitrator and facilitator and the person who will have to pay off the police and pay in if there is money missing. The *knocksman* takes a cut (a third?) of winnings earned. Participants indicated that it would be dangerous to play dice with people one didn't know and trust as games can be rigged by the *knocksman* (false dice) and or fellow gamblers appearing to be strangers but in reality working together as a team to trick the unsuspecting out of their money. Mostly people play dice in habitual venues where you "see the same faces at the game where you play". Dice can be very rough and winners (especially of large amounts) can be victimized. The police cannot be relied upon to protect players, as they are frequently paid off by the *knocksman* to ignore the gambling activities. Winners can expect to have to distribute some of their earnings to extract themselves safely from a dice game. Dice, in contrast to Fafi, generally attracts high stakes and stories of people betting their cars, houses, wives, etc abound. Most workshop participants who spoke of their dice playing activities associated it with risk, fear, excitement and frequently cited it as an activity they would rather not do but declared that they "could not stop". Participants were divided as to whether dice should be legalized. Some felt that it would help to reduce associated crime and violence, others felt that it *should* be illegal because of the crime and violence.

¹ "The Limpopo Gambling Board believes that the fifteen major operators in the region alone turn over millions of rands in fahfee games" <http://www.gamblingsa.com/stories/gsa-billion-rand-fahfee-industry-highlighted.html> Feb 4 2011, accessed on 6 /01/2012

5. Summary Results of Workshops (continued)

5.5 Participants' views on Cards

The game of cards most popular in the townships appears to be a variant of poker. Cards are most likely to be played in private houses and, unlike dice, are not reportedly associated with violence. Individuals use their homes to host card groups and generate a bit of income through this activity as each player pays the house owner to partake. Participants who spoke of their card playing activities (mostly women) generally spoke of it as being a form of social interaction and stress release and indicated deriving a sense of belonging and support from the group they played with. They also said they played cards to “make a bit of extra money”. As with Fafi and dice most participants indicated that they played cards very frequently, often daily.

5.6 Participants' views on Casino Gambling and Lottery

Some (37%) of the participants who resided in townships (T) visited casinos to gamble, with about half of these being regular casino gamblers, and half classifying themselves as occasional. All of those who no longer lived in townships (NT) were casino players (by design) and many of these participants still played Fafi, dice or cards when they visited people in townships, although most said that this would be a very occasional occurrence. Six (25%) of the 25 NT residents indicated that they were regular township gamblers.

Individuals from the NT group were much more likely to classify their casino gambling as entertainment, a form of recreation and “a way to de-stress”. The view that “Casinos are rigged” was more prevalent amongst T inhabitants than the NT group. The game of dice played in the townships was generally perceived as fairer than casino gambling as “there is no technology”...“township gambling is not programmed, so its fairer”. “99% of people gambling at casinos lose ... its rigged”. Although these negative views were tempered by the occasional “It does employ people, which is positive.” The following views were common amongst regular T gamblers: “I am in control with township gambling”; “Experience counts with township gambling” and casino gambling was consistently reported as unfair: “the house will always win”; as well as being somehow ‘tamable’: “the best time to play is between 1am and 2am when the machines are full”. NT dwellers were far more likely to experience casinos as places of entertainment and recreation. Most of the workshop participants also played the Lottery and had similarly strongly unfavorable views as they had to casinos, i.e. that they were rigged. The general view was that “everyone plays Lottery”, that “Fafi is for the unemployed” and “casinos are for the well off”.

6. Discussion

Gambling is apparently endemic to township life. Workshop participants spoke repeatedly of the different forms of gambling, from fondly remembered children's games such as *Zwebi*, coin spinning and simple games involving rolling a marble through the space between two bricks, to card schools held at people's homes through to Fafi and Dice. Many participants indicated that they started their more serious gambling habits while at school, even beginning their careers as *knocksmen* in the school grounds. Children play with whatever scraps of money they can gather and betting starts at levels as low as 5 or 10 cents. The general pattern was reported as "Boys play dice, ... girls play cards". NT participants said they had 'progressed' from township gambling to casino gambling however their reported experiences of the two types of gambling were very different. Some participants indicated that they had come from conservative and/or religious homes in which gambling was frowned upon and forbidden, so they had only been able to begin gambling as independent adults. However, all participants indicated a knowledge of the extent and practice of gambling in townships and it was consistently reported as an intrinsic part of township culture.

