Challenges of individual responsibility in (addicted) gambling: a philosophical analysis

Susanne Uusitalo, PhD

Philosophy, University of Turku, Finland

Lisbon Addictions 2019 October 23, 2019, Lisbon, Portugal

TURUN YLIOPISTO

Statement of conflict of interest

- None declared.

TURUN YLIOPISTO

Outline

▶ Background: Responsible gambling/gaming and the control condition of individual responsibility

▶ The traditional view of individual responsibility

➕

▶ The nature of gambling

🟰
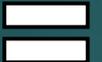
▶ The challenge of having a meaningful conception of responsible agency

    ▶ For the purpose of distinguishing problem gambling from gambling

▶ A suggestion for a more relational view of controlled agency in gambling

TURUN YLIOPISTO

Responsible gambling/gaming

prevention and treatment carried out by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, with a total of 2.5 million euros a year in accordance with the Lotteries Ac

This is how players can contro   aming

- With Veikkaus games, players can impose limits in terms of euros and time, together with self-bans, on their gaming.

- rs can impose a self-ban on their gaming, covering all digital gaming at once, and they can separately impose a self-an on their entry to the Casino and the game arcades.

- Players can follow their gaming history at the Game Account Statement page.

Reliable g

Veikkaus' cu   can trust that the games are of high quality and reliably run. We treat our customers equally and we take good c   ir data and funds.

The traditional idea of individual responsibility
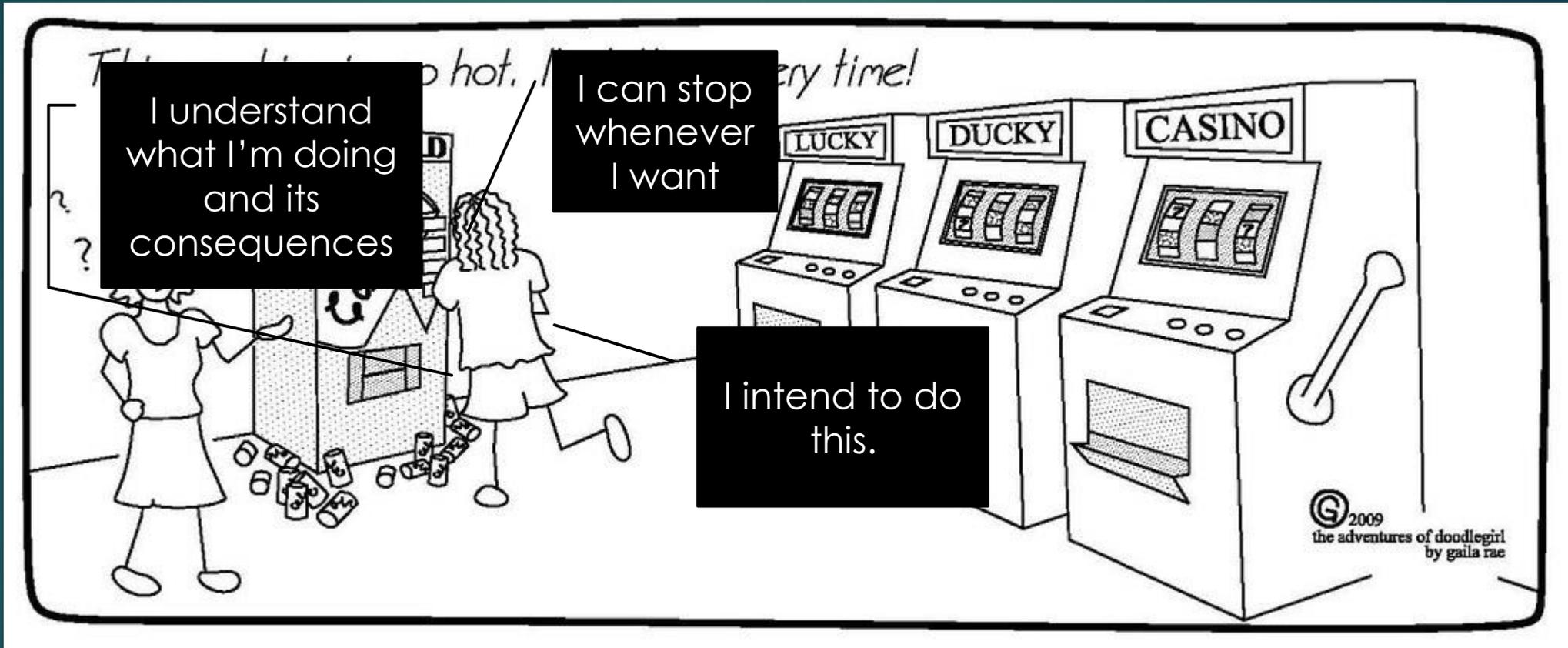
The nature of gambling and individual agency

▶ Gambling by default challenges the conception of controlled action:

  ▶ Game of chance (intentions and outcomes)

  ▶ States of dissociation (flow and zone)

▶ Distinction between (professional/recreational) gambling and problem gambling not visible in this way: both "fail" the ideals of self-controlled, i.e. responsible action.

▶ Problem gamblers should not be seen as having "faulty agency" in this respect.

