

Gambling: Social influence to gain addiction (Sociological perspective)

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Abstract - The belief that one can earn money and get rich quick and easy is one of the most enduring companions of human nature recorded in oldest book sources, mentioned even in the Bible 5,000 years ago. Along with prostitution, which is considered to be the oldest craft in the world, gambling is one of the oldest addictions and forms of deviant behavior known to mankind. The paper deals with the sociological perspective in research on gambling as a deviation and analyzes recent trends through the treatment of numerous studies on this topic. The paper discusses the causes, forms and consequences of the social environment of gambling as well as a section that deals with legal regulation and attempts to legally reduce or combat gambling as a deviant phenomenon. Agents of influence on the person who develops gambling addiction are considered and the roles of family, friends and social environment are presented as factors that contribute to the emergence of addiction. Gambling as an addiction is also considered in the context of the negative emotions that cause unusual and risky actions of individuals and is explained in the theory of interactive ritual chains by Randall Collins. The paper also tries to portray a typical profile of a gambler.

Index terms - gambling, addiction, deviant behavior, Randall Collins, theory of interaction ritual chains, sociology.

1. INTRODUCTION

In our modern and fast life, humans are challenged to fulfil lot of responsibilities and goals. Chasing a good carrier, develop a broader range of social skills and making a positive image in local environments impose a high standard for everyone. The burden of time produces a lot of expectations and increase a level of stress. Many decided to held with these expectations through line of less resistance. In our days, no small number of people decided to challenges their life happiness with some king of lottery, gambling, sport bet and other games of luck. The brief review on history of gambling, will show a long timeline of this addiction. According to some historical records and archaeological research, gambling has deep roots many years in past and in the most of the cultures of almost all civilizations. Gambling artifacts find in ancient China (2300 BC), India, Egypt, and Rome. The set of iron cubes dates from 1500 BC, probably from Thebes, and specific records of gambling have also been found in the Pyramid of Cheops. The oldest gambling game is a dice game. They were thrown by Marco Polo, Chingis Khan, the ancient Egyptians and the ancient Greeks. The original cubes are made of pebbles, wood,

bones or animal teeth and rotate slowly. Primitive cultures had witches and shamans who used the "magical" properties of dice to divination and fortune-telling. In the early 14th century we find the first records of gambling. The idea of "blackjack" and paper money poker was described in China around 900 AD. It later evolved into maps, brought to Europe by Emperor Mameluk. Lotto was founded in 1700 in the British colony Later [1]. The first automaton was invented by Charles Le Fey in 1895 in the United States. The device was named "Liberty Bell" and contained fruit-decorated rolls. These apparatuses were colloquially known as "one-armed bandits" because they were characterized by low payout rates and control by criminal organizations ([2],[3]). Gambling activities have developed over time and become interesting and attractive to a growing number of people. The elements of excitement and fun offered by gambling activities have become the basis for the inclusion of different age and gender groups of people. Gambling activities soon became widely present in the daily life rhythm of a large number of people. In fact, engaging in gambling

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activities has become commonplace and normal as the harmful effects of gambling have spread imperceptibly.

2. DEFINING GAMBLING AS AN ADDICTION

Despite of sociological interest, in everyday lives many tend to define gambling is a common leisure activity in majority of cultures throughout the world. However, having in mind potential harmful consequences of gambling, it is also an activity that attracts criticism and censure. This reproach arises out of gambling being a potential social problem. Gambling can be distinguished from other forms of leisure activity in moral or ethical terms as it is assumed to be, at least potentially, a social problem which needs to be controlled. Most of the available literature on the relationship between gambling and society focuses on its problematic side (i.e. gambling addiction and its implications). Hence, the image of gambling is frequently disparaging and negative. The pejorative and negative way that gambling is presented rest on common ideas of its possible harmful implications, i.e. that which can cause financial, personal and social problems [4].

There are several different views that define gambling given its harmful consequences for individuals and society but also in favor of the measures that the state should take to reduce gambling. Here are the definitions of gambling from a moralistic, prohibition and clinical-medical point of view:

The **moralistic** view holds that gambling is only after itself pathogenic, that is, to the circumstances or personality of that who gambles, these or those species are not crucial in origin addictions, but only the length and intensity of exposure to games. Luckily. According to that view, gambling everyone turns into a gambler, only if often enough, for a long time and a lot of play. With each game of chance, the chances of appearance increase gambling disorders and addictions caused by games on happiness. Because gambling has its addictiveness, and what it is the more you play, the easier it is to play and the more you take risks. The complexity of the internal changes that uncontrolled, excessive play on happiness (hereinafter gambling) is present in people's lives, so even when they are more than obviously positive or at least benign, the moralistic view seeks with all its might to deceive under a negative value, so as not to be ashamed of it and felt guilty by those who gambled.

