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Culture and Commerce: The Legitimation of Consumption Practices through Cultural, Normative and Regulative Influence

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Ashlee Humphreys

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ABSTRACT

Culture and Commerce: The Legitimation of Consumption Practices through Cultural, Normative and Regulative Influence

Ashlee Humphreys

Legitimation is a fundamental social process that describes the solidification of disparate practices, meanings, and material structures into a coherent, stable institution. In this dissertation, I study the legitimation of casino gambling as it expanded from 1976 to 2006. While scholars have tended to approach the legitimation process from one of three angles—regulatory, normative, or cultural-cognitive—I look at the ways in which these three forces combine to produce the institutional form of casino gambling that we observe today. How has casino gambling become a legitimate consumption practice? More generally, how do new industries come to be accepted in the marketplace? To answer these questions, I analyze data from cultural representations in film, public discourse in newspaper articles from three major national newspapers, and data from a cross-sectional analysis of 48 casinos in four states.

First, I find that discourse about casino gambling, in both cultural and normative spheres, is governed by a semantic structure of filth/purity and poverty/wealth. These semantic categories are reconfigured over time to explain the consequences of territorial expansion, and cultural narratives like disillusionment are harnessed to understand relationships between these semantic categories. I document a historical shift from the

filth/purity binary to the poverty/wealth binary over time, as gambling moves from a practice framed in moralistic terms, to one framed in techno-rational terms. I further argue that legitimation occurs not only through this discursive shift, but also through territorial instantiation and financial solvency. I introduce two new concepts—territorial and commercial legitimacy—to explain the ways in which these two important factors enter into the legitimation process.

Secondly, I find that this semantic shift from moralistic to techno-rational language directly precedes the material diffusion of casino gambling in the United States. Although legitimation is a dialectical process, regulatory and normative relaxation likely touched off territorial expansion. This finding has important implications for the study of diffusion. I argue that a full theorization of the diffusion process must include not only relational mechanisms like person-to-person contact, but cultural and normative structures that can be used to explain the impact of the institutional environment on the diffusion process.

Lastly, I shift from a process-oriented, historical analysis to a variation-oriented, cross-sectional analysis, where I find that different levels of normative and regulative legitimacy have differential effects on casino success. Specifically, normative legitimacy on the national level is associated with more casino success than normative legitimacy on the community or international levels. Regulative legitimacy that is instituted top-down through legislative action is associated with more success than regulatory legitimacy obtained through community or state-wide referendums. Again, I argue here that the reason for these results is primarily due to cultural variables. Specifically, legislative action allows anxieties and beliefs about gambling to remain "settled" by keeping them relatively free of public debate or scrutiny. When gambling is debated in local media prior to a referendum, cultural narratives are harnessed to dispute the normative legitimacy of gambling, thereby making it ultimately less successful and less legitimate.

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Culture, Commerce, and Institutions

Conceptual Background

The relationship between culture and commerce has been one of the leading debates of the 20th century. Some theorists, like Marx, draw a strict division between the commercial and the cultural, the base and the superstructure, economic "reality," and the ideological overlay. Marx stresses this separation to show how culture masks the underlying economic reality. In a different way, many modern-day economists also draw a strict separation between commercial and cultural life. From their perspective, the economic sphere is governed by self-interest and rationality, while the social and cultural sphere is governed by myths and folk knowledge. Any apparent influence of cultural and social factors on economic institutions can be explained, according to these theorists, as efficient, self-interested behavior (e.g. Friedman 1962; Rosen 1982; Williamson 1979).

Other scholars, like Mark Granovetter, Marshall Sahlins, and Karl Polanyi, see an enduring interdependence between commercial and the cultural spheres. Through anthropological history, they document the profound influence that culture has on commercial institutions and conversely the pull that commerce has on culture. To be sure, some argue a causal relationship between commerce and culture that runs one-way. Marxists like Horkheimer and Adorno (1972) argue, for example, that commerce has a corrosive effect on culture, but not vice versa. On the other end of the spectrum, some, like the early Max Weber, argue that culture has an effect on commerce (Weber 1930/2002). The Protestant Ethic, for example, alters the way that people work (i.e. a lot), consume (i.e. not much at all), and therefore develop wealth. Culture and commerce are causally related from Weber's perspective, but only because culture influences commerce.

The various approaches and arguments one can apply to this debate are endless, owing in large part to anxieties about the powers of the "market" (see Fourcade and Healy 2007 for a review) and an increasing awareness that commercial life is pervasive in modern reality (Baudrillard 1975). Many leading scholars have been fascinated by the emerging relationships between commercial and cultural institutions (Becker 1982; Dimaggio 1982), and these debates have become increasingly foregrounded in interdisciplinary fields such as Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould and Thompson 2005), the sociology of consumption (Schor 1998; Slater 2001), and New Media Studies (e.g. Jenkins 2006).

This dissertation is one attempt to closely study the interactions between commerce and culture. It has been colored by institutional theory, an approach that tends to parcel things into three buckets—regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive—which act as "pillars" used to support any institution. This approach can be used to explain the multi-faceted nature of both market institutions and their cultural components. Thus in any cultural institution, one will find commercial components such as financial logic, self interest, and contractual agreement, just as in any commercial institution, one will find cultural components such as narratives, beliefs, and cultural symbols. On balance, this dissertation investigates the latter side—the emergence of casino gambling as a commercial institution—detailing the ways in which culture has enabled and constrained its development (Giddens 1984), and to a lesser extent the way in which this commercial institution has appropriated and resold cultural elements.

Illustrations

To think through the integration of culture and commerce, consider the following quotations that illustrate the nature of this integration. The first two quotations—one from a novel, *Beautiful Children*, set in modern-day Las Vegas and the other from the movie *Casino*, about one man's transition from small-time bookie to casino tycoon—illustrate the integration of specific cultural practices into a commercial institution.

> The neon. The halogen. The viscous liquid light. Thousands of millions of watts, flowing through letters of looping cursive and semi-cursive, filling then emptying, then starting over again. Waves of electricity, emanating from pop art facades, actually transforming the nature of the atmosphere, creating a mutation of night, a night that is not night—*daytime at night*. The twenty-four-hour bacchanal. The party without limits. The crown jewel of a country that has institutionalized indulgence. *Vegas on Saturday night.*
>
> ---Charles Bock, from the book *Beautiful Children*, 2008, p. 97

> Who could resist? Anywhere else in the country, I was a bookie, a gambler, always lookin' over my shoulder, hassled by cops, day and night. But here, I'm 'Mr. Sam Rothstein'. I'm not only legitimate, but running a casino. And that's like selling dreams for cash. For guys like me, Las Vegas washes away your sins. It's a morality car wash.
>
> ---from the movie *Casino*, 1995

"Institutionalized indulgence" and "selling dreams for cash"—both practices succinctly depict the harnessing of previously-existing cultural practices for commercialization. Bacchanal or "partying" and dreaming have not historically been related to commercial institutions, but the legitimation of casino gambling has worked to commodify these cultural practices and integrate them into an industry. Note also that this commercialization process is a "morality car wash." That is, the association with financial practices in America can "wash away your sins."

Next, consider two quotations that depict the historical transformation of gambling from a proto-business to full-fledged industry, again one from the movie *Casino* and one from the movie *California Split*.

> The town will never be the same. After the Tangiers, the big corporations took it all over. Today it looks like Disneyland. And while the kids play cardboard pirates, Mommy and Daddy drop the house payments and Junior's college money on the poker slots. In the old days, dealers knew your name, what you drank, what you played. Today, it's like checkin' into an airport.
>
> ---from the movie *Casino*, 1995

> Poker has been around for a long time. But it isn't like this [the saloon] anymore. The saloon has been replaced by this [shot of a card club]. With a game that can be played in comfort and with full confidence in the management. And here's the man who's responsible for that confidence, Mr. Murray Shepard. "Welcome to the California Club, where your pleasure is our business. It has been said that everyone in America understands poker or wants to. It is one of our most popular games, and since you have shown an obvious interest by coming here, we've prepared a short film to teach you the fundamentals of the game played here. Service is our only commodity.
>
> ---from the movie *California Split*, 1974

These quotations illustrate two sides of the commercialization process, a loss of meaning, authenticity, and individuality on the one hand, and an increase in transparency, trust and comfort on the other hand. Although dealers may no longer "know your name" or what you drink, two obvious benefits come from commercialization—"comfort" and "full confidence in the management." Integrating cultural practice with commercial institutions may have made casinos "look like Disneyland," but it has given consumers confidence that games are fair and that gambling is (somewhat paradoxically) 'clean.' In this sense, the meaning of casino gambling has shifted through commercialization from a seedy, illicit practice to a clean, safe commodity.

Finally, consider quotations from two men who visit casinos regularly and who themselves articulate the same historical narratives and processes put forward by the cultural representations previously examined:

> Yes, so the Orleans is a big casino, it looks like a big square. And it just sits you know on a big parking lot, which they have room for a lot of cars. And it's five minutes from the strip, five minutes from the airport. And they have great restaurants which aren't real expensive. And it's just a homey town feel. They have gambling, but then they have…a big, twenty lane or forty lane bowling alley. They have ten or twelve theatres with all the newest movies. They have a big arcade for kids. They have a gym to workout in. They have ….shew!...they have babysitting facilities. They have all kinds of stuff.
>
> ---Mark, WM, 53

> From the outside [Harrah's] is a very classy-looking casino. The front is very classical. It's got like fluted columns and big steps and lots of waterfalls...When Harrah's first got built, they thought maybe it wasn't going to open. They had already built the structure, and then like Harrah's was rethinking having a casino there. And…the city hall in New Orleans is dilapidated, and I was thinking, they should just move city hall to this building because it's a very cool looking building. It would make a nice city hall.
>
> ---Eric, WM, 22

Mark and Eric depict two aspects of integrating commercial casinos into other institutional structures. Mark takes for granted the existence of a casino alongside a movie theater, an arcade, and a gym. All of these 'legitimate' businesses are now integrated, in Las Vegas at least, into a modern, commercial multiplex. In this sense, casino gambling is integrated into other commercial institutions such as entertainment and service industries. Eric, in a different vein, cleverly elides the distinction between governmental and commercial structures. The casino building in downtown New Orleans could equally be a place for Harrah's or a "nice city hall." Eric's quotation takes us one step further from considering the integration of cultural and commercial institutions to the integration of commercial and legal institutions.

As all of these quotations vividly illustrate, casino gambling has undergone a profound transformation from marginalized industry to corporate enterprise. There are many ways to label this transition, as “institutionalized indulgence,” from desert to “Disneyland,” from small to “big box,” but all of these terms describe the same structural transformation in cultural, economic, and social reality. As Mark, above, indicates, some casinos now come with a “homey town” feel, including bowling lanes, movie theaters, a gym and babysitting facilities. They are, in many cases, what George Ritzer calls “cathedrals of consumption,” commercial structures built to enchant, to embed cultural life into the cold rationalization of commerce (Ritzer 1999). In another sense, casinos have also become integrated with the state apparatus. Not only are they legally integrated into national and state laws, but, aesthetically speaking, some might even “make a nice city hall.” Yet this integration is not merely Eric’s idle speculation; in 2008, the democratic primaries in Nevada were held in nine casinos on the Las Vegas Strip (Tanner 2008). Casino gambling has clearly become integrated with many cultural and governmental institutions.

By depicting this transformation from the marginal to the Main street, the quotations above also illustrate the careful integration of culture and commerce, the repackaging of cultural consumption practices, many of which have existed for thousands of years. Although “poker has been around for thousands of years,” one can now play it “in comfort” (*California Split*, 1979). In this dissertation, I argue that one of the facilitators in the instutionalization of casino gambling is precisely the integration of culture and commerce. What has driven this transformation, the integration of cultural and commercial forces into one institution, and how has the integration been managed in regulatory and normative domains?

