



An Investigation into the Association between Gambling and Horse Racing in Ireland.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The opening chapter of this text will provide a in-dept overview of this investigation in its entirety. The below includes an overall justification as to the context and reasoning as to why this study is justified and appropriate. The title of this paper is “*An Investigation into the Association between Gambling and Horse Racing in Ireland*” with the research question for this paper being “*Is there a societal association between gambling and horse racing in Ireland?*”. The researcher has chosen this research question as they understand that gaining the views from those directly involved in this association will provide the most comprehensive investigation of this research. The researcher has identified this question to be of importance as they understand the preconceived social perception of both industry’s and how at times, they are labelled negatively by society due to misinformed media presentations and the stigmatised beliefs. The “null” and alternative hypothesis used for this research project are that “There is no association between gambling and horse racing” and “There is an association between gambling and horse racing”. These hypotheses are so clear and definite in nature that the researcher will be able to clearly define the answers to the research question. The researcher aims to provide an unbiased investigation into the research question, providing details and background knowledge of both the gambling and horse racing industries. This project will be conducted so as to provide the reader with a basic understanding of the association between gambling and horse racing in Ireland.

Background

As a base topic gambling as whole has been widely researched and discussed in Ireland. However, due to the constant changes in the gambling and national environment much of these studies have become outdated. Gambling in Ireland is major social issue and in this investigation my aim is to identify the context of this issue while also incorporating the world of horse racing and the gambling culture associated with it. Generally, horse racing is perceived as huge gambling sport and at times receives negative press due to its association with gambling as well as its association with gambling firms. It is my opinion that the Horse Racing industry glorifies gambling due its social perception as being a luxurious sport with large volumes of money in association. In this investigation the researcher aims to describe

this social perception while also gaining an understanding as to the extent in which gambling is associated with horse racing.

The reasoning as to why the researcher has conducted this study is because of the personal interest into the perceived association between gambling and horse racing in Ireland. The academic background of the researcher is based predominantly in business with a huge influence from analysis. Working professionally in the gambling industry the researcher has observed the workings of the industry and has seen first-hand the problems associated with gambling when control is lost. Having a clear understanding of the industry the researcher has also been able to observe the certain sports through which gambling is most common in Ireland and has identified a question point surrounding its association with the sport of Horse Racing. The researcher identifies that this investigation poses as a great way to pursue a development in his knowledge of both the professional world he works within, as well as developing his interest in the sport of horse racing.

This investigation has allowed the researcher to use their analysis skills to illustrate clearly the association between gambling and horse racing while also allowing him to point out some concerning problems associated with the social perception of both industries.

Depending on which industry an individual may operate in there is an agreed consensus that both industries operate in tandem. The gambling industry would be at a huge loss without the incorporation of horse racing within, the researcher has also found that the horse racing industry simply would not operate without the support of the gambling industry. This co-dependency is where the researcher has found the most issues. The horse racing industry in Ireland is vast, with a reliance on the sport for income in rural areas. In this investigation the researcher has identified and outlined the ways in which this association between gambling and horse racing is perceived by society while also illustrating what this association means for both industries.

Organisation of Dissertation

This investigation has been broken down into six separate chapters. Below they are described as to the content of each.

Introduction.

This is the current chapter through which the researcher has given some background and justification to the research at hand.

Literature Review.

The literature review is comprised of four headings. These headings cover current and past academic resources, studies and some theories associated with the subject. The aim of this section is to provide the researcher with as much factual evidence as possible so as to aid them in further sections.

Research Methodology.

The main focus within this chapter is on the methods the researcher has chosen to gather data. The researcher has chosen to use a qualitative approach to this research as they feel this method will best illustrate and explain their findings. For the qualitative part of this research the researcher has framed their analysis using the “research onion” presented by Saunders (Saunders, 2019,).

Research Analysis and Findings.

In this section of the text, the researcher presents the findings of all research gathered through the chosen research methods. These findings were gathered in order to reach the objectives described in the previous chapter.

The Discussion.

This chapter has been used to elaborate on the findings from the chapter prior. This chapter is used to describe fully any and all findings while also incorporating the information found in the literature review. The aim of this chapter is to illustrate to the reader what was found in a comprehensible manner.

Conclusions.

The final chapter to this dissertation is the conclusion. In this chapter the researcher presents the reader with a strict overview of the main findings from the investigation. These findings are then used to put forward a general conclusion while also

incorporating any recommendations the researcher feels will improve the issues at hand.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Hart (1998) suggests that a literature review as the selection of available documents that are either published or unpublished on a topic that contain information, ideas, data and evidence written from a particular standpoint to fulfil certain aims or express certain views on the nature of the topic and how it is to be investigated, and the effective evaluation of these documents in relation to the research being proposed. (Hart, 1998). The process of carrying out a literature review involves many different aspects that must be performed in sequence so as to reach the end target. Exploring the different literature associated with the topic at hand is vital establish the basis of your project. This review will provide a bridge between the readers preconceived ideas surrounding a topic and the factual evidence already gathered without having to peruse external sources.

This Literature Review has been divided into a few different parts. This is done as to give clear and concise insight into the different operations of the gambling industry with a focus on its association with Thoroughbred Horse Racing in Ireland.

The first section of the review is a breakdown of gambling in Ireland and some of the most prevalent ways in which the Irish population chooses to gamble, providing the project with a quantitative reference point for gambling in Ireland. The second section covers the Horse Racing industry and its importance to the Irish economy. This section will provide an understanding to the reader of the overall impact of the industry and its importance within Irish Society. This third section will tie give the reader their first view of the two industries operating in tandem. Its aim being to show co-dependency of both industries in Ireland. Here the paper will challenge the idea that gambling is associated with Horse Racing and some of the affects this has had both positively and negatively in the past on both industries.

All of these sections will have other subheadings through which other smaller elements will play a role in providing the most in-depth overview of the different sections with the aid of different published and academic sources. The overall aim of this literature is to provide the reader with a strong understanding of both industry's and to plant a seed as to potential positives and negatives arising through close association.

Gambling in Ireland.

