

## **Making up the responsible gambler**

Organizing self-control education and responsible gaming equipment  
in the Swedish gambling market

**Susanna Alexius**

Research fellow at the Stockholm Center for Organizational Research (Score)  
at Stockholm School of Economics and Stockholm University  
Score, SE-106 91 Stockholm  
[susanna.alexius@hhs.se](mailto:susanna.alexius@hhs.se)

Paper presented at the Nordic Academy of Management conference  
Track 19 *Self-control and self-organization in post-bureaucratic organizations*  
Stockholm University, Stockholm, August 22-24 2011,

## **Abstract**

Responsibilization permeates the various corners of society - not least the *markets* where responsibility is shifted down from states and organizations to individuals in their role as consumers. How then is responsibility (re)constructed and (re)distributed amongst market actors? This empirical paper contributes to our understanding of the 'preventive turn' in governance and more specifically the current trend towards self-control, and self-management by an analysis of *consumer responsabilization* at the market level. The paper is empirically based on interviews with key informants involved in attempts to organize rational, responsible consumers in the contested Swedish gambling market, a dozen participant observations of responsible gaming education (offline) and Internet studies of on-line equipment and education designed to motivate and teach gamblers to assume responsibility for gambling related problems. Drawing on a market constructionist perspective a model of responsibility in the making is presented. The paper then contributes with empirical illustrations of consumer responsabilization practices carried out in the Swedish context. Findings suggest that the responsible gambler is made up both directly and *indirectly*, both positively and *negatively* and by employment of a subtle yet powerful discourse of care.

*Keywords:* Gambling market, Svenska Spel, responsibility, responsible gaming, Sweden, responsabilization, consumer responsabilization

## Introduction

### *From prohibition to responsible gaming*

Twenty years ago, there was no fuzz about responsible gaming. It simply didn't exist. At least not on the agenda of actors in the Swedish gambling market (Alexius, 2012 forthcoming). But today, in Sweden only, there are thousands of organizations – gaming operators like state-owned monopolist Svenska Spel and its many partners in retail outlets all over Sweden, public as well as private treatment centers, national associations for gambling addicts, private consultancies and others involved in daily attempts to shape rational, responsible consumers in the contested Swedish gambling market. Drawing on an empirical field study of such efforts, this paper aims to contribute to our understanding of processes of consumer responsabilization and more generally processes of responsibility distributions in contested market settings.

Gambling has been a contested commodity for centuries (e.g. de Goede 2005, Hong and Kacpercyk 2009). As a social phenomenon practices of gambling have been criticized for bringing about various adverse consequences not only for buyers and sellers involved but also for other actors external to the market exchange. However, the downside of gambling (called externality by economists) has been reconstructed continuously over time (e.g. Alexius et al forthcoming 2012; Alexius, Castillo and Rosenström forthcoming 2012). Since early days and continuing many centuries well into the 1900s, gambling was regarded as an *immoral* activity not to be encouraged, particularly not by governments which were expected to act as good examples. The church likened gambling to stealing time from God and employers thought the idea of fast money terribly demoralizing to the working ethos. In Sweden, gambling was formally prohibited on moral grounds for close to a century - from 1944 until 1934. Following the severe financial crises of the early 1930s many states searched for new means of income. In

Sweden by this time the church was no longer as influential and reports of a flourishing black gambling market and an increase of gambling-related crime helped justify a legalization of gambling and a redefinition of the downside of the market – from immorality to *criminality* concerns. Following this redefined market downside a trustworthy state monopoly safeguarding its citizens from gambling-related crime was presented as an appropriate solution which also brought substantial amounts of capital to the Treasury (Ihrfors 2007).

After some decades of relative stability, in the late 1980s scattered research reports started to warn about an addictive disorder potentially linked to gambling (for an account of this early work see f ex Dickerson, 2003). Researchers wrote of gambling addiction and likened it to alcohol or drug abuse. What in the prohibition days had been described as the individual gambler's faulty character had gradually been reconstructed as an illness springing from harmful products. This time however, in the early days of neoliberalist influence (c f Harvey 2005) prohibiting games was never an option considered by the Swedish state. In fact, new gambling products were introduced regularly throughout the 1990s and early 2000s and gambling addiction was successfully ignored as a "foreign phenomenon" for over a decade (Alexius, 2012, forthcoming, chapter 2).

A handful of individuals employed by the industry were troubled enough to start advocating measures, but nothing much happened until the Swedish gambling monopoly was struck by three major external chocks which in just a few years managed to firmly establish "responsible gaming" on top of the market actors agenda (ibid). First, in 1995, Sweden became a member of the European Union and directly affected by the rulings of the European Supreme Court that in several cases had stressed the importance for monopoly operators to act responsibly and according to principles of care and moderation. Second, in 1999, the Swedish prevalence study concluded that problem gambling was not in fact a "foreign phenomenon" as it had been found among two percent of Swedish gambling consumers. The third of the important external chocks that

affected the market during these turbulent times was the internet boom. In the early 2000s the technological development and spread of internet in society enabled a rapid expansion of e-gaming. This radical development challenged not only traditional sales channels and gambling products but also the market regulation supporting the government monopolies.

### *The Preventive turn*

In a strict legal sense, the monopolies still existed but in practice the doors to the national monopoly markets were left wide open for new competitors and their products to enter. The technological advances, ineffective regulation and popularity amongst the consumers soon resulted in an increased availability of e-gambling opportunities and claims that problem gambling and addiction gambling too were on the rise. In this turmoil in the late 1990s, the previous *responsibility order*, i.e. the answers to the questions “*Who* is responsible, for *what* and *how*” (see figure 1 below) had been disrupted or at least severely challenged, and there was a window of opportunity for *market organizers*, both organizations and individuals<sup>1</sup>, to influence future notions and practices of “responsible gaming”. As a monopoly actor, the Swedish state owned gambling operator Svenska Spel was expected to act and before long the company had become the dominant force in attempts to shape a new responsibility order (Alexius, 2011). In the course of a few years, thanks to its proactive agenda, Svenska Spel managed to unite all major national market actors: NGO:s, government authorities and private research consultancies who, influenced by the same experts and ideas soon started to work for a common goal - the construction (shaping, educating and equipping) of the responsible gambling consumer and the parallel crafting of *preventive* roles for the organizations involved (compare the influential article by Blaszczynski et al 2004 and more generally Chan 2009). There was a gradual shift from the previously dominant idea about harmful products (games) to the

---

<sup>1</sup> Among the more influential individuals in this development in the Swedish market were Thomas Nilsson, psychologist, former CEO and founder of the private consultancy firm *Spelinstitutet*, The Gaming Institute, an expert partner in the field and the former CEO of Swedish state gambling operator Jesper Kärbrink, an entrepreneur with background in the private media and financial sectors who stayed at Svenska Spel 2004-2008.

idea of harmful or safe *consumption* of games, irrespective of their characteristics. Despite the fact that EU regulation and politics during the mid and late 1990s had stressed the utmost importance of state responsibility, were member states to keep the monopolies, a close look at practices of state market policy and CSR initiatives unfolds a rather different story (Alexius 2011). The new emphasis on risky consumption shifted focus gradually from the products themselves and hence the retrospectively motivated responsibility of games producers and operators (and the state as owner) to the prospective – future and capacity oriented responsibility of consumers (for a discussion on the concept of responsibility, see f ex Cane 2002 and Bexell 2005).

In just a few years there was a shift from a legalistic, bureaucratic, centralized top-down configuration of authority to a reflexive, self-regulatory and horizontal "market-like" configuration. And a view on responsibility as something that at least partly can be produced, distributed and actively realized through consumption (see also Shamir 2008a on a more general discussion of this theme). The intensified focus on consumer responsabilization was in line with several influential movements and ideas of the time. Both the neo-liberal/governance agenda, the upcoming future oriented theory of cognitive behavioral therapy (and more specifically self-regulation, see for instance Karoly 1993; Karoly et al 2005) and the notion of a post modern risk-society with a culture of precaution (Richter et al 2006) and a tendency to risk-manage everything (Power, 2004). These three interrelated societal trends helped lay the ideological/theoretical foundation (Hacking 2006) for the preventive turn and its characteristic proliferation of self-control education and responsible gaming equipment aimed at realizing its ideal customer, the *Homo Ludens et auctor*. During the course of a century, as a result of shifting ideals, disrupting market triggers and eager market organizers the responsibility order of the market has been drastically altered as responsibility for the downside of gambling had been profoundly reconstructed and redistributed.

