

Carran, M. (2013). How adolescents differentiate between social gaming and true forms of gambling – preliminary findings from qualitative focus groups carried out with 14-17 years old in secondary schools in London. Paper presented at the 15th International Conference on Gambling and Risk Taking, 27th - 31st May 2013, Las Vegas, USA.



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Original citation: Carran, M. (2013). How adolescents differentiate between social gaming and true forms of gambling – preliminary findings from qualitative focus groups carried out with 14-17 years old in secondary schools in London. Paper presented at the 15th International Conference on Gambling and Risk Taking, 27th - 31st May 2013, Las Vegas, USA.

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How do teenagers' differentiate computer gaming from gambling? Preliminary findings from focus groups.

15th International Conference on Gambling and Risk Taking

Las Vegas 29 May 2013

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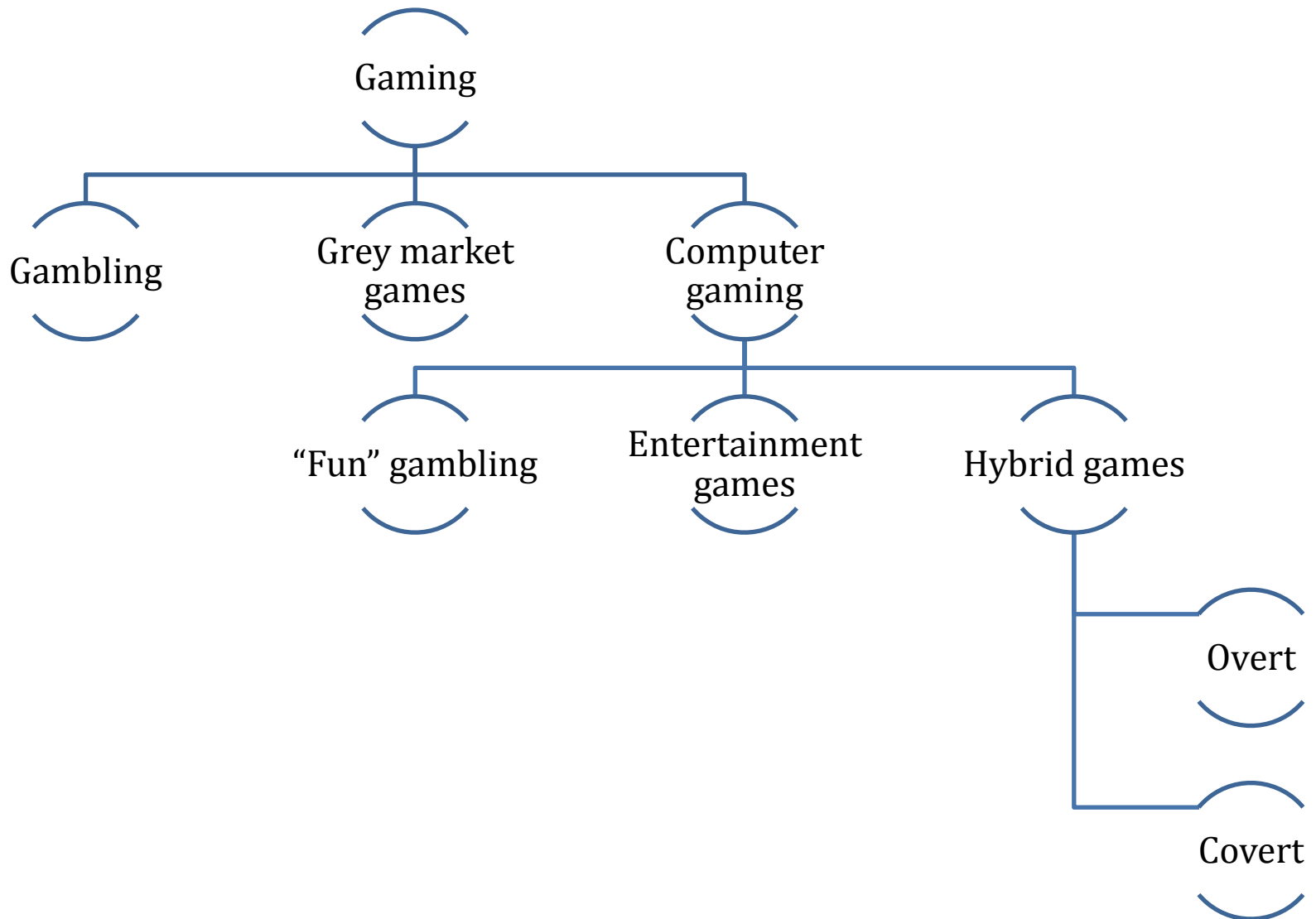
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Acknowledgement