The world of gambling in Ireland is an industry in disarray. Gambling can be described as a way in which people wager money on a certain outcome, usually betting against the “house” a term used to describe generally Casino firms but in more recent times has been used in an industrial sense with individuals betting against huge gambling corporations (Kerr et al, 2021, p.1). In Ireland gambling is hugely prevalent in all walks of life. The industry itself is growing and expanding at a rapid pace, with revenue and products being the main driver of this expansion. Traditional forms of gambling such as, Horse Racing and Dog Racing is a mainstay in Irish Culture however as time goes on gambling corporations are turning to more technological ways in which they can get the Irish consumer to gamble more frequently. This is done through the creation of online gambling methods such as casinos and other gambling games. Another driver of change within the industry is the development in technology. For years Irish people have been using scratch cards and lottery tickets as their way of gambling but in more recent times, Mobile Phone apps such as Paddy Power and Ladbrokes are being used mostly as a way in which consumers can gamble. Figures released by the Department of Health 2019 for a report from 2014/2015 gives a clear and concise understanding of the gambling environment in Ireland (National Advisory Committee on Drugs and Alcohol (NACDA), 2018, p.1). According to the report in the last year 64.5% of people who took part in the survey reported some form of gambling with 41.4% of people report a gambling on a monthly basis or more frequently (National Advisory Committee on Drugs and Alcohol (NACDA), 2018, p.3). The finding was very conclusive when it came to the different demographics through which gambling was most common with. Those aged between 55-64 were reported to be most likely to gamble in the last year with 72.4%

of those within that age bracket reporting gambling within their lifestyle however these numbers can be derived through the fact that the most common form of gambling in Ireland is lottery tickets and scratch cards with an also large percentage of people reporting bingo as another way of gambling (National Advisory Committee on Drugs and Alcohol (NACDA), 2018. P.4). In terms of problem gambling and addiction Ireland has one of the worst gambling problems in the world with Ireland being the fourth biggest gambling nation in the EU according to Brian Hutton and the Irish Times (Hutton, 2021). Globally Ireland has the 14th highest average loss amount on gambling according to analysts H2 Gambling Capital. As of 2020 almost half of this gambling was done online. More than 44% of all online bets are made from smartphones and these figures in 2020 were all driven due to the pandemic and its effects on social interaction (Hutton, 2021).

A report published by the Health Research Board in 2022 also provides insight into the different ways in which people gamble. Using the results of the National Drug and Alcohol Survey 2019 – 20 they were able to illustrate the results of this survey and shine a light on the different methods that are most synonymous with gambling in Ireland. Some of the most important findings of this report are noted as 7.8% of those with gamble in Ireland have placed a bet at a horse or dog racing meeting, the third most common type of gambling on the report after people who bought a lottery ticket or scratch card in person which was 42.4% and people who gambled in a bookmaker's shop at 9.0% (Mongan et al., 2022). The report however does not consider the sports that are gambled in a bookmaker's shop.

Horse Racing in Ireland.

According to the House of the Oireachtas in Ireland, the Thoroughbred Racing industry is worth about €1.84 billion to the Irish economy (HRI, 2019, P.2). This figure is derived through the employment of thousands of people while also accounting for the committees and groups that allow for the industry to be maintained. The industry itself operates mainly in rural Ireland due to the availability of land and other natural resources needed to sustain the industry and the animals within (HRI, 2022). In Ireland there are two main types of horse racing, flat racing and national hunt racing. Flat racing is as described whereby horses race to see who reaches the

finish line fastest. Whereas National Hunt racing is a sport whereby horses must jump a number of obstacles in the fastest time so as to reach the finish line first. The Horse Racing Ireland report is the most up to date document that can be utilised so as to illustrate the current climate of the industry in Ireland. As the report describes it is clear that Horse Racing in Ireland is developing at a rapid pace. The industry can only be operated with the support of paying owners and ensuring that there are an adequate number of animals in training (Horse Racing Ireland, 2017, p.4). A huge driving force of the industry also is commercial sponsorship as these sponsorships are what entices people to have horses in the first place. Companies and Corporations sponsor races so as to gain publicity within the sport. 2019 was a great year for the industry as the statistics show a development in almost every aspect. In 2019 the number of flat races was up by over 7% while the increase in participants in National Hunt races also increased in roughly 4%, this coupled with the increase in commercial sponsorship by 4% also meant for the strongest year to date for the industry (Horse Racing Ireland, 2019, p.22). Another aspect of the industry worth considering when discussing YOY growth would be the attendance figures at the different race meetings. Attendance at this race meeting is vital for the organic growth in the industry as it allows people. In 2019 there was a huge uncertainty around Brexit which prevented some UK customers getting to some of the Irish racetracks however the industry was able to maintain crowds at different events, with an increase in attendance around the 3% mark. 2019 also marked a milestone for the Irish racing industry with Tiger Roll winning his second consecutive Grand National being only the second horse in history to achieve such a feat (Horse Racing Ireland, 2019, p.58).

Economic and Social Impact of Horse Racing in Ireland.

Horse Racing Ireland (HRI) and the Irish Horseracing Regulatory Board (IHRB) are the two main regulatory bodies for the sport of horse racing in Ireland (IHRB Home, n.d.). These two organisations are the cornerstones of the sport in this country and ensure that the sport is run in an ethical and respectable manner. These organisations are responsible for the running and organising of all activities within the sport of horse racing in Ireland.

In 2017 Deloitte on Behalf of Horse Racing Ireland published a report on the economic impact of Irish breeding and racing. This report provided HRI with an in-depth investigation into the industry in which it operates, providing detailed information on the overall economic impact, economic factors and domestic importance of the industry in Ireland. Some key figures that were outlined in the report illustrate the economic impact of the Horse Racing Industry in Ireland. In 2016 the total expenditure of the industry was €1.84bn with 28,900 people being directly or indirectly employed within the industry given the amount of people operating within the industry be it directly or indirectly it is important that the industry is able to operate at all times so as to sustain those who are employed within (Horse Racing Ireland, 2017, p.4). As per the report published by HRI, there are three main bodies who drive industry expenditure, Owners, Trainers and Racecourses. *“Owners are estimated to have incurred gross expenditure in excess of €162m on close to 8,600 horses who were in Training in Ireland at some point, this equating to €18,800 per horse”* (Horse Racing Ireland, 2017, p.6). This expenditure is spread amongst many different subsets of the industry such as trainers and jockeys directly, with other indirect fee’s being incurred too such as vet bills and transport costs. Racehorse owners form the foundation of the industry as they provide the financial injection that is spread throughout the rest of the industry. An example of this is – A owner pays a trainer who trains, feeds and cares for the horse. This trainer then uses this money to pay for the feed of the animal while also paying his stable staff to train and care for the animal. *“The labour-intensive nature of the training means that the wages of 2,800 stable staff represent the largest expenditure item for trainers”* (Horse Racing Ireland, 2017, p.6).

