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SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXTS OF GAMBLING

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FINLAND AND FRANCE

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ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

Public and academic discussion of gambling has been characterised by numerous contradictions. Although definitions of gambling as a sinful activity or even as a crime are now things of the past, the contemporary debate on whether gambling is actually a social problem, an individual problem, a socially beneficial activity or perhaps just another form of consumption has been heated. This study maintains that no such conclusive definition of the social role of gambling can be found because societies discuss gambling differently based on contextual conditions. The research question asks whether the understandings of gambling differ between two European societies, Finland and France, and if so, how these differences are manifested.

To answer this question a comparative study has been conducted. The research data consist of group interviews conducted among gamblers in Finland and in France, along with legal texts that regulate gambling in each country. Finland and France were chosen for this study owing to practical constraints but also to represent two European countries with differing gambling traditions but with similar overall availability of gambling opportunities. This made it possible to analyse institutional differences related to provision and legislation, as well as to compare cultural differences related to habits of thought and deep cultural structures.

The study argues that social contexts influence not only the kind of gambling offers made available, but also how gambling is discussed, how it is justified, how it is understood and even how ensuing problems are conceptualised. Sociological theory is used to show that the way we understand social concepts such as gambling is specific to a particular cultural and institutional context.

The results show that Finland and France differ in terms of how their gambling legislation has been justified and in how gamblers themselves discuss the activity. Differences were found in relation to what was considered an acceptable reason to gamble, what was considered the cause of problem gambling and how well the gambling offers of their respective countries were accepted. It is argued here that these differences reflect separate historical traditions of gambling, varying institutional organisations providing gambling opportunities, cultural differences in how blame is assigned, and varying conceptualisations of individuality in Finland and France. The analysis supports the hypothesis, showing that the way gambling is understood depends on the social context. The comparative analysis also demonstrates that gambling is a social issue and should be treated as such when its consequences, its availability or its importance to societies are discussed.

TIIVISTELMÄ

Rahapelaamista koskeva julkinen ja akateeminen keskustelu on ollut hyvin jakautunutta ja lokeroitunutta. Vaikka länsimaisessa ajattelussa rahapelaamista ei enää pidetäkään rikoksena tai syntinä, myös nykypäivänä kiistellään siitä, pitäisikö pelaamista tutkia sosiaalisena ongelmana, henkilökohtaisena ongelmana, sosiaalisesti hyödyllisenä harrastuksena tai ehkä vain yhtenä kulutuksen muotona. Tässä tutkimuksessa korostetaan, ettei pelaamista voi määritellä vain yhdellä tavalla, sillä rahapelaamisen määritelmät riippuvat aina sosiaalisesta kontekstista. Tutkimus kysyy, miten rahapelaaminen ymmärretään kahdessa eurooppalaisessa maassa, Suomessa ja Ranskassa, ja millaisia eroja ymmärryksissä on.

Kysymykseen on vastattu kvalitatiivisin menetelmin. Tutkimusaineisto koostuu suomalaisten ja ranskalaisten viihdepelaajien kanssa tehdyistä ryhmähaastatteluista, sekä lakiteksteistä, joilla rahapelaamista säädelään näissä kahdessa maassa. Suomi ja Ranska valikoituivat tutkimuskohteiksi käytännön syistä, mutta myös siksi, että maat edustavat erilaisia rahapelaamiseen liittyvien perinteitä sekä samankaltaista rahapelien saatavuutta. Tämän ansiosta analyysi ylettyy paitsi rahapelitarjonnan ja -lainsäädännön institutionaalisten erojen vertailuun, myös kulttuuristen erojen ja syvärakenteiden tutkimiseen.

Tutkimus osoittaa, että sosiaaliset kontekstit vaikuttavat paitsi pelitarjontaan, myös siihen, miten peleistä keskustellaan, miten pelaamista ja pelitarjontaa oikeutetaan, miten pelaaminen ymmärretään ja miten mahdolliset ongelmat käsitteellistetään. Sosiologisen teorian avulla tutkimuksessa keskustellaan siitä, kuinka eri institutionaalisissa ja kulttuurisissa konteksteissa rahapelaamisen kaltaiset käsitteet voidaan ymmärtää eri tavoin.

Tuloksista tulee ilmi, että Suomi ja Ranska eroavat toisistaan sekä siinä, kuinka rahapelilainsäädäntöä on oikeutettu, että siinä, miten pelaajat keskustelevat pelaamisesta. Pelaajien käsitykset hyväksyttävistä syistä pelata, ongelmapelaamisen syistä sekä maan pelitarjonnan hyväksyttävyydestä erosivat. Tutkimuksessa esitetään, että nämä erot heijastelevat erilaisia rahapelaamiseen liittyviä historiallisia perinteitä, erilaista rahapelitarjontaa, mutta myös kulttuurisia eroja vastuun ja individualismin suhteen. Analyysi tukee hypoteesia, jonka mukaan se, miten pelaaminen ymmärretään, riippuu sosiaalisesta kontekstista. Rahapelaaminen on sosiaalinen ilmiö, ja tämä sosiaalinen perusta tulisi pitää mielessä myös kun pelaamisen vaikutuksista, tarjonnasta tai tärkeydestä yhteiskunnalle keskustellaan.

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Paris, August 2015

Virve Marionneau

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LIST OF ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

This thesis is based on the following publications:

- I Marionneau, V. (2015). Justifications of national gambling policies in France and Finland. *Nordic Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 32 (3), 295-310.
- II Pöysti, V. (2014). Comparing the attitudes of recreational gamblers from Finland and France toward national gambling policies: A qualitative analysis. *Journal of Gambling Issues*, 29, 1-24.
- III Majamäki, M. & Pöysti, V. (2012). Vocabularies of gambling justification among Finnish and French players. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 15 (4), 496-512.
- IV Pöysti, V. & Majamäki, M. (2013). Cultural understandings of the pathways leading to problem gambling: Medical disorder or failure of self-regulation? *Addiction Research and Theory*, 21 (1), 70-82.

The publications are referred to in the text by their roman numerals.

Please note that I changed my family name from Pöysti to Marionneau during the course of this dissertation process.

ABBREVIATIONS

CJEU	Court of Justice of the European Union
COJER	Comité consultatif pour la mise en œuvre de la politique d'encadrement des jeux et du jeu responsable
CPGI	Canadian Problem Gambling Index
DSM	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders
EU	European Union
FDJ	Française des Jeux
GA	Gamblers Anonymous
GGR	Gross Gaming Revenue
HUACC	Helsinki University Addiction Clip Collection
INPES	Institut national de prévention et d'éducation pour la santé
INSEE	Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques
INSERM	Institut national de la santé et de la recherche médicale
PAF	Penningautomatförening
PMH	Pari Mutuel Hippodrome
PMU	Pari Mutuel Urbain
RAGI	Reception Analytical Group Interview
RAY	Raha-automaattiyhdistys
SOGS	South Oaks Gambling Screen
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

1 INTRODUCTION

Gambling, like any other social phenomenon, can be understood from a variety of perspectives. In gambling research the most prevalent discourses have focused on medico-psychological research in which gambling is viewed as a problem, economic research in which gambling is viewed as consumption and to a less significant degree sociological research which considers the social consequences of gambling. Historical research has also shown that society's views of gambling have changed over time. Yet, no consideration has previously been given to how gambling is understood in different contemporary socio-cultural contexts. Earlier studies have found important geographical differences in gambling practices, but analysis has not been extended to social understandings. To fill this gap, the present dissertation focuses on how gambling is understood, conceptualised and accepted in two European countries, Finland and France.

European contexts are an important point of comparison in light of changes currently taking place in the European Union (EU). Based on Article 49 on Freedom of Establishment and Article 56 on Free Movement of Services of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) (eur-lex.europa.eu), a unified internal market is being created in the EU. Whether gambling should form part of this market is under debate. As there is no European directive on gambling, the European Treaty treats gambling as an economic activity. Instead, rulings of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) have had an important role in defining common European rules for the provision of gambling. Nevertheless, as Donnat (2011) has noted, the CJEU has shown respect toward the socio-cultural differences between member states.

This study suggests that these differences can be attributed to institutional and cultural contexts. The importance of institutional context is evident in the juridical definitions of gambling. Legislations not only determine what forms of gambling are legal and therefore 'normal' in a social sense, but also what constitutes gambling in the first place. In research, gambling is usually defined along the lines of Per Binde's (2005b, 2) 'the established practice of staking money or other valuables on games or events of an uncertain outcome', yet this definition has also been debated (e.g., Strange, 1986). In the contexts compared in the present study, Finland and France, definitions of games considered gambling have nevertheless been close. Official studies on 'games of money' or 'games of chance' in both countries have tended to include different forms of lotteries, sports and horse race betting, slot machine and casino games, and some small-scale practices such as bingo and raffles. As is often the case, the official definition coincides with legalised gambling. Indeed, official definitions have played a crucial role in propagating the view of certain forms of gambling as acceptable and

legitimate leisure activity or as an ordinary form of consumption (Reith, 2007).

Cultural contexts, on the other hand, are based on less tangible deep structures and social habits that influence how gambling is regarded by a specific social group. An initial confirmation of the cultural approach adopted in this dissertation is provided by studies on alcoholism, which have shown that there are indeed cultural variations in how alcoholism develops and how it is understood (see Room & Mäkelä, 2000 for a comprehensive typology). In line with this thought, sociologists Gerda Reith and Fiona Dobbie (2011) proposed studying gambling behaviours rather than individual gamblers. Gambling is not a fixed quality of an individual, as individuals can exhibit several types of gambling behaviour. Therefore, definitions of gambling may also depend on the situation and the context in question. The present study adopts Reith and Dobbie's view expounded in the Sub-studies based on group interviews of Finnish and French gamblers (Sub-studies II, III and IV) given that the interest of the interview material lies in how the participants discuss different gambling behaviours rather than in how they act in a gambling situation.

In the course of the research, Finnish and French ways of thinking and vocabularies of expression have demonstrated differences on a multitude of levels, ranging from social and religious habits of thought to institutional and geographic organisation and legal constraints on gambling practices. When national systems of gambling provision were discussed, the participants vocalised varying degrees of social trust or lack thereof (Sub-study II); when the interviewed gamblers discussed their own reasons for gambling, culturally acceptable justifications for action were evoked (Sub-study III); and when the progression of gambling problems was discussed, cultural differences in understanding who should be blamed for such issues emerged (Sub-study IV). Similarly, the gambling legislations in each country analysed for Sub-study I were not only connected to gambling, but to the historical and legal traditions of each country. These cultural and institutional processes behind social phenomena need to be taken into account if we are to comprehend why and how understandings differ between countries or social groups. The aim of this study has therefore been not only to encourage greater cultural sensitivity to gambling studies, but also to demonstrate some of the ways in which contextual conditions can influence how gambling is perceived in contemporary societies.

1.1 CONCEPTS

The main concepts used in the study describe this relativity of definitions and understandings. The social context is defined as a collection of cultural and institutional habits. Anu Katainen (2011) has previously considered the social

contexts of smoking and found that the contexts are mainly made up of the habits of a social group. The same idea can be applied to country contexts as put forward in this study. Social contexts are also defined as relative and flexible. Meanings arise in relation to the context, but influences both from within and without may redefine these meanings.

Habits and agency are in turn defined as the means through which contexts operate. Given that this study addresses habits of thought rather than habitual action, the term 'agency' is preferred to 'action'. Agency refers to being in society, the possibilities of action or how action is perceived, not to concrete acts. This definition is also in line research on gambling behaviours rather than with research focusing on individual gamblers.

In this dissertation, I argue that the social contexts of gambling are made up of institutions and culture. For the purposes of this study, institutions are defined as various historical, legislative, political and societal structures that delineate the limits of what is possible. Culture is the less tangible side of social contexts, the aspect that is not formed by concrete societal structures but rather by intersubjective meaning making and understandings. Following Geertz (1973), culture is considered a semiotic concept which is not a law, but rather a web of meanings. The definition is based on Clyde Kluckhohn's (1949) idea of culture as something that is, among others, the total way of life of a people, a way of thinking, feeling and believing, and an abstraction of behaviour. Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) further noted that culture is both a product of action and an element conditioning further action. Cultural contexts of gambling are not things that are actively reflected upon, but rather deep structures (chapter 4.2). In line with these definitions, the present study has considered culture as a way of thinking that is specific to a social group, i.e. a collection of habits of thought that are also liable to change based on what is considered acceptable in a given context or at a given time.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research focuses on the question of **whether the understanding of gambling differs between Finland and France and if so, how these differences are manifested**. Whether, how and why the understandings of gambling differ is studied with the help of four supplementary questions, each of which also formed the topic of a sub-study for this doctoral dissertation.

- 1) In what terms is legislation on gambling justified in Finland and France?
- 2) How do Finnish and French gamblers regard their national gambling policies?
- 3) How do Finnish and French gamblers justify their own gambling?

- 4) How do Finnish and French gamblers conceptualise and understand the progression of gambling-related problems?

The study hypothesis was that some differences would be found as it was expected that the differences in how the gambling fields of the two countries are organised would be apparent in the study results. However, it was not taken for granted that numerous cultural differences would be found. In a global world culture (Featherstone, 1990) the very existence of nationally specific cultures has been seriously questioned. However, the two datasets showed differing attitudes in regard to what is acceptable, as well as the extent to which the individual player or the state is responsible for the consequences of gambling.

1.3 SOCIETIES AND COMPARISONS

This study has taken as its point of comparison two European countries on the assumption that their respective contexts are characterised by at least some degree of institutional and cultural unity. Another assumption made here is that cultures coincide with national borders, an assumption that can be questioned. Sociologist Ulrich Beck (see Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2009) has been a frequent critic of what is known as 'methodological nationalism'. He argues that instead of taking national states as the point of departure for sociological analyses, a cosmopolitan sociology is needed. Rather than viewing individuals as members of a nation, they should be seen as interconnected in a global generation. Other authors (e.g. Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002; Chernilo, 2006) have followed this line of thought and criticised the idea of nation states as natural cultural entities. As the present dissertation uses discourses from two European country contexts as object of study, the question of whether methodological nationalism has been evoked must be considered. In fact, Finland and France are not considered natural entities here. Rather, the existence of these countries has been accepted in practice. All nation states are the result of historical processes of policy-making, control, and cultural unification. But these same nationalist forms of inclusion and exclusion are also the factors that bind people together even in contemporary societies.

Nation states have concrete effects on social ways of thinking and acting. The concrete social consequences of nation-state building in Europe have involved unifying linguistic areas, creating national cultural habits, as well as creating institutions that span national territories. Giddens (1984) has paid special attention to the spheres of influence exercised by societies on a specific territory. According to Giddens, members of a society, bound by a territory and institutional organisation, also tend to represent a common identity. In addition to territory, language is another important factor binding societies together. Language has been shown to shape thinking (the

so-called linguistic relativity school; see e.g. Whorf & Carroll, 1956; Lakoff, 1987; more recently Broditsky, 2001) and offers a point of view from which to observe and make sense of reality. Furthermore, understandings of acceptable behaviour differ based on national or cultural traditions. According to French sociologist Alain Ehrenberg (2010), societies are formed and ordained by commonly accepted institutions. Therefore, while discussing national cultures might seem old fashioned from more theoretical perspectives, the fact that country contexts do produce specific effects justifies the necessity of keeping them in mind, even in the contemporary global and individualistic world.

Indeed, a comparative analysis of a social phenomenon such as gambling can help to shed light on the complex social realities and differences that still exist between geographical contexts today. Focusing merely on one social context of gambling would not allow us to find or recognise the differences that make the understandings and interpretations of gambling culturally specific. States still have an important impact on gambling through their power to determine what is legal and acceptable gambling within their national territories, as well as in shaping a variety of other context-bound social habits and traditions. As the classical thinker of gambling studies, Roger Caillois (1958), has expressed it, games and societies appear to have a sort of mutual relationship of complicity. Even though gambling markets have become increasingly global and standardised (e.g. McMillen, 2003), the current study shows that differences in how gambling is regarded still exist between institutional and cultural contexts.

1.4 THE STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

This dissertation consists of four original publications, which have been published in academic, peer-reviewed journals. The articles have been added at the end of this presentation with the consent of the original publishers. Two of the articles were written in collaboration with my colleague Maija Majamäki who has also agreed to allow them to be included here.

The results as well as the theoretical and methodological approaches will be considered in more detail in this summary article.

In the second part of this dissertation, the contexts of gambling in Finland and France will be presented, along with some common European characteristics of gambling.

The third part introduces the juxtapositions and various academic understandings in this field of study. The somewhat limited ways in which culture and institutions have been incorporated in previous gambling research will also be considered.

The fourth part introduces the sociological approaches to gambling, the theoretical framework and sociological insights used in this study. The

conceptual tools will be further elaborated on by introducing the theory of justification and the idea of cultural understandings.

The fifth part focuses on the study's methodological approaches, introducing the research methods and materials utilised. The data used to conduct the analysis on gambling in Finland and France consist of group interviews among self-identified recreational gamblers, together with official laws regulating gambling in the two countries. The benefits and problems encountered in the two sets of data will be considered in more detail before moving on to present the qualitative methods used in the analysis.

The sixth part will introduce the results of the four sub-studies. The results have been divided into three sections. First, there is an account of the main results on the topics of legal justifications, individual justifications, understandings of problem gambling and understandings of what is just. Second, these results will be considered from the point of view of certain particularities that sum up the differences between the Finnish and French contexts: the historicity of gambling, institutional availability, assigning blame and different forms of individualism. Third, these insights will be applied to the general public discussion on whether gambling is a problem or a form of consumption.

Finally, the seventh part of this study will draw conclusions based on the entire research process.

2 GAMBLING IN EUROPEAN CONTEXTS

Gambling practices have developed hand in hand with how they have been socially understood. Even in European societies with centuries' long histories of gambling, the practice has not always been accepted as a legitimate pastime. Gambling has been subject to moral debates and attempts at control or even suppression. Neurisse (1991) has pointed out that distinguishing between permitted and prohibited forms of gambling go back to medieval times. The arguments used to criticise gambling have also changed with the changing times. During the Reformation, gambling was considered sinful, while during the Enlightenment era, with its emphasis on reason and moderation, moderate gambling was accepted, although the irrational and unproductive nature of excessive gambling was condemned. The social values of the Industrial Revolution emphasised gambling's disruptive nature to the social order (see Reith, 2006b, 1999; Orford, 2011). In public discussion the working classes, with their 'limited abilities to understand risk' were the main cause of concern while the aristocracy was considered more capable of understanding the role of chance (Miers, 2004).

Today, the deregulation of the gambling field that has been taking place since the 1980s (Kingma, 2004; Orford, 2011) has increased gambling opportunities across Europe. The democratisation of formally aristocratic places of gambling, such as casinos, and the accelerating pace in introducing new forms of play, have increased participation. Legally, this has created a strange situation in some European countries. In the case of Finland and France, both countries share the legal proscription of gambling; nevertheless, the activity continues to go on in both countries, leading to the paradoxical situation that an illegal activity is in fact regulated in law. Pressures for convergence between the country-bound European gambling markets have also recently emerged with the European Union principle of free movement of goods and services.

On average, about one per cent of all household income in Europe was spent on gambling in 2005, with Finland placed at the top end with an average of 1.9 per cent of household income spent on gambling, while France showed average rates of spending of 0.9 per cent (Besson, 2005, see Figure 1 below). More recent data collected by HQ Gambling Capital (The Economist Online, 2014) show that Finland placed first of European countries in terms of gambling losses per resident adult, while in France gambling losses are more modest (see Figure 2 below). Further estimates from Finland have indicated a 12-month participation rate of 78 per cent (Turja et al., 2012), while data from France (Institut national de prévention et d'éducation pour la santé [INPES], 2010) indicated a 48 per cent participation rate in the preceding 12 months. With the increasing popularity of the activity, gambling-related problems have also become commonplace. Prevalence rates

of pathological gambling in Europe currently run at around 0.5 to one per cent (Griffiths, 2010). In Finland a study from 2012 using the SOGS (South Oaks Gambling Screen) criteria found problem gambling rates of 2.7 per cent with 1 per cent of the population identified as probable pathological gamblers (Turja et al. 2012). In France a 2010 study using the CPGI (Canadian Problem Gambling Index) criteria found a problem gambling rate of 0.9 per cent with 0.4 per cent of probable pathological gamblers (INPES, 2011).