Research Focus

Throughout the dissertation, I ask the same question in a variety of ways. Put most simply, how has casino gambling become a legitimate consumption practice in the last thirty years? How has it moved from being perceived as an illicit activity to being perceived as an acceptable, legitimate activity? In answering this question, I also seek to answer the broader question: In general, how do new industries become accepted in the marketplace? Although scholars have theorized historical process through models of diffusion (e.g. Bass 1969) and legitimation (e.g. Suchman 1995), both approaches have missed the many cultural processes and transformations that underlie and enable historical change. Here I use and amend institutional theory to explain the evolution of casino gambling from marginalized consumption practice to corporate enterprise.

To more specifically understand the way in which institutional theory is used here as an analytical device, consult Figure 1-1. In this dissertation, I undertake an analysis of all three pillars of legitimacy, using multiple data sources. In Chapter 2, I use cultural representations of casino gambling in film to measure the cultural-cognitive pillar of legitimacy and to provide some historical context for the ways in which consumers were likely to have viewed casino gambling, at least in idealized form. In Chapters 3 and 4, I assess the normative pillar of legitimacy by analyzing data from three major national newspapers and elaborate two new components of legitimacy, commercial and territorial legitimacy, as shown in Figure 1-1. In Chapter 5, I compare multiple socio-political levels of regulative and normative legitimacy to show the differential effects of each level over a cross-section of 48 casinos in 4 states, and over a ten year time period.

Research Motivation and Contribution

The contributions of this dissertation have been positioned to make contributions to several related subfields within consumer behavior, marketing, and sociology. In consumer behavior, studies of legitimacy have focused on discursive processes to the exclusion of structural transformations in the environment. I use the case of casino gambling to show the interaction of discursive processes with material, regulatory, and commercial structures, as gambling evolves from a marginal consumption practice, to one that is normatively accepted on a national scale.

In marketing, studies of product diffusion have neglected the important role that social, cultural, and legal structures play in the success or failure of an innovation. Using casino gambling as a case study of diffusion, I assess the changes in normative legitimacy to show how shifts in semantic framing have affected the diffusion process. In general, I argue that normative legitimacy increases the number of potential adopters and that it is therefore critical to understand the institutional dynamics of an industry in order to manage the diffusion process.

In organizational studies and sociology, the constructs of normative and regulative legitimacy have been cast at the national level, often without an awareness of the differential effects that legitimacy can have at the community, state, national, and international levels. My work in this dissertation refines the concepts of normative and regulative legitimacy from gross national measures to finer measures that can exist on local, national, and international levels. Using this reconceptualization of the constructs, I argue that an awareness of legitimacy as existing in a field of stakeholders with varying interests and influence is crucial to our understanding of the legitimation process.

Cast at the highest level, the approach of this dissertation is to bring the study of cultural variables to bear on theories of commercial institutions in order to show the ways in which cultural concepts and processes can enlighten our view of systematic structural and commercial changes in the marketplace.

Organization of the Dissertation

The dissertation is organized in the following way. Chapter 2 evaluates shifts in cultural legitimacy using film as data for tracking shifts in cultural representations of casino gambling from 1951 to 2006. Chapters 3 and 4 focus on changes in normative legitimacy through a qualitative and quantitative analysis of newspaper articles in three major national newspapers, and assess the contributions of two newly proposed types of legitimacy—commercial and territorial legitimacy—to normative legitimacy. Chapter 5 then focuses on regulative legitimacy to evaluate the effects of normative and regulatory environment on overall success of legitimation efforts. Chapter 6 concludes by bringing these findings together to suggest a timeline on which these three “pillars” contributed to legitimation.

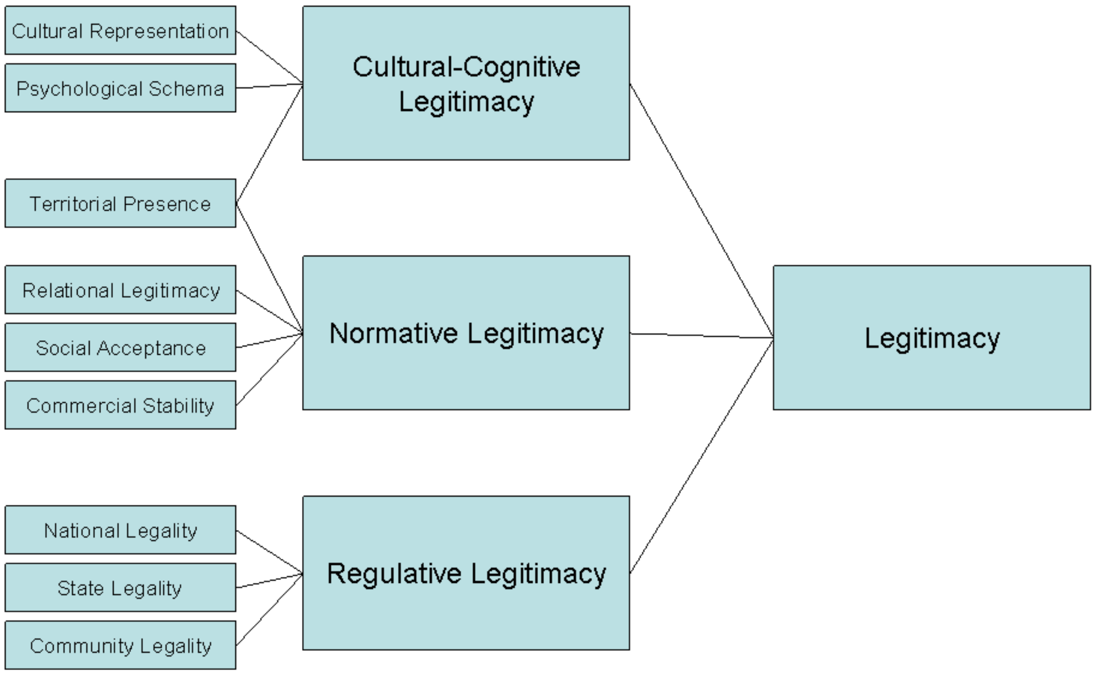

Figure 1-1: Legitimacy, Constructs and Their Operationalization

Chapter 2 : Cultural Legitimacy

Stacking the Deck: Gambling in Film and the Legitimation of Casino Gambling

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter begins the analysis of legitimation processes by first evaluating shifts in the cultural legitimacy of casino gambling from 1951 to 2006. Gambling films from *Showboat* in 1951 until *Casino Royale* in 2006 were systematically evaluated for changes in content, tone, and semantic structure. What we find in the data is a series of thematic shifts in cultural representations of gambling from an atmosphere of brotherhood, trust, and camaraderie to an atmosphere of disillusionment, then of mistrust, double-dealing, and loss of control. When these shifts in cultural representation are matched against changes in the regulatory environment (i.e. regulative legitimacy), we see that as gambling has become a *legally* accepted practice, it has lost legitimacy in *cultural* representations. Several implications can be drawn from this inversion. First, we know that cultural representations often embody a fantasy space used to express underlying anxieties about the social world (Jameson 1981). Therefore, when gambling is safely marginalized to the borders of Nevada, romantic depictions of heroism and brotherly unity, a utopian space of wish-fulfillment, prevail. As the social world changes to make gambling a more commonplace practice, however, anxieties about its elevation to a corporate entity and a national phenomenon come to the fore. Secondly, and most importantly to the overall aims of the dissertation, the findings here indicate that legitimacy occurs piecemeal in different institutional fields (i.e. Hollywood film versus American legal structure), and can even be inverted in cultural representations to provide a niche of resistance to the legitimation process.

INTRODUCTION

In 1975, casino gambling was a relatively marginalized consumption practice in the United States. Casinos were legal in only one state, and the industry took in about $800 million dollars per year (United States Commission on the Review of the National Policy Toward Gambling 1976). Now, in 2006, casino gambling is legal in 28 states in the US and annually grosses over 30 billion dollars (American Gaming Association 2006). The practice is also represented in mainstream popular culture through TV shows like *Celebrity Poker Showdown* and franchises like the *World Series of Poker*. In 1996, annual casino visits roughly equaled visits to theme parks in the US (Harrah's Annual Report 1996). As the National Gambling Impact Study Commission (1999) reports,

> [s]ince the mid-1970's, America has evolved from a country in which gambling was a relatively rare activity—casinos operating only in the distant Nevada desert, a few states operating lotteries, and a pari-mutuel gambling relatively small scale and sedate—into a nation in which legalized gambling, in one form or another, is permitted in 47 states and the District of Columbia. (p. 1)

Along with this popularity, or perhaps even enabling it, casino gambling has become a legitimate consumption practice. In this chapter I seek to answer two questions. First, how has casino gambling moved from a illegitimate to a legitimate consumption practice? Second, what part have cultural representations of casinos in film played in this legitimation process?

My broader aim in asking these questions is to consider the mediating role of institutions in the legitimation of consumption practices. Previous studies of legitimation in consumer research have looked at the legitimacy of brands (Fournier 1998; Holt 2002; Kates 2004), subcultures (Kozinets 2001), and business practices (Deighton and Grayson 1995), pointing to mechanisms that range from explicit manipulation of legitimacy through social cues and actions (Kates 2004; Kozinets 2001) to implicit manipulation of affective attachment through integration into daily life (Fournier 1998) and use of cultural scripts (Holt 2002). Legitimacy in this research, however, has been theorized more or less ‘directly’ between the company and the consumer without recourse to institutions as explanatory or mediating factors. Research in organizational theory, on the other hand, has relied heavily on mediating institutions—regulatory, normative, or cultural-cognitive—to explain the legitimation of organizations, practices, or ideas (Scott 1995). These theories tend to emphasize the role of key stakeholders and organizations rather than groups of individuals such as the general public or a particular consumer base.

The present research on the legitimation of casino gambling as a consumption practice contributes to the literature in consumer behavior in two ways. First, although the direct company-to-consumer link has been theorized, the institutional role in this process has yet to be explored. One would expect institutions to play an important mediating role in the relationship between company and consumers, making some legitimation strategies available and precluding others. Only occasionally do we see companies achieve legitimacy more-or-less ‘directly’ with consumers through brands. Instead, legitimacy is more often facilitated or inhibited by institutions such as retail structure, legal frameworks, cultural representations, or social networks. Here, I will examine the ways in which cultural representation of casino gambling in film facilitates, inhibits, or reflects the legitimation process. Do cultural representations merely reflect the practices of the social world or do they direct and orient consumption practices toward (or away from) legitimacy?

The second way in which this research contributes to existing research on legitimacy in consumer behavior is through its treatment of legitimation as a historical process. Although previous empirical studies have made reference to historical context (e.g. Kates 2004, Holt 2002), none have explicitly evaluated the mechanisms of this historical process using archival materials (for exception, see Deighton and Grayson 1995). By empirically broadening the temporal scope of data, we can better understand the dimensions and processes of legitimation. For example, previous work has suggested that habituation and affective relationships play a role in the legitimation process (Fournier 1998), but this theorizing tends to neglect the existing cultural frameworks, discourses, and institutions. Analyzing historical materials explicitly will provide evidence of these frameworks that can help us understand the process of legitimation. This approach supplements previous work that outlines the ways in which discourse structures consumption practice (Holt and Thompson 2004; Thompson 2004).

LEGITIMACY

Legitimation is the process of making a practice or institution socially, culturally, and politically acceptable within a particular context. Legitimacy has been defined as "a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate, within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions," (Suchman 1995, p. 574). Legitimacy, for sociologist Max Weber, is a mechanism for explaining why people regularly and voluntarily submit to authority. For him, it is a key concept for distinguishing between domination and legitimate authority. Weber writes, "so far as it [social action] is not derived merely from fear or from motives of expediency, a willingness to submit to an order imposed by one man or a small group, always implies a belief in the legitimate authority," (p. 37). For Weber, a legitimate social action is more than blind "obedience." Rather, it is one that includes the complicity or approval of action on the part of the subject (p. 215). Theories of legitimacy, then, center on how this approval is constructed and sustained for a particular practice, entity, or idea.

