**Cambridge English B for the IB Diploma: Teacher resource**

**Audio scripts**

**Audio track 21**

[Paper 2 Higher level - Text C]

**Text C**

You are going to listen to an interview with Dr Gurken, a professor of social and cultural anthropology.

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**Interviewer:** Welcome to this week’s edition of ‘What Makes People Tick’ on International Public Radio. Our main topic today is gambling, which is more relevant today than ever. Last month a major online search engine announced that the most expensive ads were all sold to online gambling sites. In the studio with me today is Dr Laura Gurken, professor of social and cultural anthropology. She has recently published an article on the history of gambling around the world, titled ‘There’s no such thing as a natural-born gambler’. Welcome Dr Gurken.

**Dr Gurken:** Thank you for having me on the show.

**Interviewer:** Thank you for being here. So Dr Gurken, it seems odd to publish a paper with such a title when online gambling has become so rampant. Can you explain this paradox?

**Dr Gurken:** Well there is an explanation, and it’s called technology. It has become pervasive in most people’s lives now, and has penetrated most parts of the world.

**Interviewer:** So you’re saying that before the digital age, people simply did not gamble? That’s a rather bold statement. Surely there were coins and cards and casinos as far back as medieval times?

**Dr Gurken:** Well, yes and no. There were some instances of gambling in medieval times. But it wasn’t until mercantilism became the driving force for economies in Western Europe in the seventeenth century that gambling took off. This rise in gambling coincided with the rise of stock markets, insurance companies and foreign trade. Colonialism, you could say, was a kind of gamble in itself. Especially when you consider how many ships safely returned from the colonies carrying spices and goods.

**Interviewer:** But before colonial times, other parts of the world, let’s say ‘non-Western’ parts of the world, did they not gamble at all? Certainly the Chinese have been doing this for ages.

**Dr Gurken:** Yes, actually they have. In fact it’s thought that games like blackjack and poker originated there. But China is one of the few places outside Europe to have witnessed gambling so early in history. At the time, it had all the social factors that led to gambling.

**Interviewer:** And what were those factors?

**Dr Gurken:** Where there’s an accumulation of wealth and unequal distribution of wealth gambling will arise. And that’s what happened in China about three thousand years ago. But for most countries, it’s a relatively new phenomenon. Places like Papua New Guinea had never heard of gambling until the 1950s.

**Interviewer:** And that’s because they didn’t have disposable income or social class difference, you’d say?

**Dr Gurken:** That’s right. Disposable income and... not so much social class difference, but social inequality. And, here’s the other necessary ingredient: mobility. When people travel, they encounter different currencies and economies, where they can buy things they couldn’t afford at home. They can return with wealth they hadn’t known before, and use it to change traditional social hierarchies. So you get the nouveau riche, and you get gambling. When money comes easily, it also goes easily. Easy come, easy go. That mantra applies here too.

**Interviewer:** So isolated societies, like Papua New Guinea, had very stable economies and strong social hierarchies. They weren’t disrupted or even *corrupted*, you could say, by foreign influences or, more specifically, foreign money?

**Dr Gurken:** Exactly.

**Interviewer:** But this explanation is all very historical. Your paper claims ‘there’s no such thing as the natural-born gambler’. So where do genetics come in?

**Dr Gurken:** My colleagues in the field of psychology can prove that some people have a genetic predisposition to addictive behaviour. And a vulnerability to addiction can, of course, lead to increased substance abuse or gambling abuse, among other things. But genetics only account for forty to sixty per cent of a person’s likelihood to develop an addiction.

**Interviewer:** So it’s both nature *and* nurture?

**Dr Gurken:** That’s correct. There are certain things that can trigger an addiction. A slot machine in the local bar might be one, for example. But a pop-up ad in your web browser is even more dangerous. And that’s the new world of technology we’re living with. Addiction rates have increased dramatically since online gambling has been unregulated in so many parts of the world.

**Interviewers:** So it’s like smartphones and laptops have put casinos at the fingertips of gamblers.

**Dr Gurken:** Exactly. That’s the idea. But before colonialism and globalisation and smartphones, this kind of addiction wasn’t found in many societies in the world.

**Interviewer:** Right. But what about countries that have banned gambling? I mean, haven’t there always been secret casinos? And if you block it online, won’t people just reroute their IP address? So is there any point in banning it, when people will be able to seek it out anyway?

**Dr Gurken:** Well, that line of logic is a bit flawed. By that reasoning we could justify legalising everything that’s illegal, including murder. But we have these laws for good reasons: to protect people, sometimes from themselves. With gambling, it’s been shown that countries who block these pop-ups have lower addiction rates. Gambling addictions cannot be enabled if there are no triggers.

**Interviewer:** So it’s time for governments to talk to major search engine companies about these adwords?

**Dr Gurken:** Yes, that would be a step in the right direction. After all, they also do not want to be the instigators of gambling addiction. So why are they fuelling this market with ads for gambling?