In Ireland over 25% of the population stated they are interested in horse racing. This 25% equates to nearly 900,000 people (Horse Racing Ireland, 2017, p.7). The significance behind this number is that there is potential for the Horse Racing Industry to grow further. In the HRI Strategic Plan 2020 to 2024 it is set out clearly the direction in which the industry regulators wish to strive towards. The aim is by 2024 to have increased the national interest in racing from 25% to 30%, which in turn will increase racecourse attendance to 1.5 million by 2024 an increase of 200,000 on figures published in 2016 (CIT, sc1, pg11). The planned development of the industry is also set to increase total economic expenditure as well as increasing total

employment within the industry. HRI's aim by 2024 is to increase total economic expenditure from €1.84billion to €2.5billion while also creating 6,100 more jobs, increasing the total number of people employed both directly and indirectly in the industry from 28,900 to 35,000 (HRI Strategic Plan, 2021)

Gambling and its contribution to the Horse Racing Industry.

As mentioned, previous the Horse Racing Industry relies almost solely on the owners of racehorses putting their time and money into the training and racing of these animals with the only lure being that maybe one day, they could own a winning racehorse. If a horse wins a race the owner of the horse will receive the prizemoney associated. This prize money is derived through sponsorships and donations of business, organisations and at times gambling firms. An article written by Jessica Lamb in November 2018 provides an overview as to the levels of contribution these gambling firms provide to the Horse Racing Industry. Lamb states that betting companies do not provide sponsorship for Flat racing but do for National Hunt Racing. In Ireland betting companies sponsor 31% of Irelands 35 Grade One Races (Lamb, 2018). Grade One races are the most prestigious and valuable races in the calendar where only the best Thoroughbred horses can compete, the prize money for these races is substantially higher than that of the average race. As of 2017 the different gambling companies and betting exchanges contributed €766,750 towards race sponsorship in Ireland. This sponsorship for the most part makes up the prize money associated with the different races, although not making up the full figure this sponsorship makes up the majority of it.

In 2017 the total prize money on offer for the calendar year was expected to be at €60 million (Horse Racing Ireland, 2017, p.34). This means that the €766,750 contributed from the betting industries makes up roughly 1.2% of all prize money in Ireland. Another way in which gambling contribute towards the racing industry is through the government driven Horse and Greyhound Racing fund which is primarily funded from a 1% tax that is placed on off – course betting (Horse Racing Ireland, 2017, p.49). In 2016 it was estimated that the prize money per runner in Ireland was €2,000. Given the review of literature above, this equates to loss of €16,800 per horse per year for all owners who invest within the industry, this loss coupled with the price paid

initially for the animal illustrates a huge expense that comes being involved in the sport. It is imperative that these figures begin to shift in favour of those investing within the industry in the coming years, as these losses are not sustainable for owners.

Research Question

Is there a societal association between gambling and horse racing in Ireland?

Chapter 3

Research Methodology.

Research methodology is described as the approach taken whereby research troubles are solved in a systematic and thorough manner by Mishra and Alok (Mishra and Alok, 2017, P.9). Within a research methodology we must include the ways in which this research is carried out. This is known as the research methods. This includes the different techniques and methods that have been used so as to conduct the different pieces of research for the project. In order to provide an in - depth level of research it is important to have a vast understanding of the methodology through which the researcher chooses to carry out the investigation.

In this study the main purpose of the researcher was to investigate the association between gambling and horse racing in Ireland. For the purpose of this investigation there will be many different topics discussed in this chapter so as to provide a foundation and direction through which this topic will be researched.

The main purpose of this study as mentioned previously is to investigate the association between gambling and the thoroughbred racing industry. Given that this research falls under an interpretative paradigm it is important to keep in mind that the research carried out will be subjective in nature (Floyd, 2008, p.37). The research that is carried out will be based on an individual perspective with Interviews and a survey providing the basis for this research. The answers of these interviews and surveys can be interpreted in many different ways and does not specifically set out to give a definitive yes or no response to the study.

Research Objectives

It is that when setting research objectives that they are clear and concise statements that illustrate a clear direction through which the researcher wishes to conduct his investigation. It provides guidance and definition, which is the used to develop the line of questioning that will be used in the interviews and surveys. Below are three different objectives that have been created so as to aid the researcher in his investigation.

To investigate the social perception of gambling as an Industry in Ireland.

This objective will provide a basis as to the way in which the gambling industry is perceived in Ireland. It will illustrate a clear understanding of the way in which society as a whole view the industry which will allow the researcher to make any declarations of bias or favour when correlating an association between both industries. This objective also allows the researcher to understand different geopolitics that may be at play within the investigation.

To investigate the degree of prevalence in which gambling is associated with horse racing.

This objective is the most important of the three. It puts in motion the idea of the association in question and will provide a clear definition between both industries. It is important when questioning under this objective that the different lines of questioning are open with no elements of leading or speculation. This objective will give the researcher there first indication of association between both industries.

To investigate the association between gambling and horse racing.

Objective three is subjective to the findings of objective two. Should a conclusion or indication be drawn through analysis of findings of objective two there will no reason to pursue an investigation into objective three. This objective will give the reader the conclusive evidence needed to illustrate and describe the association between both industries as stated in the research question. This objective will also

illustrate to the reader the positives and negatives of the relationship to both industries individually and collectively.

Structure of Methodology.

So as to gather a fully comprehensive investigation the researcher has chosen to use the research onion and some of elements incorporated within so create a conclusive and thorough investigation into the association between the gambling and horse racing industries. To achieve high quality results the researcher has chosen to adopt different elements of the “research onion” that best fit the research question that is being investigated. There are six different layers that make up the research onion. The different layers when used correctly will provide the researcher with a base of information that can then be analysed and interpreted which can then be presented as research findings thus leading to a conclusion and recommendation of the entire research.

