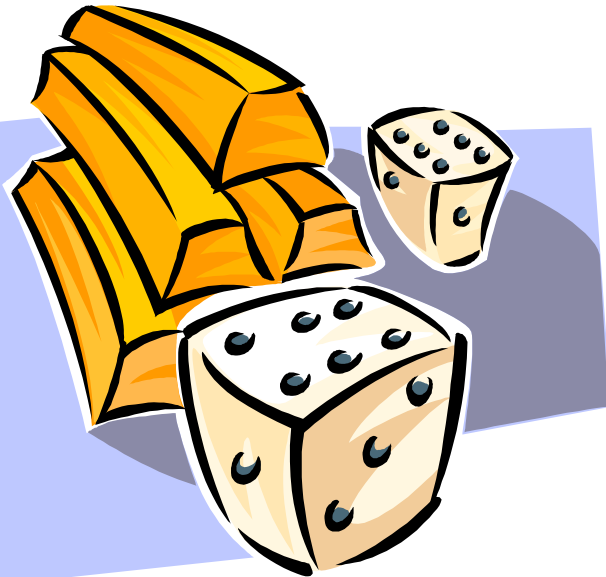


Analysis of Gambling as a Programmatic Option in Senior Centers

Responsible Gambling Council Conference
April 2002



Jennifer Higgins
Gerontology Institute
University of Massachusetts Boston, US
Tel: 617-287-7077
E-mail: jhiggins@amherst.edu



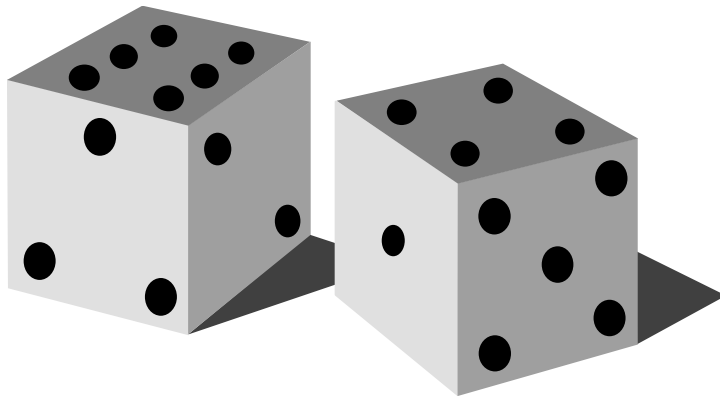
Background

- Publicly funded senior centers established through Older Americans Act of 1965
- Estimated 12,000 across America
- Federal and state regulation of senior centers is scattered and largely concerned with the Title III nutrition program
- Presently no regulation of senior center gambling activities despite evidence of increasing problems associated with offering them (Higgins, 2001)



Study Sample

- Nationwide mail survey of 1100 senior centers



- 18 states:

Alaska, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Vermont, Washington, Wyoming



Study Sample (cont.)