## Theoretical framework

### *Responsibilization*

Responsibility has been described as "the practical master-key of governance", an "enabling praxis" operated at the level of individual actors, reconfiguring roles and identities... so as to mobilize designated actors actively to undertake and perform self-governing tasks" (Shamir 2008a). Critical literature on neoliberal policies aimed at shaping economically rational and responsible individuals through a "conduct of conduct" uses the term *responsibilization* to analyze processes in which individuals are given freedom to act individually, but also knowledge and various self-control techniques and equipment in order to act as "an entrepreneur of his or her self" (Rose 1999:144) and thereby (hopefully) becoming rational and responsible (e.g. Foucault 1979, 1991, Lemke 2001, Miller and Rose 1992, 1993, Gordon 1991, Rose 1999, Dean 1999). Much has been written on the constructive nature of power in such "practices of freedom" which typically employs a rhetoric of empowerment, an operation not aimed to constrain but to co-opt individuals to *voluntarily* subject themselves to power<sup>2</sup>. For example, subjects are described as responsibilised when they are made to see various social risks such as illness or unemployment, not as the responsibility of the state, but as part of the domain for which the individual is responsible, as a problem of "self-care" (Lemke, 2001:201).

Most studies on this theme concern responsibilization of individuals as *citizens* and describe how many states and national governments during the recent decades have changed their ways of governing and controlling subjects from harder to "softer" modes of governing. During processes of responsibilization, diverse tasks of government are removed from state bureaucracy and allocated to a great variety of actors including community associations and agencies, commercial associations, philanthropic organizations, firms, professionals, families and not least individuals (Ilcan and Basok

2004, Rose 1999, Shamir 2008b). This transformation has been given various labels and been described by the use of many metaphors. Kjær (2004) describes the transition as one "from government to governance", Osborne and Gaebler 1992) write about the neo-liberal state "steering rather than rowing" while The Economist (2006) notes a "soft-paternalism" shift from a "nanny state to an avuncular state"<sup>3</sup>.

Today's governments are less keen on traditional planning and regulation and more involved in enabling, inspiring, and assisting citizens to take responsibility for social problems in their communities, and formulating appropriate orientations and rationalities for their actions (Ilcan and Basok 2004:132). For example, Chan (2009) notes a growing trend of "informed responsabilization" in the field of preventive health where professionals have become more occupied with the individual patient and her lifestyle, a development during which the meaning of "prevention" seems to have evolved from a population oriented public health focus to individual clinical pre-disease and prevention case. Responsibilization is typically analyzed in terms of transferring risk alongside responsibilities. Risk management has become an "everyday practice of the self" (O'Malley 1996:200), as self-regulation is expected to follow the norms of risk-management (Scoular and O'Neill 2007).

### *Consumer responsabilization*

Numerous empirical studies have given valuable insights into the downshifting of responsibility from states and organizations to individuals in such disparate roles as those of the parent (see Dahlstedt 2010 on parental coaching and the construction of responsible parents), the pupil (Share and Strain 2008), the internet user (see Whitson 2009 on the individualized project of care of the virtual self), the pension collector (see Nyqvist

---

<sup>3</sup> – From "A scold and killjoy forcing its charges to eat their vegetables and take their medicine, to a world-wise avuncular state, offering a nudge in the right direction, perhaps pulling some strings on your behalf without your even noticing".

2008), the job seeker (Thedvall 2004), the patient (Chan 2009), the worker (Boltanski & Chiapello 2006, Gray G. 2009) the young offender (Gray, P. 2009) or the social work client (Ferguson 2007) just to mention a few applications. Although extensively studied in that context, the trend of responsabilization is not exclusive to the public sphere. Responsibilization permeates the various corners of society - not least the *markets* where responsibility is shifted down from states and organizations to individuals in their role as *consumers* (Shamir 2008a).

In line with the present neo-liberalist governance ideal (Harvey 2005), many states currently share or delegate governance powers and responsibilities for the performance of markets to other market actors such as firms, NGOs and not least individuals (e.g. Haufler 2001). States also increasingly take on new roles in markets, mainly those of the "coordinator and catalyst" (Garland 1996:454) rather than that of the constraining regulator. States encourage consumers to "navigate the temptations of consumption society and make a rational choice" (c.f. Bildtgård 2006:236 on Swedish eating policy). Another example is described by Williams (2007), who discusses that many national governments now work actively to promote financial literacy education intended to change consumer behavior in the financial markets. While previously focusing on the supply side of the financial markets, market regulators are now increasingly focused on consumer education and financial firms are joining forces offering what could be described as "niche"-products and services such as investment exhibitions and clubs, young investor competitions and financial skills training for children (described by Williams, *ibid*). As Williams (*ibid*) notes, this shift in policy discourse and practice may be analyzed critically beyond the official empowerment rhetoric as "a reflection of the interests of states and firms in expanding consumer markets... and as a shift from the state to the individual of responsibility for personal economic security thus increasing individuals' exposure to risk" (see also Froud et al 2006 and Odin & Knights 1999).

The fact that responsabilization has become a wide spread trend in many markets may at times be understood to reflect the duality of state roles in markets. As pointed out by many (see e g Shamir 2008b), market actors are not governed by government regulation alone. There is a vast number of market organizers involved. However, it is also interesting to scrutinize the multiple roles of the state in this organization of markets. For example, in contested market settings such as the Swedish monopoly markets for alcohol and gambling (see Alexius, Castillo and Rosenström, 2012 forthcoming), the state does not only shift roles, it is a "plural actor" (Lahire 2010) in the sense that it simultaneously struggles to realize multiple and potentially conflicting values and interests such as state income on the one hand and security and public health concerns on the other.

In cases where the state strategy for market organization and involvement requires value plurality management (see also Tamm-Hallström and Alexius, eds. 2012 forthcoming), consumer responsabilization – typically attempts to advocate risk without wiping out choice (or in other ways restricting sales)<sup>4</sup> – may be a modern means for criticized states to handle their delicate balancing act. For example, according to the "Green Growth"-strategy, adopted by Svenska Spel in 2004 (see Alexius 2011), increasing sales did not have to go against an increased social responsibility as long as the "normal players" with a balanced risk behavior, also called "green players" accounted for the sales increase (see also Svenska Spel Annual Report 2007:42).

### *Markets as organized*

Just like organizations, markets are *organized* (Abolafia 1996, Callon ed 1998, MacKenzie 2009, Helgesson et al 2004, Ahrne et al 2011), although not in the same way, nor to the same degree. There is no naturally evolving market. Besides mutual adjustment

---

<sup>4</sup> For more illustration of this duality of state roles, in the public sector, see Adam 2005 (on Australian HIV prevention policy) and Scouler and O'Neill 2007 (on British prostitution policy).

(Lindblom 2001) and cultural processes (Aspers 2011) markets are "made up" and continuously shaped by a range of market actors. Sellers and buyers of course, but also actors which may not directly be involved in the exchange situation, such as regulatory agencies, social movement organizations, researchers and consultants. These market organizers – organizations and individuals taking part in market making - may cooperate harmoniously or struggle in conflict (cf Helgesson et al 2004, Fliegstein 1996, 2001, Tamm-Hallström and Alexius eds 2012, forthcoming). Their attempts to make up the various aspects of the market are crucial for our understanding of markets.

Just like organizations, markets are embedded in specific cultural and institutional contexts, which in turn affect the way they are realized, the expectations that are raised about them and what actors that participate in their shaping. One important difference between organizations and markets however is that markets are organized only partially (Ahrne & Brunsson 2011). For example, a market has no obvious hierarchical centre. Nor is there a given set of members onto whom rules and sanctions may be imposed (ibid). These differences between markets and organizations imply, for example, that the construction and labelling of risks and social costs associated with market practices, as well as the distribution of responsibility for managing such risks and costs are a matter for debate and negotiation involving many different types of market actors (cf Alexius 2012, forthcoming).