Prohibitionist starting point in understanding the problems caused by gambling, as opposed to the ingrained moralistic considering the issue of gambling, it was the premise that it was not the fault of the one who gambled, but in gambling itself as an addictive psychoactive activity. Therefore, the prohibitionist starting point is a hotbed of suppression the problems caused by gambling were no longer considered in the

"consequences" - the very problems caused by playing fortunately, but in their "cause" - gambling and betting which provoke them. A simplified but certainly correct thesis of the prohibitionists claims: if there were no games of chance, there would be no problems caused I gamble. It has become a theoretical platform for the struggle of the Prohibitionist movement against legalization and organizing games of chance. Prohibitionists hold that it is any gambling risky behavior, to anyone who gambling can also gamble that gambling is in a disastrous sense stronger than the person who gambles and make it as gambling escalates turns into a socially deviant person. Proponents of the social prohibition of gambling and betting are not only against pathological but also against moderate play fortunately, because they hold that it paves the way for pathological gambling. Proponents of the prohibition of gambling simply hold a dangerous addictive action that psychopathizes a person who gambles and urges her to do and say what else she would not do and say, that is, to be in a bad sense what is not.

According to another, common, but also **clinical-medical** point of view, it is not gambling but predisposition that is to blame for the development of addiction for the development of addiction in one who gambles. Because it doesn't hurt most people who play games. What's more, most people who play from gambling have had mostly positive experiences. Playing entertains them, relaxes them, pampers and rests. Only somewhere less than a tenth of the total number of people who gamble loses control over gaming, the amount of money invested, and the frequency playing and becomes addicted to gambling and moves on to the pattern forced, destructive and chaotic gambling [5].

3. RANDALL COLLINS: THE THEORY OF INTERACTIVE RITUAL CHAINS AND THE EXPLANATION OF THE REASONS FOR GAMBLING

Randall Collins is known for trying to reconcile structural functionalism and conflict theory into an integrated conflict theory. His views in this effort to reconcile the two orientations are based on the imperative to offer a non-ideological theory and therefore start from the individual level without neglecting the levels of the social community. Criticizing conflict theory as extremely ideologically postulated but also economically determined, Collins offers a set of principles of what he calls conflict analysis, originally intended for social stratification, which can later be applied to other spheres of social life, including and social deviation: 1) Conflict theory must focus on real life, not abstract formulations, (In this section it is closer to the materialism of conflict theory than to structural

functionalism) 2) Conflict theory of stratification must explore material conditions affecting interaction. Although social actors are influenced by a variety of factors, such as physical space, means of communication, supply of weapons, means of achieving public impression, tools and goods [6]. 3) in a situation of inequality, the groups that control the resources will try to exploit those that do not have them. 4) Theorists of conflict theory should study from the standpoint of interests, resources, power as well as cultural phenomena such as beliefs and ideals. and 5) sociologists should not only theorize about stratification (and other aspects of social life - AJ) but should study it empirically, if possible in a comparative way [7]. This leads Collins to formulate three important principles on which his conflicting sociology should be built:

1. The basic determinants of individual forms of behavior are the experiences of giving and receiving orders.
2. The more one gives orders, the more one becomes proud, self-confident, formal and identifies with the ideals of the organization that justifies the orders.
3. The more one follows orders, the more one becomes servile, alienated from the ideals of the organization, adapts to external influences, becomes distrustful of others, preoccupied with external rewards, and is immoral [6].