Perhaps the most striking difference between township and NT participants responses to the workshop questions was that those who lived and gambled in townships indicated that they not only gambled expressly to make money but that they declared that they actually did make money from gambling. It should be noted that there is a distinct difference in terms of socio-economic group between the township (LSM 4-6) and NT (LSM 9-10) groups so observed behavioural differences could perhaps be attributed to both culture *and* class.

The township gamblers were largely very positive about township gambling and especially about Fafi. There was an overwhelming sense that gambling was a form of income, the forms of gambling associated with higher stakes (especially dice) were also associated with high risk and violence, whereas those associated with small stakes were essentially a form of 'social service' and were a necessary part of township life. Cards (mainly played by women) were reported as strongly associated with networking and support and both Fafi and cards could well actually operate as social safety nets in that winners apparently often distribute small amounts of cash to those in their circle who are experiencing extremely difficult circumstances.

While there were a number of township participants who declared themselves to be 'addicted' to gambling, these workshops didn't identify *Addiction/ 'Bad' Gambling* as a negative factor. There was a much stronger awareness of the problems of gambling addiction amongst the NT group, who **did** identify this as something they disliked about gambling. The self confessed addicts were seemingly disinterested in proffered information on free counselling services provided via the NRGF. They spoke of their 'addiction' with what appeared to be a sense of pride and portrayed it as a sort of 'vocational hazard'.

The main features of the responses to the workshop questions were as follows:

- All township gamblers said they gambled in order to make *Money* (primarily), with one out of three township groups indicating that *Fun & Entertainment* was a secondary motivator for gambling.
- Both NT groups said they gambled both for *Money* (primarily) and for *Fun & Entertainment* (secondarily).
- Township gamblers indicated unanimously that they obtained *Money* from gambling which the NT gamblers did not.
- NT gamblers said that what they got from gambling was primarily *Fun & Entertainment* (one group) or *Negative Emotions* (the other group).
- Township gamblers were more likely to associate gambling with *Positive Outcomes* (largely positive emotions such as hope and a sense of having dreams) than NT gamblers were.
- Almost all township gamblers identified *Crime, Violence and Fighting* as the thing they most disliked about gambling.
- NT gamblers were more likely to say that the negative side of gambling was losing and the problems associated with what they identified as 'gambling addiction'.

A disturbing feature of the discussion in most of the workshops was the fact that most of the township residents (and many of the NT residents) in the workshops did not consider the

6. Discussion (continued)

betting odds (or any objective information about the chances of winning) as relevant information in deciding on their bets. There was, in general, a marked inability to use simple numerical information in making financial decisions. This view is perhaps best highlighted in the following exchanges which took place in the workshops:

- (i) In response to the charge that casinos are rigged, it was suggested by the facilitator that perhaps the casino should display more prominently the information on the odds and the 'house advantage' so that punters could see to what extent things were skewed in favour of the casino in the game they were playing. This was not regarded by participants as helpful or likely to make any difference to how they would approach their game, or alter their view that the process was 'crooked'.
- (ii) With regard to Fafi betting: the overwhelming majority of regular Fafi players did not know how the winning number was selected (i.e. random or not) or how many numbers there were that could be selected (i.e. all 36 numbers or some blocked off?) and declared that the only basis for choosing which number to bet on was contained in their dreams. Given the information that everyone else was also betting on their chosen number (which would clearly reduce their potential earnings) they would not switch their bet to another number. This, of course, contradicts their stated aim to 'make money' from Fafi.

(iii) A participant stated that Fafi gave better returns than any financial institution he knew, on the basis that the Chinaman pays out the winning number at a rate of R28 to R1. When it was pointed out that one needed to take into account losses over a period of time in order to work out the effective return on investment, this was disputed by the participant and others.

- (iv) The overt attempts by the Lottery operators to show that the process of selecting the winning lottery number is random (and therefore fair) did not impress the workshop participants who overwhelmingly declared the Lottery process to be flawed and 'rigged'. In contrast Fafi, in which the winning number is secretly selected by the 'Chinaman' after the bets have been placed, was unanimously declared to be a fair game. This view appears to be based on personally knowing and seeing people who *win* (in Fafi, but not in Lottery) rather than on the underlying process.

These observations have policy implications for education of citizens and for gambling regulation. It is clear that gambling in townships is a complex issue which should be dealt with cautiously and holistically. Some policy recommendations are tentatively proposed at the end of this paper.