The research onion consists of six layers, each layer has its own elements that make up that layer. From outside to inside the six layers are –

1. **Research Philosophy** – This is the layer that provides the basis of the research. This layer puts to action the different philosophies that the researcher may use to conduct their investigation. For the purpose of this investigation this layer has identified the *interpretivism philosophy* which the researcher has identified as the philosophy of best fit for this investigation. This philosophy assumes unpredictable nature of future which assumes that knowledge of the future can only be obtained through intuitive strategy. This philosophy focuses on conducting research with people rather than objects, which falls under the interpretative paradigm through which this study is being based (Floyd, 2008, p.37). This approach uses two key interpretations to differentiate between other philosophies. It incorporates the idea of people being able to illustrate different opinions based off experiences, while not specifically considering certain facts or at times conclusive research. Interpretivism has allowed the researcher to obtain certain interviewees with a vast knowledge of both industries that will provide insight otherwise hard to obtain if using other research philosophies.

2. **Research Approach** – This layer provides the different tools needed to perform quality research to the researcher. It is important here to choose between A deductive or inductive approach to research as they will provide the most conclusive results for the research. Given the chosen philosophy from the external layer the only approach that is suitable from this layer is the inductive approach. According to Kuosa in futures studies inductive reasoning is mainly associated with “intuitive” techniques (Kuosu, 2010, p.329). This approach coupled with the *interpretivism philosophy* will give a basic structure to the research which will provide a flow and format that will make the research comprehensible to the reader.
3. **Methodological Choice** – This layer is the choosing of methods that best suit the style of research you wish to gather. Saunders defines research choices with reference to the use of either quantitative or qualitative research method, as well as a simple or complex mix of both or the use of mono methods (Saunders, 2019, p.157). The method chosen for this research is the Mono method qualitative as it is the method that best suits the use of the *interpretivism philosophy* and intuitive research approach given its broad ability to correlate with both research practices.
4. **Research Strategy** – This can be defined as the way in which a researcher may choose the main data collection methods or sets of methods that best suit the way in which they can gather data that they feel best suits their research question.
5. **Time Horizons** – This layer is used to define the period in time in which the data you are collecting will align to in terms of reaching your research objectives. The three horizons are short term – up to ten years, medium term up to 25 years and long term more than 25 years (Floyd, 2008, p.39). For this project the time horizon chosen is short term as the researcher wishes to gather data that can be used in the immediate future.
6. **Techniques and Procedures** – Once the previous five steps have been followed correctly this layer will allow the researcher to analyse in a clear and concise way the findings of the research found. Choosing the correct methods and techniques

from the previous layers will give the researcher an accurate guide as to the best way of carrying out their research.

Data Collection Methods – Interviews

The researcher has chosen Interviews as the best method of conducting quality research. Interviews will be conducted so as to gain invaluable knowledge into the association of the gambling and horse racing industries. The data gathered will be critically examined using key responses that the researcher thinks will provide validity and substance to the research project.

Both interviews were carried out virtually accommodated via phone call, this was done due to the recent Covid – 19 pandemic which meant that some interviewees did not feel comfortable meeting in a face-to-face environment. Given the virtuality associated with these interviews the researcher wishes to mention a few drawbacks associated with this type of data collection. The researcher would have preferred to interview both Interviewees in a face-to-face environment as they feel body language is an important to get a full understanding of someone's opinion/answer to a question. Especially one that may be divisive in nature.

The interview style for both interviews was Unstructured as the researcher knew both interviewees personally and understood that putting a structure in place would hinder their openness about responding to certain questions. Understanding that both participants would be cautious in their responses given the sensitivity of the topic to those working in the industry, the researcher carefully positioned each question so as to build up a rapport with both individuals before asking questions of a sensitive nature. The research questions main focus being on the association between both industries, the questions were based around the interviewees opinion, first of all gaining a basic understanding on the overall gambling environment followed by a more explorative section on the association. The researcher presented the interviews in this way as it was important firstly to grasp the interviewee's knowledge of the gambling industry so as to then be able to use the information gathered in this section and ask appropriate questions that would prompt responses of a comparative nature. This method of interviewing allowed the researcher time to pivot and ask questions that were otherwise unplanned so as to further delve into the opinions of the interviewees. The open-endedness of these questions induced a more comprehensive and in-depth answer which the researcher found critical to their analysis.

Consent forms, along with an interview guide were sent to each participant prior to the interviews and the timing for each interview was to be no longer than 20 minutes. Given the qualitative approach used for this project the researcher used purposeful sampling when choosing the individuals that were interviewed for this project. Below you will find the reasoning as to why each question was asked as well as a description as to what the researcher aimed to achieve by asking these questions. The questions have been grouped based on the different themes the researcher wishes to gain information on and are asked collectively and chronologically so as to invoke detailed responses from the interviewees.

The three themes of the Interview are closely related to the research objectives described in Chapter 3.

Questions 1 – 4 deal with the theme of society and the view it has on the gambling industry. These questions are put forward to the interviewee so as to place a foundational base, that is used to further investigate the research question. Understanding how society views the gambling industry provides the researcher with a base from which they can explore other elements that they feel will best answer the research question. These questions are also used as introductory questions so as to build up a rapport with the interviewee before challenging their opinion later in the interview.

Q1. What sort of relationship do you feel Ireland as a nation has with the gambling industry?

This question is an introductory question that has been used to grasp the basic opinions that the interviewee has about the gambling industry. The aim of the question was to induce a positive or negative response that the researcher will use to frame the rest of the interview. It is important to understand this opinion of the interviewee as it will set a precedence to some of the following questions considering any bias or ill will the interviewee has against the industry.

Q2. Is there a particular method of gambling that is favoured in Ireland?

Given the wide variations of gambling that is available in this country, the researcher is hoping this question will induce an answer that includes horse racing. This question

is open ended and does not prompt any particular response. This question has been placed early in the interview prior to any associative conversation as the researcher would like a subconscious response from the interviewee. This question is one of the most important for the entire research project as it will be indicative of the results achieved for the research question.

Q3. Do you feel as though gambling in Ireland is a nationwide activity or is it more prevalent in certain areas/provinces/counties?

