

The Paradox of Control

In high-risk gambling organizations

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Risk Society Framework

- Risky consumption: gambling addiction as an unintended consequence.
- Reflexive monitoring: reflexivity as response (reflex) and as 'consciousness' (reflection).
- The meso-level of organizations is important for the construction and distribution of risks.



High-Risk Organizations

- (Commercial) enterprises that offer high-risk gambling games, and that display a reflexive attitude towards risks, which they seek to reduce.
- This definition overlaps with ‘high-reliability organizations’ (Weick and Sutcliffe, 2001)



The Risk Model of Regulation

TABLE 1	Prohibition model	Alibi model	Risk model
Moral meaning of gambling:	It's a sin	It's a vice	It's entertainment
Political strategy:	Conflict	Compromise	Consensus
Rationale for gambling law:	Gambling is considered dysfunctional for social order	Gambling can be valued as a social activity, and legalization can be important for countering illegal markets.	Gambling markets are economically important
Destination of returns:	Returns, if any, only go to the treasury	Good causes	Private profit is also allowed
Central concern:	Fighting the exploitation of gambling	Criminal involvement in gambling enterprises	External effects like gambling excesses and problem gambling.
Exploitation:	Illegal enterprises	Oligopolies	High-risk organizations
Controlling institutions:	Policing	Legal norms and social values	Scientific research and health care
Idealtypical state:	The nation state	The welfare state	The neo-liberal state (risk society)
Derived from: <i>S. Kingma, The Gambling Complex, 2002</i>			



Risk Management

- Gambling as an ‘Institutionalised Risk Environment’ (Giddens, 1990)
- ‘Responsible gambling policies’
- ‘Self-exclusion’ programs in casinos



The Evaluation of Evaluation Researches

- Bruin et al. 2001, *Guests of Holland Casino: Effectiveness of the preventive policy on gambling addiction*, CVO, The Hague
- Ladouceur, R. & F. Ferland, 2007, *Evaluation of Harrah's Responsible Gaming Policy. Report 1: Employee Training*, University of Laval, Quebec.
- The South Australian Centre for Economic Studies, 2003, *Evaluation of Self-exclusion Programs and Harm Minimisation Measures*, Gambling Research Panel, Victoria.

Research about Self-Exclusion Programs

- Normative accounts and outlines about self-exclusion programmes (i.e. The ‘Reno model’)
- ‘Input’ measurements. This concerns registration issues as part of a self-exclusion programme.
- ‘Output’ measurement. This concerns the procedural and factual evaluation of self-exclusion programs, including its effectiveness.



The evaluation of the Holland Casino self-exclusion program (Bruin et al. 2001)

- Based on: interviews with ‘stake holders’; survey among 1000 casino customers; 40 in depth interviews with 40 problem gamblers; analysis of 7000 files of customers who got a self-exclusion or self-restriction.
- 2.2% of gamblers are problem gamblers at Holland Casino.
- Points at a comparably high level of risk awareness and commitment to responsible gambling policies among personnel.
- Points at a significant increase, since 1996, of the number of signals, ‘problem gambling conversations’, and self-exclusions/restrictions.



Major weaknesses of the Holland Casino self-exclusion program (Bruin et al. 2001)

- Some problem gamblers simply are not likely to be patronized by casino officials, and many deny their problems.
- Some of those who agree on self restrictive measures evade these measures by gambling abroad, on the Internet or in amusement arcades.
- Table game players are more easily included in the self-exclusion program than the slot machine players.
- Many of the customers who were 'objectively' classified as problem gambler, were never contacted about their behavior by Holland Casino (60%!).



Major Conclusion: A Paradox of Control

With an increasing precision in identifying gambling addicts, and in procedures for excluding and treating them, it becomes at the same time, equally clear that there is a certain bandwidth of problems that are reasonably beyond control and have to be accepted...



Questions or comments?

Consider participating in the **24th EGOS Colloquium** (Amsterdam, July 10-12 2008), stream 29 is entirely on risk and risk-management!

THANKS!