Recent research in institutional theory has divided the concept of legitimacy into three dimensions, each corresponding to regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive institutional frameworks. Regulative legitimacy is the degree to which an organization adheres to "explicit regulative processes: rule-setting, monitoring, and sanctioning activities," (Scott 1995, p. 42). These rules tend to be associated with government or regulatory agencies and other supraordinant institutions. Normative legitimacy is the degree to which an organization is congruent with the dominant norms and values of the environment (Pfeffer and Salancik 1977). Lastly, cultural-cognitive legitimacy is the degree to which an organization is known and understood by social actors. Cultural-cognitive legitimacy can be explicitly articulated, but more often is 'taken-for-granted.' Gambling would be culturally-cognitively legitimate, for example, if it were as common, well known, and easy to categorize as fast food restaurants (National Gambling Impact Study Commission 1999, p. 2). There can also be interactions between various types of legitimacy. Full legitimacy could be achieved by complete regulatory compliance, normative acceptance of social actors, and eventual 'taken-for-grantedness' of the institution. On the other hand, organizations can have varying degrees of legitimacy of different types. An organization like the casino may have regulatory legitimacy but still lack normative legitimacy in the community. Further, it may never gain cognitive legitimacy as a common, taken-for-granted consumption practice. A bank, on the other hand, may have complete normative and cognitive legitimacy, but may lapse in complying with regulations, thus losing regulatory legitimacy.

Certainly, the process of legitimation is complex and takes place on several levels. To understand how consumption practices become legitimized requires that the problem be broken down into the analytical 'slices' common to institutional analysis in sociology (Figure 2-1): the individual level, the social level, the level of cultural representation, and the political level (Powell and DiMaggio 1991). Here, I will compare these "slices" across two different time frames: a time 1, when gambling is an illegitimate consumption practice, and a time 2, when gambling is a legitimate consumption practice. In doing so, I aim to explore the interaction between the cultural level and the social and political levels by drawing generalizations from cultural representations of gambling in movies and comparing these representations with the evolution of gambling practice in the social and political world. As I will show, cultural representations of consumption practices tend to work between levels, translating legitimacy from the normative domain to the cognitive realm, for example, or from the regulative to the normative domain (Douglas 1986). The relations existing between each of these dimensions can be used in turn to understand the process of legitimation at its broadest possible scope, revealing how interactions between institutional levels facilitate or inhibit the legitimation of consumption practices.

The Role of Culture

When studying cultural representations of consumption, it is important to recognize two methodological issues. First, it is important to note that culture is a term often used to elide the distinction between two components, the evaluative and the semantic (Jepperson and Swidler 1994). "Culture" can equally refer to a set of values and norms that *prescribe* action as well as a set of "sense-making" materials that simply facilitate *description* of the world. As Clifford Geertz says, "culture is both a model *for* and a model *of* behavior" (Geertz 1973). The recursive nature of culture poses several problems of analysis that I will later address. The elision between normative and semantic in the study of culture is at the crux of definitional issues, but it also illuminates how culture may actually function in the process of legitimation (Foucault 1977).

Secondly, it is important to note the separation between the social world of consumer behavior and cultural representation of consumer behavior. Of this separation, the critical theorist Fredric Jameson has written,

> …it is the very separation of art and culture from the social—a separation that inaugurates culture as a realm in its own right and defines it as such—which is the source of art's incorrigible ambiguity. For that very distance of culture from its social context which allows it to function as a critique and indictment of the latter also dooms its interventions to ineffectuality

> and relegates art and culture to a frivolous, trivialized space in which such intersections are neutralized in advance (2005, p. xv).

Jameson poses the question of the relationship between the social world and culture in dialectical terms. For him, cultural representations such as narrative are made meaningful by virtue of their separation from the social world. Rather than simply representing the world, movies, novels, and plays provide the space for reflecting on, critiquing, and re-presenting the existing circumstances. By virtue of this critical distance, however, cultural representations also stand at a remove from the process of political change, and are thus to some extent neutralized in advance by dominant institutions. For Jameson, this does not mean that cultural representations are free from politics; rather, it means that by studying cultural representations, we learn about the frameworks under which social action is directed and constrained.

Given the heavily mediated relationship between the social and the cultural, a word of caution is in order when applying the study of film to consumer research. As I will show here, claims and conclusions drawn from the study of cultural representations do not necessarily extend directly to conclusions about actual consumer behavior. Rather, they enable consumer researchers to trace the relationship between the various levels at which institutional legitimacy is achieved.

DATA

The dataset for this article was composed of 14 movies produced from 1951 to 2006 (Table 2-1). A two-stage clustered sample was taken of all gambling movies, as listed by the keyword "gambling" in the Internet Movie Database (www.imdb.org). First, all gambling movies were grouped according to key dates in the regulatory history of gambling (Figure 2-2). Then, the top grossing movies were selected from each time period in order to represent the most popular cultural representation of gambling in movies for the time period. In the second stage of sampling, the number of movies selected from each time period was weighted according to the number of total movies from group, as would be done with a stratified sample (i.e. fewer movies from smaller time periods were selected so that no one time period was over-represented in the sample). One movie, *Bob Le Flambeur* (1955), fell outside these criteria, but was included because of its direct comparison with *The Good Thief* (2003).

Many other primary and secondary sources provided the historical and social context to which these movies were compared. Primary amongst these sources are two congressional sub-committee reports, the National Commission on Gambling of 1976 and the National Gaming Commission of 1999. The number and type of casinos in operation was taken from the archives of the American Gaming Association.

METHODOLOGY

Based on examples from previous work (Sherry 1998, Hirschman 1986), a hermeneutic analysis of the films was conducted. Specifically, movies were first broken down by scenes, as listed on the DVD version of each movie. Movies had on average 26 scenes, with a range from 12 to 40 scenes. Descriptive notes were taken on each scene of every movie. These notes were then entered into a database, coded, and compared with other scenes both within the same movie and across movies. Generalizations were made by categorizing some scenes together according to theme and then distinguishing those groups from other groups, as one might do in a cluster analysis. Abstractions of themes were formed over both the entire data set and by time period. Finally, the progression of themes over the time period was compared against historical data from newspapers and government documents. I will first discuss generalizations from the entire dataset before breaking down the generalizations by historical period.

FINDINGS

Overall, cultural representations of gambling in the films depict images of utopian escape from market structures of work and consumption. These representations operate as a negative imprint of dominant ideologies by reflecting practices that resist everyday structures of work and consumption. In the domain of work, the ideas of the nine-to-five work day, the equity between work and pay, and company-organized work are regularly violated. In the domain of consumption, representations of a potlatch of free goods and services within the casino as well as the unreciprocated exchange of expensive gifts constitute representations of practices that are contrary to common practices and constraints of lived consumption.

Welcome to the Working Week

The protagonists of many films in the dataset are men who do not hold 9-to-5 company jobs. They gamble all night and sleep or relax during the day. These lifestyles, all supported by gambling in some form, depict a way to escape the constraints of the market, constraints which normally require steady work. For example, the main character, Bob, in *Bob le Flambeur* and similarly Bob in the movie's 2003 remake, *The Good Thief*, sardonically claim that they support themselves through distant investments in agriculture. Bob's lifestyle as a man of leisure is funded both by previous heists and by family wealth. Similarly, John Robie, the protagonist in *To Catch a Thief*, is independently wealthy from money obtained as a resistance fighter at the end of World War II. Some of these characters are poor, but maintain a lifestyle contrary to the spirit of a 9-to-5 job. Charley, the protagonist in *California Split*, is a down-and-out guy who barely makes ends meet by betting on horse racing and playing poker. The crew of Ocean's Eleven (1960) earn money by doing odd jobs, relying on family wealth, or by drawing military pensions. Even James Bond of *Casino Royale* (1967, 2006) has a job that requires him to work a very unconventional work day. The only exception to this generalization is Jack of *Honeymoon in Vegas*, whose life quickly spins out of control after he takes a vacation from work.

These men represent alternatives to the 9-to-5 organization man prevalent in the 1950s (Marcuse 1966). These men are not bound by the constraints of a family or a regular job, and their daily activity is organized around their own desires. As independent 'men of action' (Holt and Thompson 2004), they provide an alternative way to imagine the organization of economic and personal life. Because each of them achieves this lifestyle through gambling in some form, the practice is implicitly depicted as a way to escape the constraints of contemporary market structures.

In addition to the protagonists' identities, the utopian representation of non-marketized work is depicted in specific scenes that recur in several movies. Very commonly, movies open with scenes of early morning day break and place the protagonist, having gambled all night, moving through the transition from night to day. These scenes occur in *Bob Le Flambeur*, *The Gambler*, *California Split*, *Cincinnati Kid*, and *Casino Royale* (2006). Not only do the protagonists 'walk the walk' of men independent of regular work, but they also 'talk the talk' by staying up for many hours, carousing with women, and sleeping during the day. Scene by scene, this structure is recurrent in the films of the sample.

Money for Nothing (and the Chicks for Free)

Characters in the films studied rarely gamble to make money, and often refer to the goals of gambling as 'action,' 'excitement,' 'play.' Very rarely, if ever, do they frame gambling as work, and the winnings and losses they endure are always at odds with the labor they put into gambling. In *California Split*, Charley, the protagonist exclaims, "$100 chips. They give us real money for this?!" Although his gambling technically involves 'real money,' it is in abstracted form, represented only in chips, and gained with little effort. In a few hours, the two main characters, Charley and Bill, make $82,000 by playing craps, blackjack, and poker. To Charley and Bill, this is clearly out of keeping with the labor they would normally expend to earn that amount of money. The winnings are gained in the blink of an eye, and they are sent reeling at the disconnect between work and pay.

Conversely, in *Cincinnati Kid*, long work hours at the poker table do not result in a net profit for the main character, a gambler from New Orleans called the Kid. In the main poker match-up, the Kid goes up against a legendary older gambler, Lancy Howard. Despite a continuous 24 hours of poker play represented by a montage of 'normal' people sleeping during the night while the two play on, the Kid walks away defeated with no money to show for his labor. But no matter; as Lancy advises the Kid, "money is never an end in itself, but simply a tool, as language is to thought." Every gambler in the sample, even professional gamblers, gambles with reference to action or excitement, and no gambler in the sample saved or invested his winnings as one would do with earned money. Instead, the winnings were immediately spent on gifts or luxury consumption or they were stolen by someone else. Although some characters worked long hours and some characters didn't work at all, there was no correlation between work and pay.

The Boys are Back in Town

In addition to the theme of an inequality between work and pay, characters in the movies tend to create organizations of production that are alternatives to the traditional company structure. Most often, this organization is represented in the "heist" plot where a group of men are led by a single person, or two people, into a venture that will produce windfall gains. This is the case in *Ocean's 11* (1960, 2001), *Bob Le Flambeur*, and *To Catch a Thief*. These organizations involve many traits of a company including planning, capital investment, a work force, and a division of labor, but all exist outside of the law and without a conventional company structure.

The two partners in *California Split* similarly form a scheme to make money together instead of working for a company. In *Casino*, where the main character, Sam Rothstein, actually works for a casino company, he is grouped with men who form alternative modes of production, such as mafia organizations, instead of "puppets," or organization men, who are installed to be the face of the casino. Indeed, Sam Rothstein exists between these two organizations, such that he is a part of neither of them.

As with the previous two themes, gambling and all of the things associated with gambling provide opportunities for men to organize outside of the conventional market sphere of activity. They do not have to work for a regular boss. They do not have to keep company hours. They are free to direct their activity, and, perhaps most importantly, they have a vested interest in the products of their labor.