The following two questions are in line with what is needed to gain results to research objective one. The researcher has used this question to gain an understanding of societal participation in gambling and further afield the degree to which gambling is used in different areas throughout the country. This question is also aimed at gathering information as to the prevalence of gambling on horse racing and the locations through the country where this type of gambling is most prevalent. The researcher is hoping to gain subconscious answers from the participants that will give an early indication of the association between the gambling and horse racing industries without the question being leading in nature.

Q4. Do you feel as though gambling as a whole forms part of Irish Society?

This question following on from the previous one is structured so as to answer research objective one. It will provide the researcher with the societal perception of the gambling industry which in turn will allow the researcher to drill down further into what makes this industry so favourable or unfavourable in the eyes of Irish Society. Investigating the gambling industry in depth is vital to structuring the analysis and findings that will be presented the reader. The researcher places the utmost importance on providing clarity and transparency of this industry, as without a comprehensive understanding of the gambling industry the reader may find it hard to interpret fully the different analysis and findings of the research.

Questions 5 – 7 are the questions the first introduce the theme of the possible association between gambling and horse racing. These questions are used to ultimately gauge the degree of prevalence in which gambling is associated with horse racing (Research Objective 2). These questions although aimed at introducing the idea of the association are open in nature. The researcher has allowed the interviewee the chance to openly discuss their own views and opinions without placing importance on any particular sport or topic. The aim of this set of questions is for the interviewee to introduce the idea of there being an association between gambling and horse racing, which will in turn allow the researcher to challenge these opinions in the following set of questions.

Q5. Do you feel as though there is any issues with sports betting in Ireland?

This question has been placed here by the researcher as a transitional question. Question five is being used to move away from generic gambling and towards sports betting which is the method of gambling where people would gamble on horse racing. This question is used lightly by the researcher so as to slowly move the conversation in the direction where the most findings for the research question will be found.

Q6. What do you feel is the appeal to gambling on different sports?

This specific question is placed here so as to initiate the progression towards a more thought-provoking area of the interview. This question has been used to prompt a shift towards more discussive areas of the interview where more definite pieces of information can be gathered so as to analyse the findings. It puts in motion the idea from the interviewee's perspective of the reasons why they gamble engaging thoughts that can be answered in the following questions.

Q7. Is there a particular sport in which gambling is most prevalent in Ireland?

The researcher aims to use question seven as the instigator of the gambling and horse racing association discussion. The researcher aims to grasp what sports are gambled on in Ireland most frequently with an underlying desire for Horse Racing to be one of

the sports mentioned. It is important to note too under question six that if horse racing is not mentioned at conclusion of the interviewee's answer, then there may be an issue with the research question and its vagueness in investigating.

Questions 8 -12 are the most important questions that are asked within this research. The layout of these questions is unique. Each question requires a certain answer so allow the following question to be asked. For example, should the interviewee think there is no association between gambling and horse racing in Q8, Then Q9 cannot be asked as the interviewee would not have an opinion as it relates to the possibility of their being an association. The aim of this set of question is to answer Research Objective 3. Given the interpretive nature of this research these questions and responses will be used to highlight the different elements and areas through which gambling, and horse racing are associated.

Q8. Is there an association between Horse Racing and Gambling?

Given the unstructured style of the interviews the following questions will be answered so long as the question previous is answered in a particular manner. Questions eight to ten are all related with question eight being the first question that introduces the possible association between both the gambling and horse racing industries. In order for question nine to be put forward to the interviewee, question eight must be answered in agreement with there being an association between both industries. If the interviewee does not think there is an association the interview will be concluded.

Q9. Is there a positive or negative association between the Racing and Gambling industries?

This question placed here as it is the first question that begins to challenge the idea of the positives and negatives that derive from the association between both the gambling and horse racing industry. This question has been used by the researcher to gain a foundational understanding into the relationship both industries have due to their association. This question will provide some information needed to reach

research objective number three which is to investigate the relationship between gambling and horse racing.

Q10. Do both industries need each other to be successful?

This question is another that will be used to gain a further understanding of the relationship between both gambling and horse racing. This question will give a clear indication of the negative and positive trade-offs that are created as a result of this association and relationship. It is very difficult for a relationship of any capacity to provide equal benefits to both parties involved. This question to define the winners and losers, with question eleven being used to investigate further the distance of equality within the relationship.

Q11. Do you feel as though the racing or gambling industry benefits most from its association?

Question eleven is very open ended and can either prompt a strict “X” or “Y” answer or given the opinion of the interviewee could prompt a more in-depth critical response. Understanding which industry benefits most will be critical to the analysis of the research. It allows the researcher to pinpoint the which industry gains most and will hopefully prompt the interviewee to describe the ways in which the nominated industry benefits most.

Q12. Hypothetically, should gambling on Horse Racing be banned in Ireland, would this ban affect both industries equally?

Question twelve is undoubtedly the most challenging question that will be put to the interviewee, in practice it places a separation on the association/relationship between the industries. This is done so as to grasp fully the importance/unimportance of the relationship. It makes both industries completely separate from one another, challenging the interviewees understanding and opinion of how both industries would operate individually. The researchers aim with the positioning and delivery of this

question is to absolutely define the association and the consequences that may arise should the association/relationship no longer exist.

Ethical Considerations

The two individuals chosen were chosen based off their professional experiences within the gambling and horse racing industries. Due to ethical considerations anonymity has been given to both interviewees given the sensitivity of the questions asked and the potential ramifications for both individuals due to the responses they have given. For purpose of this study, Interviewee 1 has been given the name “James” and for Interviewee 2 the name they have been given is “Ryan”. James is a racehorse trainer based on the Curragh and has been operating in the horse racing industry for the last 20 years. His knowledge and expertise within the industry has been invaluable to this study. Ryan is a gambler and racehorse owner from Dublin, who has been involved in both industries for the past 10 years. Given his exposure to both industries he has provided some very insightful information into the association between gambling and horse racing.

Chapter 4

Research Analysis and Findings.

As mentioned throughout the research report there are three different key research objectives that the researcher has identified as being the three most important key elements to the investigation that will provide an exact and thorough investigation into the association between gambling and horse racing in Ireland. The three aforementioned research objectives are listed below.