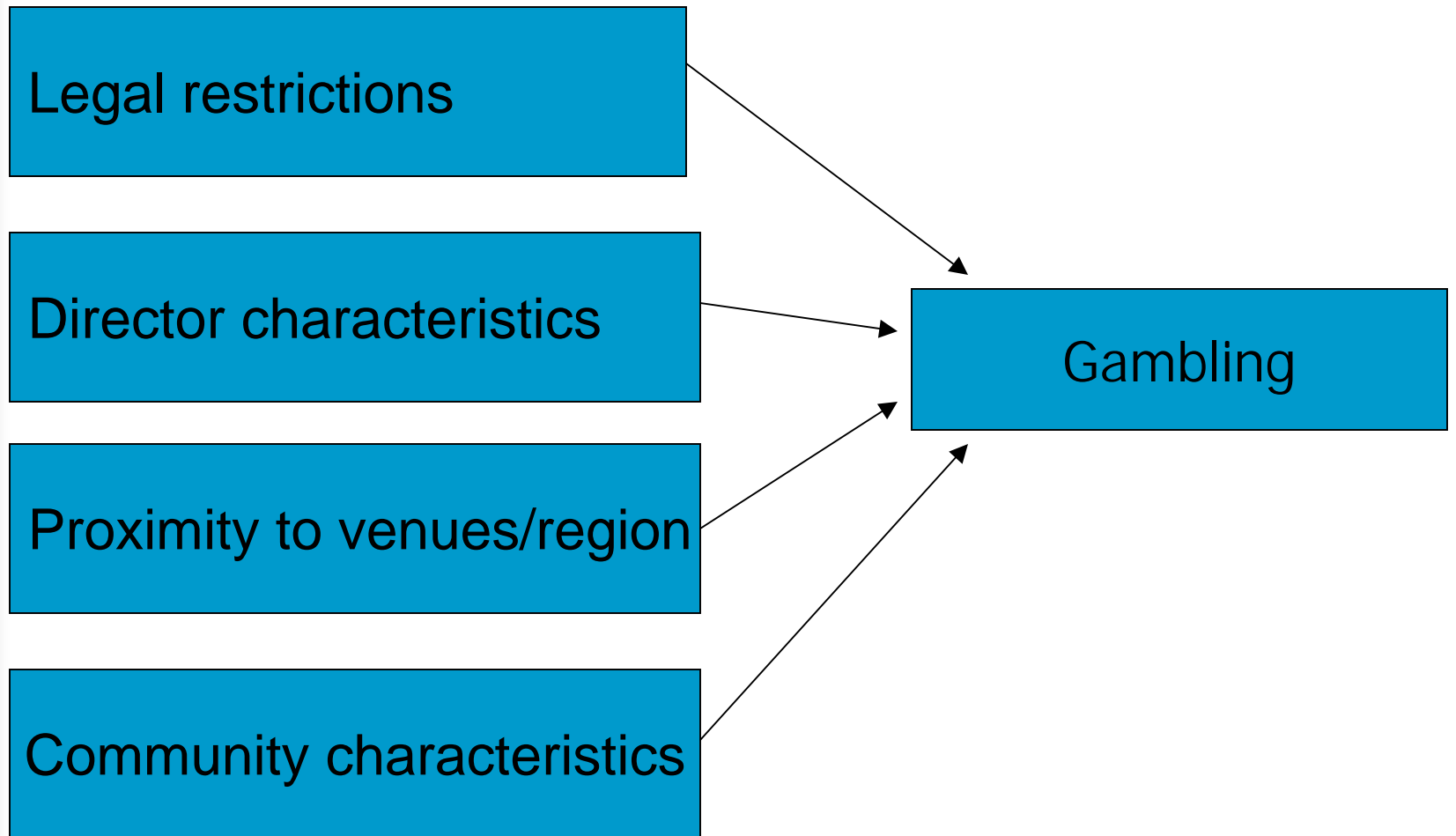
- Case studies of 7 communities engaged in issue of senior center gambling
 - Barre, MA
 - Eau Claire, WI
 - Philadelphia, PA
 - Amherst, NY
 - Norwich, CT
 - Palm Springs, CA
 - Las Vegas, NV



Main Research Questions

- Why do some centers offer gambling activities while others avoid them?
- To what extent is the issue of senior center gambling on the local agenda?

Conceptual Model





Hypotheses: Legal Restrictions

- *It was hypothesized that...*
- centers located in areas where there are restrictions on gambling offerings will be less likely to offer gambling activities.
- a corollary was that it was expected that such centers would be more likely to offer non-money gambling.



Hypotheses: Director Characteristics

- *It was hypothesized that...*
- directors who report feeling greater comfort with offering gambling activities would be more likely to do so;
- directors who have been in their positions for more years would be less likely to offer gambling activities.



Hypotheses: Proximity & Region

- *It was hypothesized that...*
- centers more than 50 miles from nearest gambling venue would be more likely to offer off-site gambling activities;
- centers located in north, south and west would be more likely to offer gambling activities and that centers in Midwest would be less likely to offer because of legal restrictions.