In these three ways—the individual identity of the gambler, the structure of daily practices and in organized relationships with others—alternatives to the structured work are represented in each movie, forming a cultural imaginary of the non-marketized work available through gambling. As both the setting and structure of these movies, gambling represents a 'way out' of the dominant ideology of work that organizes real daily life.

Can't Buy Me Love

Films in the dataset depict images of utopian escape from market structures in the domain of consumption as well. Non-reciprocated gifting between characters in the movie and representations of the 'free stuff' offered by casinos constitute images of consumption without sacrifice, something for nothing. In 12 of the 14 movies, gifts in the form of jewelry, lavish dinners, or trips, were given from men to women after a big win. Very often, gambling was undertaken to finance gifting. In some cases, giving gifts had negative results. In *Showboat,* for example, the excess of gifts financed through gambling result in financial ruin. In *Casino,* lavish gifts cause personal turmoil because they encourage deception. In *Bob Le Flambeur*, participation in crime in order to give gifts to a woman results in the death of the giver, a naïve kid trying to impress a girl. In other cases, gifts were mere tokens given to impress women or for conspicuous consumption, as in *Honeymoon in Vegas, Casino Royale*, or *California Split*. In all cases, gifts from gambling proceeds were not visibly reciprocated, breaking with this near-universal norm (Mauss 1901/1990, Sherry 1983). This breach in gifting norms tellingly represents a utopian space outside of exchange systems, where gifts do not entail repayment. Without repayment, the gifting cycle is disrupted, but characters also escape from the social norms that this disruption would entail.

The representation of free goods and services, or 'comps,' was also common in the films. Most often represented as gifts from the casino to the player, these comps depict a potlatch where the consumer is granted anything he or she wishes for. Lavish hotel suites in *Honeymoon in Vegas* and "high roller" perks in *Casino Royale* (2006) create the image of a space in the casino outside of the normal give-and-take of the market.

These cultural representations constitute what Karl Mannheim calls a utopian orientation (1936/1966). "A state of mind is utopian," he says, "when it is incongruous with the state of reality in which it occurs" but "only those orientations that when they pass over into conduct, tend to shatter either partially or wholly, the order of things prevailing at the time" (p. 193). According to Mannheim, an idea is fully utopian only when it contradicts existing circumstances and the common order. Utopian cultural representations must be translatable into conduct, but some utopian ideas can be constrained by prevailing ideologies constituting a partial utopia. In this sense, representations of gambling in film are partial utopias because they break with the dominant ideology of the work and consumption structures, but at the same time, they reinforce terminal ideological goals of the market such as conspicuous consumption and leisure.

As representations that transcend empirical reality, utopia and ideology exist in important relation to one another. Mannheim says,

> Ideologies are situationally transcendent ideas which never succeed *de facto* in the realization of their projected contests….Utopias too transcended the social situation, for they too orient conduct towards elements in the situation, but are not ideologies in that they succeed in counter activity…transform[ing] existing historical reality into accord with their own conceptions (p. 198).

As ideal structures, utopia and ideology orient action in the social sphere. Utopian orientations inspire action against dominant ideology and dominant ideology in turn constrains social action. In the space of cultural representation, these two orientations operate to drive historical change.

How can the concept of utopia help us understand the process of legitimation? As drivers of historical change, the dialectic between the ideological and utopian representation can facilitate legitimation. A marginal practice like gambling can be represented as utopian possibility, become less marginalized as it is adopted, and eventually can become integrated to be congruent with the dominant ideology of market systems. Representations of utopia inspire "counter activity" against situations constructed by the prevailing ideological structures. This social action then becomes part of the prevailing ideological structure and may again be transformed through further counter activity. Illustrating this, Mannheim says, "the existing order gives birth to utopias which in turn break the bonds of the existing order, leaving it free to develop in the direction of the next order of existence" (p. 199). As an illustration of this, cultural representations of casino gambling illustrate how gambling can constitute utopia and be used against the dominant structures of the 9-to-5 work day, a life constrained by company organization and rigid class structure. As non-market representations, viewers imbibe these meanings and act in the social world. These changes, however, occur through dynamics over time, and it is the nature of this dynamism that will now be explored.

HISTORICAL TRENDS AND CONNECTING CULTURAL REPRESENTATION TO THE SOCIAL WORLD

Although themes of utopian consumption can be generalized over the entire set, generalizations from the movies according to time period also emerge. From 1951 until the late 1960s, gambling movies were based around honorable male characters that form bonds of trust. In the 1970s this theme shifted to disillusionment with gambling. Finally, from the early 1990s to the early 2000s, gambling is depicted in a *verité* style where most protagonists are in the process of losing control of their lives. We can read the social history of gambling alongside these generalizations by time period in order to understand correlations between the social and political world and trends in cultural representations of gambling. The set can be divided into three periods roughly corresponding to key events in the status of gambling practice in the social world (see Figure 2-2). The relationship between key legal events and corresponding thematic shifts in film demonstrate that, although gambling may be legalized as a consumption practice, its legality does necessarily confer social or cultural legitimacy. A change in regulatory legitimacy (i.e. legality) does, however, change the frameworks within which cultural representations are constructed. Before discussing the trends in cultural representation of gambling, it is necessary to briefly review the history of gambling in the United States in order to understand the shift of cultural representations in film.

In 1951, a US Federal Commission, the Kefauver Commission, publicized links between gambling and organized crime, most notably the link between Bugsy Segal and the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas (Kefauver 1951). In the 1950s and early 1960s, casino gambling was illegal in most states and was practiced by about one in nine people (National Commission on Gambling 1976). In 1964, New Hampshire legalized state-run lotteries, and ten other states in the Northeast soon followed. In 1976, the US Congress convened a commission to study the potential effects of legalized gambling. The focus of this commission, tellingly composed primarily of law enforcement, legal experts, and clergymen, recommended that, despite contrary moral opinion, gambling should be legalized because it would decrease illegal gambling run by organized crime. Gambling expansion incrementally spread as off-track betting, electronic gaming, and lotteries became legal on a state-by-state basis. Still, full-fledged casino gambling was legal in only two states.

In 1988, a Supreme Court decision granted sovereign rights to Native American tribes. This escalated casino expansion in the early 1990s as a result of competition among states and between states and Native American tribes (National Gambling Impact and Policy Commission 1999; Von Herrmann 2002). After a combination of state referendums and state legislation, riverboat or dockside casinos sprung up in Illinois, Missouri, Indiana, Mississippi, and Louisiana (see timeline, Figure 2-2). Land-based tribal casinos were built primarily in the northeast and southwest, with some encroachment in the Midwest (e.g. Wisconsin) and south (e.g. Cherokee, North Carolina and Seminole, Florida). By 2006, 455 commercial casinos were in operation in 21 states (American Gaming Association 2006), often strategically built along state borders (National Gambling Impact and Policy Commission 1999). In 1999, a second US Congressional commission was convened to study the effects of the legalization of gambling from 1976 to 1999. The recommendation of the commission was to halt the expansion of casinos until more research could be conducted. With this periodiziation of the history of casino gambling in mind, we can now examine historical trends in the cultural representation of gambling.

1951-1964: Honor, Trust, Camaraderie

Between 1951 and 1967, gambling movies tended to be based around themes of honor, trust, and camaraderie among groups of two or more men. In *To Catch a Thief*, ex-jewel thief John Robie works with an upstanding London insurance agent, H.H. Hughston, to catch a jewel thief who is impersonating Robie's style of robbery. To set up a sting that will trap the impersonator, the two men must form a bond of trust that will escape the watchful attention of the police, who explicitly do not trust John Robie. The insurance agent must trust John Robie, an ex-thief, without the backing of any official or legal organization. He says to Robie,

> *HH Hughston:* We're both taking a big chance here.
>
> *John Robie:* Really? What happens to you if I'm caught?
>
> *HH:* Why, I might be embarrassed, maybe even censured officially.
>
> *JR:* They'd put me away for good.

HH: You've made a bad choice of professions.

JR: Well then let's come to an understanding. I'm doing *you* a favor. I take all the risks; you get all the jewelry back.

HH: Mr. Robie, it strikes me that only an honest man could be so foolish.

The theme of 'taking a big chance,' the risk of trusting another man in order to accomplish a task, is present in many gambling movies from the 1950s and 1960s including *Ocean's Eleven* (1960), *Bob Le Flambeur*, and *Cincinnati Kid*. In *Ocean's Eleven* (1960), a group of ex-army men form a coalition to rob four casinos of their cash holdings. Based on their previous deployment together in World War II, they form bonds of trust in order to accomplish the "liberation" of millions of dollars. When planning the operation, two planners, Sam Houston played by Dean Martin and Danny Ocean, played by Frank Sinatra, try to convince a "backer," Vince, to trust them.

Sam Houston: Vince, the plan is foolproof, take my word for it. You know I only lie to girls.

Vince: If it's so foolproof, why hasn't somebody done it yet?

Danny Ocean: Same reason nobody's gone to the moon yet. No equipment. And we're equipped.

SH: It's going to be a military operation executed by trained men.

DO: Why waste all of those cute little tricks that the army taught us just because it's sort of peaceful now?

The group of men is pulled together out of mutual trust and a spirit of camaraderie under the eyes of 'official' bureaucracies such as law enforcement and casino owners. This trust in these two instances, and over the entire 1951-1960 time period, is notably gendered. Men trust other men and "only lie to girls."

1974: Disillusionment

In the two movies coded from 1974, *California Split and The Gambler,* the main characters develop lasting disillusionment with gambling, even after big wins. In *California Split*, the main characters Charley and Bill go on a "run" in Reno Nevada that nets them $82,000. After the win, an excited Charley, played by Elliott Gould, says to Bill:

> *Charley:* Those people out there, they wanna take pictures. The *Reno Gazette*, they want to do a whole story on us, but I told them, "no, no, we're gonna be restin' until we come back, right?"
>
> *Bill*:…
>
> *C:* Do you always take a win this hard?
>
> *B:* Charley, there was no special feeling, I just said there was.
>
> *C:* Yeah, I know that. Everybody knows that. But check this out, we're heroes here….
>
> *B:*…
>
> *C:* (sigh) It don't mean a fucking thing, does it?
>
> *B:* Charley, I have to go home.

Although Charley wants to celebrate the big win, Bill has become disillusioned by their run of luck. Winning money doesn't transition into a change in lifestyle, only more wandering and hoping for the next big win. Bill can say nothing of the win; he simply shrugs and goes home. Unlike Charley, he doesn't value the attention or the money. For Bill, there is no class advancement through gambling. He realizes that the 'ride,' the search for excitement and the corresponding despair, is a hopeless cycle that he only wants to escape.

Similarly in *The Gambler*, the main character, Axel, played by James Caan, finds disillusionment after betting on a basketball game in the last scene of the movie. As a compulsive gambler, Axel tries to pay off a $40,000 gambling debt throughout the movie. His fortunes wax and wane to his alternating excitement and despair until he persuades a player to fix a college basketball game that he bets on and wins, alleviating himself completely of debt. After the win, Axel sits on the bleachers alone, disillusioned with the practice of gambling, a lifestyle of extreme highs and extreme lows, a practice that he formerly found existentially fulfilling. In these films, winning precedes an existential crisis in the main characters.

1992-2006: Loss of Control

Lastly, in the period from 1992 to 2006, gambling is tied to a loss of control in the lives of the main characters. Films generally begin with the protagonist's stable life and the plot is then driven by the protagonist's loss of control over their life due to deception, addiction, or violence, all attributable directly or indirectly to gambling.

In *Honeymoon in Vegas*, the main character, Jack, loses control of his romantic life after gambling against Tommy Korman, a professional gambler and his romantic rival. The plot of the movie centers on Jack's loss of control and his attempts to regain it by winning back his girl. As Tommy whisks Jack's girlfriend off to Hawaii, treats her to volcano explosions, romantic boat rides, and beachfront property, Jack struggles to regain control of his life through a series of frustrated attempts to travel. Throughout the film, he's hindered by conspiratorial taxi drivers, a labyrinth of flight delays, and third-class transportation. This episodic plot device reinforces the feeling of despair and frustration as we empathize with Jack's loss of control.