While for example, the popular empowerment rhetoric depicts consumers as (already) sovereign and rational subjects with unique, robust preferences, scholars of the more critical consumer responsabilization perspective take an interest in analyzing these same strategic attempts as attempts to *make up* consumers, to educate and equip them with ideal market actor traits such as rationality or responsibility. From this perspective it also becomes interesting to critically evaluate these attempts, to see how the "made up" consumers navigate the markets and manage as self-regulatory market actors (e g Nyqvist 2008). Markets, not only organizations, organize responsibility. And as one "invisible

hand” (Smith 1776) is quite insufficient to do the job attention must be paid to the influential role of *market organizers* – actors involved in the creation and continual reshaping of markets and their various elements. .

An organizational perspective as outlined above may be fruitful in the analysis of consumer responsabilization and responsibility distributions in markets more generally. Not least since there is a need to nuance the wide spread economics inspired simplification of responsibility distributions in markets as synonymous to reactive state regulation. Let me illustrate this point briefly by way of a typical quote from an internationally spread university textbook (Steiner & Steiner 2008, in a chapter on Business Regulation):

“A factory that dumps waste into a river pollutes the water... Regulation can force all factories to bear the cost”

The typical quote illustrates the simplified idea on how responsibility is organized in markets. Firstly, there is an obvious problem (the polluted water). Secondly, there is an obvious responsible party (the factory). Even the principle for distributing the responsibility, i.e. the connection between the polluted water and the factory is clear (in this case a retrospective principle of distribution according to which the party causing damage is thought responsible). In this clear cut case, the state is assumed to step in to regulate the market, to force factories to act on the pollution problem.

A textbook illustration may often be simplified of course, but it is unfortunate if such simplifications are spread like taken for granted truths on the matter (c.f. Øygarden ed. 2001) when in fact responsibility distributions on real markets are the results of far more complex processes. The problem, or area of responsibility, is seldom as evident as in the

case of the polluted water. And most likely, at any point in time there are a number of possible actors to point out as responsible for a certain problem (c f Miller 2001). Responsibility distributions in real markets are typically dramatic long term processes characterized by negotiations and competing attempts to influence and "make up" responsible market actors.

In a forthcoming volume (Alexius 2012 forthcoming) I suggest that *responsibility in the making* may be analyzed as four related and often parallel processes, each involving a large number of market actors and activities (see figure 1 below). Responsibility in the making is here used as an inclusive label for all efforts aimed at establishing responsibility, to make up responsible market actors. The four processes described in the volume (ibid) are: making up the problem (area of responsibility), making up the connection between the problem and the responsible actor(s), making up the responsible market actor(s) and attempts to stabilize the responsibility order (the results of the previous three processes).

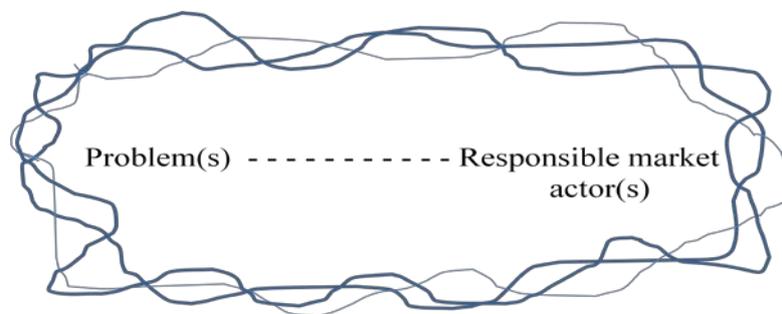


Figure 1 *Responsibility in the making*

Four interrelated and often parallel processes characterized by negotiations between a large number of market organizers: making up the problem(s), making up the connection(s) between problem(s) and the market actor(s), making up the responsible market actor(s) and stabilizing the connection(s)

This proposed model of responsibility in the making (above) stresses the constructed nature of responsibility. Before hand, responsibility is never given. It is always the result

of organizing. The results of responsabilization processes, as straight forward as they may seem when (temporarily) closed, are always preceded by negotiations and other activities involving a large number of market actors. Responsibility in the making is characterized by problems being constructed, framed and perhaps divided; by actors being categorized and shaped in various ways in order to connect, or perhaps not connect to certain problem definition. Responsibility in the making is further characterized by attempts to establish connections, i.e. responsibility links between problem(s) and actor(s). These connections, in turn, then need to be justified and stabilized in some way.

Who then is shaping problems and actors? If responsibility connections in fact seldom exist readymade to choose from (as assumed by Miller 2001) who is making and stabilizing such connections? And how is this done? As demonstrated by Helgesson et al (2004) there is a need to broaden the analytic scope from the immediate exchange practices concerning sellers and buyers, to include the normative and representational market practices concerned with establishing norms and rules and making images of various aspects of markets and market performance. While all four responsabilization processes (above) are analyzed in detail in the forthcoming volume (Alexius 2012, forthcoming)<sup>5</sup>, this paper concerns only one of these four interrelated types of processes: namely the processes aimed at making up responsible market actor(s) – in this case the responsible gambler, the *Homo Ludens et auctor* – an ideal gambling consumer of the neo-liberal era.

Before we move on to the empirical illustrations, we may also note that there is actually also psychological evidence to the fact that an individual's capacity so self-

---

<sup>5</sup> In the book it is for instance described how processes of responsibility in the making have transformed the notions of the downside of the gambling market from an immorality concern to a public health concern (gambling addiction etc). At the heart of this shift is a gradual reconstruction of responsibility – from a morality to a commodity. As described in the empirical section of this paper, risk management commodities such as self-control education and various gambling related equipment such as budget tools and self-tests as now readily available at gaming operators, government authorities, treatment centres, gambling addiction associations etc.

regulate has to be made up. In their literature reviews, Karoly (1993) and Karoly et al (2005) note that a great variety of researchers have done work on the topic of self-regulation and that a myriad of terms have been used, often interchangeably to denote an individual's capacity so self-regulate (Karoly 1993:24):

“freedom, autonomy, agency, responsibility, maturity, ego-strength, willpower, self-control, choice, purposiveness, self-direction, voluntary action, self-sufficiency, morality, consciousness, free will, independence, conscientiousness, self-discipline, intentional action, self-intervention, intrinsic motivation, self-determination and volition”.

In his literature review, Karoly (ibid:42) notes that a critical appraisal of the literature on self-regulatory training suggests that people's efforts at self-management, *even* when professionally assisted, do not always yield successful short- or long-term outcomes. Psychologist Karoly thus concludes that: “People are capable of self-regulating, but they do not do so in a formulaic, dispassionate, unwavering, or fully self-contained manner”.

In relation to the findings presented by Karolys and his colleague, a fundamental point of departure for the sociological “making up”-perspective on responsible market actors presented above is that individuals, organizations and states all have to be *made* responsible. Preferences and capacities to self-regulate, in this case to assume responsibly, cannot be taken for granted but must be created and shaped in various ways. More specifically, according to this perspective, actorhood traits such as responsibility (or any other in the quote above) are seen as results of institutionalised notions which are mediated, for example via education and equipment (c f Shamir 2008a, and Callon et al eds. 2007).

## **Empirical material and methods**

The empirical illustrations included this paper are aimed to give the reader a glimpse into the everyday practice of consumer responsabilization, the attempts by various market organizers in the Swedish gambling market to make up the responsible gambler through information, self-responsibility education and risk-management tools. But also through attempts to teach and in other ways influence other actors in the market (like retailers and relatives) to back off some responsibility they previously might have taken on (see discussion section).

The empirical illustrations emanate from a rich empirical study carried out in 2008-2009 of market organizers' attempts to shape notions and distributions of gambling related responsibilities in the Swedish gambling market. The empirical material presented in this paper (and the forthcoming book, Alexius 2012) was collected by way of interviews with key informants from the various market actors involved in these efforts (see abstract), a dozen participant observations of responsible gaming education (offline) and Internet studies of on-line equipment and education designed to motivate and teach gamblers to take responsibility for gambling related problems<sup>6</sup>.

The illustrations included in the paper do not cover all responsabilization efforts in the market but have been chosen as representative examples of the everyday organizational practices of responsabilization in the 2000s. Although the study was carried out in the Swedish context, there is ample reason to believe that the empirical practices described here may be seen as examples of a more universal trend of responsabilization and consumer responsabilization spreading across the industrialized world. The previous studies referred to in the theoretical framework section (above) suggests that the findings reported in the following sections may be generalized not only

---

<sup>6</sup> For a thorough presentation of this material, see Alexius 2012, a forthcoming volume which analyses Responsibility in the Making 1990-2010 in the Swedish gambling market.

to gambling markets of other countries but also to other types of markets or on a more general level to other organizational contexts and levels of modern society.