Hypotheses: Community Characteristics

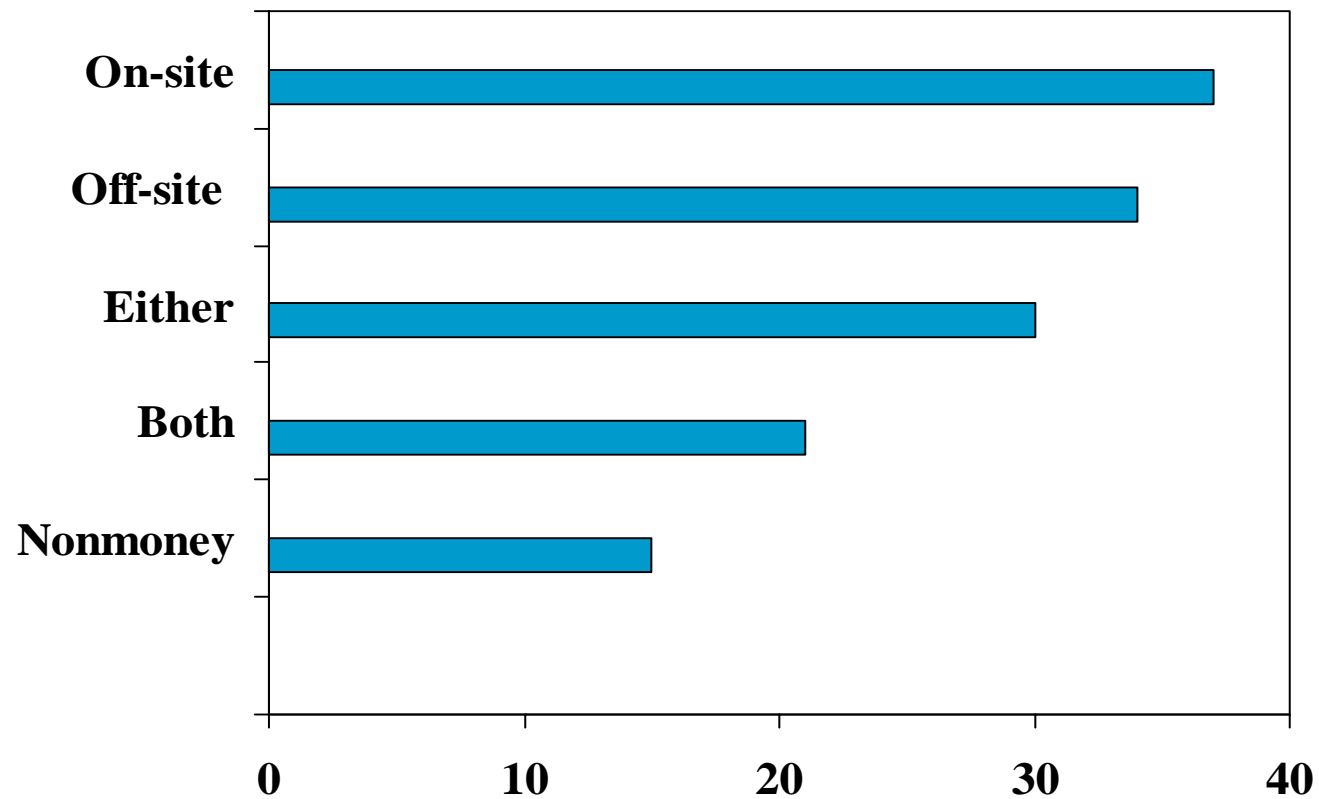
- *It was hypothesized that...*
- the older is the population in which the center is located, the less likely it would be that activities will be offered;
- the less well educated is the population, the more likely it would be that activities would be offered;
- communities with lower per capita income would be more likely to offer gambling because their clientele are more likely to participate in them;
- a competing expectation is that the same types of communities would be less likely to offer activities on account of center user's inability to afford them.