- 1. To investigate the social perception of gambling as an Industry in Ireland.**
- 2. To investigate the degree of prevalence through which gambling is associated with horse racing.**
- 3. To investigate the relationship between gambling and horse racing.**

“To investigate the social perception of gambling as an Industry in Ireland”

The research findings under this research objective will develop the different opinions and insights that were gained throughout the interview process of this research. This will provide an overall view of the way in which the gambling industry is perceived by society in Ireland. The findings under this section will provide a foundation through which the researcher will elaborate towards a more defined and descriptive view of association between gambling and horse racing in Ireland.

As found in the Literature Review section of this research, In Ireland 64.5% of people reported some form of gambling, with 41.4% of people stating that they partook in gambling on a monthly or more frequent basis. This can be interpreted that there is positive social perception of the gambling industry in Ireland due to the quantity of people who continuously partook in the activity.

The respondents of the interviews also expressed views of a similar nature. In relation to the overall social perception of the gambling industry both participants believed that given the way in which gambling is advertised and promoted in this country that there must be a relationship somewhat positive in nature.

Both respondents agreed that the social perception of the gambling industry in Ireland is positive whilst also providing some comments that detail to what extent the perception is positive. One respondent sighted geographical location and certain upbringings as a factor to the social perception of the gambling Industry in Ireland.

“I think it nearly depends on where in the country you are.... if you were growing up around racing there is a more of a healthy relationship basically because you have a better understanding of how the industry works and know the risks you are taking and allows you to manage the way in which you gamble” (Ryan)

Ryan’s interview shines a light on the idea of problem gambling and addiction in Ireland. He mentions in his interview the idea that those brought up in “underprivileged” areas around the country would tend to have a negative relationship with gambling. This underpinning

coincides with the information found in Brian Hutton's Irish Times Interview where he states that Ireland is the fourth biggest gambling nation in the EU. Hutton states that in a study done in March 2021 that 55,000 men and women in Ireland had very serious problems with gambling addictions (Hutton, 2021). This evidence both by Ryan and Hutton contradicts the information interpreted from Department of Health's report. The societal view of the gambling industry although perceived to be one of positivity from the outside, does not coincide with the findings of this research. There is an element of blindness and deceit to the industry. Last year €1.36billion was lost to gambling by the entirety of the Irish Adult Population, averaging out at €300 per adult.

Another way in which we can analyse the societal perception of gambling in Ireland is to look closer at the geopolitics that are at play and the different influential factors that may affect this perception in certain areas of the country. Both respondents sighted horse racing as the most comparable way of gambling to illustrate their thoughts on the different geopolitics that are at play, although both had contrasting views on the areas in which they feel prefer gambling on horse racing with different reasoning also prevalent in conversation.

"I suppose my exposure to the gambling industry mainly being involved with the horses would lead me to think that the country areas really like a bet. Different racetracks like Ballinrobe and Bellewstown, they draw a huge crowd compared to the more prestigious tracks like Leopardstown and Naas which is mad really cause the better racing is on those bigger tracks" (James)

James sighted the idea that those in rural areas are huge fans of racing. He sighted the fact that rural racetracks tend to acquire a much larger crowd to their venues for different meetings in comparison to more urban racecourses like Naas and Leopardstown where population sizes are much larger, although the crowd sizes tend to be lesser. Through reference of the literature provided previous, this observation is to be expected. 28,000+ people are employed in the horse racing industry both directly and indirectly mostly in rural areas of Ireland. This information would coincide with the observation made by James who states that there is a much larger crowd at rural racetracks. This would derive from the fact that people of the industry are located in these rural areas. Having an interest in the sport and the animals directly attracts a crowd more so than those who go racing for the social aspect, especially for the race meetings that are midweek.

“To investigate the degree of prevalence through which gambling is associated with Horse Racing”

The research findings under this research objective will in theory put forward the initial possibility of there being an association between gambling and horse racing. This objective will allow the researcher to answer the research question at hand *“Is there a societal association between gambling and horse racing in Ireland?”* by gaining insight from those who have been operating in the industry for the last few decades. The opinions of the industry professionals in this project, as mentioned before, have been vital to the success of this project.

To understand to the degree of prevalence in which gambling is associated with horse racing there were a number of open-ended questions asked to the interviewees. James and Ryan were both asked if there was a particular sport that they felt gambling was most prevalent. In their answers both respondents sighted Horse Racing as one of their two answers, with Soccer also being mentioned.

“Horse Racing out of the two is definitely the one where gambling is more prevalent, I’d say. People can watch a soccer match purely out of interest for their team whereas horse racing you really can’t watch unless having some kind of financial interest, for most people that may only be €2 or €3, they are still gambling. People go racing for the social aspect as well as the chance to win a few quid. The common person isn’t going to Leopardstown at Christmas or Cheltenham in March and not placing a bet”. (Ryan)

Although both respondents sighted soccer as well as horse racing when as which sport is most associated, you can clearly see from the above that Horse Racing is definitely the sport that is most synonymous with gambling. This can be interpreted also from the results published by the Health Research Board found in the Literature Review. In this report their Horse Racing and Dog Racing are the only sports mentioned individually on the report. The findings of the report state that 7.8% of people stated in the survey that they placed a bet either a dog or greyhound meeting. This figure is derived solely by those who placed a bet at the different tracks and does not consider the online presence of horse racing gamblers.

In the interview with James there was very crucial point that can be used in discussion with the above.

“See Horse Racing is an all year round sport the only day there is no racing at all is Christmas Day, so it is easily accessible to those who find the sport interesting”. (James)

Horse Racing is a year-round sport with meetings on almost every day here in Ireland. Christmas day is the only day where racing is not available by choice to the consumer and so, makes it one of the most accessible sports to gamble on in the country. In 2021 there was 394 different racing fixtures in the Irish Racing calendar which averages out at 1.08 fixtures per day of the year (Horse Racing Ireland, 2021)

From these findings the researcher feels as though it is fair to interpret that there is a high degree of prevalence through which gambling is associated with Horse Racing.