In *Casino*, the main character, Sam Rothstein or "Ace," loses control of his professional and personal life when his best friend and mobster, Nicky, exerts an insidious and violent influence over Ace's casino organization through mafia connections.

> *Ace:* Listen, Nick, you gotta understand my situation. I'm responsible for thousands of people. I got a hundred million a year goin' through the place. It's all over, I'm gonna tell you, it's all over, if I don't get that license. And believe me, if it goes bad for me, it's gonna go bad for a lot of people, you understand? ... I just wanna run a square joint. That's it. I just want my license. I want everything nice and quiet. That's it.
>
> *Nicky* (Holding up the magazine): You mean, quiet like this: 'I'm the boss.' That's quiet?
>
> *A:* That's all taken out of context. Okay.
>
> *N:* Yeah, that's out of context. Okay.
>
> *A:* I have no control over that. Ronnie and Billy were right there. They'll tell you exactly what happened.
>
> …

N: What the fuck happened to you? Will you tell me?

A: What happened to me? What happened to you?

N: Yeah.

A: You lost your control.

N: I lost control?

A: Yes, you lost your control.

N: Look at you. You're fuckin' walkin' around like John Barrymore.

N: A fuckin' pink robe and a fuckin'...

A: All right.

N:...uh, uh, cigarette holder. I'm - I lost control?!

Ace feels the loss of control over his casino empire and upstanding reputation because Nick's reputation rubs off on his own and draws the attention of the Nevada Gambling Commission. The loss of control becomes visceral, as Ace fears not only the loss of his career and wife, but also his life.

Double-crossing, tricks, lying, and swindling result in a loss of control for the main character, Bob, in *The Good Thief*, for James Bond in *Casino Royale* (2006), and for the villain in *Ocean's Eleven* (2001). In *The Good Thief* and *Casino Royale* (2006), the main characters find that someone they trusted betrays them and derails their life. In *Ocean's Eleven* (2001), the villain and casino owner Terry Benedict is depicted explicitly as someone who has complete control, who sees and knows everything. Then, due to the antics of the Ocean's Eleven crew, Benedict loses control of his girlfriend and the cash holdings of his casino. Over the three time periods, representations of gambling and the protagonists involved move from honor, to disillusionment, to loss of control.

DISCUSSION

These trends in the cultural representation of casino gambling can be related to gambling's transition from illegitimate to legitimate. When gambling is illegitimate, trust and camaraderie are important in informal networks because the practice is not buttressed by institutional assurances or highly regulated organizations. When gambling becomes legitimate, however, loss of control and distrust follow because gambling is now run by relatively anonymous, corporate and government bureaucracies. The individual is alone within these structures, and without personalized network of trusted associates, he or she feels powerless and out of control. Again, the cultural representations of gambling form the inverse of the 'official' or normative position on gambling practices and, perhaps more importantly, demonstrate the way in which the cultural legitimacy of a consumption practice can be decoupled from its regulatory legitimacy.

How do these findings resonate with consumer culture theory of legitimation? The correspondence of these themes in film alongside social and legal history suggests that, contrary to expectations, cultural representation does not directly reflect nor influence action in the social world. In fact, the correspondence between cultural representation in film and legitimation is negatively related. Instead of preaching dominant ideas of the market relations such as steady work and equal pay, these movies instead operate by representing an escape from those ideas. They depict practices of resistance to the dominant structures of work and consumption, but in doing so they reinforce more fundamental ideas about economic life. For example, the end goals of having 'stuff,' of getting rich, and of being continually entertained, are not called into question but are instead reinforced. The depictions of gambling in the dataset provide a way of thinking through ways to achieve these goals through alternative modes of social and economic organization.

This ‘negative’ image extends to the historical trends of cultural representation. Just as gambling was becoming legalized in the mid-1970s, it was being represented as a source of disappointment and disillusionment. In the 1990s when casino gambling was at its most rapid adoption in the US, gaining both regulatory and normative legitimacy, it was being represented in movies as a source of chaos, downfall, and loss of control.

The gap between the legal status and the cultural depiction of gambling suggests that legitimation occurs piecemeal. Although casino gambling may have gained regulatory legitimacy, it lags in gaining cultural legitimacy, as represented in film. The unevenness of legitimation over regulatory, normative, and cultural spheres is accounted for by the known disjunctions between these institutional domains (Scott 1995). Further, one might suggest that the very disjunction serves as fodder for cultural production and dramatic framing. When gambling is illegal, filmmakers safely exploit the archetypes of the “good sinner” for dramatic effect. When it gains legality and even some modicum of normative legitimacy, however, this new context creates fresh discursive frameworks for dramatic exploration and novel archetypes like the out-of-control gambler. Further, this suggests that when times are “unsettled” and the status of a consumption practice are unclear, cultural production often works to express and organize underlying normative tensions (Swidler 2001).

Do cultural representations reflect legitimation in the social world or do they orient practices that legitimate gambling? The answer cannot be straightforward because there is no clear correlation in time between the legitimacy of gambling in film and the legitimacy of gambling in regulatory and normative domains. Instead of correlation or temporal priority, one observes that cultural representations of gambling project a refracted image of the social world: noble representations of gambling when it is illegitimate in the normative domain and ignoble representations of gambling when it is relatively more legitimate. These representations amount to a ‘negative’ reflection of existing social conditions. Thus it’s possible to claim from this evidence that the legitimation process does not proceed straightforwardly by indoctrinating viewers through direct rhetoric but rather through a more complicated process whereby some ideological components are negated while other, more fundamental, background ideologies are reinforced.

There are, however, several limitations to the claims we can make based on the films and historical fact alone. The data used for this study cannot tell us directly about the consumer behavior of gambling practices, nor of what rhetorical frames consumers find compelling. Another limitation to this research is that sampling of cultural representation is extremely limited. Because of media and genre constraints, gambling movies could be very different from gambling TV shows, novels, and plays.

CONCLUSION

Casino gambling is a morally and politically complex topic. Should the government restrict people’s right to engage in an activity they enjoy? Should gambling be illegalized to prevent pernicious social, cultural, and economic decay? Is gambling wrong, or, even worse in the Western imagination, illogical? Casino gambling is also ontologically complex. Gambling practitioners, proponents, and opponents fight over what gambling 'is,' and use these definitions to recommend action. Is gambling a leisure or work activity? Is it a vice or simply entertainment? Each definition places the practice in a certain frame of reference that can then be used to argue for its legitimation or de-legitimation. These debates over definition in turn motivate the epistemological and moral issues. We can look toward cultural representation to understand how consumers navigate these complex moral, economic, and political issues. The goal of my study is to learn how and why casino gambling, and consumption practices more generally, become legitimate. In this chapter I have focused on the role of culture as a facilitator, inhibitor, and reflector of this process.

By looking at the ways in which gambling is represented in film, we can conclude that cultural products that represent gambling often use gambling as a space of fantasy and possibility that works in opposition to the real world. When the real world changes, the utopian possibilities that are refracted in cultural representation also change. We also learn that legitimation of consumption practices comes piecemeal in regulatory, normative, and cultural domains. Although gambling as a consumption practice may be legal and even practiced by many, it can remain culturally stigmatized. This cultural separation allows us to understand more broadly how consumption practices are legitimated through cultural representation. As a marginal activity, the practice can be safely romanticized from the distance of fictionalization. When the consumption practice becomes relatively mainstream, more *verité* depictions predominate, presenting balanced or even negative perspectives of the consumption practice. Paradoxically, this has the effect of making the cultural representation the inverse of contemporary social norms and practices. We can read cultural representations, in this context at least, as the negative image of prevailing ideologies. Because the cultural product is separated in important ways from the social world, it can operate as a space where practices of resistance are projected. Importantly, however, we still find more primary ‘background’ ideologies such as the aspiration toward a modern, luxurious lifestyle present in the cultural product. In depictions of casino gambling, there is an element of ideology and an element of utopia.

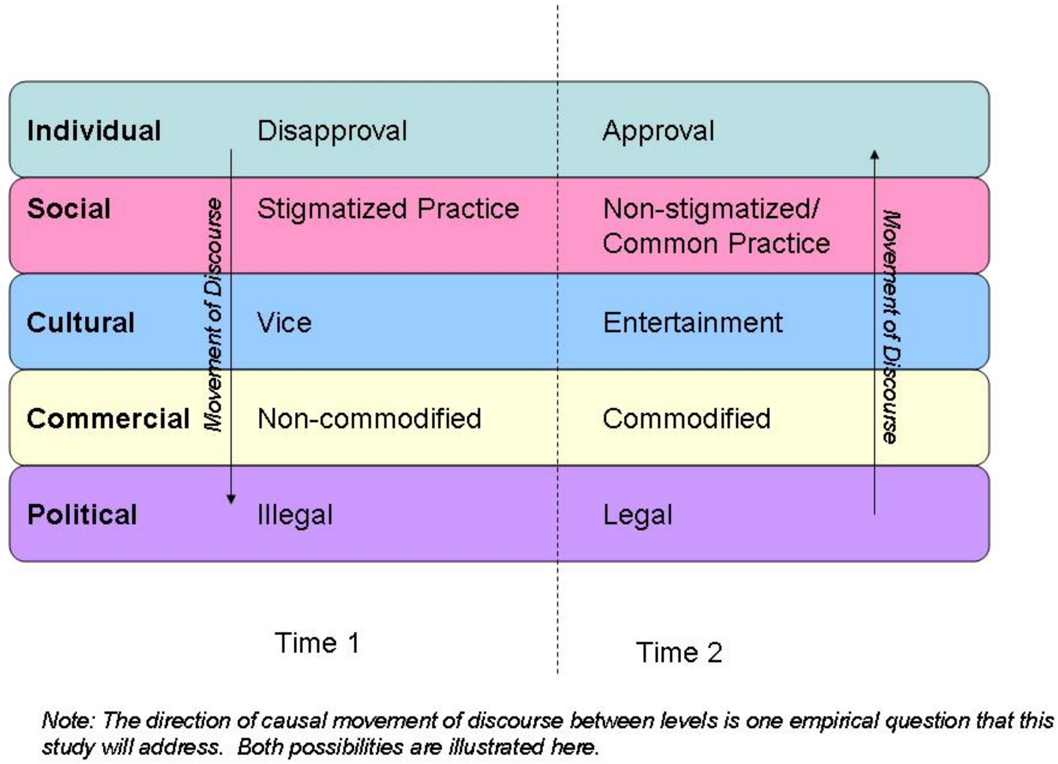

Figure 2-1: Levels of Analysis

Movie Title	Year
Show Boat (SB)	1951
Bob L'Flambeur (BLF)	1955
To Catch a Thief (TCT)	1955
Ocean's Eleven (O11.1)	1960
Cincinnati Kid (CK)	1965
Casino Royale (CR1)	1967
California Split (CS)	1974
The Gambler (TG)	1974
Honeymoon in Vegas (HIV)	1992
Casino (C)	1995
Leaving Las Vegas (LLV)	1995
Ocean's Eleven (O11.2)	2001
The Good Thief (TGT)	2003
Casino Royale (CR2)	2006