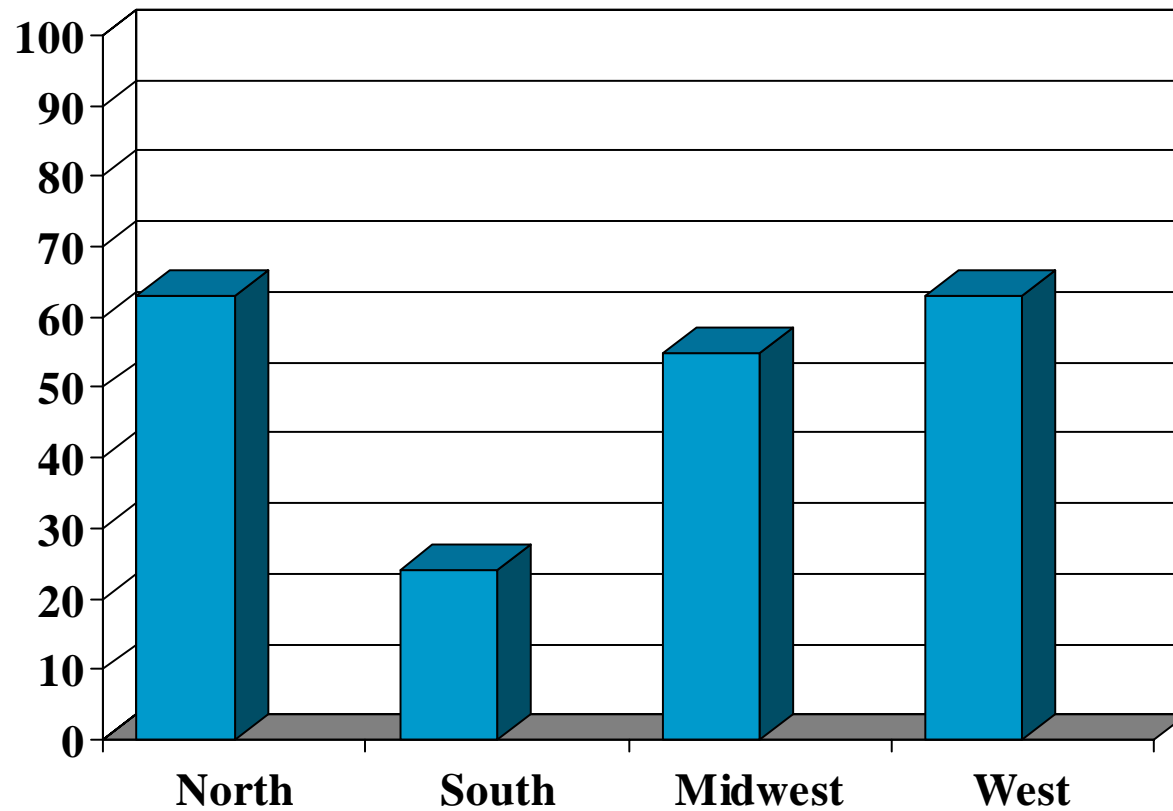
Descriptive Statistics

- Average annual budget \$220,000
- Average of 1200 participants
- Majority (50%) located within 50 miles from nearest legal gambling venue
- Nearly 30% are affected by local gambling ordinances
- Majority (50%) report that there is opposition to gambling
- Opposition to off- and on-site gambling is equal
- Nearly half of the directors reported that they are “not at all” comfortable offering gambling

Percent gambling by type (N=371)