## **Empirical illustrations - Making up the responsible gambler**

### *The Svenska Spel "Spela lagom" responsible gaming tool box*

In March of 2007 the responsibility message "Spela lagom!" - "Play moderately!" or literally "Play just enough!" was introduced as a small logo in all Svenska Spel commercial gaming advertising. In May, the state owned gambling operator continued its responsibility campaign by launching its own separate responsible gaming site called Spela lagom [Play just enough] ([www.spelalagom.se](http://www.spelalagom.se))<sup>7</sup>. Svenska Spel declared the following aim on the site ([www.spelalagom.se](http://www.spelalagom.se), retrieved 2007-11-08):

"We hope that Spela lagom may contribute to increasing the consumers' awareness about their gambling habits. That more players reflect over and earlier acknowledge their gambling (habits) will hopefully lead to more players discovering and starting to use the various control tools offered by Svenska Spel... Gaming should be moderate (*lagom* in Swedish) – that's when it's fun. And what's lagom (moderate or just enough) is individually decided, that's right. Svenska Spel shouldn't tell the individual what is just enough for him or her. That is up to the player to reflect on..."

---

<sup>7</sup> Many similar sites were already available targeted to Swedish or Nordic players and their relatives, among these sites: [speletsbaksida.se](http://speletsbaksida.se), [mariaungdom.se](http://mariaungdom.se); [slutaspela.nu](http://slutaspela.nu); [gameoverlinkoping.com](http://gameoverlinkoping.com), [kbh.se](http://kbh.se), [spelberoende.nu](http://spelberoende.nu), [spelinstitutet.se](http://spelinstitutet.se), [ga-sverige.se](http://ga-sverige.se), [spelberoende.se](http://spelberoende.se) och [ansvarligspill.org](http://ansvarligspill.org).

The idea was to reach customers directly with offers of free of charge responsible gaming education and literally a box full of self-control and self-management tools – responsible gaming equipment such as the weekly budget, the self test, the help line, a voluntary gaming pause and the innovative interactive internet device Spelkoll – Playscan - a voluntary interactive system built on artificial intelligence which detects, predicts and prevents players with a tendency to develop problem gambling.

Playscan is a prime example of a then world-unique tool aimed at helping customers keep their gaming “at a healthy level” (Svenska Spel Annual Report 2007:36). In the fall of 2006 Svenska Spel initiated a partnership with mathematics/artificial intelligence experts (at ICU intelligence) and gambling addiction experts (at Spelinstitutet)- both private consultancy firms, hoping to invent a tool, an interactive device that would help customers prevent gaming related health problems at an early stage. The result was the innovative responsible gaming device Playscan - a system that detects, predicts and prevents players with a tendency to develop problem gambling. The system was designed to safeguard customers from danger and when introduced was compared to a safety belt. The goal when developing the device was however not to keep players from the games, but rather to ensure a continued and possibly intensified but responsible gaming behavior, one that would benefit not only individual consumers but also the operator Svenska Spel and its owner the Swedish state in their efforts to balance economical and social values.

The endorsed philosophy was that responsible gaming was most efficient when placed directly in the hands of the player. Therefore, at the outset, Playscan registration was voluntary. Eventually however, Playscan was gradually integrated with Svenska Spel’s most criticized e-gaming products: its internet poker. When applying for permission to launch sensitive new games Playscan was used as an argument, as a suggested basis for a ”modern self-regulation” of the gambling market, replacing the troubled government legislation. Playscan is also used as part of an overall branding strategy communicating Svenska Spel as an operator specializing in responsible, safe

games and gaming. On 12 March 2010, Svenska Spel acquired all rights to the Playscan technology from ICU and before long started exporting its invention. La Francaise des Jeux, the French monopoly operator was one of its first international customers (for a critical reflection see also Alexius 2012 b, forthcoming).

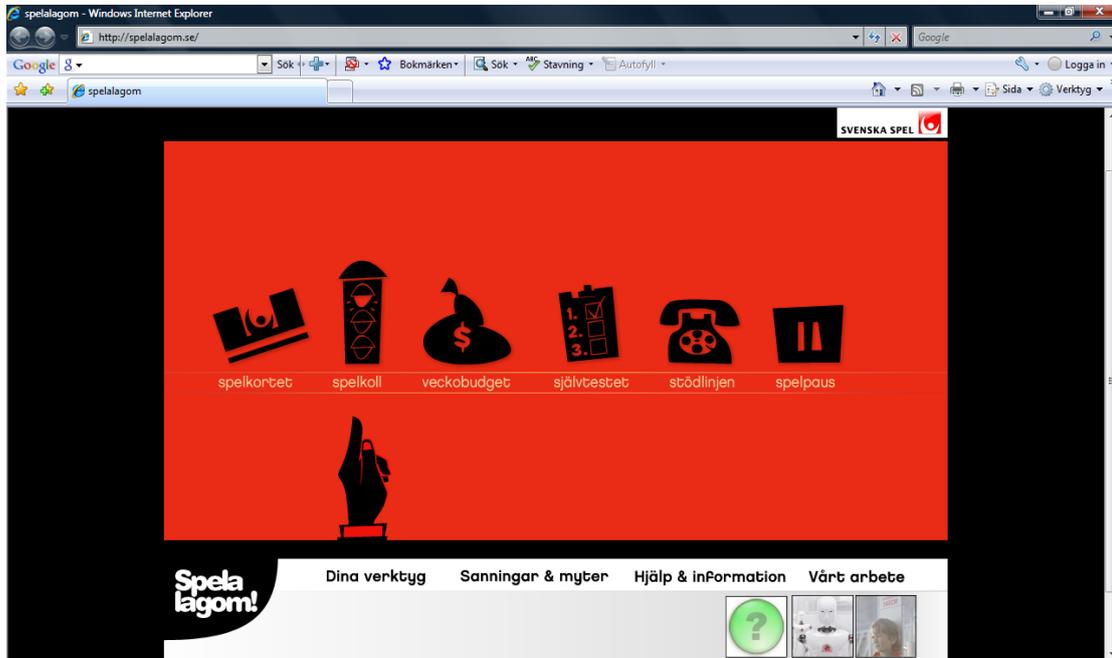


Figure 2 *Spela lagom* tool box

Printscreen from Svenska Spel's responsible gaming site [www.spelalagom.se](http://www.spelalagom.se)

featuring the toolbox. "Dina verktyg" translates into "Your tools"

*NOTE picture may turn out dark when printed*

### *Self-responsibility at "the Gambling addict's voice"*

The Swedish National Association for Gambling Addicts (SBRF, Swedish acronym for Spelberoendes Riksförbund) calls itself "the gambling addict's voice". But in practice there is little room for debates and discussions, at least on more sensitive matters which are strategically insulated from problem gamblers. As explained by Arne Petterson, cashier since many years:

“We divide it: the central headquarters of the association runs matters like the division of responsibility between actors, legislation etc while the local member associations are to give complete damn about such matters and focus entirely on people coming there. Otherwise there would be political discussion clubs debating economy and politics. People coming here may be suicidal and in total crises... they cry. We cannot have meetings with such people to discuss the different roles of the market actors. That would be terribly wrong you know.”

Influential SBRF representatives like Petterson claim that it would be “contra productive” to engage their members in debates or discussions on matters such as the division of responsibility between the various actors in the market. Instead the association de-couples such activities (Meyer & Rowan 1977). SBRF lets its national head quarters “act politically” and describes the operations of its local associations as “non political” as these are totally devoted to teaching gamblers self-control and self-responsibility, operations thus viewed as non political. Petterson again:

“Self-responsibility is what we emphasize all the time because this is what it comes down to in our business – it is to make people assume responsibility for themselves. Because there is no other way... The local associations, people often come there and claim it’s not their fault that they gamble. That is would be Svenska Spel’s or ATG’s (horse games operator) problem. But that is a discussion we don’t enter. We simply cut off and say: “Get your life together. The rest cannot be solved here but you can stop your gambling yourself if you are motivated enough.”

