

With the crisis, less money is wagered but more people play

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Scientists from the Institute of Policy and Governance (whose initials in Spanish are IPOLGOB) at the UC3M have over the last three years compiled information and carried out a series of studies which have enabled them to create profiles of people engaged in activities linked to games of chance in Spain. According to their results, the development of the world economic crisis and its effects on Spain have directly affected the field of leisure and the gaming sector. From 2009 to 2011, the number of people who play has increased, but these people risk smaller amounts. Furthermore, they participate especially in passive gaming (lotteries, football pools and the like), while regular players play less frequently. The researchers point out that, as a result, the total amount wagered has decreased in the last year.

In 2011, 63.8% of people between the ages of 18 and 75 in Spain acknowledged they play some game of chance regularly. In 2009, this figure was only 49.4%. "The crisis has encouraged people who play only every now and again to wager small amounts, driven by the desire or hope of winning some prize, large or small, that would solve their [economic problems](#) or at least alleviate them," asserts Fco. Javier Ruíz Martínez, Professor in the Department of Political Science and Sociology at the UC3M and member of the IPOLGOB. "In times of crisis," he adds, "society is given to feeding on dreams and games of chance always create the expectation to win." In short, luck is in greater demand now than it was some years ago.

On-Line Gaming Moves 650 Million Euros

The report also analyzes the percentage of the population that plays on-line. Last year, it rose to 6.4% of the 18 to 75 age group, whereas in 2012 it has diminished slightly to 6.2%, or about 2,170,000 people. Individually, on-line players play less than in 2010, with the Internet gaming market in Spain worth a total of 649.2 million euros. This is 3.3% less than in 2010, when it dropped to 671.2 million euros. The effect of the crisis has definitely been felt in Internet gaming.

In relation to ethical considerations, which are now more important because of the alleged business activities focused on Eurovegas, the researchers remark that the public generally agrees that gaming should be taxed. However, they specify, there are activities which should be taxed more, or which are more legitimately or efficiently taxed: the purchase of luxury items, activities that are harmful to the environment and capital gains from large company shares or profits. They conclude that public opinion and the opinion of on-line gamers coincide on this matter. "As typically is the case in countries of a Catholic cultural tradition, there is a certain social permissiveness toward some activities linked to gambling, like the classic lotteries. However, straight betting or activities linked to casino games and the like are not morally accepted by small segments of the population, even if the modernization that Spain has undergone in recent decades has masked that opposition within the main beliefs that make up the value system of Spanish society," notes Ruíz.

Professor José Ignacio Cases, coordinator of the research group in the IPOLGOB, explains that the goal of this research is "to begin a meditation from the academic point of view about a reality that is largely unknown in Spain: the gaming industry, which affects many workers, moves many millions of euros and involves many citizens, almost all adult citizens."

Additional information from the report:

Playing a game of chance is universal behavior in Spain: only 7.9% of people residing in [Spain](#) report that they have never played and 1.7% have not played in more than five years.

Wager amounts vary greatly among the players. Most of the regular players say they wager between 6 and 30 euros a month.

Players devote barely 10 minutes per working day to gaming, which reveals that it is an impulsive activity, especially in national lotteries.

For 70.4% of on-line players, gaming is a pastime, but for 29.6% it is an activity pursued to make money. This opinion is true especially for on-line players 45 years of age and older, and for everyday and weekly players.

The possible privatization of the national lotteries is known by 57.5% of the population and there is evidence of mistrust over the possible change from a public operator to a private one.

Provided by Carlos III University of Madrid

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