7. At-Risk Screening instrument developed on the basis of Focus Group Responses:

The information from the previous round of workshops held in Gauteng (Scott and Barr, August 2011) yielded a set of potential screening questions aimed at identifying people at risk of so called ‘problem gambling’ which results in destructive behaviour patterns and the risk of financial and physical hardship for individuals and those close to them, as opposed

to people who gamble for recreation and entertainment. The insights from the series of workshops reported on in this study have been used to modify the set of questions proposed in the August 2011 report and the final proposed set of questions is shown below in Table 8.

Table 8: Proposed Screening Questions

Q1	After a gambling session which ends in your “not winning” do you <i>mainly</i> feel: (i) that was still good entertainment? (ii) a mixture of disappointment at not winning but pleasure at the entertainment value of the time spent? (iii) overwhelmingly disappointed which wipes out the pleasure of the gambling?
Q2	Do you set rules for yourself when you gamble? If so, do you stick to these rules? (Y/N)
Q3	Do you ever think of gambling earnings as part of your household budget money? (Y/N)
Q4	Do you ever gamble because you need cash? (Y/N)
Q5	Does gambling help balance your budget? (Y/N)
Q6	Do you believe that there is a “system” that can consistently win at a casino? (Y/N)
Q7	Do you feel resentful against casino management/owners? (Y/N)
Q8	Do you wish that you didn’t gamble? (Y/N)
Q9	When you leave a casino do you more often than not think “Why didn’t I do something else with my time?” (Y/N)
Q10	Do you think your gambling is (i) not a form of addiction and not a problem? (ii) a form of addiction but not a problem? (iii) a form of addiction that is a problem? (Select one answer only.)
Q11	Do you believe you are duped by casinos who take advantage of your addiction? (Y/N)
Q12	If casinos were banned, would you continue to gamble (at illegal casinos) if it were available? (Y/N)
Q13	How often do you gamble? (i) less than once a month (ii) less than once a week (iii) more than once a week. (Select one option only)
Q14	How many different types of gambling do you regularly (at least once a month) engage in? (i) one (ii) two (iii) three or more (Select one answer only.)
Q15	Do you use any of the following to help you decide what to bet on? (i) Dreams (Y/N) (ii) Visions/ Premonitions (Y/N) (iii) Sangoma/ Life Coach/ Spiritual leader/ Spiritual guide (Y/N) (iv) Other
Q16	Do you know what the “odds” are when you bet (i.e. do you know how ‘likely’ you are to win in the long term)? (Y/N)
Q17	If YES to Q15 and Q16: Are you more likely to be influenced by (i) the odds of the bet or (ii) the category you ticked in response to Q15? (Select one option only)

²Scott and Barr, An In-Depth Enquiry into the Reasons People Gamble, the Perceived Benefits and Associated Patterns of Gambling” submitted to the Gauteng Gambling Board in August 2011.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

The workshops held across both formal and informal gambling sectors in Gauteng have yielded some preliminary insights into the complexity of thought processes that motivate people to gamble. These have led to the proposal of a set of screening questions to distinguish between those who gamble benignly for recreational purposes and those whose gambling is destructive for themselves and those close to them.

It is recommended that the proposed screening questions (in Table 8) from this research be refined and tested in a wider survey of gamblers (both formal and informal).

There are broad policy implications that arise from the findings of this survey. These include the following:

- There appears to be very poor understanding of the numerical concepts that underpin simple financial transactions such as risk and rate of return. Inability to assess risk places individuals and communities in an extremely vulnerable position. The National Responsible Gambling Programme (see Collins et al, 2011) has developed a wealth of educational material for schools and the adult educational sector.³ This material has been extensively piloted in schools across the country and it is clear that there is a need for it to be more firmly embedded in national curricula and adult education programmes.
- The issue of regulation of gambling is a complex one. Township gambling is reportedly associated with high levels of crime and violence, particularly when the stakes are high. However, somewhat paradoxically, it would seem that gambling is perceived as a safety net for the poor and may also be associated with a re-distribution of cash amongst the poor. Moreover, people appear to spend substantial proportions of their time on gambling activities which also often form the basis of social networks which provide security for people with unpredictable and erratic sources of income. The current status quo is that township gambling is illegal but this does not appear to hamper levels of gambling activity. There does not appear to be a basis for recommending increased levels of law enforcement over this particular issue.
- Gamblers in townships may be at increased risk of being 'problem gamblers' due to high availability of gambling coupled with high levels of poverty and low levels of education.
- Screening questions such as those proposed in this report may be useful in identifying 'at risk' individuals; however these questions still need to be tested and validated prior to recommending their routine use.

³ Addressing problem gambling: South Africa's National Responsible Gambling programme, SAMJ, vol 101, no. 10, October 2011