- With thanks to:
 - Responsible Gambling Trust for funding my PhD
 - My supervisors Professor Julia Hornle and Professor Mark Griffiths for their guidance and help
 - Secondary schools in London that actually allowed me to run the focus groups with their pupils

Terminology



Legal background – gambling v. computer gaming

- Gambling
 - Liberal but regulated
 - Permitted but only subject to licence (open licensing system)
 - Aims – to ensure
 - Prevention of crime and disorder
 - Fair and transparent gambling
 - Protection of children and other vulnerable person from being harmed or exploited by gambling
 - Minors' protection
 - Prohibition (under criminal sanctions) of access to “hard” core of gambling for those under 18 (16 for lottery, scratch-cards and football pools)
 - Strict age-verification measures required.

Legal background – gambling v. computer gaming

- Computer gaming
 - Generally unregulated apart from ratings and generic consumer protection law
 - BBFC
 - PEGI
- Social gambling / unclassified gaming
 - So far escaped regulation by not paying a real currency prize
 - But
 - Increased interest from regulators in this area

The social aspects

- Taxation
- Minors' protection
 - Do computer games increase propensity for real money gambling?
 - Fun gambling games
 - Entertainment and hybrid games

Aims of the study

- Part I – qualitative focus groups to find out:
 - How some of London adolescents view gambling following the significant expansion of perceived opportunities to gamble in UK since 2007
 - What they think gambling is and whether it differs from what law considers gambling to be
 - What they think about the similarities and differences between computer games and monetary forms of gambling and in particular whether they recognise gambling types activities within computer games; and
 - What they know about law relating to gambling and how, if at all, it influences their behaviour.
 - To identify the main theme for the quantitative survey that will constitute State II of this project.
- Part II – surveys

Methodology

- Focus groups
 - Ethical approval for the project was granted by the Ethical Committee of Nottingham Trent University;
 - A list of all state secondary schools in London (489 schools in total) from local authorities educational lists was compiled;
 - All schools were sent an email with details of the project and invitation to participate;
 - Teachers, pupils and parents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity of all pupils and informed and voluntary consent of all participants was obtained
 - 14 schools and one youth club consented. 15 focus groups were carried out between January and May 2013 in 10 secondary schools and one youth club; 5 agreed but still pending.

Methodology

- Participants - 114 (active) participants in total
 - 17-18 years old groups - 43 participants in total
 - 28 females
 - 15 males
 - 14-15 years old groups - 71 participants in total
 - 36 females
 - 35 males

Methodology

- All sessions followed the same semi-structured schedule
 - What sort of games do you play?
 - Do you think playing computer games is social or solitary activity?
 - What do you think gambling is? Have you tried yourself?
 - Is “gambling” for fun still gambling?
 - What difference do you think there is between gambling for money; gambling for fun and playing other types of games?
 - What do you know and think about the law in UK about gambling?
 - It was not part of the initial interview schedule but the discussions naturally touched upon advertisements.

Limitation

- Limitation
 - Qualitative nature = no claims of representative views
 - Self – selected school and from within the school self – selected participants = sample of convenience
 - Two focus groups carried out in the presence of a teacher
 - Session as a learning process
 - Peer pressure
 - Risk of socially desirable answers
 - Inherent risk of children emphasising or downplaying what they in fact do or think.
 - Some risks of misunderstandings
 - Cultural and religious influences; social background and families economic status became very apparent during the sessions

Results I – Engagement in computer games

- Engagement in computer games
 - Nearly everyone play computer games either on regular or occasional basis;
 - Only 2 participants genuinely were not engaged in any sort of computer gaming
- Free versus payable
 - Free downloads from apps stores for computers & portable devices and paid versions for games consoles
 - Club Penguin
 - No engagement in monthly subscription based games in the sample
- Minor differences in knowledge/views and opinion between the two age groups.