Collins later developed his theoretical basis for his conflicting sociology and incorporated a number of other teachings, such as the theory of interactive ritual chains. One of the sociological theories that deals among the other things with reasons for deviant behavior (gambling for example) developed in recent decades is Randall Collins' Interaction Ritual Theory (IRT) [8]. Collins' theory has sought to demonstrate the importance of rituals and emotional solidarity in building motivations for deciding in various situations in everyday life. Though it is widely cited, Collins' theory has been subject to little theoretical elaboration. While several studies have empirically investigated IRT few have expanded the architecture of the theory. Some authors contend that this is due to the underspecified nature of one of Collins' critical concepts, *emotional energy*

...Collins clearly conceptualizes what he means by emotional energy, it remains ambiguous how emotional energy might be operationally defined

4. TYPES OF GAMBLING

Analyzing the gambling as a deviant pattern of behavior, sociologists agree that long-time gambling activities offers a room for developing so-called deviant career. Most of the individuals who decided to spend their lives on some of the forms of gambling convinced that this kind of job will provide

or empirically measured. It is also uncertain how emotional energy can be linked to concrete, primary emotions—like fear, anger, sadness, or happiness—or to secondary elaborations of primary emotions like pride, shame, love, and embarrassment [9].

On the importance of the concept of emotional (negative) energy in making key decisions in life, Collins believes that there is a wide range of areas where the devastating impact of this concept can be seen, and one of the most visible is that of deviant behavior, especially in interpersonal relationships

whether participating in some great collective event such as a big political demonstration; or as spectator at some storied moment of popular entertainment or sports; or a personal encounter ranging from a sexual experience, to a strongly bonding friendly exchange, to a humiliating insult; the social atmosphere of an alcohol binge, a drug high, or a gambling victory; a bitter argument or an occasion of violence [8].

Emotional energy is, thus, the result of both the euphoria of contagious public gatherings, the ecstasy of sexual encounters, the bonding of friendly exchanges, and it is an outcome of humiliating experiences, heated arguments, and violent episodes. Clearly, emotional energy is the product of distinct and qualitatively different types of social interaction, some of which that could be considered polar opposites [9].

Finally, people also deal with the discomfort of accumulated by numbing or distracting themselves through the use of alcohol, drugs, work and food, as well as through the participation in activities such as gambling, exercise and sports. Due to the intensity of the feelings of ee- and the relatively short half-lives of such substances and the limited thrill of these behaviors, individuals can become dependent on these coping mechanisms in order to reduce the potential impact of negative emotions [8].

a secure future, do not invested in another business or job. Moreover, a good proportion of gamblers instead loses their former job and faced a bankruptcy. Today in literature we can find a several types of gambling typologies, made according to different criteria. According to the characteristics of the person who gambles, we can distinguish:

Professional : Gambling is his primary source of income; makes his living gambling.

Casual Social Gambler : Gambling is one of many forms of entertainment; gamble infrequently.

Serious Social Gambler : Gambles as a major source of entertainment; plays regularly at one or more types of gambling, and does so with great absorption and intensity.

Relief-and-Escape Gambler : Major activity in person's life of equal importance with family and business; but rest of life goes on without integrity being seriously impaired; more than a pastime.

Compulsive Gambler : Gambling is only thing in life; ignores family and business, and often turns to crime to support his/her habit.

5. THE GAMBLER'S PROFILE

As putted before types of gamblers expressed different consequences of their addict. Some sociologist, concentrated on social outcomes of gambling make a detailed profile pf excessive or passionate gambler. According to Michael Walker, 'an excessive gambler gambles once a week or more, has lost more than he or she can afford six or more times; has lost more than planned on four of the last five sessions; usually or always chases losses; for whom gambling causes debts; whom wants to cut back or stop gambling and who has tries to stop gambling without success'[12]. The hours (in some cases and days) spent gambling are hours spent away from the other aspects of everyday connections and obligations in a persons life. At the other extreme, a gambler may lose not only all of his family savings, but all of the money that can be borrowed from any available source, and may steal, embezzle, and commit fraud until in the end get caught or imprisoned.

The problem gambler seeks to win money and believes that he or she will do so with persistence; however, persistence produces increasing debts and gambling increasingly becomes, the only means by which those debts can be paid. The fluctuations in fortunes experienced by gamblers maintain the illusion that debts can be paid in this way. The 'big win' proves that the gambler is right and the 'big loss' simply increases the desperate need of the gambler for success. The hope of making money keeps the gambler involved, but the reality of the debts incurred cause the breakdown of the gamblers personal and social life [12].

As far as emotional and health problems, some authors like Walker thinks that gambling does not directly cause personal problems such as depression, suicidal thoughts etc. Moreover, gambling in many cases does not cause social problems such as

Antisocial Personality : Life career is getting money by illegal means; those who gamble try to fix gambling games [10].

According to type of game we can destinguish: Lottery, scratch, pull-tabs and raffle tickets, Bingo, Sports betting, Slot machines, Card and table games, Horse betting, Internet gambling, Stock market speculation, Betting on other games.