“The gambling addict’s voice” does not encourage problem gamblers to hold protest meetings nor engage in political discussions. In fact, such activities are officially described as ”drastic measures”, expressions of ”responsibility escape” on behalf of the problem gambler that would be contra productive to the main goal of teaching problem gamblers self-control and self-management. Efforts are directed at helping gamblers learn how to be rational, responsible market actors. How to plan ahead and take measures to solve their problems, measures in line with the SBRF views on problem gambling as connected to unsuitable, irresponsible consumption behavior. Angry or politically motivated members have been excluded in the past (see Alexius 2012 forthcoming, chapter 2) and are now treated either as “victims” to be taken pity of and/or like ”children” who do not yet fully know their own good. It all depends on the “psychological state” of the gamblers, say SBRF representatives I interviewed. Many problem gamblers visit SBRF only once or twice. The few that do become members tend to “calm down” and “quit playing the victim” say SBRF representatives. And then, members typically come to accept that responsible gambling is their responsibility. Former gambling addict, author, lecturer, gambling therapist and chairman of the Stockholm association and its 170 members elaborates on this theme:

“I will never be able to quit gambling for somebody else. I can motivate them; give them strength, loads of advice and various tools. But you can see it in their eyes if they just sit there and glance on their watch, threatened to go to the meeting by their mom or wife. Sometimes I say to them: “If you want hell, cultivate your self-pity. But if you want this over with, call the Social services tomorrow morning at 8.30 when their telephone hours start. Then call the Enforcement service. Then call your cousin and tell him there will be no car this time either, etc. That is how to tackle it. It is a lot of adult responsibility.”

Problem gamblers coming to the SBRF-meetings are also taught how to think altruistically and how to respect others' (more rational and responsible consumers) rights to the pleasure of gambling. As chairwoman Grahn of the National Association puts it:

“There are people who like to gamble; who think it is fun and who manage to do so. This is why I cannot burn down the casino. It would be far better if I were to take another route *past* the casino, not to get tempted.”

In the self-help group meetings organized once each week in most local associations, so called resource persons (former problem gamblers with group facilitation skills) organize meetings during which participants are encouraged to share coping strategies with one another. The format is one of “positive reinforcement”, a concept transferred from cognitive behavioral psychology. The aim is to give one another practical hands-on advice on how to deal with everyday problems, and above all to look ahead and stay positive despite the troublesome situation. Stockholm Chair Edström exemplifies:

“Can you take another route to the subway? Do you have to cross the square, can't you walk round it? “Yes perhaps, yes I could”... You are so into your gambling habits. Just the same when you go out for a pint with your friends. Do you have to go to *that* pub? You could choose one without VLT machines.”

Chairman Grahn gives similar advice on coping strategies:

“You can stop reading the sport news. At least for some time, to avoid... not to risk the temptation of looking at the results. You can switch channels when there is a gambling commercial coming on. Or you just decide not to let it in – “I see it but I don’t” if you see what I mean.”

Similar practices and advice are offered at the public day treatment center Maria Ungdom [Maria Youth]<sup>8</sup> in Stockholm city center. When I visited the center in June of 2008 I was introduced to the daily operations by three of its employees, psychologist and manager Annika Sonnerstein and the two social workers Eva Samuelsson and Lina Hetta who were then engaged in the ”motivational conversations” and cognitive behavioral therapy support groups which make up the core of the treatment practice at Maria Ungdom.

The aim of the four 45 minutes individual motivational conversations is to develop the individual/client’s own ”will and wish” to deal with his or her gambling problems. As explained by Hetta:

“You assume that the necessary resources needed to change one’s life are available within the person him/herself. The idea is to entice... you imagine that once the person makes the decision to change his/her life, he/she knows what he/she must do.”

But, as it turns out after all that *not* everyone knows what to do about their gambling problems, not even after four motivational conversations, the center also offers a

---

<sup>8</sup> A public treatment center run by Healthcare Provision Stockholm County (SLSO) which provides county council-owned healthcare and medical care outside emergency hospital wards. See [www.mariaungdom.nu](http://www.mariaungdom.nu).

cognitive behavioral therapy support group which at the time of my visit in 2008 consisted of twelve 3 hour sessions, once a week for 12 weeks (with about 15 group participants). Working in accordance with a manual developed by psychologist and cognitive therapist Liria Ortis (Ortis 2006), problem gamblers are gradually "made aware" of their problematic behaviors and trained in what was described as suitable skills. Sessions are organized much like classic university teaching: first a discussion about last week's assignment/homework. Then a theoretical lecture followed by a few exercises before reflection and handout of next week's assignment. In closing, each client fills in their individual "gaming calendar" to keep track of how much they have been gambling during the past week. Participants are encouraged and recommended to stop gambling entirely, but there is no such formal requirement or sanctions (again, along the lines of "positive enforcement").

Just as in the self-help meetings at SBRF, participants at the Maria Ungdom sessions are discouraged from entering any political discussions. In fact any negative, critical comments on the market practices and conditions are viewed as contra productive to the training. As explained by Hetta:

"I think that much of the purpose of this treatment is to make people learn how to self-control, that it is their life, their responsibility. Many of the effective components, both in Motivational conversations and in the Cognitive group treatment emphasize strongly the autonomy of the person – it is *you* who decide what you want to do with your life. And no one else may make that decision for you. It is *you* who shape your everyday life...*You* are responsible. *You* have the competence. *You* yourself can do something about the problem. *You* choose... So, to talk about those things

[the distribution of responsibility between the market actors, chances of sales restrictions or the like] – that would be contra productive.”

### *The Svenska Spel Gaming School for retailers*

Although net gaming is a growing business, the physical intermediaries – the retailers and business partners in restaurants still account for a large majority of the exchanges in the Swedish gambling market. It is at the local supermarkets, warehouses, betting agencies like games and tobacco shops, petrol stations, bingo hall or pizzeria that millions of gambling consumers’ responsibility is put to the test. In December 2007 (closest available figures at time of study, see Svenska Spel Annual Report 2007) Svenska Spel had 6,385 retail outlets, 2,249 restaurants, pubs and bingo halls and 1,524 voluntary associations, the latter selling club lotteries on commission). To keep track of these intermediaries, Svenska Spel continuously organizes training and information sessions about responsible gaming targeted at retailers and business partners.

In November 2008 I was a participant observer in Svenska Spel’s Spelskolan, the Gaming School, a two-day education and training for retailers representatives, i e sales personnel at Svenska Spel’s business partners in various supermarkets, shops and restaurants around Sweden. During the two-day course our group of a dozen retailer representatives learnt how to operate the Svenska Spel gaming terminal, we learnt how to promote the products in order to maximize sales, and we also learnt how to draw and stick to new lines of responsibility.

In her welcome lecture, CSR-department project manager Maria Schubert opened up with the rhetorical question “What is Svenska Spel’s responsibility for responsible gambling?” And before long she answered her own question:

“We at Svenska Spel offer security and support. Our responsibility is not to take care of people with problems. Our responsibility is *preventive*. We are to make certain the gambler may make informed decisions. To make the gambler think *before* [any problems show up] – *that* is our responsibility”

After defining the responsibility of Svenska Spel and presenting it as a fact, a learning point among other learning points in the course, Schubert went on to the mission of the day: to teach the retailing business partners about *their* three areas of responsibility concerning responsible gambling: never sell games on credit, never sell or deliver profits to under-aged customers and always keep the responsible gambling leaflets on visible display.

One course participant raised her hand to question the effectiveness of information leaflets and brochures. She suggested that as a retailing representative involved in the immediate exchange of games, one may take on a moral responsibility “as a fellow human being”. She told the class that she herself would do so if she suspected that a customer she meets may suffer from gambling problems or addiction. She further suggested that it could be morally appropriate to try to talk to problem customer and perhaps also, in some extreme cases, to even deny purchases of gambling products. Schubert listened politely to the woman but in her reply never seemed to hesitate to put her student right:

“The *only* thing you as a retailer representative may do is to try to inform and encourage the customer to change. That may help. Denying someone to play is not the right way, it would be discrimination”

As a teacher, Schubert was persistent in a friendly way, her answers were clear, to the point. We, the students of the retailer training, were to learn that such behavior – talking to a problem customer – how charitable or morally suitable it may ever seem, would simply be inappropriate, possibly illegal too.