Results I – Engagement in computer games

- Most popular games (games cited by every single group)
 - Call of Duty
 - Angry Birds
 - FIFA
 - The Sims
 - Subway Surfers
 - Temple Run
- Games mentioned at least by two groups
 - Fruit ninja
 - Mario cars/ Mario games
 - Minecraft
 - Farmville
 - Moshi Monster
 - Halo

Results I – Engagement in gambling

- For money
 - A small minority but a substantial number gambled
 - Grand National
 - (Sasha, 17)(f) with parent purchasing the ticket and (Martin, 14)(m) with family; (Susan, 14)(f) with friend's mum; (Twinker, 17)(f)
 - Lottery and Scratch-cards
 - (Carly, 17)(f); (David, 17)(m); (John, 14)(m) with parent purchasing the ticket
 - Horse betting (other than GN)
 - (Christiana, 14)(f) with adult purchasing the ticket
 - Fruit machines
 - (Marshmallows, 14)(f) on holidays; (Katy, 14)(f) in gaming place with older brother; (Cookie, 14)(m) in uncle's pub;
 - Poker (Bob, 14)(m) on a ferry with other boys
 - Roulette (Nina, 14)(f) on uncle's wedding

Result I – Engagement with gambling

- For money
 - However, if you include penny pushers; grab cranes (in arcades) and betting with friends at schools
 - Nearly all participants gambled at some point.
 - Only one participant had never been to an arcade.
 - Only three participants gambled online
 - Using someone's gambling account
 - Roulette (Eric, 17)(m) using mate's account
 - Poker (Luffy, 17)(m) using dad's account
 - Bingo (Tom, 14)(m) using someone's account
 - All claimed “with permission”

Results I - Engagement with gambling

- For fun (without money)
 - Significantly larger number of participants played for fun
 - But still relatively smaller number online
 - Types of fun gambling mentioned
 - Poker with friends or family using chips/chocolate/grapes/polos
 - Poker on Facebook, Zynga or mobile phone
 - Roulette apps;
 - Slots;

Results II – meaning of gambling

- “What do you think gambling is?”
 - Karm (14)(m) “gambling money to get money”
 - Martin (14)(m) “it like risk taking to get money from others”
 - Micky (14)(f) “when someone says of gambling you automatically think of money because that’s what mainly happens with money”
 - Bob (14)(m) “placing a bet where you can either win money or lose money”
 - Christiana (14)(f) “when you put money on a game that you have a chance of winning more money back”
 - Carl (17)(m) “I would say putting money on a chance that something will happen; not just money, basically material possession”
 - Luffy (17)(m) “taking a risk on anything”

Results II – meaning of gambling

- What do you think gambling is?
- Initial responses
 - Overall participants' perceptions clearly influenced by the traditional meaning of what gambling is;
 - All groups named all traditional (UK) gambling games
 - Poker, roulette, blackjack; betting on horses, football and dogs, bingo, scratch-cards; penny up, slot machines;
 - Lottery – only one participant considered lottery to be a competition but was quickly corrected by others
 - Two groups included monopoly as a gambling game
 - Yet, initial focus was on
 - Money or materials possession and risk taking for a chance to get more back
 - But not
 - On the difference between skill and chance or the mechanics of gambling

Results II – meaning of gambling

- Is “gambling” within computer games still gambling? - Recognition
 - Fun gambling games
 - Gambling activities within a game
 - Traditional ones named e.g.
 - Super Mario - slot machines on mushrooms (Forest,14), (Misty, 17) (Cookie, 14) (Mund, 14)
 - Fall Outs – It has lots of gambling (Janice, 14)
 - Falls – betting with slips on the outcome of racing (Mars Bars, 14)
 - Redemption – card games (Bob, 14)
 - The less obvious ones named e.g.
 - Moshi Monsters (Wence, 14) (Susan, 14)
 - Fifa (various participants)
 - Call of Duty (Eric, 17)