Table 2-1: Dataset of Gambling Films

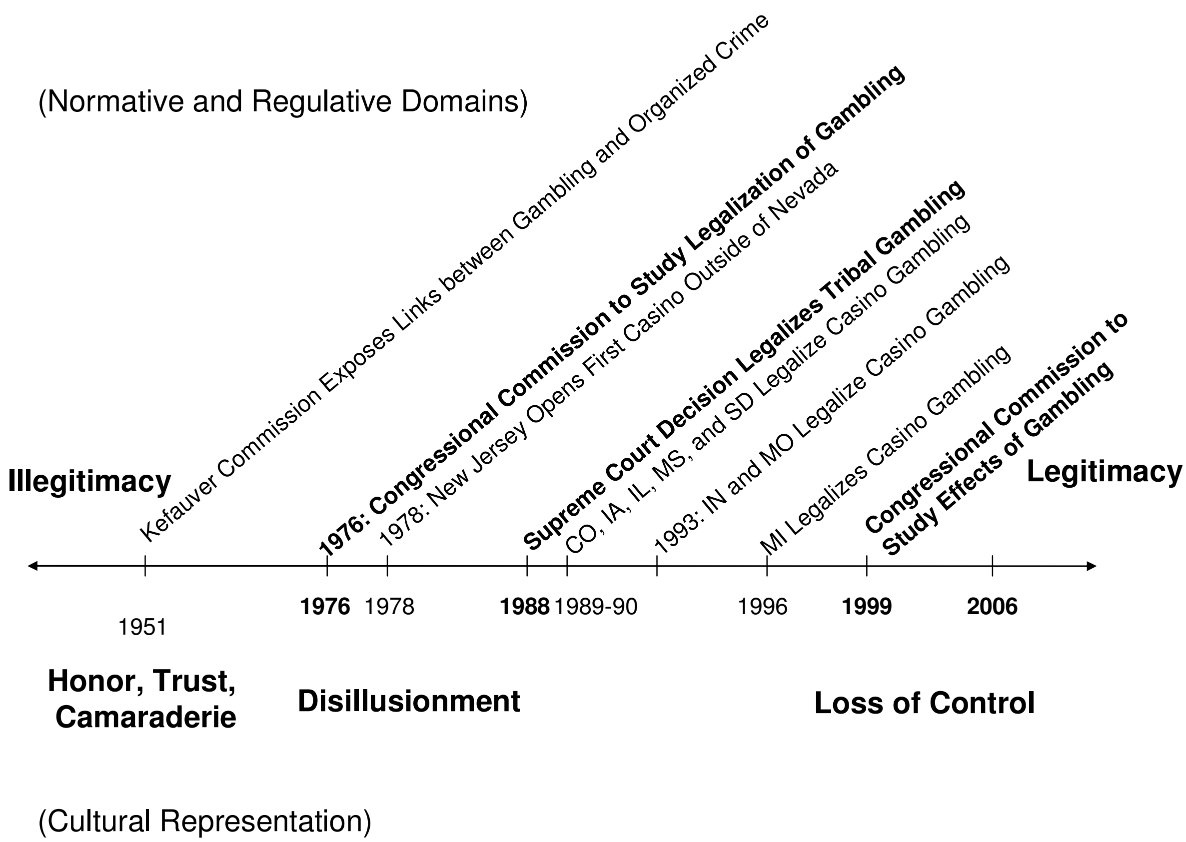

Figure 2-2: Timeline of Themes in Gambling Films

Chapter 3 : Normative Legitimacy (Qualitative Analysis)

Semiotic Structure and the Legitimation of Consumption Practices: a Qualitative Analysis of Media Coverage about Casino Gambling, 1980-2006

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter addresses the second pillar of legitimacy—normative legitimacy—and its relation to the spheres of cultural and regulative legitimacy. A systematic qualitative analysis of newspaper articles in three leading newspapers lays out the basic semantic markers used to talk about casino gambling. This chapter builds on Chapter 2 by showing how these semantic markers are unified through many of the same narratives supplied by cultural representations of gambling. The semantic categories enumerated in the initial qualitative analysis offered here are then quantified and measured over time in Chapter 4.

The findings in this chapter show the ways in which changes in regulatory, commercial, and territorial fields, impact the types of semantic categories and narratives used. Specifically, I find that as casino gambling gains regulatory acceptance and emplacement in social structure, the pure semantic concepts used to describe it (e.g. purity vs. filth) are synthesized into new concepts (e.g. corruption). Secondly, I find that narrative structures are used to unite two opposing concepts. Redemption, for example, is used to explain the transition between poverty and wealth.

There are several takeaways from this chapter. First, although previous research on legitimacy in consumer behavior has focused exclusively on changes in discourse (e.g. Thompson 2004), this chapter shows the impact of other structures such as commercial and legal fields on public discourse about consumption practices. Secondly, the most relevant takeaway from the perspective of overall aims of the dissertation is the idea that normative legitimacy is deeply embedded in other types of legitimacy. In a sense, this makes normative legitimacy the hardest to conceptualize and measure because the institutional boundaries of what is "normative" are blurred. The hallmark of normative legitimacy is normative acceptance of a social group. To measure this acceptance, however, one must define the relevant social body in question. Does the institution of newspaper journalism represent "shared" meanings of casino gambling accurately? As Jepperson and Swidler (1994) persuasively argue, the aggregate of individual opinion does not equal a collective social fact. The problem with answering the question of normative legitimacy, therefore, is that the social body that defines normative legitimacy is itself an analytical construction. The only solution that I can offer here is a methodological one: the chosen measure of normative legitimacy is the totality of data available from newspaper articles which include quotations from a variety of sources including consumers, companies, and regulators. From this collective body, one can generalize shifts in the meaning of casino gambling as conceptions about its normative legitimacy have changed. From these shifts, one can then assess the role that normative legitimacy takes in the overall process of legitimation.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores stigma at the macro-cultural level by evaluating the semantic shifts in discourse about casino gambling in the United States from 1980 to 2006. Previous research on consumer stigma has studied the pathology of shopping behaviors (O'Guinn and Faber 1989), the role of stigma in formations of fan community (Kozinets 2001), and the perceived pressures and consumer enactments toward normalization in response to stigma (Thompson and Hirschman 1995), all with an eye toward the consumer experience of living with stigma. While previous research has studied stigma from an individual perspective, it has not fully taken accounted for larger political and social institutions in which stigmatized consumption practices change. How and why does stigmatization of certain consumption practices change over time? In this chapter, I evaluate destigmatization through the theoretical lens of legitimation in order to assess the impact that social and cultural factors have on normative conceptions of stigmatized and non-stigmatized consumer practices.

The tradition in consumer behavior has been to evaluate the normative structuring of consumer practice through discourse. Drawing from the tradition of structuralism, Levy (1981) first proposed that we study the ways in which consumers use mythic and symbolic structures to organize their consumption experiences. Several studies since then have detailed the ways in which cultural concepts, categories, and narratives structure consumption practices. Stern (1995) shows how consumers draw from archetypal mythic structures (comedy, romance, tragedy, and irony), to normatively structure their holiday consumption experience. Through an analysis of advertisements, Holt (2004) traces historical changes in brand myths over time, as companies reframe their mythos to align with specific cultural-historical anxieties. Finally, Thompson (2004) shows how mythic discourses are harnessed to legitimate health micro-cultures, specifically in product advertisements.

Although this work persuasively shows the power of discursive structures in shaping normative conceptions of consumer practice, three gaps remain that can filled by an explicitly institutional approach. First, by adopting an institutional approach (e.g. Scott 1995), I measure the impact of regulative, cognitive, even physical structures alongside the effect of discursive structures on the changing legitimacy of consumption practices. Secondly, not only can we assess the independent aspects of these other institutional factors, but can also study the ways in which these aspects are integrated into discourse itself. Previous studies have yet to explicitly show how occurrences in the world are taken and incorporated into discourse. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, by moving away from the study of discourse in advertisements, this research helps us better understand the role of specific institutional fields such as newspaper journalism play in shaping cultural concepts and practices. Using this previous work as a spring board leads us to reframe the research question more precisely: through what discursive processes are consumption practices destigmatized? What factors existing outside of discursive structures play a role in the legitimation of consumption practices and how do those factors interact with existing frameworks? How are these factors, in turn, incorporated into discourse?

THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT

Before developing the concept of legitimacy, I will first review the basic tenets of institutional theory to show how they can illuminate our understanding of legitimation process. Institutional theory is a framework for understanding the development, maintenance, and persistence of social structures called institutions. Institutions are "social structures that have attained a high degree of resilience. [They] are composed of cultural-cognitive, normative, and regulative elements that, together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life" (Scott 1995, p. 33). By understanding the coordinated efforts of individual actors to support and build these social structures, we can understand the ways in which consumption practices attain legitimacy. Institutional theory, then, is a broader framework within which we can theorize the evolution of casino gambling from a stigmatized to non-stigmatized practice. Within the process of legitimacy, we can further study the effects of discourses and frames for achieving normative legitimacy.

Legitimation is a social process of making a practice or organization congruent with the configuration of other values, institutions, and social norms (Dowling and Pfeffer 1975; Johnson et al. 2006; Suchman 1995). Previous research in consumer research has theorized several mechanisms in the legitimation process ranging from explicit to implicit forms. First, explicit mechanisms such as consumer reward or punishment of a company for its actions can affect legitimacy. In Kates' (2004) study of brand legitimacy in the gay community, individuals support companies that publicize actions congruent with the subculture's goals or display long-time support of the community through advertising in community-targeted media outlets. Similarly, consumers like Star Trek fan groups may themselves explicitly and deliberately seek legitimacy through the use of social cues such as dress and community service activities that make the group isomorphic with other community organizations (Kozinets 2001).

Second, less explicit mechanisms to gain legitimacy such as company appropriation of consumer attitudes toward brands (Holt 2002) or seduction into a suspension of disbelief (Deighton and Grayson 1995) may be used to legitimate companies and their practices. Lastly, legitimacy may be obtained through implicit mechanisms such as the situating of brands within daily life, especially within the family unit (Coupland 2005; Fournier 1998). Although this previous research on legitimacy in consumer behavior has explored the full range of actions for obtaining legitimacy, it has centered on direct legitimacy relations between two groups without regard to the multi-dimensional nature of legitimacy on regulative, normative, and cognitive/cultural dimensions.

I suggest that we can better understand consumer-company legitimation processes by employing institutional theory. From an institutional theory approach, legitimacy occurs on three levels, regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive (Scott 1995). Regulative legitimacy is the degree to which a practice conforms to rules and regulations set forth by an organization, usually the government. Normative legitimacy is the degree to which the practice is accepted by social actors, irrespective of legal status. Cognitive legitimacy is the degree to which the practice is "taken for granted," the ease with which it can be categorized and understood according to existing cognitive schemas and cultural frameworks. All three types of legitimacy, however, draw from the same semantic repertoires. As members of a shared social world, politicians, journalists, consumers, and casino owners work with the same basic concepts that are used to frame and discuss casino gambling. In fact, the interaction between these stakeholders is largely the turf on which the meaning of casino gambling is negotiated. On the one hand, the meanings of casino gambling are “out there” as social facts for actors to cite (Husserl 1900/1970). On the other hand, the social meaning of gambling is actively constructed and changed by social actors, especially those with many economic and political resources (Sewell 1992). Through changes in this meaning, casino gambling can be legitimated or delegitimated. Evaluating the universe of shared meaning, then, is crucial for understanding how legitimacy is achieved.

In this article, I develop the construct of legitimacy by studying how it is achieved through multiple institutional fields. By systematizing this network of shared meaning, we learn more about the structures that govern the orientation of consumer action and belief. To understand the way in which these theoretical tools fit together, see Figure 3-1. Institutional theory at the top encompasses the three types of legitimacy—regulatory, normative, and cultural-cognitive. The primary type of legitimacy under study here is normative legitimacy, although normative legitimacy, as I will demonstrate, is influenced in important ways by other types of legitimacy. Normative legitimacy is constructed through specific discourses that operate to legitimate consumption practices. To understand these discourses, however, we need to understand both the frames on which discourses are built and the basic semantic categories used by frames themselves.