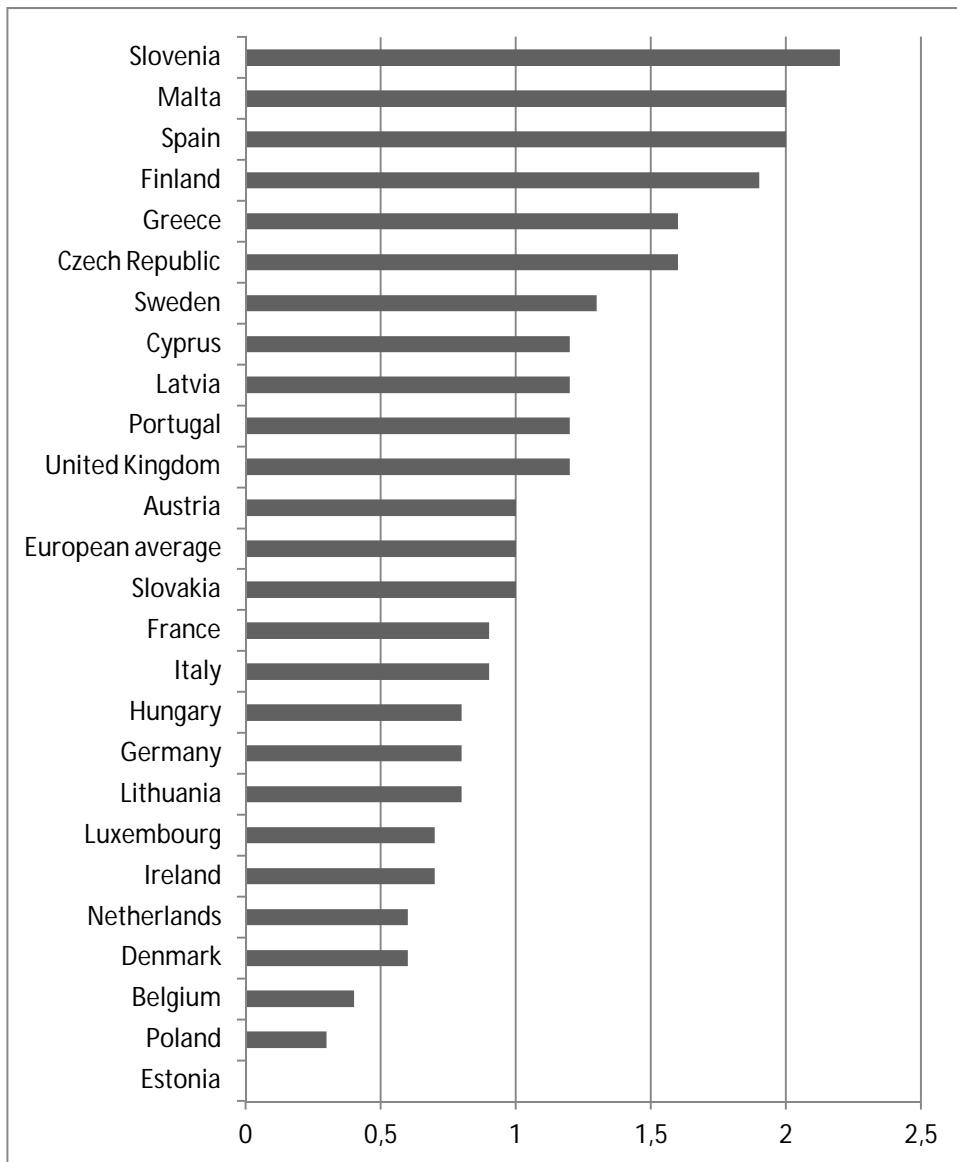


Figure 1 Percentage of household budgets used for gambling in European countries in 2005 (%), (Besson, 2005: 3)

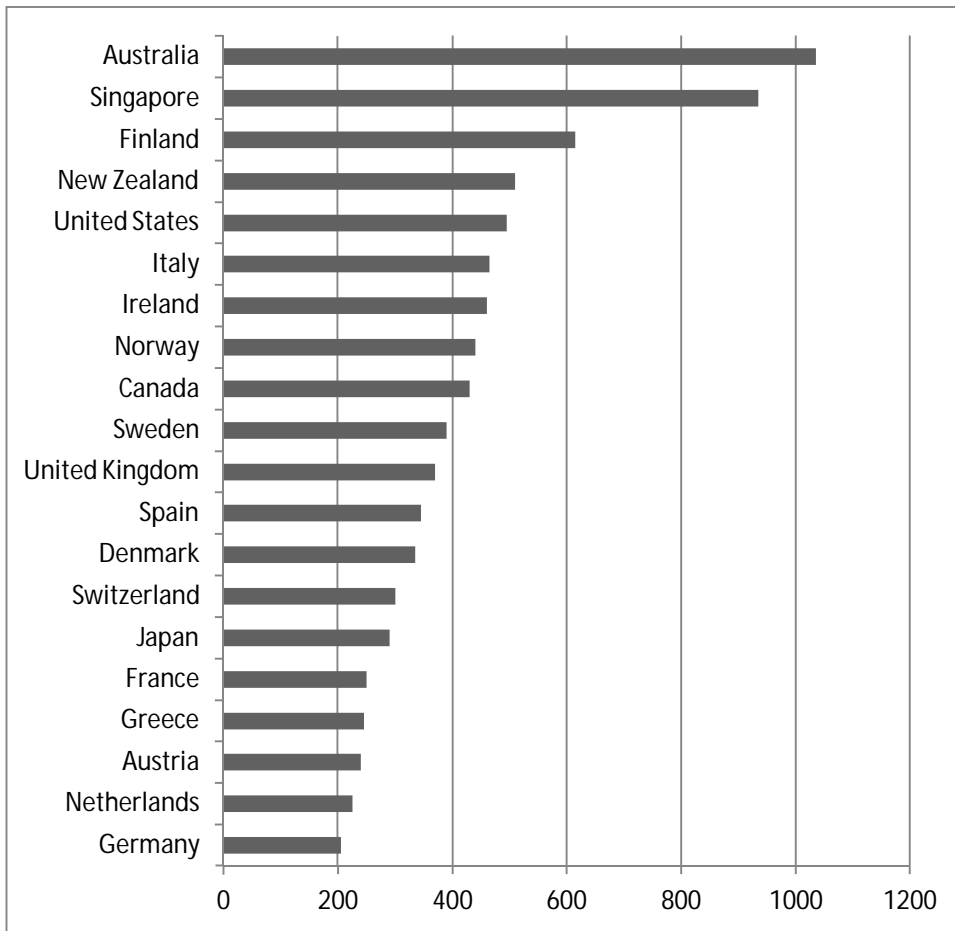


Figure 2 Gambling losses per resident adult in 2013, US\$ (The Economist Online, 2014, based on data provided by H2 Gambling Capital)

2.1 GAMBLING IN FINLAND

The popularity of gambling in Finland is significantly higher than the European average. Statistical studies have shown that 87 per cent of the Finnish population participated in games of money during their lifetime, with 30 per cent of the population playing weekly (Aho & Turja, 2007). Despite or perhaps because of its popularity, Finnish gambling practices have also been firmly controlled and instituted by the governmental level, following the tradition of Nordic welfare state policies. Finnish gambling has also been closely connected with collecting for charitable causes ever since the first lotteries in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Luoto & Wickström, 2008). The charitable nature of gambling monopolies has guaranteed strong support among players and a desire to safeguard these monopolies against online gambling sites and pressures from the European Commission to open the gambling market to European competition (Cisnerös Örnberg & Tammi, 2011).

Currently, the gambling sector is divided amongst three operators with a monopoly status licensed by the Finnish state. As the present study focuses on gambling in mainland Finland, the gambling monopoly of the autonomous Åland Islands (*Penningaautomatförening* or PAF) has not been taken under consideration. The leading Finnish gambling provider is the national lottery and betting agency *Veikkaus Oy*, which legally is a limited company owned entirely by the Finnish state. Veikkaus has a monopoly on organising lotteries as well as on offering scratch cards and sports betting. It also collaborates with other European lotteries to provide multinational lottery products with larger jackpots. In 1993, a Nordic Viking Lotto was introduced, organised by Veikkaus in collaboration with other Nordic and Baltic national lottery companies, and in 2012, a new European Eurojackpot lottery was launched, organised by the Finnish, Danish, Estonian, German, Italian, Dutch, Slovenian and Spanish lottery companies. Since 1996, Veikkaus has also been offering its games online (www.veikkaus.fi).

Raha-automaattiyhdistys, or RAY, Finland's Slot Machine Association, holds a monopoly on casino games and slot machine gambling. RAY is a public association that funds various social and charitable causes. As of 2013, RAY operated one casino, located in central Helsinki, although in August 2012, a second Finnish casino was announced for Eastern Finland, mainly to cater for Russian tourists. In addition to casinos, RAY offers table games in 336 bars and clubs as well as 19,838 (in 2011) slot machines in arcades and public spaces across Finland (www.ray.fi). The large availability of slot machines is a Finnish peculiarity in Europe. Offering gambling, including slot machines, in a variety of everyday locations also means that the Finnish gambling field is mainly characterised by convenience gambling. Since 2010, casino gambling has also been offered online in the RAY online casino, which is the only legal online casino operating in the country. (www.ray.fi).

The third, and smallest, monopoly for game offer is held by *Fintoto Oy*, owned by a non-profit organisation of Finnish horse-breeding associations, *Suomen Hippos Ry*. Fintoto provides totalisator betting on horse races on and off track, as well as online. Betting on horses is popular in Finland, and the country ranks fourth in a European comparison on betting turnover (Union Européenne du Trot, 2014).

Based on the data made available by the Finnish gambling operators in their annual reports, the most popular games in 2011, as measured in amounts played in euros (€), were RAY slot machines (659,7 million €), the national lottery, *Lotto* (576 million €); and the *Keno* lottery (367 million €). Compared to other European countries, the popularity of slot machine gambling in Finland is even more striking. According to one study on gambling in the European Union (Swiss Institute of Comparative Law, 2006), Finland is behind only Spain, Germany and the UK, some of the most populated countries in Europe, in absolute revenues generated through slot machine gambling. The Finnish gambling market is also expanding with all the three national providers reporting growth in their market in 2011.

Finland also has a relatively well-established sector of gambling research. While in the 1990s Finnish gambling research was still modelled on research on alcoholism research and a lack of criticism to governmental policies, the situation started to change in the early 2000s. Excessive gambling had become a public issue in the 1980s, but the real push in turning gambling into a major policy question was the Lotteries Act of 2002, which enlisted the Ministry of Social Welfare and Health to monitor and research gambling-related problems (Tammi, 2008, 2012). Since around 2010, researchers have also challenged the close relationship between gambling research and policy making by questioning policies instead of automatically supporting them (Raento, 2012, Tammi, 2008). Moreover, attention has recently been devoted to the cultural and social aspects of gambling (Raento, 2012).

A large body of statistical evidence on gambling in the Finnish society has also been collected since the 1990s. The first comprehensive survey study mapping out Finnish gambling habits was carried out already in 1989 (see Tammi, 2008), while the first qualitative study on Finnish problem gambling was conducted in 1993 (Murto & Niemelä, 1993). Since that time the Finnish government has regularly commissioned prevalence studies to provide updated information about gambling both by the general population and by the young (Turja, et al., 2012; Aho & Turja, 2007; Ilkas & Aho, 2006, see also Järvinen-Tassopoulos, 2012b). Public discussion about gambling-related problems effectively began in the early 2000s (Tammi, 2008) when the relatively high levels of problem gambling in Finland started receiving more attention in both Finnish gambling research and policy making. Finland's legal framework has gone from one of the most relaxed gambling legislations in Europe to a relatively strict one (Raento, 2012) with the introduction of the updated 2002 Lotteries Act (1047/2001) and its later modifications (see Sub-study I).

2.2 GAMBLING IN FRANCE

France appears slightly below the European average in terms of gambling participation and gambling losses. However, French gambling boasts a long and salient history, which is still evoked in the images of leisure typical of contemporary French gambling. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Versailles was known as '*ce tripot*' (that gambling den) of Europe (see Reith, 1999). Later on, the French Riviera became known as Europe's main gambling destination (Schwartz, 2006). While the days of conspicuous aristocratic consumption have given way to more democratic activity, France is still highly characterised by destination gambling due to its casino geography. Opportunities of convenience gambling have also increased since the 1980s along with the general popularity of gambling (Institut national de la santé et de la recherche médicale [INSERM], 2008; Sub-study I).

Just as the Åland Islands were excluded from the Finnish consideration, for this study only gambling in metropolitan France (the French territories located in Europe) was considered. This means excluding gambling activities in French overseas departments and territories. The gambling sector in France has been divided by three national actors. Until 2010, two of the three have been national monopolies, and they still continue to have an exclusive position in the offline market: the National Lottery company *La Française des Jeux* or FDJ, and the national horse betting company *Pari Mutuel Urbain* or PMU.

FDJ, a public company of which 72 per cent is owned by the French government, is the larger of these two. It has an annual turnover of over 12 billion euros (in 2012) and over 35,000 sales outlets across France making it the second biggest lottery in Europe and the third in size in the world. The product range of FDJ includes the traditional lottery, *Loto*, as well as a large choice of scratch cards, which have become very popular since their introduction in the early 1980s. Sports betting and sports lotteries are also on offer. Together with the national lotteries of Spain and the UK, FDJ launched a trans-European EuroMillions lottery in 2004. Instant lotteries broadcast on television screens (*Amigo*, or until 2014, *Rapido*) in licensed bars are a French peculiarity offered by FDJ. Owing to their fast pace, these games have also been called a French substitute for non-casino slot machine gambling (Turay, 2007; Valleur & Bucher, 2006). *Rapido* was cancelled in 2014 owing to the ample criticism it received for being conducive to gambling problems, but as Martignoni-Hutin (2011) points out, its replacement, *Amigo*, is essentially the same game. All of FDJ's games, with the exception of *Amigo*, are also provided online.

PMU is the most important horse betting provider in Europe with 11,300 sales outlets across France (in 2011). PMU offers on-track betting under the name PMH (Pari Mutuel Hippodrome) and off-track betting, online betting services and since the French online gambling market was opened in 2010, online poker (www.pmu.fr). Betting on horses is very popular in France, and in a European comparison on betting turnover in 2014 (Union Européenne du Trot), France held the first position.

The third traditional actor in France has been the casino sector, which provides slot machine and table game gambling. Unlike in Finland, slot machines are not allowed in public spaces, but only in casinos. France has the largest casino sector in Europe, amounting to 198 land-based casinos in 2014. Unlike the national monopolies held by FDJ and PMU, the casino sector is private and open to market competition, albeit strictly regulated and steeply taxed. The geographical location of casinos has been limited legally, and establishment of casinos has been permitted only in communes classified as touristic locations. Under a law enacted on 1 August 1920 (Article 82), casinos are also not allowed within 100 kilometres of Paris, with the later exception of Engien-les-Bains, which lies 14 kilometres north of central Paris. A more recent development has been the concentration of the

French casino sector in the hands of a few leading companies. After some important mergers in 2004 and 2005, the two largest casino groups in France are Partouche with 45 casinos and Barrière with 33 casinos.

In 2007 the European Commission instructed France to open up its online gambling markets to competition. France had attempted to safeguard the positions of its national monopolies, yet failed to provide the European Commission with an acceptable justification for maintaining them (Sub-study I, European Commission, 2011). As of May 2010, French online betting on sports and horses, as well as online poker markets have been opened to outside providers, requiring an authorisation from the French state. In 2013, 19 operators had received licenses, including the traditional national providers (www.arjel.fr). However, despite this change in French gambling markets, the FDJ, the PMU, and the casinos seem to have been able to maintain their position as the leading gambling providers in France (Rakedjian & Robin, 2014). The 2010 law has been criticised for the strictness of its regulations on both operators and players. For example, one of the world leaders in online gambling, Betfair, has not applied for a licence in France because the French regulations are not sufficiently flexible (Martignoni-Hutin, 2011). More importantly, the new law has changed the basis of the French gambling policy. Until 2010, the state had at least the theoretical possibility to restrict gambling offer. However, this possibility no longer exists, as the authority on online gambling, Arjel, cannot refuse operators in order to limit offer (George, 2011).

In 2012 a total of 12.1 billion euros were bet on all FDJ games combined; 10.5 billion euros were bet on all PMU games and 15.4 billion euros were bet at casinos, making the casino sector the most popular of the three actors. Online bets, excluding FDJ and PMU, amounted to 8.1 billion euros in 2012 (Rakedjian & Robin, 2014).

A European comparison from 2006 shows that the French casino sector is by far the largest in Europe and over twice the size of that in the UK, which comes in second. However, the casino sector has been in decline since 2007 (Bilan statistique des casinos, 2014). In 2012 the GGR (Gross Gaming Revenue, i.e., revenue generated through bets after winnings) of the casino sector was estimated at 2.3 billion euros, in comparison to 4.3 billion for FDJ and 2.5 billion for PMU (Rakedjian & Robin, 2014). For the season 2013-2014, 89 per cent of the GGR of casinos was generated by slot machines (Bilan statistique des casinos, 2014), making them one of the most popular forms of gambling in France, despite their limited availability. In 2014, France counted 22,943 slot machines, only slightly more than Finland (Bilan statistique des casinos, 2014). In the case of FDJ, 46 per cent of the GGR was generated by lotteries, including Loto, EuroMillions and Rapido and 44 per cent by scratch card sales. No detailed information on the most popular games is available for PMU. The GGR of online gambling sites other than those of the traditional actors amounted to 0.4 billion euros in 2012. Online

gambling experienced an initial boom in 2010, but since then, only sports betting has proven profitable (Rakedjian & Robin, 2014).

Despite the recent change as well as the increasing popularity of gambling, critical public discussion has been somewhat lacking in France. Before the 2000s, academic studies on gambling were scarce and mainly focused on the history of gambling (e.g., Freundlich, 1995; Neurisse, 1991; Mehl, 1990). Since, research on problem gambling has been conducted by a few researchers in psychology (see Valleur & Bucher, 2006) but little attention has been given to the larger societal frame of gambling or the sociology of gambling practices with a few exceptions (Martignoni-Hutin, 2000; Piedallu, 2014). Research has been further hindered by a lack of statistical material on gambling in France. Until 2010, when the first national survey on gambling was conducted (INPES, 2010), the only statistical materials available were the 1988 INSEE (Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques) study on leisure activities, which involved questions on gambling and a 1993 study conducted among those seeking help for gambling-related problems (Achour-Gaillard, 1993). Prevention of gambling-related problems has also only recently surfaced in France, mainly due to pressures from Brussels (Turay, 2007). The Observatoire des jeux, a national research centre on gambling created in 2011 was meant to address the need for more gambling research in France. However, as Martignoni-Hutin (2011) has argued, research centre has not been staffed with researchers but with interested parties in gambling profits, and more sociological and critical research on gambling is still needed.

3 GAMBLING AS A RESEARCH TOPIC

Across the western world, prevalence studies have shown that a high proportion of citizens participate in gambling at least occasionally (Gambling Commission, 2011; Buth & Stöver, 2008; Worthington et al., 2007; Cox, Yu, Afifi & Ladouceur, 2005; Abbott, Volberg & Rönnerberg, 2004). Any activity as popular as gambling will also involve various levels and styles of participation, individual preference and social classification, influencing what is considered acceptable and non-acceptable gambling behaviour. These understandings not only differ between country contexts, but also between academic disciplines. Academic discussion on gambling has been characterised by strong disciplinary divisions, mainly between psychologists and economists, as well as to a lesser degree between proponents of the public health paradigm and functionalist sociologists who have looked at gambling from a structural point of view.

Public discussion on gambling also reveals a number of paradoxes and oppositions. In the European tradition in particular, gambling is treated as an important social cause when it comes to raising public funds. However, when excessive gambling is discussed, gambling suddenly becomes an individual problem. Although views on problem gambling as a societal public health issue are becoming more common, the paradigm centring on the individual still remains the main premise of gambling studies (Cassidy, 2014). What all these different points of view have shared is a lack of regard for contextual differences. This chapter presents some of the classical and contemporary ways of understanding and classifying gambling practices before moving on to a discussion of how the social and cultural contexts of gambling have been taken into account in previous gambling research.

3.1 CLASSIFICATIONS

To analyse the different points of view from which gambling is understood, it is important to look first at some basic classifications. The classic division of games has been made between games of (at least partial) skill, such as poker or sports betting and games of chance, such as slot machines (see e.g. Bergler, 1957). The basis of this dichotomy is the level of player input into the outcome of the game: The more a player can influence the outcome of the game the bigger the role of skill. Caillois (1958) suggested that games of chance are also less acceptable since the player remains passive and does not use his skill to influence the outcome.

However, this dualism is not the only proposed classification for games. The French gambling researcher and psychologist Marc Valleur (2008) has divided games into two groups based on the biological symptoms they

produce: The first group, 'dream games' (*jeux de rêve*), include lottery-type games with low levels of sensations, while the second group, 'thrill games' (*jeux de sensation pure*), include games such as slot machines involving strong sensations and high levels of adrenaline. Of these two groups, Valleur (2008) considers thrill games to be the more dangerous.

Games can also be classified according to the rate and pace of play, the player's relation to the game and the player's distance from the game, i.e. whether the game is played from close proximity such as pari-mutuel betting or from a distance like a lottery (see Reith, 1999). The distance or proximity of a game has also been evoked in classifications of playing sites. The venues of gambling can be divided into gambling specific sites, such as casinos, and sites that are not exclusively dedicated to gambling, but where gambling is possible, such as the internet, supermarkets with slot machines or tobacco shops that sell lottery tickets (Reith, 1999).

Gambling-specific sites are generally called 'destination gambling' in gambling research, as entering these venues is preceded by a conscious decision to gamble. The opposite, 'convenience gambling', occurs when gambling opportunities are situated in everyday locations (e.g., Brown 2010; Ungar & Baldwin, 2000). Although convenience gambling has sometimes been argued as being more dangerous, owing to its impulsive nature (Brown, 2010), destination gambling and casinos in particular have received more research attention. Casinos are the archetype of destination gambling, but different types of casinos can also be distinguished. Eadington (2003) has identified four different types: resort casinos, rural casinos, urban or suburban casinos and small arcade-type neighbourhood casinos. A division between resort and urban casinos is the most common, and the differences between these two types are often underlined in research. Resort casinos are frequently tourist destinations, offering gambling opportunities in addition to other leisure-time facilities such as restaurants and hotels. They are also usually located outside major urban centres. Urban casinos, on the other hand, are usually smaller, located in city centres and aimed at locals, making them more problematic for the community (Reichert et al., 2010; Reith, 2006a).

Differences in the levels of participation and participant demographics have also been used in classifications of gambling practices, as some games have been found to be more popular among certain demographic groups. Studies from different countries have shown that games of (partial) skill are preferred by men, while games of luck are more popular among women (Casey, 2003; Volberg, 2003; Hing & Breen, 2001; Reith, 1999). Reith (1999) has also shown that gambling practices differ amongst social groups. Casinos tend to be populated by middle income groups, while betting shops are popular amongst less privileged males; bingo halls are favoured amongst less privileged females and slot machines amongst the young.

Beyond their preferred games, gamblers have also been classified based on how much they play. Statistical studies on participation rates tend to use

12-month participation as a limit on the most basic division into gamblers and non-gamblers, but different levels of participation can also be distinguished. This has usually meant distinguishing recreational gamblers from problem gamblers. Terms for designating gambling-related problems also abound. From pathological gambling to gambling addiction, excessive gambling, compulsive gambling, impulsive gambling, disordered gambling, gambling dependency or at-risk gambling, these terms are sometimes used interchangeably to describe the same phenomenon, but can also be used to determine the severity of problems, as is the case with clinical criteria. Clinical criteria, such as those determined by the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders), SOGS (South Oaks Gambling Screen) or the CPGI (Canadian Problem Gambling Index), are generally used to designate the line between problematic and non-problematic gambling. In the DSM-IV, ten diagnostic criteria are introduced. A person scoring fewer than five points is considered a 'probable problem gambler' while a score of more than five points yields a diagnosis of 'probable pathological gambling'. In the CPGI index 3 to 7 points out of a possible 27 constitute moderate risk gambling, while over eight points earns the definition of excessive gambling.

These clinical classifications have also been strongly criticised for their inability to grasp adequately the multi-dimensional nature of problem gambling (Orford, Sproston, & Erens, 2003), for their applicability to general population studies (Stinchfield, 2002), a lack of clarity to respondents (Ladouceur et al., 2000) and a lack of cultural sensitivity (Room, 2003).

Indeed, a plethora of schools of thought exist today with differing views on what constitutes gambling, what motivates gambling behaviour and what is considered acceptable forms of participating in this activity. As Pierre Bourdieu (see Bourdieu, 1994, 1984; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) has often reminded, systems of classification have direct consequences for social reality. In Bourdieu's terms, a field such as that of gambling is always defined somewhat differently depending on one's position in it, and attempts to establish one 'correct' definition can often turn into a struggle. Sociological classifications are no different and can even hinder comprehension of the complexities of everyday life. To overcome these problems of classifications and definitions of gambling, the present study did not depart from a fixed idea of what constitutes gambling. Instead, the definition was drawn from research data, which consisted of interviews and legal texts.

