

How Gambling Research Informs Policy & Practice

AGRI 4th Annual
Conference on Gambling
Research

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Policy formulation

- Rational process
- Articulated goals/outcomes
- Identified inputs:
 - Facts (incl. research)
 - Media positions
 - Public sentiment
 - Stakeholders (provider/consumer)

Policy formulation (cont'd)

- Options weighed in relation to:
 - Intended consequences
 - Unintended consequences
 - Unanticipated consequences

“Gambling is unlike any other policy issue”

Unique attributes of gambling

1. Government a principal beneficiary
 - 02-03 revenues - \$5.7B (\$775)
 - Lottery payout - \$1.1B (\$150)
 - Operating/profit - \$2.3B (\$313)
 - Gov't revenue - \$2.3B (\$313)

Unique attributes of gambling

2. Gov't is provider/licenses provision
3. Gambling crosses gov't roles
 - Revenue generation
 - Regulation
 - Public health
 - Public security/well-being

Unique attributes of gambling

- Role conflicts manifest as flashpoints
 - Often resolved by dominant interest
 - Seldom resolved by compromise

Key questions

1. Where should the onus/burden of proof rest?
 - Do no harm doctrine - reverse onus
 - Standards of evidence

Key questions

2. Can we identify overlapping health/revenue goals?

- Optimization vs. maximization
- Meta-policy question:

“How much revenue for how much harm?”

Possible optimization strategy

- 02-03 revenues - \$5.7B - reduce 10%
- Lottery payout - \$1.1B - hold
- Operating/profit - \$2.3B - reduce \$570M
- Gov't revenue - \$2.3B - hold

Key questions

3. How do we manage inconvenient research results?

- 35% of revenues from PGs
- a single plaintiff liability suit will succeed
- heavy gamblers a function of mean expenditure
- advertising distorts perceptions of gambling/winning

Conclusions

1. Need to resolve key questions
 - research seen as impediment
2. Need to retain independence/integrity
 - honest generator/broker
 - may introduce discomfort
 - frame as healthy
 - basis for policy discussion, formulation, adjustment