The next day, following hours of intense sales exercises at the terminals, it was time for the responsible gaming module of the course. We watched a film, produced in cooperation with the Swedish knowledge firm Spelinstitutet, headed by and highly influenced by psychological research on addiction<sup>9</sup>. The film<sup>10</sup> gives a glimpse of what we presume is typical everyday life at the betting agency. We follow Ben (Björn in Swedish version) - a problem gambling customer and the decision making of two retailer representatives in the shop, we assume it is the owner/manager and her younger colleague. The younger of the two (let's call her Anne) asks her manager (let's call her Pat) for advice on how to help Ben:

(Anne) - I think Ben has gambling problems. He has tried to buy on credit with me too. Should one say something?

(Pat) - No, we are to display and inform, for example the number to Stödlinjen (the Support line, hot line support service for problem gamblers and their relatives)

A bit further into the movie, a relative of Ben's, presumably his wife, calls the shop and asks Anne to deny Ben to purchase any more games. Ben's wife calls out to Anne's and Pat's personal morality and responsibility as fellow human beings. But this time, Anne does not hesitate in her reply:

---

<sup>9</sup> Spelinstitutet is a private consultancy firm that specializes on gambling related education and equipment.

<sup>10</sup> The film may be accessed at the site [www.spelansvar.nu](http://www.spelansvar.nu)

(Anne on the phone to Ben's wife): - You can get help from Stödlinjen (The hot line). I am not responsible. If he wants to gamble he will do so anyway.

(Pat, after overhearing call) – You were brilliant! You helped her without taking responsibility for Ben's behavior.

Concluding the Svenska Spel retailing training module on responsible gaming was a Certification procedure. We were to complete a 9 question multiple choice test that could grant us a Responsible Gaming Certificate (and a diploma to hang on our walls). The 6<sup>th</sup> questions read:

*6. What can you as a retailer do to help someone with gambling problems?*

1. Display information on the Support line and age limits and be careful to ask for ID and not allow purchases on credit.
2. Talk to people you believe have a problem?
3. Ask other customers who [they think] has a gambling problem.

This time, there is no hesitation. We all choose alternative 1. The course has effectively taught us to draw the line of responsibility where Svenska Spel wants it. In the closing discussion, Schubert repeats once more that retailers are "in troubled water" should they start asking customers about gambling problems as "what is much or just enough is entirely individual".

\*\*\*

The Gaming School Training Session teaches retailers to draw certain lines of responsibility. But does this educational effort affect the business practice? In December 2008-March 2009, I had a chance to follow up on the retailer training by participant observation, following three of Svenska Spel's area representatives, (AR)<sup>11</sup> in their daily work visiting "their" supermarkets, games and tobacco shops and restaurants in the Stockholm region. The ARs make up the physical direct link between Svenska Spel and its many thousands of retailers and are in organizational terms another layer of intermediaries between the games operator and its customers in the market.

During my three days of participant observations in the AR- practice, I found reason to believe that The Retailer Gaming School may have an impact on the notions and practices of responsibility amongst retailers. When I asked the sales personnel at the retailers we visited whether they personally had approached a customer with a suspected gambling problem replies were swift, almost as if copied from the training sessions Certification test. Cashier Franzén at supermarket ICA Maxi Häggvik said "No, it is not my business". Her colleague Sundström filled in: "No, we have our folders on display". Sundström went on to tell me about a client she suspected to have a gambling problem and how she approached her: "I show her that I see her. But to say something? No, that would be wrong". Sundström went on to suggest that cashiers selling games could perhaps wear a small brooch on their coats to silently signal their status as certified responsible gaming retailers.

Sales and marketing of games continue to dominate the marketing and communication with customers. Area Representative Lundquist, responsible for supermarkets in the northern suburbs of Stockholm, one of the ARs I followed, was critical of the degree to which the "responsibility before profits" strategy of Svenska Spel is been implemented at retailer level. He told me he had suggested that Svenska Spel, his employer, could exchange a full page add on responsible gaming in the daily newspaper

---

<sup>11</sup> "DA- districtsansvariga" in Swedish.

Dagens Nyheter for a major consumer oriented campaign at the "heart of business" – the retailers. Lundquist's idea was to exchange the traditional sales messages for communication on responsible gaming for two weeks. To integrate rather than to decouple CSR-ambitions from sales. "But...", said Lundquist, "there is not a chance in the world that my idea would materialize".

The only retailer representative of the dozen I met during my AR-participant observations and interviews that had *not* taken the Gaming School training course, proved to be the only one<sup>12</sup> who told me he *had* approached a customer with assumed gambling problems. Hans Erdal, who owns and runs a pizza place in Stockholm city together with his brothers, told me about a customer who came in daily to gambles for 2000-3000 SEK (about 200-300 Euro) on the VLT machines. Erdal told me he knew the man had a family, several small kids at home. Erdal therefore did not hesitate to approach the customer: "I have told him: You cannot win millions! Perhaps it helps him to know I see him? Perhaps he leaves to gamble somewhere else? No matter what, I don't regret approaching him".

#### *Kålmården - Coaching relatives to place an ultimatum*

Contrary to the present popular ideas of voluntary self-regulation characteristic for responsabilization, during my empirical field studies at public and private treatment centers in Sweden (Kålmården and Maria Ungdom in Stockholm) I found that few gamblers contacted the treatment centers voluntarily. In practice, according to the personnel I interviewed, contact is nearly always triggered by a direct or indirect threat from a close relation, typically a family member or relative, often the wife or girlfriend (as a large majority of the gamblers admitted to treatment are men).

---

<sup>12</sup> at least the only one who *openly* admit to doing so.

When during the fall of 2008 I visited the private treatment center in Kålmården<sup>13</sup> the owner and manager Roger Thörn and his colleague Margareta Borggren told me of the many hours spent coaching and educating relatives in order for them to take necessary steps to force their problem gambling relatives or family members to contact the center in what is officially reported as a "voluntary" way. As Thörn explains:

"There are just two options for the relatives unfortunately. Either they live on in this damn mess or they pack their bag, put it by the door and say "either you take the bag and leave or you contact Kålmården or a support association or psychologist. They [the relatives] must do *something*."

Whereas Svenska Spel concentrates its efforts on teaching their retailers to back off and stick to the newly learnt limits of responsibility, Kålmården's treatment center similarly focuses on their organizational "intermediaries", the relatives. Thörn and Borggren both spend hours each week on the phone to relatives teaching them to present their gambling next of kin with an ultimatum. Thörn again:

"Threats of separation, of not being financially sustained, or perhaps of being kicked out of the apartment. That is what may trigger them to call us"

\*\*\*

The National Association for Gambling Addicts (SBRF<sup>14</sup>) also spends a lot of time and effort educating and coaching their "intermediaries", mainly relatives and so called resource persons – ex gamblers who have been free from their addiction for at least six

---

<sup>13</sup> [www.spelbehandling.se](http://www.spelbehandling.se).

<sup>14</sup> "Spelberoendes Riksförbund" in Swedish, [www.spelberoende.se](http://www.spelberoende.se).

months and who have proven suited to lead self-help groups meetings at the local associations. Each year, SBRF organizes two weekend courses financed by the Public Institute for Public Health, *Folkhälsoinstitutet*. The first "Basen" (the Basics) for about 15 resource persons responsible for self-help meetings at the local association departments, the other "The Relatives' weekend" for some 30 relatives. Both of these courses are practically oriented and focused on coping strategies and positive reinforcement.

## **Analysis and discussion**

Processes of responsabilization are urgent to study since it is through these very processes that responsibility may be shaped and shifted from one area or actor to another. Although many recent societal transformations have been analyzed in terms of responsabilization far more studies have been conducted on the responsabilization of citizens than there have been analyzing the responsabilization of *consumers*. The many simplistic accounts of responsibility distribution in markets as a straight forward or even natural, spontaneous process point to the need for more nuanced empirical studies of the specifics and mechanisms of these processes as they are played out in real market settings. Premised on the idea that governance is no more real than the practices that constitute it, it becomes crucial to study "the practice of responsabilization" as a prime underlying social disposition of governance (Shamir 2008a, b). Another reason to study these market practices from a critical perspective is the pre-eminence of consumer empowerment claims which tend to orient critical questions towards the efficacy of particular initiatives rather than the aspirations of the various initiatives and changing role of the state in social welfare (ibid).