3.2 CONTEMPORARY CONCEPTUALISATIONS

Jim Orford (2011) has found a total of 11 contemporary ways of discussing gambling. However, in public discussion, the most common of these views relate gambling to a natural way of acting, to a problem or to a harmless form of consumption (see also Borch, 2012; Reith, 2007), which will be discussed in more detail below. All of these premises share the problem that gambling

is not understood contextually, but rather gambling behaviours are equated with gambling individuals. As argued by Reith and Dobbie (2011), even the same individual can exhibit different types of gambling behaviours with different meanings.

The widespread nature of gambling practices across cultures has raised comments about the existence of a 'gambling impulse' (France, 1902), a universal desire to gamble, which occurs in all societies and in every period of history. The great classical thinkers of gambling studies, Johan Huizinga (1938) and Roger Caillois (1958), and their accounts of the universality of gaming are often quoted by proponents of this view. However, despite its popularity and its prevalence across the world, gambling is by no means a universal practice. In his global account of gambling practices, Per Binde (2005b) has demonstrated that prior to the era of European colonisation, societies without gambling were common outside Europe, but also within Europe. The indigenous Sámi people of Finnish and Scandinavian Lapland do not have gambling-related traditions.

Even in contemporary global societies, gambling is not practised in all cultures. Most Islamic countries as well as Israel, for instance, do not allow gambling or at most only some forms of it, for cultural and religious reasons (Orford, 2011). Indeed, gambling does not seem to constitute a biological instinct or impulse.

In turn, gambling as a problem discourse focuses on the difficulties that its practice potentially creates. Conceptualisation of excessive gambling varies greatly not only between academic fields, but also between societies. In the United States, the influence of the American Psychiatric Association has introduced the pathologisation or psychologisation of gambling, including discourses of addiction (Adams, 2008, see also the recent DSM-V). The main advocate of this view is the Gamblers Anonymous (GA) movement, founded in Los Angeles in 1957. Such medicalisation of gambling problems has been criticised, especially by European and Australian researchers (e.g., Livingstone & Woolley, 2007; Ehrenberg, 2010; see also Sub-study IV), who have advocated an understanding of problem gambling as a social issue. In Australia, Canada and Northern Europe, a wider public health model of conceptualising problem gambling has gradually gained in importance. According to this view, even though gambling is still outlined in terms of individual health, it is done in a larger societal framework (e.g., Järvinen-Tassopoulos, 2012a; Adams, Raeburn & De Silva, 2009; Korn, Gibbins, & Azmier, 2003; Korn & Shaffer, 1999).

The same centring on the individual can be detected in the view of gambling as a harmless form of consumption. Increasingly, recreational gambling is promoted as a normal leisure activity and a form of consumption, particularly among industry or state representatives with vested interests in gambling (see Livingstone & Woolley, 2007; Reith, 2007). The spread of an ideology of consumerism is also apparent in the vocabularies used to discuss gambling: In the English-speaking world the

term 'gaming' instead of 'gambling' has become widespread, thereby associating the activity with play and leisure rather than with the old connotations of risk and financial loss (Reith, 2007; Cosgrave, 2006). A similar change in vocabulary is also taking place in Finland and France with the Finnish word *uhkapeli* ('game of risk') being increasingly replaced by the less negative *rahapeli* ('game of money') and the French *jeu de hasard* ('game of chance') replaced by with *jeu d'argent* ('game of money').

Some academic researchers remain sceptical of this development and have maintained that recreational gambling is merely a voluntary form of taxation for the sole purpose of increasing state budgets (Korn, Gibbins & Azmier, 2003; Miller & Pierce, 1997) or that connecting gambling to leisure is problem in itself, as increasing recreational gambling also increases the levels of excessive gambling (the so-called total consumption model, see Hansen & Rossow 2008; Lund, 2008). Furthermore, the importance of regulating gambling in jurisdictions around the world shows that the normality of gambling is not accepted in a similar way in all contexts. The Nordic countries have been particularly insistent on consumer protection (see also Sub-study I). In other jurisdictions, an extreme case of which is Nevada in the United States, gambling has been liberated to a great extent in the name of both consumer and business freedom (Collins, 2003; Nikkinen & Marionneau, 2014).

3.3 THEORETICAL JUXTAPOSITIONS

Contextual differences in understanding gambling are not only apparent between jurisdictions and societies, but also between academic disciplines. In his research Per Binde (2013) has shown that basically any field of study which considers human behaviour seems to have its own definition of gambling. The main rifts in gambling research today have been summarised in Table 1 below. Two levels of opposing views were found: first, juxtapositions between problem and non-problem related gambling research and second, divisions between an individual and a structural level of observation.

Table 1 Divisions in gambling reserach

	Individual level	Structural level
Problem-related	Bio-psychological approach	Public health approach
Non-problem-related	Economic approach	Functional approach

Today most gambling studies fall under the category of individual level and problem-related medico-psychological research to the point that gambling studies have criticised for one-sidedness (Cassidy, 2014). The approach has included studies with varying focal points ranging from neuropsychological processes (see e.g., Blanco et al., 2000; Blum et al., 1995) to the inability to control impulses (Blaszczynski et al., 1990; Dickerson et al., 2006), cognitive deficiencies (Ladouceur & Walker, 1998), and elevated rates of impulsivity or compulsivity (Blaczczynski 1999, Frost et al., 2001; Skitch & Hodgins, 2004) (see also Sub-study IV). The GA movement has been particularly zealous in promoting problem gambling as an incurable disease, while terms such as gambling addiction and pathological gambling have also been common in this line of research.

Economic research on gambling also focuses on the individual, but from the point of view of consumption. Furthermore, most economic theories on gambling are very basic, explaining gambling as a rational cost-benefit calculation to win money (see Aasved, 2003, on economist gambling research) and gambling supply as something that responds to consumer demand (see Woolley & Livingstone, 2010). These views are widespread among gambling industry representatives who promote gambling as harmless fun or as an ordinary business enterprise (Livingstone & Woolley, 2007). In the European tradition of protective welfare states and provision of national, monopolistic systems of gambling, the scope of this free market ethos has been reduced. However, recent pressures to open up the European gambling markets have also brought this line of thought into the wider European discussion as private gambling entrepreneurs have been pushing for the dismantlement of national controls on gambling. Cases against national gambling monopolies have been taken up in the CJEU based on the principle of free circulation of services in the European Union, stimulating debate about whether gambling should in fact be seen as just an ordinary commodity (Sub-study I). However, as Donnat (2011) has noted, the CJEU has shown respect and comprehension to the national gambling providers in member states.

Other studies on gambling have been conducted from a structuralist point of view, with consideration given to the larger societal context. Similarly to studies focusing on the individual gambler, these enquiries can be divided into those which deal mainly with the problematic side of gambling and those focusing on the cultural or non-problematic side. The first category consists of socio-statistical approaches, which consider the prevalence of gambling and gambling problems within the general population. The approach also includes the recent public health approach to gambling, which is more interested in the distribution of gambling problems within the population than with the individual experiencing these problems.

Finally, structural studies that do not concern themselves with gambling problems are typically qualitative or theoretical studies that examine the general functions of gambling in society or claim a universal will to gamble

(France, 1902). The functionalist tradition has been particularly popular amongst some of the classical thinkers of gambling studies (Caillouis, 1958; Devereux, 1949), yet it can also be found in some contemporary gambling studies that look into gambling's psychological or social benefits for society (see e.g. Cosgrave, 2006).

3.4 GAMBLING CONTEXTS IN PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Despite the benefits that contextual analysis could bring to gambling research, the contexts of gambling have not been widely studied. Even studies that have made reference to contexts have largely remained focused either on general remarks about the importance of culture or, at most on one country context at a time without any comparative aspect. As a result, data obtained in one social context are often generalised to gambling elsewhere. Yet different understandings between academic contexts as well as between country contexts abound, as discussed in the previous section. I argue in this dissertation that a first step to increasing the contextual sensitivity in gambling studies is to focus on the cultural and institutional contexts of gambling in different societies or social groups. Fortunately, the concepts of culture and institutions have not gone completely unrecognised in gambling studies, and some initial steps have already been taken.

3.4.1 CULTURE AND GAMBLING

Some research that considers the importance of culture has already been conducted in relation to gambling. Notably Binde (2005a, 2005b, 2007) has made important ethnographic contributions to understanding the link between gambling and culture. However, a unified research paradigm on the relationship between gambling and culture has yet to be formed. Moreover, there seems to be a general confusion about what is actually considered 'culture' in the field of gambling studies. The term has been used to designate all levels of social organisation, ranging from the universality of the culture of games to societies as cultural entities to cultures of gambling within an ethnic community or even a family (e.g. Tifferet, Agrest, & Benisti 2011; McMillen, 2003; Volberg & Abbott, 1997). Different levels of cultural organisation, of course, exist in society. However, in this study cultural unity is connected above all with social contexts, a research tradition that has been particularly weak in gambling studies.

Furthermore, studies on gambling that have taken cultural differences into account have often followed a sociologically problematic reasoning. First, studies that do deal with culture tend to be highly structural and neglect the existence of the gambling individual or the possibilities of changes within the cultural structures. Cultural practices (Raylu & Oei, 2004; Volberg & Abbott, 1997) have rightfully been underlined as important factors

influencing gambling behaviour. But by doing so, cultural differences are also easily generalised as individual similarities, turning culture into a determinant of individual behaviour rather than a combination of habits and understandings of acceptable behaviour that individuals are likely to follow, but may also choose not to (Bourdieu 1980, 1994).

Second, studies have tended to follow the tradition of modernisation theories. Instead of discussing cultural differences *per se*, the variations amongst different societies or cultural groups have often been considered as stages of societal development. The modernisation ideology is already familiar from Caillois' (1958) classification of cultural forms based on the types of games that are played in a society. For Caillois, games are strongly linked to social reality, and games of money are more common in highly developed societies. The economist Frederic Pryor (1976) has followed the same idea in his study on the globalism of gambling practices. Pryor found that the existence of gambling correlates positively with the presence of an economic system based on monetary exchange and degree of societal complexity. More recently, these insights have been applied to quantitative approaches or comparisons of gambling prevalence rates between different societies. The statistical approach is especially common in official state reports on gambling where national figures are compared to those of other countries. Countries with higher rates of gambling and more complex gambling institutions are often considered more 'developed'. For example, in a statistical comparison of the Swedish and New Zealand gambling sectors, and without questioning the political and social differences between these two societies, Abbot et al. (2004) concluded that the development of gambling in Sweden is following the same trends as those in New Zealand some fifteen years earlier. However as Schüll (2012b) has shown in a study exploring the establishment of Western casino entrepreneurs in Asia, similar patterns of gambling preference are not followed everywhere in the world.

Beyond these approaches, some researchers have taken culture into account by taking ethnic minorities of some western societies as the main point of interest. These studies made it possible to point out the role of culture as an important factor influencing gambling behaviour. Within the same institutional contexts and exposed to a similar gambling offer, the gambling practices of different cultural groups have still been found to vary (see e.g. Li et al., 2011; Oei, Lin, & Raylu, 2008; Papineau, 2005; Blaszczynski et al., 1998; Volberg & Abbott, 1997). The most systematic cultural comparison so far has been the GAMECS (Gambling among Members of Ethnic Communities in Sydney) project (1999) in Australia. The study found that not only did the amounts gambled, the types of games played and the preferred gambling locations differ between different ethnic groups, but so did the way these games were discussed. Whereas Korean and Arabic groups discussed gambling as a form of entertainment, the Chinese and Spanish emphasised the social importance of games, the Vietnamese

stressed the possibility of making money, and the Italians underlined the role of individuality.

LaTour et al. (2009) have also taken the step of comparing how different societies regard gambling. Written from the perspective of marketing, their analysis uses early childhood memory elicitation to study how individuals from the United States, China and France were initially exposed to gambling. The authors argue that each culture has its own 'code' of gambling: The United States is characterised by an idea of the American dream where anyone can be a winner, gambling in China fills the need for attention as an individual, and French gambling seems to follow the Pascalian idea that one can use math and intellectual abilities to outsmart the system. These few studies provide an excellent point of departure towards maintaining that cultural comparisons are not only needed, but paramount in comprehending how gambling is understood in different contexts.

3.4.2 INSTITUTIONS AND GAMBLING

There has been even less consensus and less of a research tradition on the institutions of gambling. A strong body of research on the social structures that enable gambling does exist, which focuses in particular on the impact of physical availability and accessibility (see Vasiliadis et al., 2013 for an overview) but also on the gambling environment (e.g., Marshall, 2005; Wildman, 1997), on the policy options governments have for regulating gambling (Chambers, 2011; Bogart, 2011; Adams, 2008) and on gambling law (e.g., Rose, 1986; Rose & Owens, 2005). Some attention has also been given to more abstract institutional processes such as social availability or positive social attitudes to gambling in the press or in the government (Welte et al., 2007; Borch, 2012; Barmaki & Zangeneh, 2009). However, the term 'institution' is rarely used to describe these state structures behind gambling.

Instead, 'institution' has been used to designate various levels of gambling organisation. Usually in gambling studies, institutions either refer to individual gambling providers or to a rather vaguely defined routine of play. Equating institutions with providers has been particularly typical of studies that consider the legal or economic framework of gambling, specifically casinos. These studies have been especially common in America, where economic interest in improving the profitability of casino gambling has often affected research (e.g., Barnes, 2013; Morse & Goss, 2010; see also McMillen, 1996). In Europe, notably in the UK, casinos have also taken centre stage in policy studies, but from a more critical standpoint of proposing restrictions on the sector (e.g. Miers, 1981, 2004). The narrow view of institutions as essentially individual gambling establishments has been further elaborated by Ocean and Smith (1993), who have developed a model of casinos as total institutions in the Goffmanian (1961) sense. For Ocean and Smith (1993), casinos fulfil all the basic human needs of dwelling, playing and working. Similarly, Kingma (2010a) has called casinos institutions, but rewarding

institutions rather than restrictive. Some commentators have also considered certain games such as the lottery (Creigh-Tyte, 1997) or horse racing (Trucy, 2001/2002) as national institutions. French gambling researchers Valleur and Bucher (2006) have even called gambling itself an institution in society, while others (Adams, 2008; Reith, 1999) have described the increasing propagation of games as the *institutionalisation* of gambling in societies.

In this study institutions are not seen merely as a collection of gambling establishments or providers, but also as the larger legislative and economic contexts in which these providers operate. In the case of Finland and France, this includes both national and European Union-level measures to promote and constrain gambling as discussed in more detail in Sub-study I. Institutions are thus understood as specific to one national context and refer essentially to the gambling environment of a specific country. The institutional environment can have a great impact on gambling practices, ranging from the types of products that are offered to their social, demographic and geographical accessibility, as well as the organisation of dealing with potential problems that ensue. Moreover, institutions are seen as open to redefinitions whenever the need arises.

4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Because research on gambling has been strongly compartmentalised along the divisions between disciplines, sociological insights have not been widely used with the exception of a few researchers. Some classical sociological theorists already took up the example of gambling and some classical theories have also since been applied to gambling but there has been a lack of approaches uniting both the individual actor and his or her structural setting. Yet sociological theory has shown that action, as well as understandings, can be seen as both voluntary and socially determined (e.g. the Pragmatist school in the United States; Bourdieu and Giddens in Europe). These insights could also be applied to gambling, not by focusing on why people gamble or the functions of gambling in societies, but by taking interest in the social contexts and understandings of gambling. Furthermore, by focusing on gambling behaviours rather than gambling individuals (Reith & Dobbie, 2011), the problem gambler / non-problem gambler division can be overcome: Individuals can have phases of more or less problematic gambling behaviour, making acceptable gambling connected to behaviours, not to individuals. This chapter presents a contextual approach to the study of gambling by discussing the concepts and theoretical tools that are needed.

4.1 SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO GAMBLING

Contemporary sociology has made many interesting advances in gambling studies, including ethnographic approaches (Reith, 1999; Casey, 2003, 2008; Kingma, 2010a), analyses on the changing political conditions of gambling (Kingma, 2004, 2008; Orford, 2011), critical studies of gambling provision (Schüll, 2012a, Livingstone & Woolley, 2007; Livingstone & Adams, 2010) anthropological approaches (Binde 2005a, b, 2007), and even the description of the cultural contexts of gambling (Binde, 2014, Schüll, 2012b). In Finland, sociologists of gambling have also considered how gambling came to be viewed as a social problem (Tammi, 2008, 2012), how gambling is connected to welfare policies (Järvinen-Tassopoulos, 2012a; Nikkinen & Marionneau, 2014) and how gambling is understood among general practitioners and social workers (Egerer, 2010, 2013; Egerer & Marionneau, 2014). In France, the sociology of gambling has not been as firmly established as it is in Finland, but critical studies of the availability of games (Martignoni-Hutin, 2011) and ethnographic studies of gambling practices (Martignoni-Hutin, 2000; Piedallu, 2014) have been conducted.

Nevertheless, most sociological studies of gambling have focused on socio-statistical descriptions of which social groups play the most and which groups experience problems. While these studies do serve an important

purpose for policy makers, they do not advance the theoretical understanding of gambling. As a result gambling studies have not benefitted much from theoretical advances in sociology, and the input of social theory for gambling studies has largely remained at the level of rational action theory or functionalist accounts, trends that were more common in sociological theorising in the earlier half of the twentieth century. The two main lines of thought in the sociology of gambling have been either to view gambling as irrational, wasteful or pathological behaviour, which goes against the rationality of individuals or to view gambling as an activity functionally beneficial to the individual or to the society.

The idea of gambling as irrational behaviour finds its roots in the economic theory of rational action. This branch of economic theory has assumed that people act rationally by weighing the costs and benefits of their actions. In gambling studies, a similar line of thought has been followed by Huizinga (1938), for example, who viewed gambling as essentially a parasitic and materialist activity, i.e. contrary to the economic ideal of a rational man. Adam Smith, one of the classic thinkers in modern economics, considered lottery participation to be irrational since 'the more tickets you adventure upon, the more likely you are to be a loser' (Smith, 1785 [1863]: 49). The contemporary trend of viewing gambling as a problem follows this line of thought. Gambling is perceived as something that is not rational and therefore constitutes a problem or even a disease. Adherents of this view have also tended to condone gambling. From another point of view, Marxist studies have also considered gambling problematic as the activity is seen as the 'opium of the people', which exploits the less wealthy groups of society (Barmaki & Zangeneh, 2009; Nibert, 1999, 2006; Martignoni-Hutin, 1997).

Structural theories of gambling tend to view the activity in a more positive light by explaining the existence of gambling through its functional benefits either to society or to the individual gambler. The most famous functionalist account of gambling was offered by Edward C. Devereux (1949), a student of Parsons. In line with Parsons' structural functionalism, Devereux viewed gambling as a 'safety valve' for people suffering from the cultural pressures of capitalism. For Devereux, gambling was not irrational, but beneficial to societies as it helped to relieve tensions and maintain social equilibrium (see Aasved, 2003). Similar accounts can be found in mid-twentieth century Europe. In Sweden, Nechama Tec (1964), another follower of Parsons, viewed gambling as contributing to social stability, while in France, Roger Caillois (1958) discussed the important role of games in industrial societies. Some later researchers have followed the insights of Max Weber in discussing the rationality of gambling from the point of view of the interests of the state (Levy, 2010; Cosgrave & Klassen 2001; McMillen 1996).

On a more individual level, Irving Zola's (1963) study on lower-class horse betting concluded that gambling meets personal needs of bonding and gaining prestige in a social group. Some of Goffman's followers have also emphasised the value of gambling in demonstrating character and courage

(Cosgrave, 2008; Holtgraves, 1988). Nevertheless, these functionalist approaches have had some theoretical problems. First, they have been criticised for *ad hoc* thinking: gambling cannot be both the result of capitalist pressures and the solution to them. Second, they have not been able to explain why all people do not act accordingly or why persons choose gambling instead of another activity (see Aasved, 2003).

Perhaps due to the popularity of functionalism and rational action theory, some other sociological theories have not been given the attention they would deserve. One of the most often quoted sociological thinkers amongst gambling researchers has been Thorstein Veblen. His concepts of 'conspicuous consumption' and 'leisure class' have been used in research on gambling as consumption (Reith, 2007; Casey, 2003) and in studies on class-based gambling motivations (e.g., Smith & Preston, 1984; Pryor, 1976). In his *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), Veblen explains the popularity of gambling amongst the upper classes by arguing that modern gambling practices developed from primal instincts and humanity's 'barbarian' heritage. Following this logic, upper class gambling was largely aimed at demonstrating conspicuous consumption and superiority over the less affluent classes (see also Aasved, 2003).

However, beyond his theories of consumption, Veblen had another theoretical point that can be useful in gambling research. Veblen was a critic of methodological individualism as well as of methodological holism, i.e. of viewing action as individually rational or as socially determined (see Kilpinen, 2004). He also criticised the idea that motives precede action. For Veblen, gambling was not merely an individual consumption choice or a functional answer to modern capitalism, but rather a social habit or *instinct* in his terms. To paraphrase another Pragmatist classic, G.H. Mead (1934), games cannot be dissociated from the social as it is in a social environment that games find their meaning.

4.2 UNDERSTANDING CONTEXTS

Sociological research on the contexts in which actions and understanding occur has stretched from considering the impact of individual characteristics such as gender, age and social class, to larger social structures such as norms, values and societal institutions (e.g. Zusman, Knox, & Gardner, 2009). However, as this study deals with the contexts of gambling in two societies, the focus has been on the cultural and institutional settings in which a person gambles.

As it is defined here, the institutional context is made up of several levels, including the organisation of gambling, gambling providers, political decision-making and legislation on gambling. The definition of culture here follows Geertz's (1973) idea that culture is a web of meanings, understood as cultural 'deep structures' of a social group. The term 'deep structure' was first

introduced by Noam Chomsky (1957) in linguistics, but has since been adapted to social research, including fields close to gambling studies such as cultural sensitivity in public health approaches (Resnicow et al., 1999) or prevention of drug use (Hecht & Krieger, 2006). For Resnicow et al. (1999), cultural sensitivity has two dimensions: surface structures and deep structures. Surface structures refer to the superficial characteristics of a social group, such as language or location, whereas the more complex, deep structures are made up of a variety of cultural, social and historical forces, or habits, that influence behaviour and understandings.