“To investigate the relationship between gambling and Horse Racing”

The pillar of the investigation falls under the third research objective. It is here that the researcher aims to underpin the association between gambling and horse racing and illustrate to the reader what this association means to both industries. The line of questioning towards both respondents for purpose of answering this objective was direct, with aim that there would be a clear definition of the aforementioned association and relationship. It started off with both interviewees if there was an association between gambling and horseracing. To which both respondents sighted that there was in fact an association. However, when putting the question to Ryan he gave a response that was intriguing, especially for purpose of answering the research question *“Is there a societal association between gambling and horse racing in Ireland?”*. For purpose of the investigation the researcher has included the entire response given by Ryan as it touches on a lot of interesting points.

“So in my opinion right there isn’t but obviously there is, so yesterday I was in the office here in work and they were trying to organise a staff night out and one of the lads suggested a night out at the races , and one of the ladies said that we couldn’t do that as it would be promoting gambling, I then turned to her and said that there was more money gambled on football week on week than racing and backed it up saying that the gambling of horses in the

racine world is needed so as to provide a living to those who care for the animals. I then asked her if she would go to a football match, without hesitation and she said yes, gambling on football only lines the pockets of the players and staff who are already wildly overpaid as is, but she had no issue with that. I suppose my biggest gripe with that is that she made that interpretation herself without considering fully what the industry means, if you ask any trainer or jockey why they got into racing they will never say because of gambling. Horse Racing has been going on in this country for 100s of years its only recently that it has become a huge gambling sport. To answer your question. I don't personally think there is an association but within society of course there is an association it's the first thing people think of if you discuss either or."

Ryan's response is very important to this research. As you read his response you can clearly see a prime example of society perceiving there to be an association between gambling and horse racing and in this case the perception to be one of negativity. Ryan himself mentions the need for the gambling industry within the horse racing world. In reference to the 28,900 jobs that the industry creates, we interpret his response to mean that without the association between gambling and horse racing these jobs would be at risk.

In the literature review we found out that the gambling industry provide €700,000+ in race sponsorship while also contributing 1% of their revenue to the government driven Horse and Greyhound Racing Fund. Although significant these contributions are not of huge importance in the association between gambling and horse racing.

Both respondents sighted the allure of gambling and what gambling means for the sport of horse racing.

"Racing would lose its general attraction to the common person if gambling was taken away. You wouldn't see nearly as many people in attendance on the racecourse if they couldn't have a bet" (James).

Using James response above we can see how the racing industry would be affected if there was no longer the ability to gamble. He makes it very clear that the draw to the industry is the ability to gamble and states that there would no longer be any interest in the sport if you were unable to have a bet.

"People who have no interest in the sport aren't going to pay €20/30 to watch horses run around in circles, it's just never going to happen" (Ryan)

The quote above illustrates clearly that without gambling, Horse Racing is just animals running around in circles. Gambling is what provides interest to the sport. It gives meaning to the different races providing an element of competition to those who are not involved in the ownership of the horses that are racing. Given the costs involved with owning racehorses as found in the literature review, it is only the wealthy who can own a racehorse.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this final chapter is to present a summary of the results found in the previous chapter. Using the Analysis and Findings of this research we can answer the question at hand *“Is there a societal association between gambling and horse racing in Ireland?”*. This chapter will also include different research limitations found throughout the process of conducting this research. This dissertation will conclude on some future recommendations that the researcher thinks would benefit any future studies on this topic.

The researcher has interpreted the findings and wishes to initially answer the research question – *“Is there a societal association between gambling and horse racing in Ireland?”* – The answer to this question is a resounding YES. The findings of this research provide substance to this answer both through the findings from the different interviews carried out and also on a line through the review of literature in Chapter 2. As mentioned, previous the line of questioning was aimed at being used to induce answers from the respondents that would shine a light onto this association. One of the key responses that was used in interpreting these findings was from the interview had with Ryan. In his interview he mentioned a recent conversation had with a work colleague in which she felt she couldn't attend a day at the races for fear of promoting gambling in the workplace. This brief response illustrates clearly the resound societal association between gambling and horse racing. This response also highlights somewhat of a negative stigma associated with both gambling and horse racing.

The researcher wishes to interpret this negative stigma and association using some other findings. It is important to understand and compare both views put forward by both respondents. James and Ryan both come from contrasting backgrounds. James based in the

Curragh and Ryan in Dublin. Also, with James operating solely in the Horse Racing industry and Ryan coming from a predominantly gambling background, one could assume that their views on the topic would vary, however both respondents sighted geographical location as being one of the main factors that influence someone's perception of the association between gambling and horse racing. As found in the literature review, The Horse Racing Industry operates mainly in rural Ireland due to the availability of land and other natural resources needed to sustain the industry and the animals within (HRI, 2022).

It is clear from the findings that those who are involved in the industry and have a comprehension of what it means as a sport, understand fully the significance the gambling industry has in its success. The 28,900 jobs that the industry creates are mainly found in rural areas of Ireland. It is these areas where the social perception tends to change to a more positive tone. Evidence to this can be found in the different attendance levels at the racetracks as sighted by James. The different racetracks situated in these rural areas draw much larger crowds due to their locality within areas the industry mainly operates. Given these findings it is important to note that although there is a clear societal association between gambling and horse racing, depending on what part of the country an individual is located, this association can be seen both positively and negatively in nature.

The final point the researcher wishes to make, drawing on the findings, is the need for the association of gambling within horse racing. It became clear in the final few questions of both interviews that without the gambling element of horse racing, the sport itself would eventually cease to exist. Both respondents sighted the appeal gambling brings to the sport of horse racing. It adds an element of competition and excitement within the sport and allows people the chance to participate in the sport without having to invest huge amounts of money into the buying and training of a racehorse. The allure and attraction of the possibility for people to win some money is what draws such a crowd, this coupled with the social scene is what provides such appeal to the sport.

To conclude, it is clear from the findings and the discussion that there is indeed a societal association between gambling and horse racing. Different factors influence the way in which this association is perceived by society, but we can assume the societal association to be true. Thus, meaning that the researcher accepts the alternative hypothesis "There is an association between gambling and horse racing" and rejects the "null" hypothesis "There is no association between gambling and horse racing". The researcher can also conclude that the

answer to the research question – “*Is there a societal association between gambling and horse racing in Ireland*” to be yes there is a clear societal association between gambling and horse racing in Ireland.

