

# The extraordinary case of the monopolisation of the slot machine market in Norway

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# The monopoly story from a stakeholder view

My sample:

1 (previous) minister  
1 bureaucrat  
1 gambling authority  
1 gambling business  
2 sports associations

1 humanitarian org.  
2 private operators  
1 therapist/special int gr  
1 self-help gr/special int gr  
1 journalist

# Questions:

When did you first hear about the monopolisation and how was it justified?

What role did you and your institution have in the process and how did you experience it?

What consequences did the process have for society and for your institution?

# Why?

The actors' stories reveal the driving forces and hence the structure of power creating the market

Raising **awarness**, increasing **knowledge** and thereby stimulate to **discussions** about the forces contributing to stabilize and change markets and socities

If necessery, contribute to **change-making actions**

# The «official» story

- 1995: organisation of public utility can offer slots
- 1998: JD tries to restrict – fails
- 2001: Slots from JD to KKD
- 2002: KKD tries to restrict – resistance
- 2003: Monopoly passes in the Parliament
- 2004: The monopoly is brought to Oslo Town Court, Court of Appeal, EFTA, Court of Supreme
- 2006: Bank note acceptor ban
- 2007-2010: Old slots replaced by Norsk Tipping's «Multix»

# Lack of awarness

- The monopoly was initiated by Norsk Tipping around 1998.
- The Gambling Authority heard about the monopoly in 2002 – from Norsk Tipping, not from their owner KKD
- Therapists, self-help groups, journalists and others symphatising with the problem gamblers' cause seemed not to have heard about the monopoly until 2006. They worked for a total ban, not monopoly.

# Different roles

- *The Minister* got support from the 10H and conducted the case in the court system
- *Norsk Tipping* initiated the monopoly and replaced the old slots with new machines
- *The 10H* accepted the monopoly
- *Reserchers* confirmed that problem gambling was a social health problem
- *Therapists, self-help groups, special interests groups, journalists and problem gamblers* increased the public awarness in the press
- *The private operators* fought for their rights to offer slot machines, supported by ESA - but failed

# Consensus

Most actors are positive to the monopoly.

*«Indeed, there are things that could be improved, but if we have to have slots, we think that the monopoly is the best solution.»* (Head of Spilleavhengighet Norge)

# Yet, people worry...

- The double role of the state: owner and regulator
- Norsk Tipping's new machines becomes more aggressive and some of their new games are similar to those which were banned in 2007 (Belago, online games).
- The state is dishonest and makes free with the gambling market by replacing private games with their own or by making stronger rules for private operators than for themselves.

# Overall,

*“this is a story about a state and a company that know what they want—and take what they want, first of all by making use of the power that has been given to them through formal political channels, but also by making alliances with special interests groups working to combat a ‘shared enemy’: the private operators and the online businesses offering their games from abroad” (Borch, forthcoming).*

# A problem?

Not yet