A context provides a setting in which possible courses of action, opinions or utterances can be chosen, but the reflexive nature of habits also makes it possible for the context to change by welcoming new forms of acceptable action or by rejecting opinions that were previously justifiable. The German sociologist Niklas Luhmann (1995 [1984]) used the concept of system in a manner very similar to context as understood here. In opposition to a structuralist model of 'choice within constraints', Luhmann argued that systems are not stable because they need to adapt to changing situations that originate in the changing environment. Here the changing environment in Luhmann's systems theory has been equated with changing cultural and institutional habits to which the system or context adapts. Richard Rorty has followed the same line of thought in his contextual studies of language communities. According to Rorty (1980), justifications for acceptable action are only valid within particular language communities that share the same form of rationality. Although Rorty's language communities referred to academic disciplines rather than to societies, the idea can be applied to social groups that share the same cultural and institutional context.

The present study has viewed socio-cultural contexts as comprised of institutional and cultural structures. Yet how these structures come to make up a context and how a context influences individual understandings of a topic such as gambling form the topic of this section. The term 'habit' is used as a way to understand how contexts come about and are maintained, while 'agency' helps to appreciate the role of individuals in that context. The terms 'reflexivity' and 'relativity' explain why contexts are also open to change and reinterpretation.

4.2.1 HABITS

In everyday language, gambling is often described as a habit. Habits influence gambling in many ways. At the most basic level, habits can be individual propensities to play, such as the habit of playing the weekly lottery or a habit of dropping by a casino on holiday. In research literature the habituality of gambling has also been used in the sense of empty routines, fixed interests or even compulsive behaviour. For instance, Orford (2011) explains excessive gambling in terms of an acquired habit, while in the Pathways model of Blaszczynski and Nower (2002) the development of

habitual gambling patterns is viewed as a precondition for any form of gambling problem. Habits have also been used to refer to government or industry stakeholders' interests in guaranteeing continuing or even increasing gambling offers (see Paldam, 2008).

Defining habits as either routine or motivational interests represents two extremes of thinking, both of which involve problems of one-sidedness: Seeing gambling as merely a routine neglects their reflexive aspect and openness to change, while perceiving habits as interests easily equates them with individual rationality without structural influence.

In this study the term 'habit' has been preferred to similar concepts such as social constraint, owing to its more extensive theoretical use in previous literature. The term also highlights the important role of individuals in maintaining social structures. Discussing habits was particularly important in the pragmatist school of thought in the early twentieth century, but since the 1980s sociological theorists have again increasingly discussed similar ideas. Important contributions include Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus (1979), Anthony Giddens' structuration theory (1984), the theory of justification by Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot (1991), as well as some neo-pragmatist thinkers (e.g., Joas, 1996; Whitford, 2002; Kilpinen, 2000; 2011). Although the pragmatists are first and foremost theorists of action, the concept of habit can still be used to explain social contexts. This conceptualisation is also in line with Bourdieu's theory of habitus. For Bourdieu (1979), habitus is formed in daily practices, meaning it does not explain practices but rather social order. As Sulkunen (2009) has emphasised, Bourdieu was not so much a theorist of action, for which he is often mistaken, as a theorist of society.

Because of the social nature of habits and the understandings that lie beneath them, members of the same social group tend to act in similar ways and produce social order. As Gronow (2008) has argued, habits are often followed because often no other alternative can even be conceived of. Sulkunen (2009) has proceeded along similar lines with his generative concept of agency. For Sulkunen, all action is based on habits. However, habits can change with changing circumstances. For instance, the introduction of new games can alter individual gambling participation, and changes in the global economy may alter institutional gambling offers. These adjustments are generally created by evaluating existing habits and replacing them with new ones, although only within the framework of understandings or images that we have of the world (Sulkunen, 2009). Bourdieu (1980) has similarly argued that people are not determined by their conditions but habitual thinking often co-ordinates even the apparently original choices in a social context.

In the realm of gambling, this means that within a particular social context, such as Finland or France, people's ideas about gambling may vary based on individual choices, but these ideas are still based on the codes of what is acceptable within that context. Gambling can therefore be seen as a

habit, not a routine, but a social habit that influences how gambling is understood and justified and what forms of gambling behaviour are considered acceptable within a specific cultural and institutional environment.

4.2.2 AGENCY

As my research interest has not been in the actual gambling practices in Finland and France, but rather in the ways in which these practices are understood, the term agency has been preferred to the term action. 'Action' is often used in sociological theory to mean the opposite of social structure. The term agency does not have the burden of being confused with concrete acting situations. Instead, agency designates how action is discussed or understood or how the self-image of an agent is constructed and evaluated by others. Agency helps gamblers define their position in regard to what is considered acceptable gambling. Majamäki (2010) has shown in a previous study that recreational gamblers display agency by emphasising their own competence in comparison to problem gamblers, who in turn are viewed as having lost the ability to be in control of their actions.

Sulkunen (2009) has argued that the term agency resolves some of the problems common to theories on action. First, discussing agency gives action a generative capacity. This means that action is evaluated by subjects as discussed above, but is explained as well through justifications, understandings and opinions. The ability to evaluate and comprehend habits, according to Whitford (2002), gives habits the rational aspect that distinguishes them from routine. Bourdieu (1994; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) has repeatedly quoted Pascal's statement 'Le monde me comprend mais je le comprends' (I am part of the world but I also understand it) to clarify this point: we have an understanding of the world because we are its products. Second, the generative capacity of agency makes innovation and stability interdependent. If action is seen as the opposite of structure, then stability could not be explained. Third and finally, while action theory often attempts to explain action, a theory of agency is a theory that focuses on the social bond.

Similarly, in the pragmatist view action cannot be explained because it is a natural way of being in the world (Whitford, 2002). However, the way in which action is understood can be investigated. In his famous study on distinction, Bourdieu (1979) showed that activities such as appreciating certain forms of art find their meaning only in connection to other forms of art and other consumption choices. Active understandings turn into habits, which in turn influence the forms of agency that individuals express.

4.2.3 REFLEXIVITY AND RELATIVITY

In sociological theory reflexivity has often been used as the opposite of habituality, frequently by creating models of different types of action, for example, Weber's (1991 [1922]) traditional, affectional, value-rational, and instrumental action; Habermas' (1984 [1981]) strategic and communicative action; or more recently Landowski's (2005) programmed and strategic action. However, the conceptualisation of habituality presented in these models is closer to empty routine than the term habit as used in this study. Bourdieu's habitus as well as the pragmatist grasp of habit make no such distinction between different forms of action, as it is rather assumed that action can be simultaneously both reflexive and habitual. For Bourdieu, people not only reproduce social understandings, but also produce them in unexpected ways (see Sulkunen, 2009).

Habits are always reflexive and open to change. Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) explains this by emphasising action situations instead of individual acts. A situation is always characterised by a physical and social environment to which action has to be adapted. In situations of stability familiar habits are followed but when situations change, actors have to adapt by modifying their habitual behaviour. This is done by evaluating the habit and using the available knowledge of the world to find a new solution. However, owing to their basis in social perceptions, habits and especially habits of thought, as discussed in Sub-study II, can also be highly resistant to change and may adhere to familiar lines despite shifting situations.

This study has highlighted the important role of gamblers themselves in determining what is acceptable gambling. I have maintained that gamblers can and do make sense of gambling, but this meaning making follows the rules of acceptability of the gamblers' cultural and institutional contexts. The same idea is familiar in phenomenology. For phenomenologists (e.g., Garfinkel, 1967), habits of social life are based on suppositions we take for granted and do not actively question. These suppositions differ depending on the social contexts, resulting in varying ideas of what is considered acceptable and on what terms. The discussion on habits, agency and reflexivity is therefore also tied to the idea of relativity. Understandings are not passive, but depend on the context and situation. Behaviours such as gambling do not have an innate meaning, as their sense arises and changes with the social context.

4.3 THEORETICAL APPLICATIONS

Studying gambling through contexts has concrete effects on how the concept it is understood on an empirical level. In the present research, the theory presented above was applied to gambling with the help of two connected concepts: justification (Sub-studies I and III) and social understandings (Sub-studies II and IV). Even if both terms describe the shared

understandings of a social context and alternative concepts such as images (Sulkunen, 2012) would exist, a distinction is made here between the two ideas. The term justification is used to refer to culturally acceptable vocabularies that are used to explain action, whether individual gambling or the legislative means of regulating gambling. Social understandings, on the other hand, refer to the shared views amongst members of a social or cultural group. Therefore, social understandings describe the habitual, taken-for-granted ways of thinking, while justifications are evoked to seek legitimacy.

4.3.1 THEORY OF JUSTIFICATION

The Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard argued that while life must be lived forwards, it 'must be understood backwards'. (Kierkegaard, 1959 [1843]: 89). Kierkegaard's assertion is in line with the pragmatist view of habits that are not contemplated unless a person is prompted to do so, either by changing circumstances or the necessity to justify one's actions. On a similar note, Bourdieu (1980) has made a distinction between the terms commission and omission. While commission refers to conscious decisions, omission applies when habitual behaviour has to be justified later. Bourdieu further maintains that while omission is not motivationally rational, it is reasonable because it is based on the available vocabularies of acceptable behaviour.

The French sociologists Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot (1991) developed the idea into a theory of justification. Unlike a motivation, a justification takes place *after* an action, therefore privileging the moment when one looks back to reflect on his or her actions.

Justifications are explained by social understandings and ideologies. According to Boltanski and Thévenot, social order needs to be maintained by acceptable and meaningful principles of justification or 'orders of worth' that are the basic values of a society.

The present study has used a very concrete application of the term justification, which expands the definition from societal principles to the vocabularies are used to explain action. The term was chosen instead of similar concepts such as representations, images or vocabularies of motive (Sulkunen, 2012; Mills, 1940), owing to practical needs in the two sub-studies in which justifications were discussed. In the case of Sub-study I, the CJEU also uses the term when prompting member states to clarify their national gambling legislation. In Sub-study III, it was important to use a term that would be distinguished from motivation theories. Following Mills (1940), unlike motivation, the term justification means placing rationality after rather than before an act.

I do not argue that justifications of legislation are the same as recreational gamblers justifying their personal gambling habits. Legal justifications have much wider ramifications, and thus mapping together these two processes together may seem somewhat artificial. However, theoretically the term

justification has the benefit of being applicable to both situations, as the stress is on the socially acceptable vocabularies used. As Boltanski and Thévenot (1991) point out, the forms of justification used help us to understand the normative undercurrents of critical action. Furthermore, the legitimacy of an argument depends on situations rather than on actors. Situations find their determinants in habits, conventions, institutions and social relationships. Justifications depend on the social circumstances in which they are articulated. This also makes them contextually variable. Indeed, it has been shown elsewhere that the types of societal justification preferred in Finnish and in French contexts differ (Luhtakallio, 2012).

4.3.2 CULTURAL UNDERSTANDINGS

There has been a lack of cultural sensitivity in gambling research. For this reason discussing cultural understandings is a useful theoretical tool in gambling studies. Often, studies set out to seek factual evidence on issues such as developing gambling problems or the link between availability and acceptability of gambling, meanwhile neglecting the social bases for these phenomena. Even if the institutional gambling offers are similar in different countries, the ways in which these offers are understood may differ. Research evidence supports this assertion; for example, in Australia understandings of gambling between different cultural groups have been found to differ, despite the group members' exposure to the same gambling offer (GAMECS project, 1999). Indeed, 'meanings' are not the property of things, thereby making them unpredictable and trivial (Sulkunen, 2009). Practices can have different meanings for different people, but usually within the limits of the social habits of a specific context. Meanings are therefore neither determined by context nor do they arise independent of contexts. As Bourdieu (1980) has argued, the ways of understanding are not based on logic, but sense.

Weber (1968 [1922]) showed in his comparative work that the way concepts such as rationality are understood depends on the institutional framework of a given society and a given time in history. In line with this theory, the present study views cultural understandings as social beliefs of what is true. This idea is closely related to justification: legitimate vocabularies find their bases in social beliefs. The term social understandings was chosen instead of concepts such as beliefs, norms or values to highlight the social nature as well as the flexibility of the process of defining what is true in a given context. Norms and values also have a strong connotation of structuralist sociology, while discussion of understandings incorporates the role of individual agents.

In this dissertation cultural understandings were considered essentially through problem gambling and the acceptability of legalised gambling. In Sub-study II, the pragmatist conceptions of 'truth' and how social habits of thought do or do not change were introduced in building a framework for studying public opinions. The sub-study argued that public opinions are not

formed based on rational calculations, but within the framework of cultural understandings and institutional traditions of acceptable behaviour. In Sub-study IV, a framework of cultural understandings of what constitutes problem gambling was developed. While the reality of problem gambling was viewed as existing beyond the manner in which it is conceptualised or classified, understandings of this reality were found to differ between cultural groups. These differences were attributed to the available social vocabularies of what problem gambling means in that cultural context.

5 RESEARCH PROCESS

The decision to compare Finland with France was a result both of academic constraints and convenience. The study was initiated as a part of an international research project called the Images and Theories of Addiction. The project was effectively comprised of collaboration between the University of Helsinki and the Paris Descartes University, also known as Paris V. The initial research protocol to be used in conducting group interviews with gamblers in these two countries had already been drawn up before I joined the research project. On a more personal level, comparing cultures or social understandings requires a certain level of familiarity with the cultural and linguistic contexts of the countries chosen. My personal experience living and working in each of these countries made them a natural choice for my research.

I first joined the gambling studies work group of the Images and Theories of Addiction project because of my familiarity with the cultures and languages of both Finland and France. The topic of gambling, however, was strange to me. At first, this posed challenges as it took some time to become acquainted with the basic concepts and practices of gambling. However, my personal distance from the object of study has also been an asset, as it has resulted in a hermeneutical and investigative take on gambling. The importance of meanings was emphasised through my own attempts to understand gambling. The vocabularies of gamblers and lawmakers were highlighted while my own interpretations took a back seat. Of course, it is not possible to distance oneself completely from one's own social reality, but my own unfamiliarity with the world of gambling did permit me to analyse the practice at some distance. As Durkheim (1966) aptly pointed out, when something is of importance in our own lives, we are incapable of examining it with calm and care.

The initial research data consisted of group interviews with Finnish and French recreational gamblers. These interviews were collected in two sets, in 2009 and 2010. The first set of interviews was collected in 2009 before I joined the project. The Finnish data collection was organised and carried out by Maija Majamäki and Matias Karekallas, who were at that time in charge of the gambling studies of the Images and Theories of Addiction project. The initial Finnish dataset consisted of eight interviews. The French interviews were carried out at the research centre ERANOS by our project partners at Paris Descartes University. The first French dataset included six interviews. After I joined the research project in 2010, this original interview data were found to be insufficient; thus during 2010 we supplemented these data with six additional interview groups in Finland and eight further groups in France, putting the total number of interviews at 14 in each country. I later supplemented the group interview data with legal data dealing with the

gambling legislation of the two countries. This became necessary in order to offer a more comprehensive picture of the context in which Finnish and French gambling takes place.

5.1 GROUP INTERVIEWS AS RESEARCH DATA

The data used in three of the four sub-studies consisted of qualitative group interviews conducted with the so-called *Reception Analytical Group Interview* (RAGI) method. Previous studies on issues such as attitudes to gambling (Sub-study II) or 'motivations' for gambling (Sub-study III) have predominantly been researched using quantitative questionnaires. Using a qualitative approach overcame some of the problematic premises of such statistical methods. First, questionnaires are often not reliable. That people sometimes conceal their gambling activities has been acknowledged by researchers (e.g., Brown, 2010; Walker, 2008; Volberg, 1993). Second, questionnaires often only scratch the surface of a phenomenon and fail to explain, for example, why gambling is popular with some groups or why some games are more popular than others. Quantitative data can offer deeper interpretation of a social phenomenon such as gambling by not merely describing it, but by trying to understand it.

Furthermore, as the aim of this dissertation was to examine the cultural understandings of gambling rather than actual gambling behaviour, the importance of interview data was further emphasised at the expense of other qualitative methods such as participant observation, which has been used in some qualitative gambling studies (Reichert et al., 2010; Cotte, 1997). The importance of speech has also been emphasised in sociological theory. Sulkunen (2009) has maintained that identities and ideologies of everyday life are formulated in ordinary speech. This means that action is not only explained, but also evaluated by subjects. Bourdieu (1980) similarly asserted that social reality is not only understandable by outside observers such as sociologists, but also by agents themselves.

Group interviews were preferred to individual interviews because the point of interest lay in the social reality that is formed in an interaction. Group discussions encourage social consensus rather than subjective biases. Group interviews have therefore been described as ideal for studying understandings or 'images' (Sulkunen & Egerer, 2009). The consensus-seeking of participants reinforces ideas that are legitimate in a social context. This is why the comparative dimension between Finland and France is important. As Room (1988) points out in studies on alcoholism, descriptive examinations of cultural representations do serve a purpose but a comparative frame adds more depth to the analysis. Particularities of one social context become clear when compared to those of another. Comparative studies have also been preferred in other work conducted in the Images and Theories of Addiction project.

5.1.1 INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

The RAGI method has its roots in the theoretical debate between structuralist semiology and reception research (see Sulkunen & Egerer, 2009). While structuralists emphasise the importance of analysing the construction of a text, reception researchers highlight interpretations of the texts. The latter approach follows Bourdieu's (1980) view of agents as active and social participants in the meaning-making process. According to the RAGI manual (Sulkunen & Egerer, 2009), this puts the reception analytical approach closer to sociological theory than to ethnographic case studies. The interest lies not in the actions of agents, but in their 'meaning making' or social understandings of behaviours.

The RAGI method was developed in order to study lifestyle issues such as alcohol consumption or gambling, and as such the method proved appropriate. When questioned directly, people are often unwilling to disclose the full extent of their gambling behaviour. Furthermore, direct questioning runs the risk that the questions are not uniformly understood – the very thing that qualitative studies have often criticised quantitative methods as being. The RAGI method avoids these pitfalls by not prompting participants directly to speak about gambling, but rather encouraging free discussion on gambling-related topics.

The only structure created for the group interviews consists of showing short video clips of gambling situations to evoke and stimulate discussion. Film clips were chosen instead of other media such as pictures or short stories, because clips were an easy media in a group situation and were able to convey a significant amount of stimuli in a short time. All group interviews were conducted in a uniform manner. On recruitment, the participants were given an initial description of the study. The study protocol was also explained before commencing the interviews. The Finnish interviews were conducted at the Department of Sociology at the University of Helsinki and the French interviews took place at the Paris Descartes University. The participants were seated around a table on which their place numbers were indicated by slips of paper. Participants were given a short questionnaire about their age, gender and gambling habits, as well as a sheet with a list of six orienting questions and short synopses of the film clips. Refreshments and snacks were also offered.

In order to stimulate discussion, six short video clips were shown to the groups in pairs. The clips were chosen from the Helsinki University Addiction Clip Collection (HUACC) by Maija Majamäki and Matias Karekallas, the researchers who were in charge of the protocol. Despite the term 'addiction' in the name of the clip collection, not all clips dealt with problematic forms of gambling. Instead, scenes portraying gambling that could be interpreted as problematic and/or as non-problematic were chosen to encourage the participants to discuss a wide range of gambling-related topics. The selection of the clips was also influenced by the desire to avoid so-called genre effects (Sulkunen & Egerer, 2009). Films from strong genres

such as cartoons or Hollywood blockbusters run the risk of diverting the discussion from the theme of gambling. For this reason, realistic and low-profile films were preferred. The selection process concluded with clips from six films depicting different stages and forms of gambling that had been identified based on previous research (also Sulkunen & Egerer, 2009; Egerer, 2010). Most of the film clips were from American movies. This was not a conscious choice, but happened naturally as American movies provided a large selection of gambling-related scenes. To avoid problems of comprehension, subtitles in Finnish or French were added to the clips.

The first series of film clips was designed to portray initiation into gambling and non-problematic recreational gambling. In a scene from *Going for Broke* (USA, 2003), a young woman goes to a casino and tries a slot machine for the first time. Helped by a *habitué* of the casino, she experiences the thrill of winning. This clip was chosen to portray initiation into gambling and the first kick a person experiences. In a clip from *Rounders* (USA, 1998), a young law student uses his poker skills to impress his professors in a job interview. The clip depicts a competence that can be connected with gambling. The second series was intended to demonstrate the line between recreational and problematic gambling behaviours. In the first scene from *The Cooler* (USA, 2003), a young couple is enjoying a winning streak at a casino, exclaiming that this will enable them to send their child to college. The clip was chosen to emphasise the sociability of gambling. In a clip from *The Gambler* (USA, 1974), a man is losing at cards in a private gambling circle and tries to borrow money from a friend in order to win back his losses. This clip depicts the problematic behaviour of chasing losses. The final series consisted of clips portraying different facets of problematic gambling. In a clip from *Bord de mer* (France, 2002), a retired woman sneaks into a casino to play slot machines. The film's plot summary explains that she is gambling away her son's inheritance, an activity she tries to hide from her family. In the excerpt from *Owning Mahowny* (Canada, 2003), a man is unable to stop gambling after an initial, large win and slowly loses all his winnings at a game of dice, his guilty conscience haunting him. These two clips depict harm to others and harm to the self.

After each series, the participants had about 20 minutes to discuss the ideas that the clips had evoked. To help start the discussions, six orienting questions were distributed around the table:

1. Describe what happens in the clip and what kinds of characters are present.
2. What might have happened just before the clip?
3. What will happen immediately after the clip?
4. What will the characters be like in ten years' time?
5. Could something like this happen in real life?
6. Should someone do something to help the character(s)?

The participants were encouraged to expand their discussions beyond these topics and share personal experiences if they wished. The researchers tried to remain silent during the interviews so as not to intervene in the discussions. It was also emphasised that there were no correct or incorrect answers and that participants could withdraw from the research process at any time. The interviews were filmed and recorded as a means of helping with the transcriptions. This procedure was also explained to the participants to make sure they knew the conditions under which they would take part in the study. In total, the interviews lasted about 60-80 minutes.

The RAGI method offered some important advantages. First, by allowing free discussion, the method minimised the influence of different interpretations of research questions. Second, the group interview situation emphasised the role of social interactions in understandings. Understandings are above all social and should be studied as such. Third, because the interviews were carried out with the same protocol in both Finland and France, comparing the two sets of data became possible.