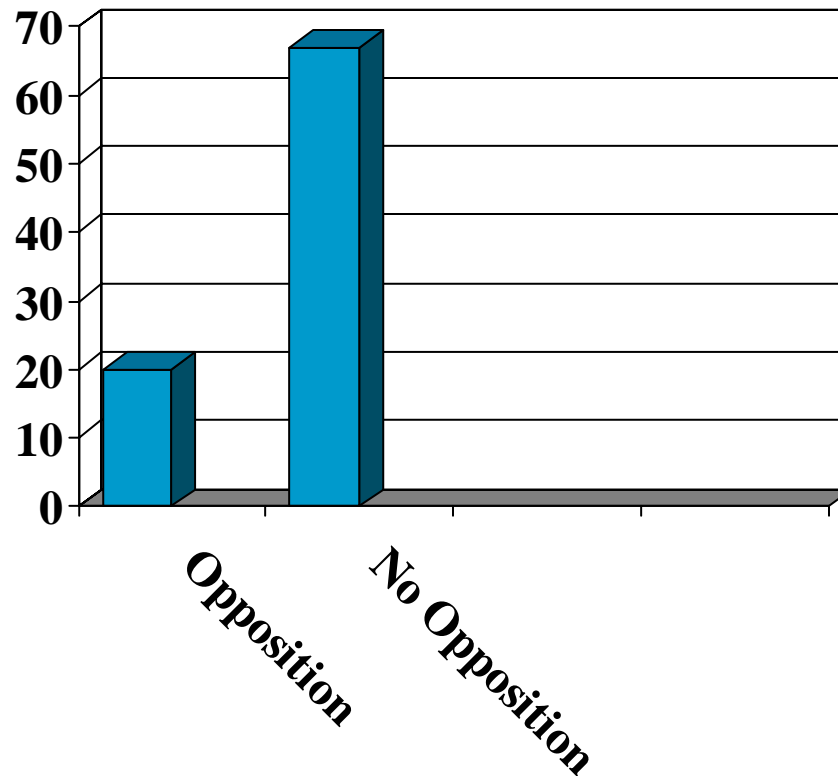


Percent gambling by region



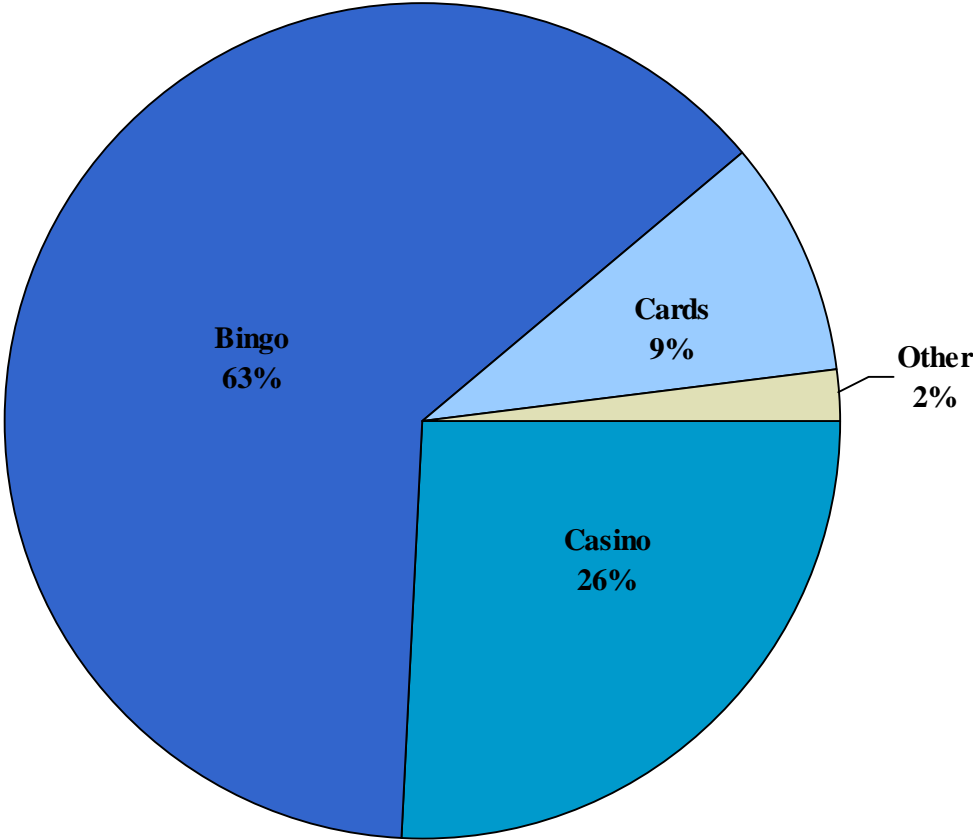
Pearson chi2(3) = 36.7482 Pr = 0.000

Percent gambling in presence of opposition



Pearson $\chi^2(1) = 83.6724$ Pr = 0.000

Gambling activities by percent (n=187)





Reasons for offering gambling

- 27% report that gambling activities benefit their center by attracting users
- 11% report that gambling activities provide needed funds
- 2% report that activities are offered for the perks received (i.e., free meals)



Logistic Regression Analysis Findings

- Regulations have a significant negative effect on off-site gambling activity offerings
- Results do not, however, support the hypothesis that non-money gambling activities are more likely to be offered where legal restrictions exist



Regression Findings (cont.)

- Certain director characteristics have direct effects on senior center gambling offerings
- Directors who report feeling less comfortable about offering gambling activities are less likely to offer on- and off-site gambling activities
- Results indicate that directors who have been in their positions for a greater number of years are less likely to offer only non-money gambling



Regression Findings (cont.)

- Results do not support the hypothesis that proximity to legal gambling venue has a direct influence on gambling activity offerings
- Possible explanation: wide range of distances from venues in this particular sample (0-1000 miles)



Regression Findings (cont.)

- Regional variation has direct effects on gambling offerings
- Centers located in the north and south are more likely to offer gambling activities
- Results do not confirm the related hypothesis, however, that centers in Midwest are less likely to offer activities because of legal restrictions in effect in that region



Regression Findings (cont.)

- Per capita income is the only community variable that has direct effects on gambling activity offerings
- Centers in communities with lower per capita income are less likely to offer gambling activities
- Results do not confirm the competing hypothesis, however, that centers in communities with lower per capita income are more likely to offer gambling on account of their inclination toward them



Subsample Analysis

- Subsample analyses were conducted to assess the degree to which gambling activity characteristics (i.e, benefits, duties, problems, prevention programs) influence the offering of senior center gambling activities.



Subsample Regression Analysis Findings

- Results indicate that gambling activity characteristics have direct effects on non-money gambling offerings.
- Centers that report receiving benefits from and experiencing problems with gambling activities are more likely to offer non-money gambling.



Case Study Findings

- Senior center gambling is on local agenda
- Devastating impact of casino development on several case study communities
- Lack of monitoring by government at all levels
- Respondents attributed the lack of attention afforded the issue of senior problem gambling to growing financial dependence of state and local government on gambling revenues
- Cyclical nature of gambling industry's impact on case study communities



Research Implications

- Prevention and education programs to target:
 - centers in north and south which are more likely to offer gambling activities
 - centers with directors who report feeling uncomfortable offering gambling activities
 - centers in communities of mid-range per capita income
 - centers that derive a high percentage of their total or activity budgets through gambling activity offerings
 - centers with gambling problems that are not currently using non-money gambling activities