▶ By shifting the focus excusively from the player's competence to a contextualixed view of their agency, we avoid the simplistic control-no control evaluation of the players.

Rethinking the agent in control

▶ The agency should be seen relational in the sense that the circumstances of gambling are also constitutive of agency, not merely threats or boost for the individuals' competence and control.

▶ The motivation, purpose, for playing and continuing playing should be contextualized in the sense that for instance the machines play into the these.

▶ Also the societal conceptions of agency, economic stability and meaningful (and appropriate) conduct of life play into the agency of all of us.

  ▶ Stigma as an aspect affecting the individual agency that is beyond any individual's control.

Concluding remarks

▶ The current conceptions of individual (self-)control over one's actions may be overrated on the conceptual level.

▶ Further, this kind of control may be impossible to gain in any kind of gambling.

▶ Change in conception of responsible agency is called for

  ▶ From control-centred to context-relational (the machines, societal setting etc.)

▶ Even if more work on understanding the nature of gambling is needed for the reconciliation of competence and situational challenges in gambling, accommodating a feasible notion of (self-)control in any kind of machine gambling, enables more realistic responsibility ascriptions and expectations in the phenomenon.
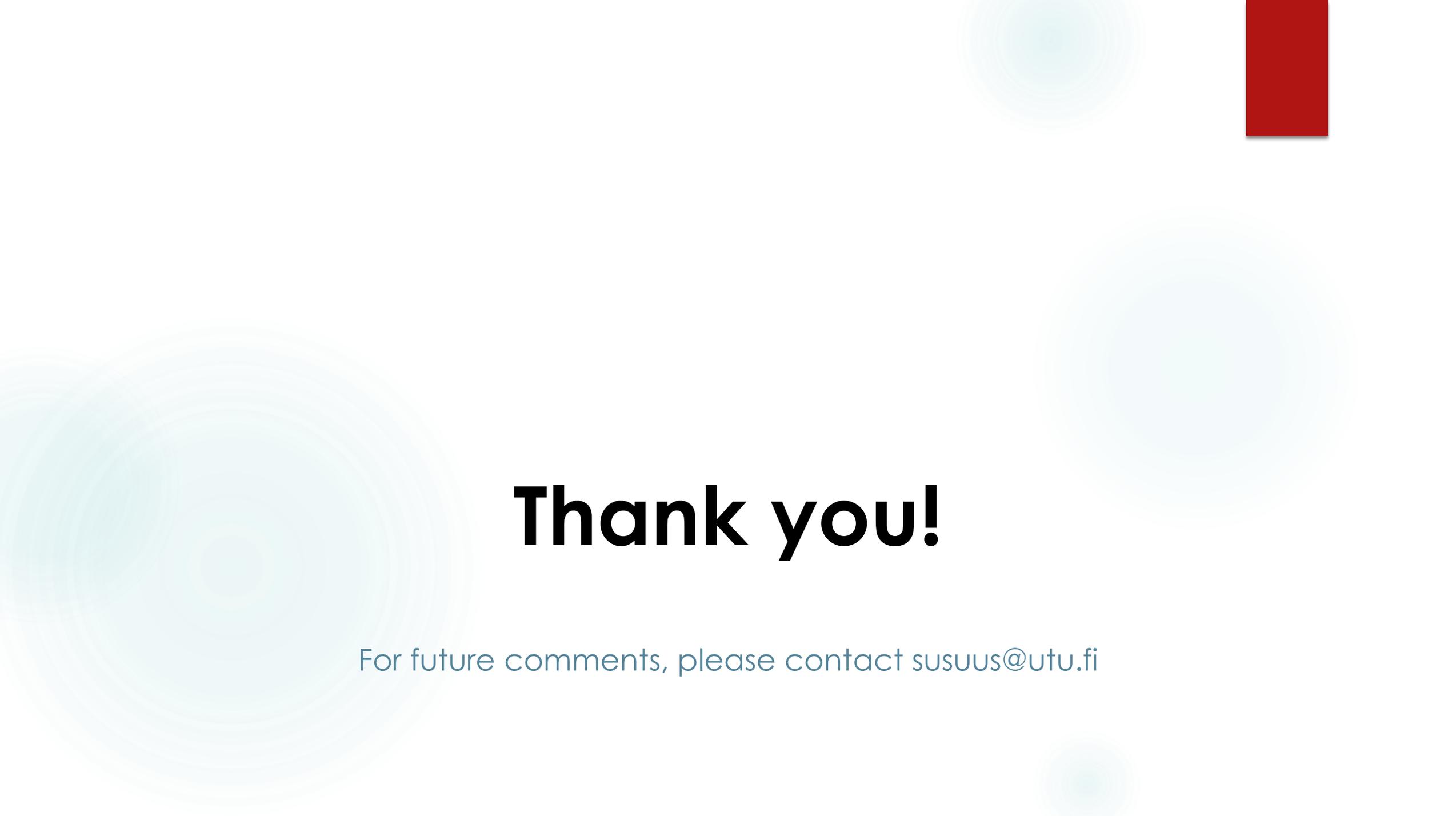
Thank you!

For future comments, please contact susuus@utu.fi