However, some problems arose that had not been anticipated when the protocol was initially drawn up. First, although the film clips were intended to encourage discussion on a variety of gambling-related topics in some groups the conversation failed to move beyond mere plot summaries and descriptions of the films. Second, the French interviews were conducted at the sociological research centre ERANOS in Paris with the instructions that the researcher allow the participants to discuss freely without interviewer intervention. Unfortunately, this did not prove possible in the French context, and the French interviews are characterised by more interviewer interference than the Finnish interviews. Third, on a more theoretical level, the RAGI manual (Sulkunen & Egerer, 2009) suggests analysing the interview data by focusing on the imputation of meanings to reality and the images that people have of a topic applying such modalities as competence, obligation, will and ability. This approach was abandoned in this study because my colleague Maija Majamäki (2010) was already using the same method. Instead, a contextual approach was developed. The interview data were not originally collected for such an approach, but the material eventually proved usable.

5.1.2 RECRUITMENT, ACCESS AND DATA COLLECTION

The group interviews were carried out during 2009 and 2010. The first step in the data collection was to conduct pilot interviews in both countries. In Finland, what was originally meant to be the pilot interview succeeded beyond our expectations and was eventually added into the main dataset. In France, the pilot interview was not included in the final dataset, as there was only one participant who had stopped gambling some time before. Nevertheless, the interview did allow the French researchers to become acquainted with the research protocol. The first set of interviews was

conducted after these pilots in 2009. The initial dataset consisted of 8 interviews in Finland (including the pilot) and 6 interviews in France. However, some shortcomings were identified in the data. First, the French participants were considerably younger than the Finnish participants. Second, in Finland the proportion of female participants was significantly lower than in France. Third, it was necessary to have an equal number of groups. To address these issues, 6 more interviews were conducted in Finland and 8 in France during the year 2010.

The main recruitment criterion for participants was that they be self-identified recreational gamblers. Gamblers experiencing their gambling as problematic were excluded to avoid ethical issues. Interviewing problem gamblers may incite them to gamble more, while discussing their problem in a social setting may be upsetting to some. Furthermore, recreational gamblers represent the vast but often neglected majority of all gamblers. In both countries the interviews were organised in the capital cities, and the participants were recruited from the capital regions. The groups were not meant to be natural units, but consisted of gamblers from various backgrounds, although in some cases a few of the participants knew each other beforehand.

The methods of recruitment varied, based on the differences in the national gambling fields. In Finland, research permission to recruit participants from RAY slot machine gaming arcades was applied for with the first round of interviews, but only granted for the second round. Unfortunately, this method of recruitment did not prove very successful, as few slot machine players in the arcades wanted to talk to us about their gambling, and only about 10 Finnish participants were eventually signed up in this face-to-face manner. Instead, advertisements on supermarket notice boards near slot machines and especially invitations posted on different online gambling forums and e-mail lists proved fruitful. Some participants were also recruited by using snowballing methods or via researcher contact. In general, the recruitment in Finland was very difficult, owing to the reluctance of gamblers to take part, despite the free movie tickets that were offered to all participants as compensation for their time. In France, the recruitment was carried out by ERANOS, who informed me that, contrary to the situation in Finland, finding participants had been easy. Recreational gamblers were mainly reached by snowballing and by direct recruitment at gaming locations. The French participants were compensated by offering low-value scratch tickets.

The Finnish participants were recruited from the Helsinki region and the French participants from the Paris region. This was a practical choice, as the interviews were conducted in these two cities. Beyond the national contexts the differences between these cities may also play an important role in the results. Paris is one of the main metropolises of Europe with a multicultural population. Helsinki is a middle-sized European city with a comparatively homogeneous population. The influence of multiculturalism was at least

partly attenuated by the need for participants to be fluent in the language of the country to be able to take part in the group discussions. However, it must be emphasised that the results from the group interview material cannot be generalised to apply to the countries as a whole.

5.1.3 PARTICIPANTS

The final data consisted of 14 Finnish groups and 14 French groups. In total, 110 recreational gamblers participated in this study, 48 of whom were Finnish and 62 French. The French groups were somewhat larger, owing to the relative facility of recruitment. The groups in France had on average four participants, with group sizes ranging from one to six. The group with only one participant was initially going to be removed from the data, but as the interviewer discussed gambling-related topics with the participant to the point of creating an interactive situation, the interview proved interesting enough to be included in the study. However, only the participant's speech was considered in the coding. The Finnish groups had on average three participants, with group sizes ranging from two to six recreational gamblers. For a more comprehensive table of the participants, see Appendix 1.

In the second set of interviews in 2010 some of the initial issues with the data were resolved. Notably, in the final data the French and the Finnish participants represented on average similar age groups. The average age of the French participants was about 36, with a range from 18 to 71. In Finland, the average age of all participants was about 37, with a range from 19 to 76 (see also Table 2 below). However, the issue of male dominance in the Finnish data could not be resolved. Despite conscious attempts to recruit female participants for the second round of interviews in Finland, this proved exceedingly difficult. Female players were even less interested in talking to us than males, and they often claimed to have no time to participate in an interview study. It could be that gambling is less socially acceptable among women in Finland, and therefore women are less willing to discuss this activity. Furthermore, female gambling is more often characterised by lottery-type games than male gambling (Casey, 2003; Breen & Hing, 2001). This makes women harder to reach because their game play is not characterised by going to gaming arcades or gambling-related online forums. A study on Finnish lottery millionaires (Falk & Mäenpää, 1999) has shown that among Finnish players lottery play is not even considered proper gambling. The skewed gender distribution in the Finnish data may have affected the results, a problem discussed in the sub-studies.

On arriving for the interviews, all the participants filled out a short questionnaire about their gambling. Along with age and gender, they were asked about the games they played most often and the gambling environments they usually frequented. Space was left at the end to describe their gambling habits freely. However, for several reasons these questionnaires were not used in the study beyond superficial statistics. First,

before I joined the project the questionnaires had been drawn up in Finland and translated for the French context. The result was a lack of sensitivity to the particularities of gambling in France, with obvious misunderstandings amongst the participants who filled them out. Second, as with all questionnaire studies, questions arose about the failure of some participants to answer some of the items. This left blanks in the data, which in such a small sample, could not be ignored. Third, because of a printing oversight, a few of the Finnish groups had filled out a somewhat different questionnaire than the rest: In the questions on the games played, this alternate version did not suggest the same options, although the chance for participants to mention games other than those proposed was given. The slip might have influenced the statistical outcomes.

Despite these shortcomings, the questionnaires offer a great deal of interesting information about the recreational gamblers who took part in the study. The free space left at the end for respondents to describe their gambling habits enabled me to fill in some of the blanks in the questionnaires. Table 2 below summarises the gender and age distribution of the participants. In addition, the respondents were asked about their profession. Although not all participants wanted to disclose this information, in France about two-thirds listed an occupation, while in Finland the number was about half. The remaining participants were either students or retirees or unemployed individuals. Most had started playing at a relatively young age. Among the Finns the average age to begin gambling was 20, and among the French, 17. Some even claimed to have started as early as 5 or 6.

Table 2 Finnish and French study participants in percentages

	Total	Finland	France
All	110	48	62
Male	56	33	23
Female	54	15	39
Average age (all)	36.6	35.7	37.4
Average age (male)	34.6	33.7	35.8
Average age (female)	38.8	40	38.3

The participants played a wide variety of games, reflecting the types that are popular and legal in Finland and France. On average, the Finnish and French participants played four different kinds of games at least sometimes. In Finland, the most popular was non-casino slot machines, a game type that is not available in France. The vast majority of the Finnish respondents participated in this form of gambling at least occasionally. In France, almost all participants played scratch cards at least occasionally. This type of gambling was significantly more popular among the French participants, as less than half of the Finnish participants played scratch cards at least

sometimes. Participating in the lottery was also more popular among the French. Because of the oversight in translation explained above, separate questions were asked on the French questionnaires about slot machine gambling and casino games. In Figure 3 below these two were combined, as the French respondents often did not understand the difference between them. In France, slot machines are by far the most popular game in casinos and available only in casino environments. The popular French instant lotteries, Rapido and Amigo, were not even on the list of games enquired about. Some participants added Rapido to the list themselves, yet had the game been specified on the questionnaire, more participants might have indicated playing it.

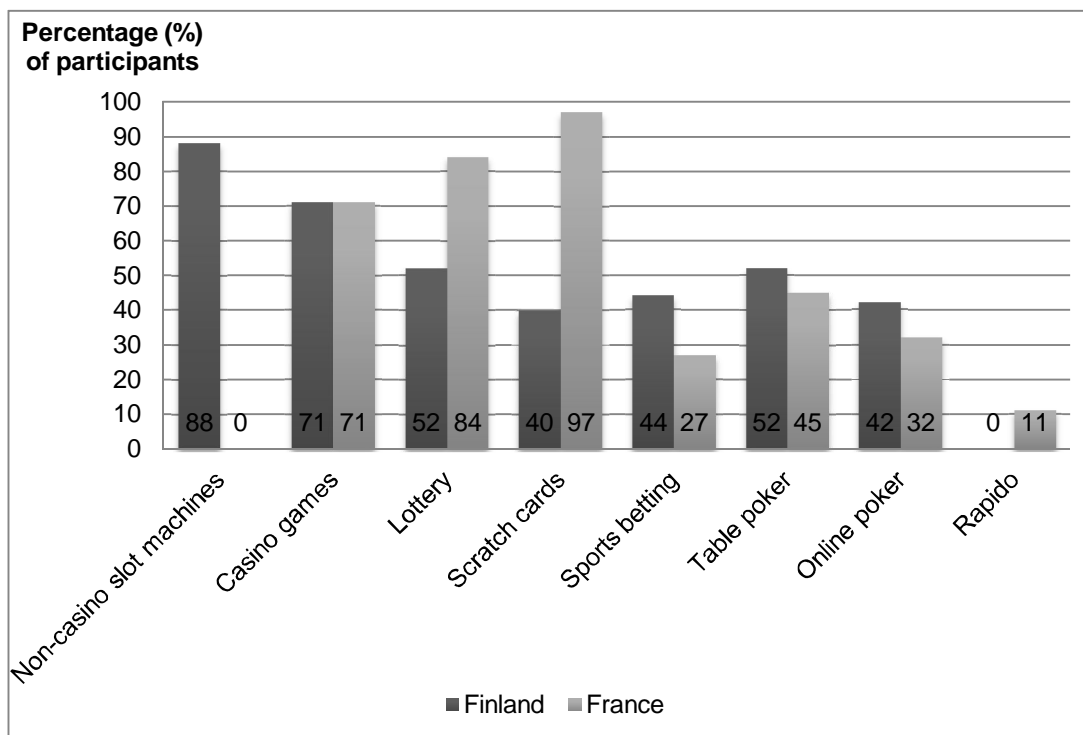


Figure 3 Games played at least sometimes by the Finnish and French participants

Different games were also characterised by different levels of involvement. In Finland, non-casino slot machines were not only played by many people, but were also played often: most participants played them monthly, weekly or even daily. The same was true of scratch cards in France, which were typically played monthly or weekly. In Finland, scratch cards were typically bought only a few times a year. The majority of the participants in both countries played casino games, although usually only a few times a year. The lottery was usually played monthly or weekly in both countries. As for poker, while more respondents reported playing table poker at least occasionally, online poker was generally played more frequently.

The places or environments of play were also a subject of inquiry in the surveys, but no dramatic differences were found between the Finnish and the French gamblers in this regard. In France, bars, and specifically PMU bars, which specialise in offering games such as Amigo (previously Rapido), horse betting and sometimes scratch card sales, were the most popular environment for playing, but the majority of French respondents also played at least sometimes in casinos or at kiosks (i.e. tobacco shops). In France, scratch cards and lottery tickets are mainly sold at tobacco shops. In Finland, kiosks and shops were the most popular places for gambling. The fact that slot machines are available in a variety of such public spaces in Finland is reflected in these results. Like the French, the Finns also played at bars, which often offer slot machines and table games. Finns also went to casinos, although this was not as common as in France.

Interestingly, even though the only Finnish casino is located in Helsinki and in France casinos are prohibited by law near Paris, the relative proximity of a casino to Finnish respondents was not reflected in the results. This contradicts some previous gambling studies, which have claimed a direct link between the proximity of casinos and the rates of gambling participation (Sévigny et al., 2008; Adams et al., 2007). Finally, online gambling was also relatively popular in both countries with just over half of all respondents playing online at least sometimes.

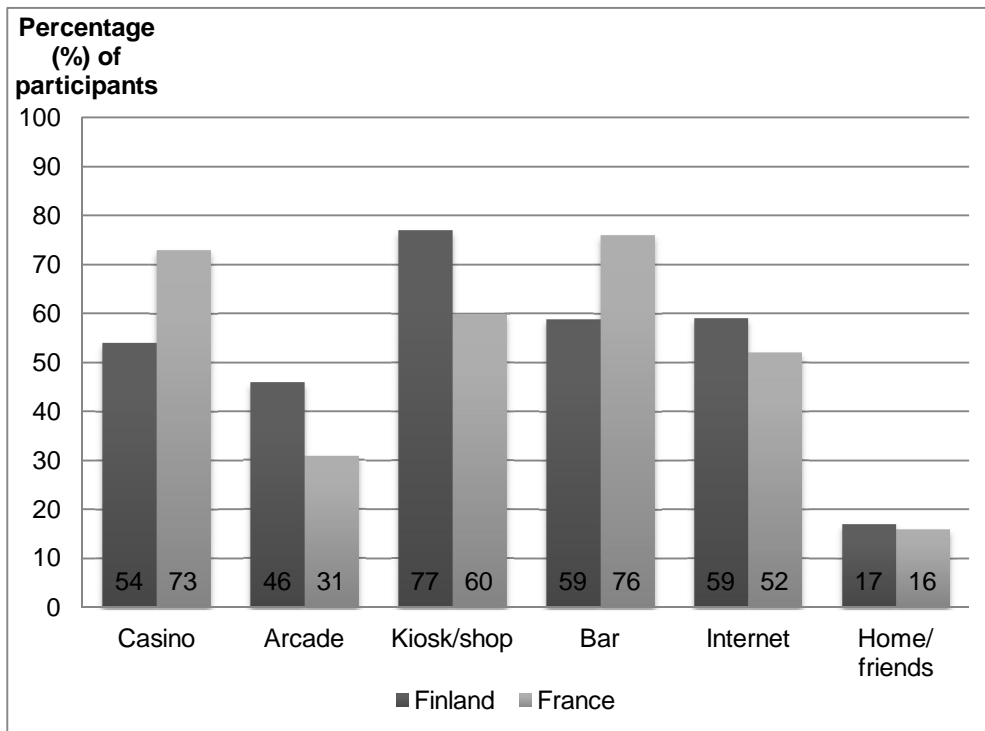


Figure 4 Places of play frequented at least sometimes by the Finnish and French study participants

Much like the games played, the places in which the participating gamblers played turned up with varying degrees of frequency. In both countries gamblers typically went to casinos and gaming arcades only a few times a year while frequenting other types of environments more often. Most notably, the Finnish participants who played at kiosks or shops typically gambled at these locations monthly, weekly or even daily. Among the French, gambling at these locations was somewhat less frequent. The main differences could be found in terms of bars and online gambling. Not only did the large majority of French participants play at bars, but they also played there frequently, usually at least monthly. The Finnish respondents on average played at bars only a few times a year. As for internet gambling, the Finnish participants who played on the internet tended to play weekly or even daily. French online gambling was much more scattered with some individuals playing only a few times a year while others played more often.

5.1.4 ANALYSIS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE DATA

The group interviews were transcribed word for word from the video recordings using text processing software. The transcription made use of the seating numbers placed on the table for the participants. These numbers were also used in the questionnaires to identify the participants, as no other personal details on the gamblers were collected in order to protect their anonymity. In the French data collection, there was an oversight regarding this guideline, and some of the French interviews identify the participants by name. The real names were not published in the sub-studies.

The transcribed text files were inserted into the qualitative data analysis software Atlas.ti, which helps organise data by allowing the application of codes. The software does not replace researcher input in the coding process, but assists in the management of the data. The data were carefully studied for the main topics of conversation. The coding process was then carried out separately for each of the three sub-studies. In this context a code refers to an uninterrupted statement made by one participant. If a second participant continues with the topic, this was coded separately. All coded statements were also given a male/female code in order to control issues involving the skewed gender distribution.

The research questions posed by the three sub-studies using the interview data were based on issues that arose in the interviews. The scope of possible questions was limited only by the fact that the researchers Matias Karekallas and Maija Majamäki also used the Finnish material to study images of money and pragmatic modalities. Three major themes were identified in the interviews: the participants' recreational gambling, issues related to problem gambling and, on a more institutional level, the provision and organisation of gambling. These topics also formed the cores of the three sub-studies based on the same interview data. In Sub-study II, gambler attitudes towards national gambling configurations were considered. In Sub-study III, the vocabularies

of justifying one's own gambling were examined. Finally, in Sub-study IV, understandings of the processes that are conducive to problem gambling were analysed.

The RAGI method proved useful for this study because it highlights social meaning-making and the formulation of social consensus. However, as the interview material was not collected for only this study alone and as I was not able to influence the research protocol, some limitations arose with regard to the use of the method. The first limitation concerned the use of film scenes as a conversation stimulus. Although the group interview material could be used to conduct a reception analysis, discussion of the clips did not provide much information for the purpose of the present study. Karekallas and Raento (2012) have also criticised the use of film clips as a conversation stimulus because the clips can be interpreted differently in different contexts. While the criticism is justified, different understandings can also be an asset, as they allow researchers to analyse group interviews contextually.

The second limitation of the RAGI method concerns the use of group interviews, which have been criticised by Karekallas and Raento (2012), in this case, for problems related to group dynamics. The discussion can be awkward and sometimes a strong personality may monopolise the situation. Nevertheless, although Karekallas and Raento (2012) suggest the use of individual interviews in future gambling studies, group interviews serve the purpose of creating a situation of social interaction that cannot be achieved in individual interviews. Despite some problems with group situations, the social aspect of group interviews brought out answers to the research questions posed in the present study better than individual interviews.

5.2 LEGAL DOCUMENTS AS RESEARCH DATA

This dissertation attempted to tap into both cultural and institutional contexts as a means of analysing gambling in Finland and France. As the group interview data could only be used to describe gamblers' understandings, but not the realities of the gambling field, the need arose for supplementary data. The main sociological interest lay in the ways in which the gambling provisions in Finland and France were justified. In contrast to the interview data, this research question was clear before commencing the data collection and analysis.

Legal documents have been used in sociological and historical studies as evidence of the moral or social atmosphere of a specific society or historical period. These kinds of documents also proved useful in describing the institutional organisations of gambling and their historical and social bases in Finland and France. Furthermore, the legal material presented fewer challenges than the interview data. Most notably, the language of legal documents is clearly formulated and leaves much less room for interpretation than interviews. Legal data are also readily available from

national authorities. The main problems in using legal data were related to the complicated nature of the documents. In France, some laws still in force today were drawn up as early as the nineteenth century and sometimes include numerous small modifications that were hard to keep a track of. Gambling was also regulated in both Finland and France in a number of decrees ranging from core documents regulating legality to less important laws, regulating, for example, horse breeding practices. Distinguishing the documents that were useful from the point of view of the research question proved somewhat difficult. Nevertheless, legal documents provided a fruitful source of data and contributed to answering the question of how provision for gambling has been legally justified.

5.2.1 DATA COLLECTION AND ACCESS

Finland and France both offer comprehensive legal databases online (www.legifrance.gouv.fr; www.finlex.fi) from which legislative texts regarding gambling were collected. Both of these national databases feature all legislative codes and articles that are currently in force. In order to find texts dealing with the question of gambling, search functions were initially used by inserting such terms as *rahapeli*, *uhkapeli*, *lotto*, *veikkaus*, *ray* and *fintoto* in Finland and *jeux*, *jeu de hasard*, *jeu d'argent*, *loterie*, *française des jeux*, *casino* and *pmu* in France. Additional documents were found by following links from the documents to which the search words led. Most of the laws or codes found were added to the initial data. Exceptions were made only for the purpose of limiting the scope of the research. First, only legislation relating to gambling in mainland Finland or metropolitan France was considered. This meant the exclusion of gambling legislation in Finland's autonomous Åland Islands as well as in French overseas departments and territories. Second, small-scale gambling such as raffles and other games at fairs, bingo and gaming circles were excluded. As these forms of gambling have a relatively small scope of activity in both countries, I made the decision to direct the research attention towards the main actors in the Finnish and French gambling fields.

The initial Finnish and French datasets proved somewhat different in scope. In Finland, gambling legislation is concentrated in specific Lotteries Acts, the first of which was drawn up in 1965 and the second in 2002. The 2002 version is in force today, with some later modifications. Finnish gambling is also regulated by several other laws and codes, notably related to taxation and public use of gambling profits. Altogether, the final Finnish data consisted of 28 different laws or decrees, divided into 213 articles. In France, the oldest codes still in force go back to the nineteenth century, but no Lotteries Act has been drawn up. Instead, the different sectors of the gambling field (lotteries, casinos and horse racing) are regulated by separate laws. These laws were supplemented in 2010 by a law regulating the liberalisation of online gambling markets in France. Altogether, the French

data consisted of 19 different laws or codes, which were further divided into 351 articles.

5.2.2 ANALYSIS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE DATA

The first part of the analysis of the legal data was carried out with the help of Atlas.ti software. The legal documents were transformed into text files and added to the Atlas.ti text bank after which they were coded. The research question was to examine the vocabularies by which the provision of gambling, or limitations to the provision of gambling have been justified in France and Finland. All articles that contributed to this theme were coded under different themes as explained in Sub-study I. The main challenge in the legal data was the scarcity of such vocabularies. In the French texts, 41 such justifications were found while in the Finnish texts only 26 justifications were coded. Furthermore, some of these expressions repeat the same ideas and therefore offered little additional information. Nevertheless, the dataset was considered adequate for a qualitative and explorative study and was thus able to answer the research question posed.

The justifications were then traced back to the original or previous forms of the same laws to determine whether they had been recently added. The data were analysed separately for laws passed before 2007 and those passed after that point. The year 2007 was chosen as the dividing line, since it marked a change in gambling policies in both countries due to new requirements and pressures from the CJEU to justify gambling policies more effectively. Both countries also established committees to rethink national gambling policies.

5.3 PRESENTING THE RESULTS

The results of each sub-study are presented according to four principles. First, the results are organised thematically based on the research question for that study. Second, a comparison of Finnish and French practices runs through the entire analysis. Third, in the tradition of quasi-statistics (Becker, 1970) or qualitative contingency analysis (Sulkunen, 1992), some frequencies or per centages of the rates of recurrence of particular topics or codes are given to illustrate the main differences or similarities between Finland and France in a clear and easy-to-read format. Fourth and finally, quotations from the research data are used to enliven the text and to justify the coding and thematic classification of the data.

