

The Globalization of Addiction as Spiritual Crisis

David Seljak, St. Jerome's University
Georgian Triangle Lifelong Learning Institute
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Bruce Alexander: Spirituality, Addiction and Globalization

- *The Globalization of Addiction: A Study in Poverty of the Spirit.*

1. Understanding Addiction
 - a. The Official View of Addiction
 - i. Addictive substance + addicted individual
 - ii. Focus is on harm of addiction
 - b. The Medical Model
 - i. Religious roots
 - ii. Demon drug + person = addict (once an addict, always an addict)
2. A New Understanding of Addiction
 - a. The Rat Park Perspective
 - i. Addiction comes from context not substance
 - ii. Social determinants of addiction
 - iii. Addiction as adaptive response
3. Social Dislocation Theory
 - a. Psychosocial integration is a necessity (Erik Erikson)
 - b. Free-market society undermines psychosocial integration
 - c. Prolonged dislocation is unbearable
 - d. Addiction is a way of adapting to dislocation
 - e. Globalization spreads social dislocation
4. Polanyi on social dislocation (*The Great Transformation*, 1944); see Linda McQuaig, *All You Can Eat*.
 - a. The Market Society and the modern nation-state
 - b. Unregulated market system
 - c. Supply-Demand-Price mechanism
 - d. "Disembedded" market is totalizing
5. Addiction as response to social dislocation
 - a. "Overwhelming involvement"
 - b. Narrowing attention
 - c. Controlling subjective states
 - d. Regulating relationships
6. Addiction as adaptive behaviour
 - a. Addiction gives the addict an identity, purpose, and a community
 - b. Substitutes for psychosocial integration
 - c. Adaptive but not desirable

Natasha Dow Schüll: *Addiction by Design: Machine Gambling in Las Vegas*

7. Natasha Dow Schüll on Addiction
 - a. Addiction is “located” neither solely in both “subject” and “object” of addiction, but rather in the **relationship** between the two.
8. Prevalence of Gambling Addiction
 - a. APA and Industry: 1 to 2 percent of the general population is prone to pathological gambling and 3-4 percent meet the criteria for “problem gambling”
 - b. More accurate: 20 percent of those who gamble regularly
 - c. Studies show that 30 to 60 percent of gambling revenues derive from problem gamblers
9. Designing for Addiction: Outside of Machine
 - a. Casino design
 - b. Architecture, ambience, affect
 - c. No clocks, no view of outside world
 - d. No intersections
10. Game design
 - a. Screens, sounds, lights, touch-back
 - b. Chairs, consoles, etc. battle fatigue
 - c. Tracking players to incentivize them
11. Addiction by Design: The Inside
 - a. Gaming machines as Skinner boxes: Intermittent positive reinforcement
 - b. Techniques of manipulation
 - c. Hiding the odds
12. Gambling and Maximization of Profits
 - a. Maximizing machine productivity

Conclusion: Addiction by Design and Spiritual Crisis of Neoliberalism

13. Spirituality and Understanding Addiction
 - a. The definition of addiction: a response to disconnection
 - b. The push and pull of addiction
 - c. The subject and object of addiction
 - d. Other factors in addiction
 - e. Poverty of spirit in “push” of social dislocation and “pull” of addiction by design.
14. Alexander and Francis: parallel discourses of transcendence
 - a. Shared human impulse for seeking identity, purpose, community
 - b. Defense of human dignity and freedom
 - c. Social scientific analysis of human alienation
 - d. Common critique of absolutization of the market system
 - e. Defense of transcendence
 - f. **Disconnection is the key issue.**
 - g. Horizontal v. Vertical Transcendence