Research Limitations

The researcher wishes to make clear a few research limitations that they have encountered throughout their time carrying out this research. The first of these limitations is time constraints. The researcher would have enjoyed a longer period of time to carry out this research. As this dissertation began in earnest at the beginning of the year it gave the researcher roughly seven months to carry out their research. Undertaking such an extensive project in a narrow time window although enjoyable was at times difficult. Given the topic of investigation and the time of year the access to people was, at times, strenuous. Horse Racing is, as mentioned in the study, a year-round sport which means that those involved in the industry are extremely busy. The researcher would like to thank James and Ryan for their time and contribution to the study understanding that they both have very busy schedules.

As mentioned in the Introduction of this study, the gambling industry is very divisive. Given the sensitivity surrounding the industry the researcher was unable to investigate certain elements of both the gambling and horse racing industry. These investigatory limits somewhat hindered this study as researcher did not feel it would be fair to his participants to publish some controversial opinions. In recent years there has been huge speculation surrounding the idea that there is a level of cheating within the Horse Racing industry, given these factors some questions in the interview process were withdrawn.

Future Recommendations

The findings of this research although conclusive, have created some issues the researcher believes need to be investigated further. Within the investigation the researcher mentioned a degree of cheating that has been associated with the horse racing industry in recent years. This cheating derives from the ability of some people to be able to achieve monetary gain by gambling on horses that are either going to win or not going to win, knowing in advance the outcome through a process known as handicapping. This handicapping is when horses are given a set amount of weight they carry based on their ability. This handicapping process is done in theory to give all animals an equal chance of winning a race. The researcher believes that a thorough investigation into this handicapping process would prove or disprove these

allegations, thus cementing the overall perception of the sport which in turn would influence potential future studies, associated with this research project.

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Appendices

Interview Transcriptions

Appendix 1

James, Racehorse Trainer, The Curragh.

Aidan: Morning, before we start, I just want to confirm that you've read and agree to the terms on the consent form?

James: I have indeed, and I am fully aware of the way in which this information provided is going to be used.

Aidan: And you understand the topic at which we will be discussing today.

James: I do, you've been asking me to do this interview for a while, so I have a great understanding as to why I am needed.

Aidan: Perfect that's great James thanks, so the first section is based on gambling in Ireland, and we'll start with the first question. What sort of relationship do you feel Ireland as a nation has with the gambling industry?

James: Yeah, I don't see there being any problem. There seems to be a good relationship between the two. Yeah, I don't see anything wrong with it anyway, so I suppose it's a positive relationship in that sense.

Aidan: Do you feel as though there's a particular method of gambling that is favoured here in Ireland?

James: This is all my opinion, so I suppose working in the Industry I'm inclined to say gambling on horse racing is the most favoured. I suppose the compulsive gamblers at a lower level maybe those with a problem are on the slot machines and they maybe come across as being some of the most popular, especially back in the day when they had those kinds of cherry machines in pubs and takeaways people would have emptied their change into one of those machines.

Aidan: Yeah 100%, do you feel as though maybe the lottery or other methods of gambling are frequent here in Ireland?

James: I feel as though the lottery is an older person's way of gambling as well as the bingo, but I reckon in 10 years those types of gambling will start to die out.

Aidan: A1 next question so, do you feel as though gambling in Ireland is a nationwide activity or do you feel as though it is especially prevalent in different areas, counties or provinces?

James: I'd say it's relatively nationwide, I feel as though it depends on the types of gambling you're referring to. I feel as though Horse Racing is followed all around the country, especially during the winter months when National Hunt is on. I suppose my exposure to the gambling industry mainly being involved with the horses would lead me to think that the country areas really like a bet. Different racetracks like Ballinrobe and Bellewstown, they draw a huge crowd compared to the more prestigious tracks like Leopardstown and Naas which is mad really cause the better racing is on those bigger tracks.

Aidan: Yeah, completely agree there, you see the small evening meetings at those smaller tracks drawing huge crowds out to. Next question is do you feel as though gambling as a whole forms part of Irish society?

James: Oh yeah absolutely, comparing here and the UK to the almost the rest of the world there is a huge level of tolerance and acceptance of gambling in this country. I'd say every town across the country has a gambling shop in it, whether that be

Paddy Power, Ladbrokes or Boylesports there is a huge gambling presence wherever you look in this country. On the other side of the coin though I know that gambling is huge in some European countries too especially with the online gambling. I suppose to answer your question I would say that gambling in this country is somewhat part of the society yeah be it betting or as you said before playing the lotto.

Aidan: Perfect that's great. So, the next section is on sports betting and the first question is, what do you feel is the appeal to sports betting in Ireland?

James: Well, I suppose starting out people mainly do it to make money but there also has to be a level of interest in doing it too to get some sort of enjoyment out of it as well. You know like what you call it, an activity or hobby or something. You do it to get an extra level of enjoyment out of it as well.

Aidan: That's great cheers. Next one, do you think there is a particular sport in which gambling is most prevalent in Ireland?

James: Id imagine horse racing would be up there, is it? Probably up there with the soccer as well when the like of the premier league is on. See Horse Racing is an all year round sport the only day there is no racing at all is Christmas Day, so it is easily accessible to those who find the sport interesting. Even here in the yard Id only hear of the lads' backing horses or soccer with no outside sports really coming into it.

James: Perfect, do you feel as though there is any issue with sports betting in Ireland?

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Appendix 2

Interview Questions Guide

Section 1 – Gambling in Ireland

- What sort of relationship do you feel Ireland as a nation has with the gambling industry?
- Is there a particular method of gambling that is favoured in Ireland?

- Do you feel as though gambling in Ireland is a nationwide activity or is it more prevalent in certain areas/provinces/counties?
- Do you feel as though gambling as a whole forms part of Irish Society?

Section 2 – Sports Betting

- What do you feel is the appeal to gambling on different sports?
- Is there a particular sport in which gambling is most prevalent?
- Do you feel as though there is any issues with sports betting in Ireland?

Section 3 – Horse Racing

- Is there an association between Horse Racing and gambling in your opinion?
- Is there a positive or negative relationship between the Racing and Gambling industries?
- Do both industries need each other to be successful?
- Do you feel as though the racing or gambling industry benefits most from its association?
- Hypothetically, should gambling on Horse Racing be banned in Ireland, would this ban affect both industries?