The thematic organisation of the data is based on the research question posed in each sub-study. In Sub-study I, which concerned the different vocabularies for justifying national gambling policies, these topics were essentially the justifications, ranging from customer protection to fighting criminality and promoting tourism. In Sub-study II, recreational gamblers'

attitudes to national gambling configurations were investigated. These results were thematically organised based on whether their expressions indicated a will for further regulation, a will for further deregulation or a will to maintain the *status quo*. In Sub-study III the research interest lay in how recreational gamblers justify their own gambling. Different vocabularies of justification were coded in the interview data and organised, based first on whether these vocabularies were intrinsic or extrinsic and second, on whether they were related to an economic, hedonistic or symbolic reasoning. Finally, in Sub-study IV concerning the understandings recreational gamblers have of pathways to problem gambling, the interview material was coded based on how problem gambling was discussed and who was considered to be at fault for it. These results were then organised in a table based on whether the gamblers considered the progression to problem gambling the result of individual or structural reasons on the one hand, or related to the player or the game on the other.

Such thematic classifications can be criticised as oversimplifications of the complexities of reality. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the infinite variations and complexities of individual experiences of gambling could not be examined without at least some level of generalisation or classification. These classifications were drawn in the spirit of Weberian ideal types (Weber 1968 [1922]). For Weber, generalisations in the form of ideal types are necessary for the purposes of sociological analysis. The types refer to typical cases that precede theoretical concepts. Weber further points out that these types can seldom if ever be found in reality, but this does not reduce their importance in sociological analysis. Like Weber, this study has typified vocabularies and understandings of gambling in order to show the general lines and themes in the data. I do not argue that these themes constitute the whole reality of gambling in Finland or France. Rather they are used as theoretical means to analyse and to understand gambling.

The thematic presentation of the results also permits a contextual comparison between Finland and France. The comparative thread ran through the analysis of each sub-study. The socio-cultural environments of gamblers proved highly significant, as many differences in discussing gambling could be attributed either to the institutional or the cultural conditions of the two countries. The comparative aspect also brought more depth to the analysis itself, as focusing on merely one cultural context can run the risk of taking for granted some facets of gambling because no alternative can be envisioned.

The use of quasi-statistics, a method of presenting qualitative research results in numerate form proposed by Becker (1970), was used in this study in the light of both the Weberian understanding of ideal types and the aim of creating a setting for comparative analysis. Quasi-statistics refers to an approach that does not aim at statistically valid sample sizes or statistically tested results in the form of numerical data. Instead, certain statistical features are used with the aim of describing qualitative data. In the present

study, this approach was mainly apparent in the tables provided on the frequencies or percentages of different codes or topics. The statistical data are provided in order to help the reader readily apprehend the major themes of each sub-study. The tables or figures were not meant to serve as the main results, but rather as a starting point from which the complexity of the themes could be elaborated upon with the help of a qualitative analysis and the use of direct quotations from the interviews or the legal data.

The use of quotations in the text is a common practice in qualitative research to elucidate and justify results. Quotations enliven the analysis and also demonstrate on what specific vocabularies the thematic analysis of a sub-study has been based. There is no consensus among qualitative researchers on the use of quotations. It is true that quotations can sometimes be counterproductive to sociological analysis if they are given too much space with too little interpretation or analysis. In this study, quotations were used when required by the analysis, not as a substitute for analysis. Themes were initially drawn based on coded quotations, after which one or a few most edifying examples of that theme were chosen in order to offer further clarification in the form of a direct quotation. With regard to legal data, the same procedure was followed to ensure that there would be no miscommunication of the exact wordings of the justifications offered. Each quotation was followed by a short description of its source. In the case of the interviews, the gender, age and country of the participant were indicated, except in Sub-study III, in which fictional first names were given to the participants by request of the publishing journal. In the legal data, the code and article of origin were cited.

The use of quotations also raises the issue of translation. The group interviews and the legal data were collected in the original languages, Finnish and French, but reported in English. The use of English to attract a wider audience to the study also meant translating the Finnish and French quotations. A translation always loses some of the finer nuances of language and may fail to convert the exact meaning of an expression into the new language. In this study, all data were analysed in their original language to avoid such loss of information in the coding and analysis phases. Translations were used in the direct quotations that were added into the final manuscripts. I am responsible for all the translations. The emphasis in these translations was to use clear English and to convey the content rather than the literal wording of the original.

6 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Gambling always takes place in an institutional context, which in turn influences how the activity is undertaken and understood. At the most basic level, in order for an individual to gamble, the opportunity to do so must exist. Legislation on gambling defines who can provide gambling and which games are authorised. The Finnish gambling context is strongly characterised by gambling opportunities in everyday places, with non-casino slot machines together with lotteries constituting the most popular forms. Easy access to gambling also puts Finland at the top of European comparisons in gambling popularity. In France, gambling is more often connected with special occasions. Although gambling opportunities exist in everyday spaces, such as tobacco shops and bars, the highly popular slot machine gambling is restricted to casinos, which as a rule are located in coastal and other holiday destinations. It is likely that this 'exceptionality' (see also Egerer & Marionneau, 2015) of gambling is the reason that French gambling expenditure remains below the European average.

I argue here that individual understandings of acceptable forms of gambling are based on the societal definition of acceptable gambling. This creates a reciprocal link between culture and institutions: legislation is based on understandings of socially accepted standards, while what is legal influences what is considered socially acceptable. Therefore, cultural understandings are based on institutions, yet can have an independent influence on institutions. In the sub-studies, this independent influence was attributed to such underlying deep cultural structures as the importance of individualism and personal responsibility. Previous studies on the cultures of Finland and France have indeed found that while a focus on personal responsibility and individualism are typical traits of Finnish mentality, the French society is characterised by attributing less importance to the individual and more to external forces such as the society and the state (Egerer, 2012; 2013; Ehrenberg, 2010).

6.1 MAIN RESULTS

Sub-study I mapped out the institutional contexts of gambling in Finland and France, but also took a step towards comparing the cultures by focusing not only on how gambling is legislated in the two countries, but also how these legislations are justified. The cultural comparison within the institutional frameworks set out in the first study was further elaborated in the three other sub-studies (II, III and IV) by focusing on how the Finnish and French gamblers participating in the group interviews understood and discussed gambling-related topics. The group interview situations were designed to

encourage culturally acceptable vocabularies for gambling. This meant discussing the acceptability of the institutional organisation of gambling in the two countries (Sub-study II), justifying one's own gambling in culturally acceptable terms (Sub-study III), and providing ideas about paths that might lead to problem gambling from the viewpoint of cultural understandings related to individual responsibility versus societal or even biological responsibility (Sub-study IV). Table 3 below summarises the main results.

Table 3 Summary of results

	Finland	France
Legal justifications	Charitable causes Consumer protection Preventing criminality	Preventing criminality Consumer protection State budget
Attitudes to gambling	Happy with current configuration	More protection from gambling needed
Player justifications	Pleasure Money Inner competence	Pleasure Money Dreams
Pathways to problems	Dealing with wins and losses Slot machine availability Biology or personality	Biology or personality Casino surroundings Dealing with wins and losses

However, the differences between the two gambling fields or cultures should not be exaggerated. Finland and France are European welfare states as well as European Union member states, and they face similar challenges in the increasingly global gambling market. Both countries also have traditionally relied on state monopolies to organise gambling for the financial benefit of the state, although France has opened up its gambling markets to state-licensed private providers. Recently, rulings by the CJEU have had an impact on national gambling legislation and gambling offers in both Finland and France; meanwhile, some convergence has been taking place in relation to how the monopoly system has been justified. Therefore, before moving on to answer the research questions posed in the introduction, I will consider some similarities between the two contexts.

6.1.1 CONTEXTUAL SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

The most striking parallel between the two contexts is the resemblance of the conversations of the participants in the group interviews. The interview setting was designed to evoke images of gambling based on clips from internationally distributed films, but in both countries the discussions that ensued were strongly characterised by three themes not proposed in the setting itself: what kind of gambling arrangements are acceptable, individual

reasons for gambling and what constitutes problem gambling. The fact that the same topics are puzzling gamblers in both countries suggests that there are similarities between the gambling fields in the two countries. The same is true of the legal data. Despite some differences, Finnish and French legislation followed the same rationale of striking a balance between authorising and restricting gambling opportunities.

Both institutional and cultural similarities were found. Institutionally, although different solutions have in part been opted for in the availability and offers of games in the two countries, the development of the legal contexts of gambling in both has been moving in a more permissive direction until about 2007. As a rule, since the early twentieth century gambling markets have been opened and different games legalised, and the pace of this change has accelerated in both countries since the 1980s. Kingma (2004) has described this shift a move from an *alibi model* to a *risk model*. In France, the first steps to legalise gambling since the general ban of 1836 (Law of May 21, 1836) were taken in 1891 when pari-mutuel betting on horse races was authorised, followed by the re-authorising of casinos in seaside and thermal resorts in 1907 and finally the instating of the National Lottery in 1933. In Finland, the general ban in 1889 on all lotteries (Criminal law 39/1889) was first undercut by laws allowing lotteries for monetary gain in 1926, pari-mutuel betting on horses in 1927 and finally slot machines in 1933. Even today, gambling is in principle forbidden in both countries, but as Coutant (2008: 153) has remarked regarding the French case, 'exceptions have become more common than the rule'.

Since 2007, several legislative measures have been taken in both countries to enhance consumer protection owing to pressures from the European Commission. However, gamblers have not been convinced by these attempts. In Sub-study II, the group discussion material was used to examine how well the Finnish and French gamblers who participated accept their national gambling arrangements. While there were some significant differences between the two datasets and the French participants were more likely to reject the efficiency of governmental preventative measures on gambling, the Finnish and the French gamblers did agree that some forms of gambling are especially problematic from the point of view of consumer protection. The threat of online gambling was pronounced in both contexts, as gamblers in both datasets felt that this could not be controlled via traditional measures. Foreign online casinos aroused concern because they operate beyond the realm of national legislation and protective measures. The internet was described as a dangerous gambling environment with no controls. It would seem that the supranational character of online gambling poses new threats that are felt in similar ways in different national contexts.

Cultural similarities between the two sets of group interview data were also apparent in Sub-studies III and IV. Sub-study III examined how the participants justified their own gambling practices. Differences in emphasis were again found between the Finnish and the French participants, but in

both contexts vocabularies emphasising personal gratification were the most common form of justification. Indeed, what was termed 'pleasure', including the thrill or fun of the gambling situation and winning, were the most common justifications coded in both sets of data. This similarity can be attributed to the participating gamblers' understanding of gambling as a form of consumption that needs to be justified. Intrinsic justifications such as pleasure or personal development emphasise the individual competence, rationality and agency of the respondents. As concluded in Sub-study II, in a society of consumption based on personal gratification through consumption choices, gambling behaviour needs to be justified in terms of hedonism and pleasure. Gambling was often described as a leisure activity, connected with free time, thereby making it a source of relaxation or a hobby. By contrast, extrinsic reasons for gambling, including money, were downplayed in the discussions of both the Finnish and the French players. There was hardly any mention of circumstantial reasons, such as the proximity of a casino, in either dataset; moreover, instrumental reasons such as the desire to win money were downplayed. Money was mentioned as a partial reason for gambling, but money was seen as something that increases the pleasure and thrill of the activity rather than as a reason in its own right.

Individual-level argumentation was also characteristic of discourses relating to problem gambling. Sub-study IV examined our participants' understandings of the paths that lead to problem gambling. Differences were again found between the Finnish and the French groups: while the Finnish groups tended to emphasise a lack of self-control amongst problem gamblers, the French discussed a biological proneness to develop gambling-related problems. However, both discourses were characterised by a focus on the individual gambler. Instead of structural or institutional factors such as the gambling offers or availability of games, the participants followed the line typical of psychological or clinical studies that have focused on the individual failure of a problem gambler. A chicken or egg question arises: Does the individualistic research on problem gambling influence the discourses of gamblers or is there a reason to attribute gambling problems to individuals? According to Livingstone and Woolley (2007), the underlying force is the gambling industry, which has had a strong impact on public discourse and on exonerating the supply side of responsibility. Whether this is the case is beyond the scope of this study, but the results show that individualistic discourses are applied to gambling behaviours even amongst recreational gamblers.

The few structural features of gambling offers brought up in the interviews were largely identical in the two contexts and concentrated mainly on the dangers of casino and slot machine gambling. Casinos were considered the most problematic setting in both countries; the atmosphere, dim lighting, soft music and sounds of slot machines and jackpots were believed to induce the player to become absorbed in another reality and thereby make it difficult to stop playing. In France, the fact that slot

machines are allowed only inside casinos increased the concern over these gambling locations. Indeed, in both the Finnish and the French interviews, slot machines were considered the most dangerous type of gambling along with online opportunities. In Sub-study II, slot machines were also brought up as the only type of gambling to which both the Finnish and the French respondents wanted to restrict access.

The study also identified a variety of contextual differences at both the institutional and cultural levels. These differences are even more remarkable when considering the converging interests and shared cultural pressures with which Finnish and the French gambling markets are faced. The research process showed that even similar gambling opportunities can be viewed very differently depending on the cultural context. Attitudes to the national lottery provide a good example (Sub-study II). In the Finnish group discussions, the national lottery was regarded in a positive light, mainly owing to the charitable purposes for which the proceeds are used. Although lottery proceeds have a long tradition of being used for public and charitable projects in France as well (see Fèvre, 2008), a similar acceptance was not apparent in the interviews. Instead, the state was considered untrustworthy because of its financial interests in gambling provision.

6.1.2 LEGAL JUSTIFICATIONS

The first sub-study focused on the rationales and justifications for national gambling policies in Finland and France. The term justification was used in the sub-study in order to highlight both the sociological benefits of the theory of justification and the vocabulary used by the European Commission in clarifying the aims of national gambling policies of member states. The research question of this sub-study was how the national policies regarding gambling have been justified in political and legal terms in Finland and France.

In the European Union the justification of gambling policies has become controversial with the introduction of the principle of a common European market. Article 49 on the Freedom of Establishment and article 56 on the Free Movement of Services of the TFEU are intended to create a unified internal market in which goods and services can be freely exchanged. The CJEU has slightly attenuated this requirement in the case of gambling by stipulating that restrictions on free trade, for example, in the form of national gambling monopolies, may be permitted if it can be justified in terms of public interest such as protecting consumers and reducing the risk of crime. However, economic reasons, be they charitable or related to increasing the state budget, are not acceptable justifications (also Tammi, 2008), although the CJEU has been sensitive to the importance of the argument (Donnat, 2011). Both the Finnish and French legislations have been faced with this requirement of justification, but their responses have differed, owing to their differing historical traditions. Financial arguments have traditionally been

important in both countries, and the national legislations on gambling have had to be modified to follow the European Union requirements more closely.

Sociologically, the topic revealed important aspects about the contexts of these two countries. Despite a situation of convergence and pressure for uniform gambling policies between member countries of the European Union, Finnish and French gambling policies differ to an important degree, even today. I argue here that this is due to the deep roots of gambling legislation in both countries, which still influence how contemporary policies are justified. The French gambling researcher Francis Donnat (2011) has similarly suggested that the rationales of gambling legislation can only be comprehended in light of juridical, moral, cultural and religious traditions of the country in question. Although there were some notable similarities in the justifications found, particularly in relation to the increasing importance of consumer protection, contemporary French legislation on gambling is still mainly justified in terms of preventing criminality and fraud while the Finnish legislation follows the rationale of collecting public funds for charitable causes.

In France, gambling has traditionally been understood to contain a high risk of criminality and fraud from which the lower classes in particular needed to be protected. This tradition is still apparent in contemporary justifications of gambling policies, which have largely opted to focus on preventing criminality. Consumer protection measures have only recently appeared in legislation. George (2011) has made a similar observation, concluding that the first measures of consumer protection in France date back to only 2007. A French justification not found in the Finnish data was the 'democratisation' of offering equal gambling opportunities across the country. An interesting characteristic of the French case was that this 'democratic' access to gambling was itself considered a measure of consumer protection as it directs players away from clandestine providers. Donnat (2011) has shown that in France a wide offer of gambling is seen as a way to protect gamblers, and the CJEU has also accepted the reasoning. Coutant (2008) has even argued that the democratisation of gambling is increasingly replacing financial arguments as the main justification for the increasing offers of gambling opportunities.

In Finland, the financial argument related to charitable causes funded by gambling has remained strong, despite pressures from the European Commission. In the analysis conducted for Sub-study I, funding non-profit activities or charitable causes still remained the most frequently mentioned topic, even in the post-2007 legislation. Charitable causes or collecting public funds is particularly typical of lotteries, but in the Finnish case the charitable argument spans other sectors of the gambling industry. Nevertheless, because of the politically problematic nature of the charity argument, consumer protection has been mentioned with increasing frequency in the updated versions of the 2002 Lotteries Act. Tammi (2008) has suggested that the Finnish gambling providers have adopted consumer protection

discourses in order to protect their image and business interests. Furthermore, Finland has emphasised the role of national monopolies as a way of preventing gambling-related problems in its legislation. This contrasts with the French idea, according to which the widespread availability of gambling is not in conflict with consumer protection, but a means of channelling demand away from illegal markets.

As new legislation tends to build on existing laws, it can be slow to change. A good example is the 2010 French law on liberating online gambling. Legislation on traditional providers, including the National Lottery, the casino or slot machine sectors and horse racing, has not been able to introduce new measures of consumer protection or prevention of criminality to any considerable degree. Sub-study I argues that this is due not to political ill will, but rather to the difficulty of legislators to deviate from the existing basis. Wilsford (1994) has shown that institutionalised public policies tend to become 'path dependent'. This means that policies become hard to change, although they might be suboptimal. Change would need too much monetary or political investment, as well as going against the vested interests of beneficiaries of the old system. The results of Sub-Study I support Wilsford's theory. However, the 2010 French law does not have to bear a similar historical weight, and consequently the law is the most innovative of the texts analysed.

The analysis of the Finnish and French legislative differences showed that the concept of justification may also be expanded from different realms of society as used by Boltanski and Thévenot (1991) to apply to different institutional and cultural contexts between countries. As Boltanski and Thévenot argue, policies are justified according to principles that are known and acknowledged by all. The analysis showed that the ways in which national gambling policies are justified in Finland and France are indeed based on historical rationales, and this basis serves to make them acceptable.

6.1.3 ACCEPTABLE GAMBLING OFFERS

The topic of an acceptable gambling offers arose in the group discussions so frequently that the question of how Finnish and French gamblers regard their own national gambling policies was added to this study as a research question. Sub-study II addressed the question of whether the offers of gambling within the national context were considered acceptable.

There is a tradition of opinion poll studies on gambling particularly in the Anglo-American context. Based on a simple methodology with statements on gambling and an 'agree-disagree' scale for responses, researchers have found that while gambling in general is considered acceptable (Orford et al., 2009; Azmier, 2000; Moore & Ohtsuka, 1999), consumers of gambling products feel that opportunities to gamble are too readily available (Orford et al., 2009; Livingstone, 2005; McMillen et al., 2004; Moore & Ohtsuka, 1999) and that more restrictions on gambling are needed (Azmier, 2000;

McAllister, 2014). In general, attitudes towards gambling and its deregulation have been found to be negative or at best ambivalent despite the hypothesis that more gambling offers would inevitably translate into more positive attitudes (Strong, Breen & Lejuez 2004; Breen & Zuckerman, 1999). There has also been evidence to the contrary (Amey, 2005). Sub-study II tackled this contradiction with the help of social theory on habits of thought. The sub-study argued that the degree to which national configurations of gambling provision are accepted depends not only on the objective structures of the gambling field, but also on habits of thought. This explains why opinions tend to change much more slowly than structures in the gambling field.

The analysis conducted in Sub-study II supported these theoretical premises. Despite some apparent similarities between the Finnish and the French gambling fields, the Finnish participants were more accepting of their national configurations than the French. These results also find support in a Finnish survey of gambling attitudes (Mäkelä et al., 2008) in which the majority of the Finnish respondents were content with the status quo in Finnish gambling. Another survey study (Aho & Turja, 2007) has also shown that although almost two thirds of the respondents thought gambling was a serious problem in Finland, 70 per cent felt that the Finnish monopoly system was a good way to prevent problems. As Järvinen-Tassopoulos (2012b) has suggested, Finns seem to trust national monopolies despite problems. In France, no surveys on gambling attitudes have been conducted, although it has been estimated that in general more restrictions are demanded by French consumers (Trucy, 2006/2007).

This difference could partly be attributed to the slight variations in gambling provisions between the two countries. In France, the casino sector and more recently the online gambling sector are operated by private companies, while in Finland all the operators are state owned. State-owned operators may evoke more confidence in the sincerity of consumer protection and the provision of safe gambling environments. However, the institutional difference alone cannot explain the differences between the Finnish and the French attitudes because the French were also much more critical of their national monopolies than the Finnish participants. Indeed, the qualitative analysis showed that the Finnish acceptance of the national frame of the gambling offers was linked to how the Finnish providers have been able to justify themselves in the eyes of the consumer, as well as to the general trust that Finns have in their officials.

Although the European Commission has not included charitable causes in its list of acceptable justifications for gambling provision, charity can prove to be important in the eyes of the gambling public (also Tammi, 2012). The results of Sub-study II showed that while the French participants were highly critical of the French gambling field, the Finnish participants were largely content with the gambling provision in Finland. They regarded the national monopolies positively, and this satisfaction was mainly connected to the

monopolies' charitable functions in Finnish society. In an 'époque of seeking legitimacy in opinion polls', as Bégin (2001: 131) has called the contemporary age, the charity aspect cannot be easily dismissed as they not only make gambling acceptable, but *'almost like putting money in the bank, for national health!'* (21-year-old man, FI, Sub-study II) as one respondent fittingly (although somewhat ironically) put it. The French gambling providers have evidently not been able to justify their offers in similar terms. This is also mirrored in the participants' opinions of the monopolistic state providers, whose attempts to raise public funds are not regarded as a charitable and beneficial act to society, but rather as a suspicious rip-off of gamblers.

The Finnish and French participants also showed an interesting difference in their ideas of who should be considered the main victims of gambling. Participants from both countries acknowledged the need to protect vulnerable groups. In France these vulnerable groups were largely considered to be gamblers who had problems, resulting in demands for the French gambling provision to be restricted. However, the Finnish participants equated vulnerability also with those who receive funding from the proceeds raised by gambling. The Finns deemed it important to protect the Finnish monopoly system against outside competition, and considered the need for the state to support these charitable causes more important than the need to protect gamblers. This result is also linked with the findings of Sub-study IV, according to which the Finnish participants did not consider gambling problems to be a result of companies' exploitation of gamblers as was argued in France, but rather an individual failure.