Apparently, such typology of gamblers offers an overview of negative aspects of this addiction. There are several groups of aspects concerned gambling, social, emotional, economical, health, etc. Concentrating on the negative economic effects of gambling, Rowntree and Lavers argue it to cause the diversion of resources rather than the generation of income and employment and conclude it to be poor economic reasoning and an increasingly isolated attitude [11].

the breakdown of relationships with significant others. As he puts it, gambling directly causes debt which in turn causes the range of other observable phenomena. The motivation for gambling may appear to be the acquisition of money, there may be deeper underlying reasons. At the very least, gambling may be seen as a challenge or contest in which the individual attempts to show his or her true self, or in which the individual attempts to create a sense of self[12].

6. SOME MORE SIGNIFICANT SOCIOLOGICAL STANDPOINTS ON GAMBLING

Abovementioned theoretical approach to gambling in sociology by Randal Collins and its theory of interactive ritual chain – that emphasizes negative emotion and energy as a trigger for gambling – is just a one of the theoretical orientations on topic. Another theoretical standpoints which has provided the sociological basis for a more positive perspective on gambling was developed by Erving Goffman. In his broaden theory of dramaturgy, analyzing the human behavior and motives that lies under this motivation, Goffman 'lifts gambling out of the moral abyss into which successive generations of commentators and reformers have consigned it and renders possible a consideration of its meaning which is freed from a priori association of a negative kind'. Goffman essentially argues that gambling provides players with an opportunity to demonstrate strength of character and commitment to valued social codes such as risk-taking, courage and honesty. Gofman argues „While gambling provides a substitute for challenges removed from ordinary

life, it also is given an added civilising function as a beneficial agency of socialisation and social control" [13].

Another sociological perspective on gambling was introduced by Wray Vamplew. He also recognises gambling as a positive social function and goes on to add that gambling performs a social function in providing an open sesame to certain subcultures. In such cultures the ability to pick winners brings social recognition and willingness to share knowledge, particularly the hot tip straight from the stable via dubious friends of friends, serves to cement relationships. From this, Vamplew concludes that gambling clearly has a positive side and is not merely the irresponsible, anti-social activity, caricatured and condemned by the anti-gambling brigade [14].

CONCLUSION

From the dawn of the humanity, gambling in all its forms has been a companion of human history. Present in the early civilizations like Egypt and Ancient Greece through the throwing of ivory cubes to the modern forms of electronic and online gambling, the pursuit of happiness and easy earnings has always aroused the interest of ordinary people but also of the explorers. There are several theoretical approaches in the sociological literature that deal with the problem of manifestation and the reasons for gambling. Only a handful have been considered here, such as that of Randall Collins called Theory of the Interactive Ritual Chain, that of Irwin Goffman, and that of Wray Vamplew. These approaches differ from each other, above all, the view and the assessment of the gamble. If in Collins views the belief prevails that negative emotions and bad energy attract people to the gamble, which later excludes them, completely bad consequences for the individuals, in Goffman and Vamplew there is a moderate to positive criticism of gambling. Namely, these authors believe

that gambling as one of the ways to fill free time only indirectly leaves consequences primarily for the social life of gamblers. Even Wray Vamplew goes far and talks about the process of building a deviant career where the friendship with the other gamblers of the individual enables a kind of emotional support and joining a subcultural community.

However, gambling today, in all its forms, is an addiction with serious consequences, such as for the individual, his family and society. The legal policies pursued through the dislocation of casinos and betting shops in the central areas is just one measure of dubious effectiveness. In terms of the social response and reduction of this type of addiction, a more comprehensive program of socialization and re-rationalization is needed from an early age.

There is a different type of gamblers according to various criteria. Some of the gamblers feel to approach to slot-machines casinos and bet several times in week even every day. Some gamblers have a control and visits gamblers places in particular days and plays games as a pattern for fulfilling free time and leisure time. Excessive and compulsory kinds of gamblers seems to deal with the biggest problem affecting their whole social and emotional life. Michael Walker emphasized the negative social consequences of gambling portraying the typical excessive gambler which life path can traced to imprisoning.

However, sociological interest in gambling has to be more vibrant in the next years and decades having in mind epidemical spreading of on-line gambling, betting and electronic casinos. What is more worrying is easy access to gambling for youth and children. All these suggest that, sociology in the future will and should research factors and forms of manifestation of such addiction.

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