The empirical illustrations included in the paper show how responsibility in the making is acted out by organizations and individuals in the contested Swedish gambling market. It shows how institutionalized notions of responsibility and responsibility

distributions are mediated via education and equipment in much the same way, no matter the actors involved – since these measures are all built on the same theoretical ground, informed by the same experts and expertise – not least, in the Swedish case “monopolist” Spelinstitutet (a private responsible gaming consultancy which has been immensely influential)

The paper describes the events that triggered the responsible gaming efforts starting off in the late 1990s and the institutional movements/theories inspiring the transformation. Critical events were: the Swedish EU membership in 1995, the national prevalence study of 1999 and the internet boom which followed shortly thereafter. I have suggested that influential movements and theories informing the transformation were: the neo-liberal/governance agenda, the upcoming future oriented theory of cognitive behavioral therapy (with its ideas on self-regulation and positive enforcement) and the notion of a post modern risk-society with a culture of precaution and a tendency to risk-manage everything.

The Swedish gambling market of the 2000s has been characterized by an idealistic attitude to learning, preferably by preventive voluntary courses and training of all sorts. With the preventive turn taking place about the turn of the century, the idea that gambling consumers as having a capacity to self-control and self-regulate have become wide spread, even institutionalized as taken-for-granted as scientific facts to the point where practices of the SBRF views them as non-political facts, basics of business for an association who calls itself “the gambling addict’s voice”.

Risks associated with gambling are assumed possible to eliminate or minimize drastically if gambling consumers plan ahead and assume a proactive personal responsibility *in time*, while they are still rationale, ideally *before* there are any signs of problems. The organizations operating in the market have joined forces to work out various training programs and equipment aimed at making up and supporting the individual gaming consumers in their (assumed) efforts to navigate the temptations of

consumption society and make a rational choice. And these programs are strikingly similar. Even treatment targeted at problem gamblers, like that of the public open treatment programs of Maria Ungdom's or the self-help meetings of the National Association of Gambling Addicts, are future oriented and do not necessarily involve teaching problem gamblers never to purchase games ever again.

The endorsed philosophy holds that consumers are capable of self-control and that responsible gaming therefore is most efficient when placed directly in the hands of the player. He or she may just need some training and tools to portray the ideal balanced responsible market behavior. However, the empirical illustrations in this paper (see also Alexius 2012 forthcoming) suggest that the responsible gambler is made up both directly and *indirectly*, both positively and *negatively*.

#### *Direct and indirect measures*

Direct measures such as the Svenska Spel Spela lagom Toolbox, the motivational conversations and coping strategies offered to problem gamblers directly are combined by various indirect measures. In their joint efforts to shift down responsibility to gambling consumers, the organizations in the Swedish gambling market first of all direct considerable efforts at proactively constructing and communicating limits of *their own* responsibility typically as that of providing others (mainly individuals) with theirs.... The organizations also spend considerable time and resources educating their *intermediaries*, the retailers (of gambling operators) the resource persons and the relatives (of importance to addiction associations). By constructing and communicating limits for the responsibility of these intermediaries, organizations like gambling operator Svenska Spel, Maria Ungdom Public treatment center, Kålmården's private Treatment center and The National Association of Gambling Addicts, teaches intermediaries to take part in shifting down responsibilities to the individual gamblers they meet in their daily practices. The

intermediaries become intermediaries not only of games or treatment, but also of responsibility.

The film sequence in the Svenska Spel Retailer Gaming School for instance teaches retailers about the limits of Svenska Spel's and their own responsibility. By doing so, the film *indirectly* constructs the responsibility of the gambler. Retailers are taught that it would be inappropriate or simply wrong to deny a customer to purchase games (if not underage or on credit). The film further suggests that gambling problems ought to be understood in terms of an individual behavioral problem (c f Svensson 2005). It is Ben's consumption, not the games as such nor the retailer's sales to him, that bring on the problems. The problem is problem gambler Ben's (perhaps even Ben). Not Svenska Spel's. Not the retailer's and not even primarily his relative's ("the Support line may help", "He will gamble anyways"). To avoid any non-business connections retailers are taught that it would be wrong to start a conversation about the presumed gambling problems of a customer. Retailers are not to act as amateur psychologists.

To avoid any double agency problems they are to play the part of the classical intermediary only, the carrier of goods and messages between the producer and consumer. But despite the dual mission of Svenska Spel (c f Alexius 2011) to combine social responsibility and profitability, and the promise by CEOs of the state owned enterprise to put responsibility before profits (ibid) retailers are taught not to actively direct customers to responsibility leaflets. They are to *provide* them, not actively promote them.

In line with the preventive turn, as illustrated by the Spela lagom self-management services and Playscan self-control product, state morality and CSR have taken the shape of a growing "niche market" targeted at individual gambling consumers now increasingly expected to manage their risky business as consumers of, not only games, but also responsible gaming education and tools (Alexius 2010). Responsible gaming has become something that at least partly can be produced, distributed and actively realized through consumption. It seems state morality has been transformed into a market targeted at

individual gambling consumers who are now increasingly expected to manage their risky business.

### *Negatively defined responsibility*

By way of the indirect organization of responsibility (teaching others to back off and shift down by providing folders, packing their bags etc), the responsibility of the individual gambler is in a sense *negatively* constructed as the responsibility which remains "unclaimed" by other market actors. Could it be that this strategy of an indirectly downshifted responsibility is more subtle and less politically sensitive, than direct confrontations by legally binding contracts etc? Defining one's own responsibility as preventive (compare Chan 2009 and Alexius 2010), as responsible for producing and distributing information, advise and equipment on responsible gambling may also be analyzed in terms of power over the agenda, definitions, etc. It is also in line with the popular rhetoric of voluntariness.

To further ensure the adaptation of the measures, that responsibility is actually being transferred successfully to subjects, the organizations in the Swedish gambling market prefer to *de-couple* any political, critical debates and discussions on responsibility from the individuals. This is done by insulating subjects from alternative views and by employing a subtle yet powerful "rhetoric of care" according to which it would be "contra productive" to question the new responsibility order as it stabilizes in the market. Anyone questioning or criticizing it will be labeled a "victim" or "child". The only normatively tolerable attitude and action is to accept, to look ahead and face up to the "adult responsibility" transferred.

## References

- Abolafia, M. (1996). *Making Markets*. Cambridge Ma. Harvard University Press.
- Adam, B. D. (2005) Constructing the neoliberal sexual actor: Responsibility and care of the self in the discourse of barebackers. In *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, Vol 7(4), Jul-Aug 2005, 333-346. doi: [10.1080/13691050500100773](https://doi.org/10.1080/13691050500100773)
- Ahrne, G. P. Aspers and N. Brunsson (2011) *Hur organiseras marknader?* (How are markets organized?) Unpublished working paper, Score.
- Alexius, S (2012 forthcoming). *Responsibility in the making - responsible gambling from morality to commodity, a study on the Swedish gambling market 1990-2010* (preliminary title). Forthcoming at Lap Lambert Academic Publishing (preliminary)
- Alexius, S (2011) *Play responsibly! A case about the Swedish state gaming operator Svenska Spel and its dual mission to balance profits and social responsibility*. Business case adapted for Higher Education. Available upon request from author at [susanna.alexius@hhs.se](mailto:susanna.alexius@hhs.se). Forthcoming at the European Case Clearing House (ECCH).
- Alexius, S (2010) Responsibility for sale. Commodification and responsabilization in the Swedish gambling market. Paper presented at the conference *Gambling, Entertainment and Finance*, Visby - Gotland University, September 24<sup>th</sup>.
- Alexius, Castillo and Rosenström, (2012 forthcoming). Contested Commodities in Transition-Organizing Value conflicts in the markets of alcohol, gambling and coal. In Tamm-Hallström and Alexius, eds. (2012 forthcoming) *Organizing Value Plurality in Markets*. Edward Elgar (preliminary)
- Alexius, S (2012 b forthcoming) CSR as niche-markets for responsibility? Responsible gaming devises and responsabilization of consumers in the contested internet gambling market. In Brunsson, N and M Jutterström eds. *Forming and Reforming Markets* (preliminary title).
- Aspers, P (2011) *Markets*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bexell, M. (2005). *Exploring Responsibility: Public and Private in Human Rights*
- Bildtgård, T. (2006). "Näringsvetenskapen och regleringen av det svenska åtandet". In Fernler, K & C.F. Helgesson. eds. 2006. *Kloka regler? Kunskap i regelsamhället*. Studentlitteratur.
- Blaszcynski, A; R Ladouceur; H.J. Shaffer (2004) A Science-Based Framework for Responsible Gambling: The Reno Model. In *Journal of Gambling Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 3, pp. 301-317.
- Boltanski, L and E. Chiapello . (2006) *The New Spirit of Capitalism*. London: Verso.
- Callon, M ed. (1998) *The Laws of the Market*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Callon, M., Y. Millo and F. Muniesa eds (2007). *Market Devices*. Blackwell publishing.
- Chan, Chee Khon (2009) "Choosing health, constrained choices" in *Global Health Promotion* 1757-9759; Vol 16(4): 54-57.
- Cane, P. (2002). *Responsibility in Law and Morality*. Oxford and Portland Oregon. Hart Publishing.
- Dahlstedt, M. (2010). "Det är ditt eget val" – Medborgarideal och föräldraskap(ande) i nanny-tv. In *Nordicom Information*, 32 [4]; 41-55
- Dean, M. (1999) *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society*. London: Sage.