Even though the French lottery company collects funds to benefit society in a manner similar to the Finnish lottery company, this argument has not taken hold amongst consumers. This is partly due to the lack of success of the FDJ to promote the benevolent side of gambling offers, but it is also partly the result of cultural understandings related to trust in national institutions. The levels of trust depend on how fair these institutions appear to be. The Finnish and the French political traditions have differed significantly in regard to attitudes to officialdom. As argued in the discussion in Sub-study II, the Finnish tradition of Nordic welfare state policies may account for the general trust in political institutions to protect consumers, while the centralised policy-making in France may make it more difficult for consumers to relate to political decision-making.

6.1.4 GAMBLER JUSTIFICATIONS

In Sub-study III, the concept of justification was applied to how the participants explain their own gambling behaviours. Given that previous gambling studies on reasons behind gambling have mainly used motivation theories, the justification approach offered new theoretical tools for understanding why gamblers provide certain motivations when prompted. In

this study the term justification is used somewhat differently than in Sub-study I. In both, the term describes rationale after an action has taken place; however, in Sub-study I the justifications referred to larger societal processes, much in the sense that Boltanski and Thévenot (1991) used the term, while in Sub-study III the term is applied to the private sphere of individual gamblers, following the insights of C. Wright Mills (1940). Although Mills used the concept of 'vocabularies of motive', he characterised these as essentially justifications.

In previous research, gamblers have been seen as participating in gambling activities based on more or less rational motives related mainly to monetary gain or pleasure. Furthermore, no clear distinction between the motivations of problem gamblers and recreational gamblers has been made, and these very different forms of behaviour have often been studied in similar ways. To cite a few, studies have found motives for gambling such as a desire to win money (Abarbanel, 2014; Binde, 2013; Reith, 2006a; Ricketts & Mackaskill, 2004; Neighbours et al., 2002), the pleasure or entertainment value related to gambling (Abarbanel, 2014; Reith, 2006a), the desire for achievement or a challenge (Binde, 2013; Ricketts & Macaskill 2004; Cotte 1997) or relieving boredom and socialisation (Binde, 2013; Clarke, 2008; Reith, 2006a).

Cotte (1997) has divided gambling motives into hedonistic, symbolic and economic types, while Chantal, Vallerand and Valliers (1995) have observed a difference between problem and recreational gambling in their classifications of intrinsic motives, extrinsic motives and amotivation. According to Chantal et al. (1995), intrinsic and extrinsic motives are typical of recreational or beginning gamblers, while problem gamblers are characterised by amotivation, that is, a lack of any reason for their action. The contribution of this study has been particularly important since it has shown that motives may depend on one's situation as a gambler. This insight has been further supplemented by studies indicating differences in the motives mentioned by female and male players (Casey, 2008; Fisher, 1993). Unfortunately, the approaches have not expanded to explaining what kinds of social processes are behind the different vocabularies used by different groups of gamblers. Sub-study III suggests that the different vocabularies used to justify gambling vary based on the gambler's social context. Recreational gambling is not necessarily always motivated by a rational reason just because recreational gamblers seem to be able to give one. Or conversely, even though problem gamblers may not be able to explain their actions, it does not mean that they lack will or reason. As Bourdieu (1980) has suggested, agents do not necessarily act based on *logic*, but according to *sense*. Sociologically, it is therefore more interesting to ask *how* people justify their gambling than *why* they gamble.

The justification approach was supported by the empirical findings of Sub-study III: Were gambling motives universal and uninfluenced by cultural contexts, there would have been hardly any differences between the

Finnish and French participants. It is true that some important similarities could be found between the two sets of data, as the pleasure of gambling, followed by the desire to win money were the two most common forms of justification in both contexts. Indeed, the individual nature of these discourses can be seen as a reflection of postmodern rationale, highlighting personal gratification and competence. As Jean Baudrillard (1970) has argued, in a postmodern world consumption no longer responds to actual needs, but to social wants and systems of meanings. Gambling cannot be justified in terms of a 'need'. Instead, gambling can be explained in terms of wants and pleasure – attitudes that today span societies and have become legitimate in differing contexts.

A closer qualitative analysis also revealed interesting differences in emphasis between the Finnish and French data. Most significantly, while amongst the French participants the desire to win large sums of money was often connected with 'dreams' of what one could do with those winnings, the Finnish respondents highlighted the importance of personal development as a gambler. Black and Ramsay (2003) have pointed out that such different reasons given may be associated with different games; lottery gambling is connected with dreaming, casino games with socialising and non-casino slot machine play with recreational pastime. Chantal et al. (1995) have also noted that intrinsic motivations tend to be characteristic of skill-seeking games, while extrinsic motives are more typical of games of luck.

The results of this study support this theory, but only if institutional contexts are analysed along with cultural understandings related to what is considered an acceptable reason to play. It is true that in France lottery gambling is more popular than in Finland. All the French participants in this study played the National Lottery or instant lotteries at least occasionally. It has also been shown that lotteries tend to promote illusions of big wins more than other types of gambling (Casey, 2008; Pinçon & Pinçon-Charlot, 2010; Falk & Mäenpää, 1999); indeed, the French participants in the study did discuss dreaming of big wins more than the Finns. On the other hand, slot machines, very popular in Finland, have been shown to promote illusions of control owing to the possibility of manipulating sequences (e.g., Ladouceur & Gaboury, 1988), as well as offering substantially lower jackpots than lotteries. Furthermore, the Finnish data included more players of games with a partial skill element, such as poker and sports betting. The game preferences of the players, which reflect the institutional offers in the two countries, need to be taken into account in order to appreciate the different vocabularies used to justify play.

However, institutional structures alone cannot explain all the differences between the two contexts. Lottery play was popular also among the Finnish respondents, yet dream discourses were virtually non-existent. The absence of dream discourses among the Finnish gamblers shows that winning money in games is less socially acceptable in Finland, but also that for the Finnish respondents *play* (Caillois, 1958) itself, as an individually motivated

enterprise, was reason enough for the Finnish respondents to gamble. The contextual differences of what is understood as acceptable were further highlighted in a deeper qualitative analysis of how winning money and personal competence were discussed among the Finnish and the French players.

In discussing winning money, the Finnish participants tended to highlight the fact that they were realistic about their chances of winning and that winning only a few euros would be enough. It would therefore appear that it is not culturally very acceptable in Finland to win large sums of money or at least to plan any future projects based on such a slight prospect. The results find support in a Finnish interview study on lottery millionaires by Falk and Mäenpää (1999). One of their key findings was that Finns tend to prefer humble winnings to lavish jackpots. A French study on lottery millionaires (Pinçon & Pinçon-Charlot, 2010) did not find such a discourse.

In this study, the French participants dreamt of winning large jackpots and also discussed what they would do with such large sums. Although winning a lottery is not considered a socially acceptable way to riches in France either (Pinçon & Pinçon-Charlot, 2010), the dreams of what one could do with that money, especially if it related to helping family and friends, were a way to justify such dreams. Casey (2008) has found a similar tendency of dreaming among working class female gamblers in the UK. According to Casey, discussing the will to win in terms of providing for one's family justifies gambling by transferring it, using Bourdieu's term, from the realm of economic capital to that of cultural capital.

In a Finnish study using memory elicitation, Riitta Matilainen (2012) found that Finnish lottery players also emphasised the desire to help family members with lottery winnings. Matilainen's results somewhat contrast the findings of the present study, but this is probably due to the different data collection methods. Memory elicitation focuses on the past, while Sub-Study III was interested participants' contemporary gambling activities. As Matilainen (2012) suggests in her study, changes in the gambling field in the past few decades might have changed how players interpret the activity in Finland.

In addition to winning large sums of money, relying on luck was also considered more acceptable in the French data, while among the Finnish respondents, skill as a player was seen as the more culturally legitimate form of justifying gambling. This difference was further illustrated by the qualitative differences in discussions of competence. In the Finnish discussions, 'inner competence', as it was described in Sub-study III, was mainly equated with learning gaming techniques, while amongst the French participants apparently superstitious means of controlling the game were offered to a greater extent. It appears that amongst the French participants, games of luck are taken as exactly that, submitting oneself to the whims of Lady Luck, while in the Finnish data, gambling is seen as something that one can learn to master by means of statistics and probability calculations. It is

also likely that highlighting competence was a form of displaying individual agency among the Finnish respondents.

The results of this sub-study contrasted with those of an earlier study on the 'cultural code' of French gambling by LaTour et al. (2009). They argued that French gambling is characterised by the idea that math and probability theory can be used to master gambling. In Sub-study III, these characteristics were found to be more typical of the Finnish gamblers. Two plausible explanations for this divergence can be found without discrediting either study. First, the study by LaTour et al. (2009) used early childhood memory elicitation as a method. This means that the gambling experiences analysed dated back to the childhood of the respondents. Justifications used as adults might therefore be different. Second, LaTour et al. (2009) compared France to the United States and China while this thesis compared France to Finland. These points of comparison might reveal interesting degrees of cultural variation. French gambling may indeed seem to be characterised by cognitive motivations in comparison to the United States or China, but not in comparison to Finnish gamblers, who display even stronger tendencies to justify their gambling in terms of what was defined as inner competence in Sub-study III.

Based on the data, it cannot be said whether the reasons the participants gave for gambling are the real reasons for their habit or influenced instead by a need to present culturally acceptable opinions in the context of a group discussion. However, three important conclusions can be drawn to benefit further studies on motives for gambling. First, the analysis based on the theory of justification has shown that behaviour is not necessarily motivated by rational reasons, although it can be rationally explained and justified. Second, these justifications depend on the social context in which they are voiced rather than reflecting only the institutional setting of what is available. Third, and as a consequence of the two first points, studies conducted in one cultural context cannot be generalised to other contexts, but can be used as points of comparison.

6.1.5 UNDERSTANDING PROBLEM GAMBLING

The Finnish focus on individual competence was also present in Sub-study IV, which concentrated on the participants' understandings of what leads to problem gambling. This sub-study set out to answer the last research question in this dissertation, related to how the Finnish and French gamblers conceptualise and understand the progression of gambling-related problems. There has been abundant research on this topic, and a wide variety of potential causes for problem gambling have been identified. These causes have become widely accepted as multi-faceted and multi-dimensional and are found in the biological, psychological and social conditions of the gambler (e.g., Blaszczynski & Nower, 2002; Griffiths & Delfabbro, 2001; Martignoni-Hutin, 2005). However, researchers from different academic

fields and even from different socio-cultural contexts have had varying focal points. The American psychiatric sector, in particular, has highlighted the importance of individual-level medical and psychiatric discourses (see Adams, 2008). The disease model has been questioned by other researchers; in particular Peele (2003) has made an important contribution to the discussion by arguing that problem gambling might actually result from experience rather than from pre-existing tendencies, while Schüll (2012a) has extensively demonstrated the role of the gambling industry in creating problems. Finnish research has also shown that no treatment for problem gambling is completely effective (Halme & Tammi, 2008).

These arguments are in line with the approach adopted in Sub-study IV: problem gambling is seen as being related to the institutional and cultural availability of games rather than as a biological fact. Research has shown that prevalence rates of problem gambling correlate positively with the institutional availability of gambling products (Griffiths & Wood, 1999; Korn, 2000; Raylu & Oei, 2002). The availability argument has been especially popular in the Nordic countries and in Australia, where the individualistic discourse typical of American research has been challenged by a public health approach. However, the progression of problem gambling cannot be attributed merely to availability and offers. In addition, what has been termed 'social availability' (Welte et al., 2007) has been found to play an important role. Although the research on social availability has been relatively limited, it has been argued that the importance of peers' approval of gambling (Larimer & Neighbors, 2003; Reith & Dobbie, 2011) as well as permissive attitudes in society (Cosgrave, 2006) affect the prevalence of problem gambling. This last point is of particular importance when considering contextual differences in how problem gambling is understood. Different societal contexts may not only accept gambling behaviour in varying degrees, but also understand the phenomenon differently based on cultural and institutional habits particular to that context.

The sub-study does not claim that problem gambling *per se* is different in Finland and France, but the ways in which it is understood may differ. This is also the reason the term 'pathway' was preferred over symptom or cause, for example. Problem gambling was not considered to be an absolute condition, but rather a process both in terms of how it progresses in an individual gambler and how it is defined in society. The main difference found between the two countries was the emphasis on lacking self-control and weak cognitive abilities among the Finnish participants in contrast to the biological or social proneness to gambling problems highlighted by the French participants. As with justifying one's own gambling, these differences in understanding the pathways to problem gambling were also attributed to the differing institutional and cultural contexts in Finland and France.

Institutionally, differences between the Finnish and the French data can be explained by how problem gambling is treated in the two countries. In France, it has traditionally been considered a psychological disorder that may

develop regardless of individual control, and as such it has been treated by physicians or psychologists (Bergeron, 1999). In Finland, gambling problems have been considered a question of personal responsibility and social work, making the Finnish discussion on gambling problems less medically-based than the French equivalent (Egerer, 2013).

These differences in professional understandings of problem gambling and how it should be treated were also clearly apparent in the group discussion data. Taking responsibility for one's actions was widely claimed among the Finnish participants. The Finnish discussions referred only marginally to any biological or psychological source of gambling problems, and even when these sources were evoked, they were discussed in terms of personal shortcomings related to lack of self-control, failure to understand how the game works or, even more frequently, a failure to understand the value of money. The Finnish participants tended to equate gambling problems with lack of individual competence and to attribute blame for any problems to the individual gambler. This was most likely done to emphasise one's own competence and agency in comparison with problem gamblers. The French discussions differed from the Finnish by highlighting factors that were beyond the individual's control as the main sources of problem gambling. A biological or psychological tendency to excessive gambling was suggested, which was also apparent in the vocabularies employed by the French respondents. While the Finns tended to discuss 'gambling problems' or 'problem gambling', the French made use of terms such as 'disease', 'addiction' or 'pathology'. For the French participants, gambling problems were a question of personality or biological fact and therefore beyond the control of the individual. Furthermore, the French participants considered precarious life situations to be conducive to gambling problems.

These differences in emphasis in assigning 'blame' can only be understood by considering cultural habits in the two countries and most important, what is culturally acceptable behaviour. The differences are also in line with a previous study on the varying understandings of problem gambling. Moran (1970) has divided these into four varieties characterised either by a focus on sub-cultural, neurotic, psychopathic or symptomatic factors. Although Moran's typology was not intended to apply to differences between country contexts, the Finnish understanding does follow the sub-cultural variety, characterised by a loss of control, while the French view of problem gambling coincides with the symptomatic variety that defines problem gambling as a (mental) malady. It can, therefore, be concluded that varying social understandings influence how problem gambling is perceived.

6.2 DIFFERENCES IN CONTEXTS

The results presented above have answered the four research questions posed at the beginning of this study. However, the analysis can be taken a step further by moving from the similarities and differences manifested in the Finnish and the French data to asking what kinds of context-specific habits create and maintain these differences. Four important themes reflecting the cultural and institutional contexts of Finnish and French society were identified based on the analyses for the sub-studies: The historicity of gambling, variations in gambling offers, assigning blame and different conceptualisations of individualism. These themes are some of the mechanisms through which social contexts can influence understandings and justifications of gambling.

It is not claimed that these four topics are the only ones to influence how gambling is discussed and perceived in a society. The importance of deep cultural structures such as religious traditions and the history of ideas cannot be ignored. While cultural differences cannot be equated with religious differences, religious traditions have had a strong impact on what is, even today, considered acceptable in a society. The Roman Catholic Church has been found to be more permissive of games than the Protestant churches (Lavigne, 2010; Binde, 2007; Bell, 1976). Indeed, the values connected to Protestantism have tended to highlight hard work and personal development. Mangel (2009) has further pointed out that Protestant churches have been particularly hard on superstitious beliefs, considering them blasphemous while the Roman Catholic Church has been somewhat more accepting of winning money through games, even providing games (see also Neurisse, 1991). While the scope of this study does not extend to determining whether religious values still play a role in gamblers' understandings, it can be said that religion has had a major impact on cultural ideas of what is acceptable and just and can could help explain some of the differences between Finnish and French discourses on gambling. However, the four topics discussed in this chapter were the ones brought out most clearly in the analysis conducted for the four sub-studies. Table 4 below summarises the main institutional and cultural habits.

Table 4 Summary of institutional and cultural habits

	Finland	France
Historicity of gambling	Availability of slot machine gambling rooted in charitable traditions	Availability of casinos rooted in historical legacy and equality of regions
Game offers	Slot machine play connected to everyday life → concern over availability	Slot machine play connected to special occasions → concern over surroundings
Assigning blame	The individual is responsible for his gambling	The individual is a victim of his biology or of his desperate life situation
Type of individualism	Individual responsibility Individuals contribute to the common good by gambling	Individuals should be protected by institutions State contributes to the individual good

6.2.1 THE HISTORICITY OF GAMBLING

According to French sociologist Alain Touraine (1984), the idea of historicity is based on the capacity of a society to reproduce. Historicity refers not only to something that is in the past, but also to an ongoing process of meanings and understandings that reproduces and modifies existing social structures. Touraine’s definition of historicity is in line with the arguments set forth in this dissertation. Contemporary gambling offers and the institutional structures that regulate them are the results of historical developments. Similarly, contemporary understandings of what is an acceptable gambling offers or of acceptable reasons to gamble are shaped by past understandings and developments.

Unfortunately, although historical studies on gambling are abundant, research on contemporary gambling, including studies of gambling choices, behaviour and institutions, rarely make reference to the historical context in which these topics are embedded. This problem was taken up in Sub-study I of this dissertation. Although the sub-study focused on how gambling legislation has been justified in Finland and France, it also offered a step towards incorporating a historical analysis in studying contemporary gambling. The results showed that the characteristics of each country in their respective gambling fields have their roots in how gambling has been organised and justified in the past. This is particularly noticeable in two situations: the wide popularity of non-casino slot machines in Finland and of casinos in France.

Finnish gambling opportunities are distinguished by slot machines in a variety of public spaces. The reasons can be traced to the 1920s when the first slot machines started to arrive in Finland. By 1933, a decree was drawn up stipulating that slot machines were only to be used to collect funds for charities or other good causes (Decree 222/33), a rationale that has remained unchanged to the present day. The importance of promoting the 'public good' with the help of gambling has been considered so important in the Finnish discussion that even in the face of international studies warning of the dangers of non-casino slot machine gambling (e.g., Lund, 2006; Productivity Commission, 1999), the offer has remained unchanged. Less sensitivity to the historical basis of the slot machine offer in Finland could lead to misinterpretations of societal irresponsibility, although in fact their historical rationale has been quite the reverse: to collect funds for social programmes and thereby promote social welfare.

The numerous casinos in France are another good example of why historical developments are important in understanding contemporary gambling. Casino games in France have a long tradition, going back to the aristocracy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and to the popularity of the French Riviera with European gamblers from the late nineteenth century on. France is also the birthplace of some of the most popular casino games today, including roulette, baccarat and blackjack (Schwartz, 2006). Against this historical backdrop, the large number of casinos in contemporary France is easier to understand. France boasts the largest number of land-based casinos in Europe (198 in the year 2014), and French legislation actively supports this sector to equally develop the economy of its regions. As with slot machines in Finland, easy access to casino gambling in France would be easy to criticise if the historical importance of this sector is overlooked.

Sub-study I showed that the need to conform to European Union legislation has ensured that Finland and France today are closer than ever with regard to their gambling policies and they face similar challenges. However, the ways in which EU and national law have been consolidated have differed in each country. These differences are impossible to understand without considering the historical development of the respective gambling fields in Finland and in France. The contemporary gambling offers of any European Union member state are a result of historical and social processes and these processes are crucial to understanding the contexts of gambling today. The same can be said of how gambling is currently discussed in each social context. Historical traditions and habits are behind the forms of gambling that have become acceptable today, and these ideas are also reflected in the group discussion data collected for this study. In Sub-study II, the Finnish respondents repeated the official doctrine that gambling is for the public good, while in Sub-study III, the French connected acceptable gambling with holidays in coastal and holiday resorts which have casino gambling opportunities.

6.2.2 GAMBLING OFFERS

Contemporary configurations of gambling offers are closely related to the idea of historicity, as historical developments have a significant role in the kinds of gambling offered in different social contexts today. The gambling offers in Finland and France have similar configurations and consist of the national lottery companies, horse race betting and the casino or slot machine sectors. The partial opening of the French online gambling market has only recently changed this picture. Yet while neither context can be described as significantly encouraging of gambling activities, different types of games are available in various degrees and in various locations in each country. It is true that the volume of gambling participation and gambling-related problems is greater in Finland than in France, but these statistics cannot be directly attributed to a more widespread availability. Only non-casino slot machines are more widely available in Finland than in France. However, other forms of gambling, especially casinos, horse betting (in the form of PMU bars) and more recently, online gambling are more widely available in France. Lotteries, including instant lotteries, are within easy reach in both countries.

Yet even the relatively small differences in emphasis between the Finnish and French gambling sectors were clearly noticeable in the results of the four sub-studies. The main difference was related to understandings and practices in slot machine play. Slot machine gambling in Finland was strongly connected with everyday life. The availability of slot machines in such public spaces as supermarket entrances, hubs of public transportation and petrol stations was also apparent in the group discussions with the Finnish recreational gamblers. The gamblers often referred to these opportunities, and sometimes even criticised their excessive availability. In France, slot machines are restricted to casinos and are more strongly connected with holidays and time off. This difference in offers was also evident in the kinds of slot machine gambling considered acceptable: In Finland so-called convenience gambling was considered more acceptable, while in France, destination gambling was preferred and also considered the better alternative.

These acceptable forms of gambling behaviour could also turn into problems if played to excess. The Finnish participants expressed concern about the general availability of slot machines in public places as a factor that might lead to more gambling than is appropriate, while the French were more concerned about the atmosphere of the casinos, which was believed to encourage excessive playing. Once again, the offers in the two countries are apparent in the discourses, as the gamblers highlighted the dangers of the forms of gambling that are typical of their own context. The Finnish and French players discussed gambling from their own contextual points of view based on the existing institutions in their respective national gambling fields.

6.2.3 ASSIGNING BLAME

The issue of blame is related to the perception of who should be held responsible when gambling ceases to be a pleasurable pastime and becomes a problem. This question has not been widely discussed in previous gambling studies, save for the debate pitting gambling products against the gambling individual (see Orford, 2011). Proponents of attributing blame for gambling problems to the individual player follow the psychological assumption that some individuals are more vulnerable. The research focus in these accounts has varied from psychoanalytical ideas to narcissistic, antisocial and impulsive personality disorders. Partisans of blaming the product have not been as numerous, and the lack of consideration given to structural factors has often been noted (Schüll, 2012a; Livingstone & Woolley, 2007; Marshall, 2005). Yet research evidence from various countries has shown a link between gambling problems and the availability or accessibility of gambling products (Schüll, 2012a; Raylu & Oei, 2002; Korn, 2000; Productivity Commission, 1999). Marshall (2005) has even concluded that the offer of gambling is 'producer driven' rather than 'consumer driven'. This view follows the total consumption theory familiar from studies on alcohol (Sulkunen & Warsell, 2012; Babor et al., 2003): According to this theory, as the total consumption of a product increases in a society, the problems related to its consumption increase in the same proportion.