Understanding shifts in discourse over time is crucial for understanding and theorizing the process of legitimation. The semiotic relationships enumerated here become the tools with which opponents and proponents of casino gambling frame their arguments, and ultimately fail or succeed in enacting their agendas (Gamson 1992; Gamson and Modigliani 1989; Snow and Benford 1988). Conceptually, these semantic networks are important because they unite multiple levels of analysis, from cognitive structures (i.e. individual conceptualizations of casino gambling) to social structures (i.e. norms that govern when and where one should gamble) to regulatory structures (i.e. laws that govern the enactment of casino gambling). As the basic building blocks of frames, its important to first lay out the structure of meaning from which social actors construct discourse about gambling practices and institutions.

To understand the basic building blocks of discourses and frames, I take a structuralist approach to enumerating the basic cultural categories operating in the institutional field. Following from Durkheim's work on religion, Claude Levi-Strauss, and the tradition of structuralism more broadly, first introduced the idea of cultural binary as a tool for socio-cultural analysis. A cultural binary is a pair of concepts that people use to organize the world. For example, the binary of the raw and the cooked, Levi-Strauss argues, broadly structures cultural thought to make sense of the relationship between nature, as represented by "the raw," and civilization, represented by "the cooked," (Lévi-Strauss 1969). This "inventory of mental patterns," (p. 10) can be used "as conceptual tools with which to translate abstract ideas and combine them to form propositions," (1969, p. 1). Although seemingly infinite, binary structures are important because they structure not only discourse between people, but sensory experience, as well. Further, it is the structuring of meaning, rather any particular binary itself, which is the topic of a structuralist analysis. "The function of signs," Levi-Strauss says, "is precisely to express one [sign] by means of the other. Even when restricted in number, they lend themselves to rigorously organizing combinations which can translate even the finest shade of a whole range of sense experience," (p.14).

While binary structures may seem timeless and universal in Levi-Strauss' Kantian theorization, post-structuralist modifications help us to understand changes in binary concepts over time and in communication rather than sense experience. If we apply a model of Hegelian historical process to this structural framework, we see that concepts evolve through a process of thesis, anti-thesis, and synthesis. Two concepts, a thesis and its opposite, the anti-thesis, exist in fundamental opposition. The "raw," for example, is strictly different from the "cooked." The mutual exclusion of these ideal concepts, Hegel would argue, comes from the most fundamental binary between the self and other. Through perception of the world, the interaction of the self with other, two opposing concepts, the thesis and anti-thesis combine to form a new concept, a synthesis (Hegel 1807/1979). Similarly, as the categories of sensory experience, such as the raw and the cooked, interact with the world, they become synthesized in order to explain observation. This process, initially existing on the level of the individual and his or her physical interaction with the world, also, for Hegel, occurs historically on a larger scale.

Although structuralism has had many critics, the cultural binary remains a useful tool for mapping semiotic relationships that exist in discourse. Even critiques of the binary structure use it as a foundation on which further textual exegesis is based. For example, although Derrida critiques the binary structure of *langue* and *parole*, his deconstructive analysis of Rouseau's text, *Le Savage*, first enumerates these binary relations before demonstrating how they are co-continuative and mutually undermining (Derrida 1976/1998). (For other examples, see (Butler 1999), (Alexander 2004) and (Giesler 2008)). One need not accept that the binary structure exists 'in reality' to understand that such structures, at least in a Western context—itself part of another important binary—are used by social actors to organize discourse. With requisite skepticism toward the universal reality of cultural binaries, such tools can be useful for analyzing the structure of discourses, always with three caveats: 1) semantic structures are the product of a collective social process, 2) these structures are not cohesively or uniformly adopted by all members of the culture in question (Meyerson and Martin 1987), and 3) they are theoretical, ideal-typical structures that are applied (sometimes unevenly) to the world at large.

The Greimsan or semiotic square is a tool for mapping these kind of semiotic relationships and forming larger structures from primary binary concepts. Beyond outlining frames that exist, as previous research has done, the semiotic square as it is used here demonstrates the way in which semantic frames relate to one another and the ways in which concepts are synthesized for form new frames (Jameson 2005; Kozinets 2008). Although developed as a tool for synchronic analysis, we can also advance its use here by introducing changes in structural emphasis over time. That is, although the structure of meaning itself doesn't dramatically change over course of legitimation, the semantic points of emphasis shift and combine to create more nuanced and elaborated semiotic structures. For example, the concepts of clean and dirty are present from the very beginning of discourse about gambling. However, as gambling becomes legitimated over time, they become synthesized into cynicism about the integrity of regulatory mechanisms in the idea of corruption, the combination of legislators, supposed to operate with pure motives, with 'dirty' money from casinos or other interested parties.

DATA AND METHODS

The data for this chapter is a sample taken from the population of all newspaper articles with the word "casino" in the headline or lead paragraph from three periodicals, *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *USA Today* from 1980-2006, using the Factiva database. From this search, a stratified random sample of 600 articles (200 from each periodical) was drawn according to three time periods, 1980-1988, 1989-1999, 2000-2006. These time periods were chosen because of their correspondence with important dates in the regulatory history of casino gambling (see Chapter 4). Articles were qualitatively coded using Atlas.ti, and a procedure of open, selective, then theoretical coding was employed until stability in interpretation was reached (Altheide 1996; Glaser and Strauss 1967). This chapter took its methodological cues from the several other studies in consumer research that have analyzed texts using a structuralist or post-structuralist interpretive approach (Belk and Pollay 1985; Hirschman 1990; Holt 2004; Levy 1981; Stern 1995; Thompson 2004), although the focal texts of these studies have usually been advertisements (Belk and Pollay 1985; Holt 2004; Scott 1994; Thompson 2004), magazines (Hirschman 1990), television shows (Hirschman 1988), or comics (Belk 1987; Spiggle 1986). Several other sources of data provided the context with which articles were interpreted. These include seven interviews with casino gamblers, five of which were tape-recorded and transcribed, lasting between one and two hours (Table 3-1). Participant observation was also conducted at seven casinos in the Midwest and East Coast over a period of six months. Materials from this part of the research include transcripts from each interview and field notes from each visit comprising about 179 pages of single-spaced text.

Historical discourse analysis of this type has several advantages. First, it is able to draw from representations of consumption practices as they were depicted at the time, without the mediation of individual memory that retrospective interviews sometimes produce (Bernard et al. 1984). Secondly, newspapers perform for a wide, generalized audience (Tuchman 1978), which means that historical analysis of newspaper text can give us an idea of the shared social meaning of a consumption practice, rather than the range of particular meanings that particular consumers or advertisers articulate. Finally, the historical analysis of newspaper text is likely to be based on representations of consumption practices that are depicted within the conventions of newspaper reporting, a genre framed by readers as a generally trustworthy source of information (Goffman 1981; Tuchman 1978) and a genuine reflector of public opinion (Habermas 1973). Because of the conventions that govern the genre, these representations of consumption practices are therefore less spectacularized than those represented in advertising (e.g. Scott 1994) or cultural products like movies and novels (e.g. Hirschman 1988) and less targeted, as in magazine publications with a narrowly circumscribed readership (e.g. Thompson and Tian 2008). Of specific interest here are the ways in which newspaper discourse claims to speak for a general audience. It is thus particularly notable when we find systematic historical changes in the representation of consumption practices in these generalized media sources. The remainder of the article is structured as follows. In the first section I outline the basic semantic categories used in the data. In the second section, I cover the narratives used to connect these semantic categories over time. In the third section, I specify the ways in which semantic categories are synthesized. Then, in the fourth section, I show how these elements are incorporated to support legitimation efforts.

Finally, I summarize the findings and discuss their implications for research on consumer culture.

BASIC SEMANTIC CATEGORIES

Purity and filth

Four fundamental concepts structure discourse about casino gambling: purity/filth and wealth/poverty (Figure 3-2). One of the most fundamental binaries in human cultures is the distinction between purity and filth (Douglas 1966). With roots in food preparation, biological health, and sexual practice, the purity/filth binary serves as cultural bedrock for many human practices and institutions (Bullard forthcoming; Coombes 1994; Griffiths and Robin 1997). As Mary Douglas puts it, "[d]irt offends against order. Eliminating it is not a negative moment, but a positive effort to organize the environment, " (1966, p. 2). "In short," she continues, "our pollution behavior is the reaction which condemns any object or idea likely to confuse or contradict cherished classifications," (p. 36). The concepts of purity and filth in discourse about casino gambling are evoked not only literally to describe the state of communities where gambling occurs, but are also, and perhaps more often, used figuratively to activate reader associations with crime, prostitution, rot, and decay in the case of filth or cleanliness, integrity, transparency, heroism, and integrity in the case of purity.

Structurally, a number of concepts align along these two semantic poles and orient the way discussions about casino gambling take place. For example, a source for an article about casino gambling in Atlantic City says, "I get upset by the dirty city… Because the casino industry came in, prices of real estate went sky high, our taxes went up and it takes our tax money to provide services for casino people who work here but live outside. There isn't enough to clean up the city," (*New York Times*, March 1, 1984). This resident identifies two states, the "dirty city" and the "clean" city, and identifies the introduction of casino gambling as the reason for a persistently dirty city. Further, she alleges that the reason the city cannot become clean is the imposition of casino gambling. A man from another article says, "'Since casinos, it's just been horrible,…We often have as many as 25 to 30 drunks and prostitutes outside the church during the 8 A.M. Sunday service. It's not a good atmosphere for children. It drives people away from the church,'" (*New York Times*, September 25, 1983). Drunks and prostitutes, as representatives of filth are opposed to the church and children, as representatives of purity. Again, casinos are posed as the mediating factor, the cause of introducing filth to purity. In these examples, the two concepts of filth and purity are used side by side to understand the relationship between casino gambling and the communities in which casinos exist.

The distinction between filth and purity also plays a role in the regulation process itself. Casino operators as well as regulatory officials must be deemed pure, which usually means that they have no connection with organized crime. A source from a *USA Today* articles reports, for example, "the New Jersey Casino Control Commission, sometimes accused of going overboard to keep the mob out, ended up giving Griffin a casino license. 'They went through my home, my closets, my safe deposit box,' he says. 'You're Mother Teresa when you're cleared here,'" (*USA Today*, September 20, 1990). By citing the figure of Mother Teresa, the source from this article articulates the purification of the licensing process. In another licensing dispute, one official says, 'Based on those business associations, I felt that the Nevada regulatory statute required my vote against licensing Perlman. It says that association with undesirable people who pose a threat to the welfare of the state is a basis for license denial.'' (*New York Times*, April 24, 1983). "Undesirability," as Foucault has noted (1977), can and has been framed as anything from outright criminality to a questionable psychological case history. The casino context is no exception. Individuals with criminal records or questionable psychiatric histories are routinely denied licenses for employment. Here, defining and bracketing undesirables serves a basic sociological function of enhancing the legitimacy of the regulatory process. The semantic distinction between purity and filth, as will be discussed later, is foundational for the grounding of regulative legitimacy.

The final way that the purity/filth binary is expressed is through disputes over the utilization of space. Instances where a casino is proposed in a sphere of purity are often cause for community outrage. When a proposal was made in New Orleans to put a casino in the former city hall there was a community outcry. More recently, vehement public protest arose in response to a proposal to build a casino near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania due to its close proximity to a civil war battlefield, a cite of both national and spiritual sacredness. About a similar issue in Providence, Rhode Island, one journalist writes, "The idea of a casino in the capital – alongside state government buildings, a new convention center and Brown University – has infuriated gambling opponents" (*New York Times*, November 16, 1992). Structures like government and university buildings are representations of purity and integrity, while casinos here are implicitly related to vice and filth. Many other examples of this territorial contestation between filth and purity exist in the data (e.g. a cemetery in CA), and distinctions between the sacred and profane clearly figure heavily into these debates. As Durkheim says, "sacred things are those things protected and isolated by prohibitions; profane things are those things to which such prohibitions apply and which must keep their distance from what is sacred" (p. 40). In this case, national monuments like Gettysburg, government buildings like the state Capitol, or other spaces like universities or cemeteries, are all classified by community residents as sacred. The casino, on the other hand, with its associations with money and crime, is classified as profane. A spatial barrier, opponents argue, must therefore be placed between these two types of structures, to separate the sacred from the profane.