- De Goede, M (2005) *A Genealogy of Finance – Virtue, Fortune and Faith*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Dickerson, M (2003). Exploring the Limits of "Responsible Gambling": Harm Minimization or Consumer Protection? Paper presented at the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual conference of the National Association for Gambling Studies, Melbourne.
- The Economist (2006). The new paternalism – the Avuncular state – A smarter, softer kind of paternalism is coming into style, April 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Fligstein, N. (1996) "Markets as Politics: A Political-Cultural Approach to Market Institutions" in *American Sociological Review*, volume 61, issue 4, pp. 656-673.
- Fligstein, N. (2001) *The Architecture of Markets*. Princeton University Press.
- Ferguson, I. (2007) Increasing User Choice or Privatizing Risk? The Antinomies of Personalization. In *British Journal of Social Work*, 37, 387-403.
- Foucault, M (1977). *Discipline and Punish – The Birth of the Prison*. Penguin Books (originally published in French in 1975).
- Foucault, M. (1991): Governmentality. In: Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, & Peter Miller (eds), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, pp. 87-104.
- Froud, Julie, Adam Leaver, Karel Williams, and Wei Zhang (2006). "The Quiet Panic about Financial Literacy" in *Global Finance in the New Century: Beyond Deregulation*, edited by L. Assassi, D Wigan & A. Nesvetilova. Basingstoke, Hants: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Garland, D (2001) *The Culture of Control: Crime and Social Order in Contemporary Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gray, P. (2009). The political economy of risk and the new governance of youth crime. In *Punishment and Society*, vol 11(4): 443-458.
- Gray, G. C. (2009). The Responsibilization Strategy of Health and Safety – Neo-liberalism and the Reconfiguration of Individual Responsibility for Risk. In *British Journal of Criminology*, advance access published March 5, 2009.
- Hacking, Ian. (2006). Making Up People. In *LRB* vol 28 No 16, 17 August.
- Harvey, David (2005) *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Haufler, V (2001). *A public role for the private sector – Industry self-regulation in a global economy*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington: The Brookings Institution Press.
- Helgesson, C-F, H Kjellberg and A Liljenberg (2004). *Den där marknaden. Om utbyten, normer och bilder*. Helgesson, CF., H. Kjellberg, and A. Liljenberg (eds.). Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Hong, H and M Kacpercyk (2009). The Price of Sin: The Effects of Social Norms on Markets. In *Journal of Financial Economics*, 93 pp. 15-36.
- Ihrfors, R. 2007. *Spelfrossa: spelets makt och maktens spel*. PhD dissertation thesis in management, Stockholm University.
- Iltan, S. and T. Basok (2004). Community Government: Voluntary Agencies, Social Justice, and the Responsibilization of Citizens. In *Citizenship Studies* 8(2): 129–144.
- Jessop, B. 2002. "Governance and Metagovernance: On Reflexivity, Requisite

- Variety, and Requisite Irony". On-line paper: <http://comp.lancs.ac.uk/sociology/soc108rj.htm>
- Kjær, A.M. 2004. *Governance*. Polity Press.
- Lahire, B. (2010/2011). *The Plural Actor*. Polity Press.
- Lemke, T (2001). The birth of bio-politics: Michael Foucault's lectures at the College de France on neo-liberal governmentality. In *Economy and Society* v.30, i.2, p. 190-207.
- Lindblom, (2001) *The Market System: What it is, How it works and What to Make of it*. Yale: Yale University Press.
- Lupton, D. (1999) *Risk*. London:Routledge.
- Meyer, J and B Rowan (1977) Institutionalized organizations: formal structure as myth and ceremony. In *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 83 pp. 340–63.
- MacKenzie, D. (2009) *Material Market: How Economic Agents are Constructed*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Miller, D. 2001. "Distributing Responsibilities" i *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, volym 9, nr 4, s. 453-471.
- Nyqvist, A. 2008. *Opening the Orange Envelope: Reform and Responsibility in the Remaking of the Swedish National Pension System*. PhD dissertation thesis in social anthropology, Stockholm University.
- Odin, Pamela and David Knights (1999). "'Discipline needs time": Education for Citizenship and the Financially Self Disciplined Subject", *The School Field X*: 127-52.
- Ortis, L. (2006). *Till Spelfriheten! Kognitiv beteendeterapi vid spelberoende. Manual för behandling individuellt eller i grupp*. [eng To the gaming freedom! Cognitive behavioral therapy for gambling addiction. Manual for individual or group treatment]. Stockholm: Natur och Kultur.
- Power M (2004). Counting, control and calculation: reflections on measuring and management. *Human Relations*, 57(6):765–83.
- Raphael, D (2008) *Getting serious about the social determinants of health: new directions for public health workers*. Promot Educ. 2008; 15(3): 15-20.
- Richter, Berking and Müller-Schmid (2006), Introduction, in *Risk society and the culture of precaution*, Richter, Berking and Müller-Schmid (eds.), pp. 1–18. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rose, N. (1999). *The Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rose, Nikolas. (2006) *The politics of life itself: biomedicine, power and subjectivity in the twenty-first century*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Scoular, Jane and Maggie O'Neill (2007) "Regulating Prostitution. Social Inclusion, Responsibilization and the Politics of Prostitution Reform" in *British Journal of Criminology*, 47, 764-778.
- Shamir, R. (2008a). The Age of responsibilization: on market-embedded morality. In *Economy and Society*, volume 37, no 1, pp. 1-19.
- Shamir, R. (2008b). Corporate Social Responsibility: Towards a New Market-Embedded Morality? In *Theoretical Inquiries in Law*, vol 9(2): 371- 394.

- Share, M and M. Strain (2008). Making schools and young people responsible: a critical analysis of Ireland's obesity strategy. In *Health and Social Care in the Community*, vol 16(3): 234-243.
- Smith, A. (1776/1994) *Den osynliga handen – Adam Smith i urval. Introduktion av Erik Dahmen*. Utdrag ur *The Wealth of Nations*. Timbro förlag.
- Svenska Spel Annual report 2007. Svenska Spel.
- Svensson, O. (2005). *Ungdomars spel om pengar: Spelmarknaden, situationen och karriären*. PhD dissertation thesis in sociology, Lund University.
- Steiner, G. A. and J. F. Steiner.(2008). *Business, Government, and Society: A managerial perspective*, 12th Edition. McGraw-Hill.
- Tamm-Hallström and Alexius, eds. (2012 forthcoming) *Organizing Value Plurality in Markets*. Edward Elgar (preliminary)
- Thekvall, R. 2004. "Do it Yourself: Making up the Self-Employed Individual in the Swedish Public Employment Service" i Garsten, C. och K. Jacobsson. red 2004. *Learning to be Employable: New Agendas on Work, Responsibility and Learning in a Globalizing World*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Whitson, Jennifer R. (2009) "Identity Theft and Challenges of Caring for Your Virtual Self" in *Interactions*, March-April 2009, pp. 41-45.
- Williams, Toni (2007). "Empowerment of Whom and for What? Financial Literacy Education and the New Regulation of Consumer Financial Services" in *Law & Policy*, vol. 29. No 2.
- Øygarden G. ed. (2001), *Vår tids ekonomism. En kritik av nationalekonomien* [Economicism of our time – A critique of Economics]. Boréa.