The views on the topic of blame expressed in the Finnish and the French group interviews both coincided with and deviated from this academic discussion. In line with assigning blame to the individual, the Finnish and the French respondents tended to discuss gambling problems in individual terms. However, while the French participants followed a line familiar from psychological studies, emphasising that the individual is a victim of a disease or a personality disorder, the Finnish participants attributed blame to the gambling individuals. In the view of the Finnish respondents thought that gamblers were responsible for keeping their activity under control, making gambling-related problems a direct consequence of lacking self-restraint or failing cognitive abilities. Livingstone and Woolley (2007) have called this type of individual framing a 'blame the victim orthodoxy' that is more typical of gambling industry representatives. However, as the contextual analysis conducted in this study showed, discussing gambling problems from the standpoint of the individual does not automatically equate with blaming the victim. As was the case in the French group interview data, gambling problems can be discussed as an individual condition without assigning blame. Instead, the individual problem gambler was considered a victim of his own biology or psychology.

Discourses relating problem gambling to the gambling product were less prevalent. However, in the French discussions a third culprit beyond the individual and the product was identified: social reality. The social reality of some gamblers was considered so desperate that gambling could become a means of escape. Some French participants suggested unemployment and

poverty as potential causes of gambling problems. The state and society were blamed for offering no other solutions to escaping a life of destitution than trying one's luck at gambling. Similar tendencies can be found in the French academic discussion: sociologist Jean-Pierre Martignoni-Hutin (1997) has criticised gambling for mainly soliciting those who seek to escape the uncertainties of everyday life.

French mistrust in the state was even more apparent in Sub-study II, which focused on gamblers' attitudes to gambling. In the French data, a strong suspicion of private gambling providers as well as the state was apparent. This cannot be attributed merely to the fact that the state plays a role as a gambling provider. In Finland, the state gambling offers are more extensive than in France, yet the Finnish study participants did not view the state's actions with comparable scepticism. For the French respondents, the attitude of the French state was considered indifference to gambling problems and too permissive of games. They pointed out that the state seems more interested in collecting the profits of gambling than in protecting consumers, making the state partially to blame for the social and individual problems caused by gambling.

Two conclusions can be drawn from this discussion related to assigning blame. First, the academic discussion, which has focused on opposing the individual and the product, could benefit from adding the factor of social conditions, given that state attitude and habitual ways of thought and action can have an impact on gambling problems. Second, the contextuality of blame, much as the contextuality of gambling in general, has to be better accounted for. Different societal contexts can produce different ideas about who is to blame for gambling problems.

6.2.4 FINNISH AND FRENCH INDIVIDUALISM

Along with the issue of blame, the ways in which individualism was conceptualised by the Finnish and French respondents stood out as an important habit of thought that helps explain the contextual differences between the two countries. Results from the three sub-studies that were based on the group interview material all pointed in the same direction: The Finnish respondents highlighted individual competence, emphasising their personal competence in discussing their own reasons for playing, assigning blame for gambling problems to the deficient cognitive abilities of problem gamblers and not calling for restrictions on gambling offers but believing it was up to the individual to know how to deal with available opportunities. A similar tendency amongst the Finns to highlight individual competence has been shown by Michael Egerer (2013) in his qualitative interview study comparing social workers in Finland and France. He found that while Finnish treatment professionals associated lifestyle related problems such as alcoholism, gambling and bulimia with 'wrong coping patterns', French social workers tended to attribute the same problems to social circumstances

and the biological constitution of the individual. The Finnish emphasis on individual competence, which sometimes extends to blaming the individual, has even been labelled 'Finnish individualism' in a conclusion report on the Images and Theories of Addiction project (Sulkunen, 2012).

However, this does not mean that the French are not individualistic. Indeed, 'individualism' is often opposed to 'collectivism' with the assumption that these two concepts are not only in opposition, but also coherent entities with no variations (see Schwartz, 1990). Not only do such oppositions neglect the fact that collectives are actually made up of individuals, but they also ignore the different forms of individualism as well as collectivism. Singelis et al. (1995, see also Schwartz, 1990) have in fact distinguished several forms of individualism and collectivism. According to Singelis et al. (1995), the forms of individualism highlighted in various social contexts differ based on how social relationships are organised. In strongly horizontal societies, individuals do not differ much from each other, making them strive to differentiate themselves by individual merit. Vertical societies are characterised by stronger hierarchies, which individuals also struggle to maintain, leading individuals to distinguish themselves by their hierarchical position rather than merit.

While it would be an oversimplification to say that the Finnish model coincides with horizontal individuality and the French more with the vertical model, the different models show that even if the results of this study seem to indicate that the Finns are more individualistic than the French, it might be more a case of the Finnish and French respondents displaying different types of individualism. How individualism is understood depends, like any other concept or social phenomenon, on the societal context. As Alain Ehrenberg (2010) has argued, individualism might be a global idea, but concrete societies give it different contexts and contents.

Indeed, the French vocabularies in the three sub-studies based on the group interview material were highly focused on the individual gambler, but from a different perspective. In justifying their own gambling, the French respondents highlighted personal gratification and dreams. In discussing the pathways to problem gambling, the French participants brought up individual psychological, medical or social suffering rather collective or structural factors such as availability of games or being encouraged to gamble by other players. The French respondents did not emphasise individual competence, but they did highlight individual coping in the face of biological or institutional realities. This was also apparent in Sub-study II, where the French gamblers interviewed were critical of their national gambling offers because these were seen to exploit individual gamblers despite some collective benefits.

Since in Finland problem gambling is mainly attributed to the failure of individual competence (Sub-study IV), it seems to be more acceptable to organise gambling in the name of collecting public funds even at the expense of these problem gamblers (Sub-study II). French individualism is more

subtle. Alain Ehrenberg's (2010) study of the French conception of individualism concluded that in the French tradition, individuals have been seen to be free only as members of protective institutions. The French individualism therefore relies on institutions rather than on the individual, as seems to be the case in Finland. For Ehrenberg (2010), the contemporary demands placed on individuals to be more autonomous and take more responsibility for their own lives have met with opposition in France. Comparing the French way of thought with the American tradition, Ehrenberg argues that in American society the individual is seen as having responsibilities to society, while in France the view has been that the state has responsibilities to the individual.

Finnish individualism might be more obvious, as it is more directly connected with an emphasis on the individual's ability to deal with gambling opportunities. Yet this does not mean that the French discourses are not individualistic. The difference is that French individualism highlights individuals as being part of an institution rather than opposing those institutions. The state or gambling providers are regarded negatively if they are believed to exploit individuals rather than protect them, while in Finland individuals contribute to the institutional good by gambling to raise money for charities.

The cases of Finnish and French gambling support the idea that different types of individualism exist in different contexts. Individualism should not be understood as a universally shared concept, but rather as a contextual understanding of the roles, rights and responsibilities of the individual. These habits of thought translate into an understanding of gambling, but they also reflect wider cultural habits related to how the individual is perceived. More studies are needed to determine whether this interpretation of Finnish and French individualism applies to other fields in life, but based on this study it can be stated that different forms of individualism have an important role to play in how gambling is understood.

6.3 BETWEEN PROBLEMS AND CONSUMPTION

As has become apparent throughout this research, previous gambling studies have been characterised by a strong emphasis on the individual, and the same is true of the vocabularies used by the Finnish and French gamblers in the interview data. The topics of problem gambling and recreational consumption of gambling products, both of which are highly focused on the individual gambler, have been the recurrent themes in previous studies. In this final part of the discussion, the contextual thinking that has been presented above is applied to the wider academic debate on gambling. This is done by offering a contextual perspective on problematic and recreational gambling behaviour and by asking whether such an approach can actually be in line with individual-centred discourses on gambling.

The emphasis placed on individual health and consumption choices is familiar in other aspects of society. Gambling is not the only social phenomenon that increasingly is understood as a health matter. According to Lupton (1995), an imperative of health reigns in contemporary societies, intended to regulate individual health behaviour. The increasing importance placed on consumption is even more remarkable. As early as 1970 in his famous *La société de consommation*, the French sociologist Pierre Baudrillard noted that economists' views propagating the importance of consumption as an individual liberty have taken over and become determining values of social life. Baudrillard was highly critical of this development because of its alienating impact on several social groups that did not have the same consumption possibilities, but also because for Baudrillard, the need to consume had turned from a liberty into a constraint.

Clinical classifications, such as the DSM-IV and SOGS, have had a major impact on problem gambling research and on the terminology employed. Such classifications have not been without criticism; Davies (2006) has even argued that the idea of addiction is a myth resulting from social labelling rather than a real syndrome. According to Reith and Dobbie (2011), gambling problems are too often connected with individuals rather than behaviours. Livingstone and Woolley (2007) have further argued that attributing gambling problems to the individual easily leads to policies that exonerate the supply side from any responsibility. However, problem gambling is not just an individual condition as clinical classifications would suggest, but a multi-faceted bio-psycho-social condition. Therefore, in the present study the term 'problem gambling' has been consistently preferred over 'addiction' or 'pathology' in order to highlight the multidimensionality of gambling-related problems. Problem gambling means predicaments not only for the individual player but also for their social circle and for society at large (see also Dickerson et al., 1997).

Furthermore, identifying problem gambling continues to vary with social contexts, disciplines and researchers. Problem gambling is a real condition with real consequences for the individual, but how it is defined is a social construct. Gambling studies would benefit from this sociological insight, as definitions too can have real consequences. How problem gambling is defined influences not only how these problems are treated, but also how they are studied, the criteria by which they are diagnosed, how acceptable it is for gamblers experiencing these problems to seek help and how problem gamblers are regarded in a society. Problem gambling is not only an individual condition, although it is manifested through the individual, but also a result of a number of social processes. When comparing problem gambling in different social contexts, it would benefit future researchers to move beyond statistical evidence to consider what is behind these numbers. The higher percentages of problem gambling in some countries may be the result of greater availability but also of greater social acceptability of gambling problems, making people more willing to admit to them.

Individuals are never separate from their social context and should not be treated as such, especially in the case of a phenomenon such as gambling, which too easily blames the individual without questioning the role of habits within that context.

A similar situation can be found in studies and commentaries that equate gambling with consumption. While gambling is a form of consumption, the approach has the downside of downplaying its possible adverse effects. As Reith (2003) has pointed out, gamblers, and recreational gamblers in particular, are increasingly called consumers rather than immoral or criminal degenerates as was still the case some decades ago. Kingma (2010b: 4) has even called gambling 'one of the highlights, sometimes even the ultimate form of contemporary consumer culture'. The rise of consumption discourses can also be seen in the wider social discourse. Following Jean Baudrillard (1970), consumption is the foundation of our modern societies. For Baudrillard (1970), the rise of consumption as the determining act of being a member of society is linked with the quest for happiness, and also with the quest for equality typical of welfare state ideology.

However, viewing gambling as consumption can be problematic if this is done too strictly in line with economic theory and without considering social contexts. In economic theory, consumption is often discussed in terms of consumer sovereignty. A phrase coined by William Harold Hutt (1936), consumer sovereignty implies that offer of goods and services are determined by consumer demand. Transferring the idea to gambling would therefore imply that gambling suppliers only respond to consumer demand. This view has been promoted especially by the gambling industry, as discussed in Sub-study II. The idea has been criticised by academic thinkers, and Marshall (2005) has suggested that gambling should be discussed instead in terms of producer sovereignty in which suppliers determine what is offered by encouraging consumption or creating demand.

Consumer discourses are also often used to legitimise gambling in societies. If gambling is considered a consumption choice and a service demanded by consumers, then its regulation becomes problematic. The consumption ethos therefore poses problems similar to the individual-based understandings of problem gambling: If gambling is seen as a mere individual choice in which social contexts and structures play no significant role, then the view is not only one-sided but also dangerous for those who eventually have problems.

Social theory may be helpful here, because in contrast to economist individualism, consumption is considered above all a social phenomenon in sociology. Theorists such as Zygmunt Bauman (1998) and Colin Campbell (1987) have characterised our age as a move from production ethic or Protestant ethic to a consumption ethic, and gambling has been a part of this change. In this dissertation, gambling has been understood as a peculiar form of consumption, as it is actually the 'consumption of nothing at all' (Reith, 2007: 51), but consumption nonetheless. The important difference

from economist consumption theories has been that the act of consuming has been understood as social and habitual. In Sub-study III, gambling was considered from this point of view by focusing on the terms that recreational players as consumers of gambling products used to discuss their own gambling behaviour. The analysis shows that calling gambling a form of consumption is justified because recreational gamblers themselves seem to defend their own gambling behaviour in terms typical of consumer societies. Most important, the prevalence of hedonist vocabularies in both sets of data can be seen as wanting to highlight one's agency as a consumer. The gamblers wanted to emphasise their individuality, but with a vocabulary that was considered legitimate in their own social context.

Alain Touraine (1992) has argued that modernity has two alternative roads: either both reason and subjectivity are abandoned completely in order to give way to religions and ideologies or modernity has to make way for a new era of post-modernity in which individuals are able to seek their own pleasures freely. Contemporary discussions on problem gambling and on gambling as a form of consumption seem to be characterised by both of the paths envisaged by Touraine. Discussion of gambling has become coloured by the ideology of individual responsibility or consumer choice.

Yet, Touraine (1992) continues, both potential paths are detrimental to society as they relate to fundamentalism and to a lack of social structure. Touraine proposes a third way, which would fit social reason and individual subjectivity and which he calls a democracy of participating free individuals. Applied to gambling, this would mean considering the practice not as a problem or as a consumption constraint, but as a socially controlled pleasure. Both the Finnish and the French legislative frameworks support this idea to an extent, as the provision of gambling is restricted. Consumer protection is also increasing in both contexts (Sub-study I).

Sulkunen (2009) has suggested replacing the individualistic economic view of consumption with a cultural approach, in which consumption is viewed not merely as an individual enterprise, but rather as interplay between the individual and his social and cultural context. Woolley and Livingstone (2010) have argued along similar lines, contending that the reductionism of economic theories can be avoided by recognising the link between gambling and meaningful subjectivity. Gambling can be called a form of consumption, but with caution in order to avoid the ideological traps that characterise the use of such terminology. This is possible by understanding consumption as social consumption taking place within a social context.

Consumption choices are not isolated individual acts, but aspects of social habits, social definitions of acceptable behaviour and social meaning-making. The same is true of problem gambling. Excessive gambling behaviour has real consequences for individual lives, and as such an individualistic approach can be justified. However, gambling problems should be understood in terms of problematic behaviours rather than in terms of

problematic individuals. Behaviours are influenced by contextual habits and the way to move forward in solving them should also incorporate addressing these habits. Further research could benefit from adopting a wider perspective on gambling that would move away from too narrow a view on the individual problem gambler or the individual consumer, thereby finding alternative and more sustainable models of gambling offers.

7 CONCLUSIONS

Throughout this dissertation, the contextuality of gambling has been emphasised. Gambling occurs in a cultural and institutional context that influences not only how it is understood and discussed, but also which games are preferred, which forms of gambling provision are accepted, how problems related to excessive gambling behaviour are conceptualised and how legislators as well as gamblers choose to justify their action. French sociologist and gambling researcher Jean-Pierre Martignoni-Hutin (2005) has noted that a game has no meaning without the player. Based on the present research, his idea could be taken a step further by pointing out that gambling has no meaning without its social definition. In Bourdieu's terms, gambling could be characterised as cultural production and reproduction. Some important conclusions can be drawn from the discussion presented here. These conclusions relate to gambling research, policy making on gambling, and even sociological theory.

First, the importance of these results for gambling studies needs to be emphasised. The field of gambling research has grown significantly in the last few decades, and our knowledge of the topic has increased, with many valuable contributions ranging from population surveys to clinical research on problem gambling and even theoretical work on different types of gambling behaviour and the implications of gambling for societies. However, the field has been characterised by a lack of cultural and institutional sensitivity to contexts. Yet what is considered acceptable or problematic gambling differs depending on the cultural contexts, while the limits of legitimate gambling are set at different levels in different institutional contexts. This study has shown that the importance of contexts cannot be neglected in gambling research and furthermore, that we should proceed with care when applying results from one context to another. How gambling is experienced and understood always depends on the context in which it takes place. This does not mean that gambling studies conducted in one context have no global value, but it does suggest that more comparative approaches are needed in order to understand the contexts in which the results have been obtained.

Second, and as a direct consequence of the first point, political decision-making about gambling cannot necessarily be based on studies from other countries. This study has purposefully chosen to equate institutional contexts with countries. This has been a conscious decision based on the realities and boundaries of political decision-making. Gambling takes place within specific jurisdictions, which at least for the time being, are made up of countries or states. This applies not only to individual gambling behaviour, but also to the political decision-making process. Policies are influenced by how gambling is understood in a society, and these understandings are in turn influenced by

political decisions. Gambling studies is an area in which politics is in very close contact with academic research. This is not necessarily problematic since different perspectives are and should be welcomed. But political decisions about gambling need to be based on solid research and the research evidence needs to be applicable to the country context. Experiences from other contexts should not, of course, be ignored. For example, both Finland and France could benefit from one another's examples of organising their respective gambling fields. However, there should be more comparative research, which would allow the available options to be considered more thoroughly.

Third and finally, the emphasis on contexts has theoretical implications. Gambling has proven to be an excellent case study of a social phenomenon that shows the importance of social context. Gambling is a socially constructed activity, which does not exist naturally outside human societies. Gambling is furthermore intimately connected with money, and money is also a social construction. In addition, gambling requires social institutions in the form of rules and a social community, as the activity always requires an opponent. You cannot gamble against yourself. Beyond these social conditions, the present study has contributed to our understanding of how gambling is perceived within a social context and on which kinds of institutional and cultural habits these perceptions are based. Societies have been seen as multi-level, not only in the traditional sense of consisting of individuals and collectives, but in the sense that social contexts are made up of shared, habitual ways of acting and thinking which can be cultural or institutional. These habits can also change with the times, as the historical views of gambling in Finland and France has shown.

The aim of this study was not only to discuss gambling, but also to show how gambling relates to wider social processes. This was achieved by comparing two European country contexts, Finland and France. Nevertheless, as the approach is novel in gambling studies, the research conducted has been exploratory at times, and further research is needed to expand the topics. Studies should be expanded to other contexts, possibly also outside Europe, as well as to deepen our knowledge of the cases of Finland and France, especially on the political level of gambling legislation and its connections with other areas of society. Nevertheless, this research has shown that even in the relatively narrow field of gambling, discourses from two different social contexts conceptualise the same practice in very different terms. The group interview material proved to be an important data source for studying these conceptions as the participants discussed gambling behaviours in a social situation, thereby highlighting socially acceptable vocabularies, justifications and understandings. The same can be said of the legal material, which by definition is drawn from what is expected to be legitimate within a given institutional context. The research suggests that a contextual approach can be useful for studying how individuals understand social phenomena and how they construct their own agency. Gambling can

be much more than the act of betting; it can be an expression and even a reflection of socio-cultural contexts.

Conclusions

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APPENDIX 1: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS IN GROUP INTERVIEWS

Finland

Group	Gender	Age	Profession
1	Male	45	Teacher
1	Female	48	Sales manager
1	Male	25	Office manager
1	Female	20	Student
2	Male	36	IT specialist
2	Male	25	Student
2	Female	22	Nurse
2	Male	42	Systems specialist
3	Male	59	Retired
3	Female	59	Retired
3	Female	23	Administration
3	Male	25	Laboratorian
4	Male	61	Journalist
4	Male	35	Entrepreneur
4	Male	35	Sales manager
5	Male	32	Artist
5	Female	45	HR manager
6	Male	37	IT specialist
6	Female	35	Homemaker
6	Male	19	Unemployed
7	Male	38	Customs official
7	Female	43	Nanny
8	Male	31	Unknown
8	Male	22	Sales
8	Male	31	Sales
8	Male	30	Entrepreneur
9	Female	76	Retired
9	Male	73	Retired
9	Female	67	Retired
9	Female	67	Retired
9	Female	53	Social worker
9	Male	63	Retired
10	Female	23	Student
10	Male	22	Student
10	Male	25	Student

France

Group	Gender	Age	Profession
1	Female	24	Independent
1	Female	20	Unknown
1	Male	21	Student
1	Male	24	Student
1	Male	24	Student
1	Male	40	Unknown
2	Female	22	Etudiante
2	Male	21	Unknown
2	Female	26	Author/interpreter
2	Female	25	Executive assistant
2	Male	40	Artist
3	Female	19	Unknown
3	Female	20	Student
3	Female	19	Student
3	Male	18	Unknown
3	Male	18	Unknown
4	Female	21	Student
4	Female	28	Consultant
5	Male	27	Unknown
5	Male	28	Student
5	Female	31	Ph.D. Student
5	Male	26	Unemployed
5	Male	18	Unknown
5	Male	42	Traveller
6	Male	21	Student
7	Male	66	Retired
7	Female	27	Lawyer
7	Female	30	Unknown
8	Female	52	Nurse
8	Female	48	Sport
8	Female	47	Accountant
8	Male	38	Unemployed
9	Female	47	Family assistant
9	Female	49	Executive assistant
9	Male	40	Transportation

10	Male	33	Lawyer
11	Female	20	Student
11	Male	21	Truck driver
12	Female	22	Student
12	Male	20	Student
13	Male	21	Student
13	Male	23	Student
13	Male	31	IT assistant
14	Male	29	Logistics
14	Male	21	Student
14	Male	49	Entrepreneur
14	Male	30	Student
14	Male	20	Student

9	Female	42	Relaxation therapist
9	Female	37	HR manager
10	Male	54	Accountant
10	Female	49	HR assistant
10	Female	59	Executive assistant
10	Male	34	IT specialist
10	Female	35	Teacher
10	Female	48	Administration
11	Female	42	Unknown
11	Female	42	Secretary
11	Female	50	Secretary
11	Female	58	Executive assistant
11	Female	59	Secretary
11	Male	41	Unknown
12	Male	58	Retired
12	Male	71	Retired
12	Female	53	Executive assistant
12	Female	32	Executive assistant
12	Male	35	Sales manager
13	Female	35	Unknown
13	Female	35	Secretary
13	Female	39	Sales
13	Female	35	Accountant
14	Male	27	Unemployed
14	Female	22	Retired
14	Female	46	Investigator
14	Female	59	Investigator