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Faith's wager: How religion deters gambling

Kraig Beyerlein, Jeffrey J. Sallaz

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Faith's Wager: How Religion Deters Gambling*Abstract*

The relationship between religion and gambling has only rarely been investigated in sociology and related fields. Prior studies have found that religion, broadly defined, deters gambling, with different religious traditions exhibiting varying degrees of deterrence. Our study, a quantitative analysis of a recent representative sample of U.S. adults, theorizes and tests how three different dimensions of religion affect three distinct forms of gambling. Religious tradition and religious service attendance are found to reduce the likelihood of casino gambling and lottery play; while religious salience is the only dimension that constrains online gambling. We argue that these findings reflect variation in the social visibility, time intensity, and broader legitimacy associated with gambling forms, and that this variation is crucial for understanding the deterring effects of faith.

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