Results II – meaning of gambling

- Is “gambling” within computer games still gambling? – Attitudes - YES
 - Fred (14)(m) “but it is gambling, [on Super Mario] you can see actual children putting the coins on the mushroom, like they are on a roll and they gonna win; that’s sound sad but they may want to do it for real”
 - John (17)(m) “what happens is when you start the game you are like not even conscious that you are gambling but you are”
 - Botande (14)(m) “it is gambling; it gives you some sort of knowledge what games are like, what to look out for wen you play it”
 - Paly (14)(f) “it is actually proper gambling because our parents paid the money, like real money with actual pound and your gambled the money in fake money; if that makes sense, so you ask them and they gamble with parent’s money to get virtual coins”

Results II – meaning of gambling

- Is “gambling” within computer games still gambling? – Attitudes - NO
 - Cookie (14)(m) “in video game you know it is fake whereas in [real] gambling you are actually putting real stuff on the line; and if you lose in video game you are not in debt to anybody”
 - Zulu (14)(m) “it’s gambling [technically] but within a game, it is not real money so not really, it is really just part of a computer game”
 - Fin (14)(m) “if you are not betting money it is just a card game, not gambling but just fun; when in your computer games you just play for the fun and you are not giving anything to play that is not gambling”
 - Twain (17)(m) “the games that are truly free I wouldn’t think about it as gambling at all, nope because **I am** not gambling anything , the game may give little tokens but I haven’t gambled anything”.
 - Batonde (14)(m) “the only thing you gamble if it is not for something of value is your, not pride but sort of; you are not really gambling anything if it is not of anything of value, so it is not really gambling and this makes it less exciting”

Result II – meaning of gambling

- Is there a difference between gambling for money and gambling for fun or playing video game?
 - Nearly unequivocal “yes”
 - Zainab (14)(f) “if you are gambling for money you are more determined, you are trying to win something whereas if you are not doing it for money you are just doing it for fun”
 - Nina (14)(f) “if you lose it doesn’t bother you as much as it would if it was for actual money”
 - Martin (14)(m) “if you play with money you want to win; you become more competitive, you play hard instead of being lazy”
 - Luffy (17)(m) “with gambling for money you get the fear factor”
 - Eric (17)(m) “I don’t think it’s fun [without money]; it’s more like a warm up kind of things, like working out the odds and apply it to real game”

Results – gambling and law

- Age – restrictions
 - General knowledge of age – limits
- Suggestions for
 - Decrease
 - Carl (17)(m) “The age shouldn’t be lower because some people don’t have the maturity to understand what they are actually doing and there is also a high risk that children will lose it (in terms of their temper) and get angry which may lead to problems. When I was younger I was always pushed to play penny up. Barriers are important even if they don’t always work”
 - Timmy (15)(f) “if I saw like 15 [years old] gambling I would be thinking like “go home, get a life”;

Results – gambling and law

- Suggestions for
 - Keep the same
 - Carl (17)(m) “18 is a good age; I think so; if you are old enough to take on responsibilities like joining the army, marriage you probably old enough to gamble”;
 - Increase
 - Sasha(17)(f) “I would make it higher, in psychology lessons we learnt that because teenagers don’t develop their prefrontal cortex until the older age so until then they can’t make a rational decision and they wouldn’t know what is good for them, at younger age you are a bit naïve and only at older age you are more likely to know what you are getting yourself into”.
 - Forest (14)(f) “because people like 18 can still live with their mum and get their money from them”.

Results – gambling and law

- “Prohibited fruit” argument
 - Gary (14)(m) – “it doesn’t make it more attractive because I don’t think about it in anyway; I don’t think –oh, as soon as I come 18 I will definitely come out gambling – so even if the law wasn’t any different I probably wouldn’t gamble anyway;
 - Laqisha (14)(f) – “that’s the thing with people, we all like rebellious, this is in-build in us; if we see something that says – don’t touch – you will wanne touch it”
 - John (17)(m) – “but it is still the safest way”;
- Other comments about law
 - Cap on gambling amounts;

Conclusions

- Parental education is a key
- Good recognition of gambling activities within a sample
 - But no necessary acknowledgment that they may be gambling
- Good understanding of age-restrictions
 - But that doesn't necessarily stop them from playing or worrying about it