Wealth and Poverty

The concepts of wealth and poverty are complimentary to the concepts of purity and filth, but they are by no means identical with them (Figure 3-2). A broader capitalist ideology may associate wealth with purity and poverty with filth, but this view is valid only within a particular ideological framework. From a religious ideology, for example, poverty is associated with purity and wealth with impurity. Because of the commercial nature of gambling and the American business context, however, the semantic poles of wealth and poverty take on a special role in orienting discussions of gambling and are complimentary to the poles of filth and purity.

The binary of wealth and poverty is mobilized by reporters and their sources to describe people. High rollers, for example, are wealthy clientele, the kind casinos woo with special treatment and perks. These are the desirable customers, the ones with whom casinos want to be associated, and those who are spatially separated from "normal" customers in the casino space. Articles depict many efforts to draw wealthy clientele to the casino. One article reports that "Las Vegas lives for big fish and the even bigger 'whales,' who gamble millions during a typical three-day stay. The big casinos have tried almost everything to lure them, says casino analyst Jason Ader of Bear Stearns. 'Think of it as an arms race,' he says. 'There was no end in sight because as soon as somebody built a mega-suite, the competition was quick to fire back with something better. You name it, Vegas thought of a way to build it.'" (*USA Today,* March 22, 2000). This "arms race" to attract high rollers expresses itself as potlatch of free gifts, not unlike the cultural representations of gambling in many movies (see, for example, *Honeymoon in Vegas* and *Casino*).

The elaborate description of casino furnishings and high-roller perks gives gambling, especially "Las Vegas style" gambling its glamorous appeal by aligning it with the semantic category of wealth. In reporting, journalists seem to revel in the luxurious details of lavish treatment that wealthy gamblers receive, reporting expensive meals, spas, and casino furnishings in the casino space. For example, one article reports, "To provide a likely atmosphere for this kind of gambling…Playboy spent $500,000 to strip the hotel's third level and $1.2 million to redo it with opulent amenities. There are only 20 tables and 195 slot machines, the $1-a-pull kind. Wide aisles are in sharp contrast to the more-congested spaces on the other levels. The centerpiece in Salon Prive is a raised baccarat salon of Italian rose marble. The interior favors peach, rose and burgundy, with appointments of copper, brass and chrome" (*New York Times*, July, 17, 1983). By describing the special, removed areas designated for high rollers, writers work to segregate "this kind" of gambler from others. Just as "undesirables" are categorized and then systematically separated from the industry, high rollers are categorized and then systematically incorporated into the industry. This process is facilitated, I argue, by the cultural binary. The high roller, as a category of wealthy clientele is categorically separated from the average gambler. This semantic categorization operates as a mechanism used to destigmatize gambling. The fantasy of an ideal gambling experience is based on this high roller ideal, and several gamblers I interviewed used this as a reference point for their own experiences, attempting to emulate this cultural type. High rollers aren't dirty or poor; they are successful gamblers having fun.

In contrast to wealth, poverty is a concept also used to describe people. In the discourse, poverty and filth are complimentary concepts within this particular ideological framework. An article in *New York Times*, for example, reports poverty alongside unsanitary living conditions. It says,"some people think that gambling is wrong, no matter what the benefits, and that poor people will be tempted to gamble away their meager savings. More fundamental is this question: Can riverboat gambling really bring permanent change to a county where, until just a few years ago, a few people still lived in shacks and emptied their bodily waste into a ditch?" (*New York Times*, December 22, 1992). This quotation about gambling in Mississippi depicts community members as both poor and filthy and asks if casinos can move these communities from poor to wealthy, and more implicitly from filth to purity. Over time, we see that the question becomes a narrative of redemption, at least in Mississippi. The redemption narrative, which I will later discuss, isn't the only way to connect these two semantic poles. However, in other cases, once a casino is established, the poverty of the community is portrayed in contrast to the wealth of casinos. As one writer reports, "away from the casinos there is another side to this once-fashionable resort. There are vacant blocks, abandoned buildings and numerous other signs of poverty" (*New York Times*, February

16, 1984). Here, as in many other examples in the data, we see that the binary structure at work. In contrast to the wealth of a "once fashionable resort," we now have the poverty of "vacant blocks" and "abandoned buildings." Casinos, then, are placed as the cause of downfall of people and communities in narrative structure.

As we see, the wealth/poverty distinction is also used to depict the actual and potential state of communities. In the community form, cities seek to be "resort towns" or gaming "destinations," wealthy cities that have money for infrastructure and a place for growing commercial enterprise. In the transcripts from the Indiana Casino Commission, for example, the goal of creating a "resort destination" was a high priority. Las Vegas, of course, is the symbolic touchstone for wealth brought by gaming, a seeming-oasis of wealth in the middle of the desert. Often, the rhetoric for licensing casino gambling in a community centers around bringing wealth to an impoverished community, as we saw in the previous quotations.

Finally, the wealth/poverty distinction is used by journalists and their sources to articulate the fates of companies. Representations of boom and bust come in the form of company gains versus losses and reports of spectacular success versus bankruptcy. Articles that depict unusually high revenues associate casino gambling with wealth. For example, one article pairs vivid imagery typical of gambling with financial reporting by saying, "[a]mid soft lights and green-topped tables, a haze of cigarette smoke and gamblers in silhouette, the croupiers and slot machines took in $3 million a day in 1981 in gambling revenues. This summer, revenues have been even higher" (*New York Times*, August 29, 1982). Statements like this one bring together the vividly depicted spaces of gambling with the financial success of business. The concept of wealth binds together multiple levels of analysis between patrons (in the form of high rollers), profitable companies, and communities in the form of resort destinations.

Poverty in the company context conjures the image of a failed project. One article reports, for example that "The Flamingo, the shut-down riverboat, could become just another faux paddle-wheeler hauling camera-toting day-trippers on the Mississippi. The empty shell of the French Quarter pleasure dome could be abandoned to the stray cats and foraging rats that have already taken up residence there, or it might fall to the wrecker's ball" (*New York Times*, October 14, 1997). The striking contrast between the glamour and hype of a new casino and the decay of an old abandoned casino is often stressed by reporters. The "pleasure dome," as a symbol of opulence is opposed to the "empty shell," as a symbol of poverty. In this way, the two concepts of poverty and wealth are used to structure thought and discourse about casinos. Debt reporting is also common. For example, one article reports that, "Starwood would see its debt fall to $5 billion, from an estimated $8.7 billion in December, says analyst David Loeb of Credit Lyonnais Securities. The Casino Magic Corporation said today that it had dismissed 163 people at its recently opened casino in Bossier City after posting a loss of $700,000 in the first quarter." (*New York Times*, April 26, 1997). Although this article depicts debt falling, which is technically a gain, it is framed in terms of financial turmoil—large debt, layoffs and profit loss. Again, there is a striking semantic disconnect between images of wealth conjured by casino name, "Casino Magic" and the state of business.

The binary of wealth and poverty orients discourse about casino gambling in terms of success and failure. The image of wealth, as it's embodied in high roller clients, implies success for the casino organization and for individual gamblers. Further, communities aspire to attract this wealth in order to help impoverished citizens and civic spaces. Poverty signals failure, either of the more endemic form in the case of people or of the explicit form in the cases of particular companies and communities. The concepts of wealth and poverty, of course, do not exist without the context of other concepts; they are simply points of emphasis and repeated attention, structural elements upon which many related concepts are aligned. The binaries of purity/filth and wealth/poverty undoubtedly rely on each other for semantic content. This coherence is often bestowed through narrative structure, the transition from one meaning to the other. I will now turn to describing the narrative structures used to relates semantic binaries.

PROCESSES AND NARRATIVES OVER TIME

Contamination

Several narratives are used by journalists and their sources to structure the relationship between binary oppositions in the data, contamination, disillusionment, and renewal (Figure 3-3). Perhaps the most prevalent and well-entrenched narrative in gambling discourse is that of contamination, the movement from purity to filth. This narrative takes both literal and figurative forms. In addition to the many quotations already discussed in which filth is introduced to purity (recall, for example, the filth of prostitutes and drunks of Atlantic City versus the purity of the church and children), the contamination narrative is used often by politicians and regulators. For example, regulators literally depict casino gambling as contaminating states by saying, “Casino gambling in our state, even if it’s as clean as it possibly can be –as I believe this one is – doesn’t help the state’s image” (*New York Times*, August 26, 1982). This quotation from

1982 implies that something is inherently unclean about casino gambling. Regulators then place themselves as defenders of the community from contamination, heroes of the general public (Jacobs and Sobieraj 2007). Some ‘suspect’ companies can contaminate other companies or the entire industry. For example, this article about Atlantic City reports that “the [regulatory] division opposed this, saying that allowing a ‘suspect’ company to return to Atlantic City posed ‘an unacceptable risk to casino gaming operations in New Jersey’” (*New York Times*, May 9, 1982). Companies deemed “suspect” because of connections to organized crime are prevented from contaminating the local industry, a threat which is spoken of with epidemiological metaphor, using terms like “risk,” or “threat.”

The narrative of contamination, falling from a pure, clean city or community into filth, is thus often used to bolster the position of regulators in a city or state. For example, one article reports that, “the state countered that all facets of the casino industry, including its unions, required close regulation to keep criminal elements out, and that no exception should therefore be made for the regulation of casino unions” (*New York Times*, June 12, 1983). As protectors of the community, politicians vilify some “suspect” companies or individuals in order to valorize their own purpose. Importantly, as I will later discuss and explain, this happens early in the legitimation process, here from 1982 and 1983.

One strong institutional embodiment of beliefs about contamination is the regulation requiring casinos to be floating, literally isolated from the land (Indiana Gaming Code, Chapter 9, 1993). As a point of practice, we can see how ideas about contamination are made manifest in policy and thus also in the spatial placement of casinos. One article reports, for example, "Jan Craven is a blackjack dealer aboard the Northern Star riverboat casino, one of two owned by Harrah's Entertainment that ply one and one-half miles of a canal through industrial wasteland, satisfying a state requirement that gambling take place only offshore" (*New York Times*, February 28, 1996). Wasteland and casinos are both isolated from the naturally existing community, here, this article says, because of the enforcement of regulatory structures.

Contamination appears figuratively in several striking and consistent ways. One opponent to casino gambling, for example, makes metonymical connection between casinos to toxic waste: "If there were toxic dumps in 23 other states, it might also be a good idea for Florida to be left behind," says Andrew Hines Jr., president of No Casinos, a coalition of businesses and others opposed to gambling. He disputes the argument that if Florida-bound tourists can't gamble, they'll go somewhere else" (*USA Today*, October 26,1994). The pairing of casino gambling and toxic waste is not unusual in the discourse. For example, another article covers a PBS special called "GAMBLING AND NUCLEAR POWER" (*New York Times*, July 18, 1980). In a two hour show, the issue of casino gambling is investigated and then, in a separate piece, the dangers of nuclear power are explored. While seeming to be a coincidence, alongside many other instances of contamination, this pairing seems logical. Articles further emphasize this narrative by depicting casinos in relation to landfills. For example, one article reports that the New Jersey Casino Commission "would allow Mr. Wynn and his Mirage Corporation to recoup 75 percent of the costs of cleaning up the contaminated municipal landfill where the complex would be built. Proponents said the bill was not intended just to benefit Mr. Wynn, but to encourage developers to build on landfills. Under the measure, an eligible developer would be reimbursed out of sales taxes generated by the project" (*New York Times*, September 27, 1996). Here, the contamination narrative is inverted into a narrative of redemption. Although casinos "belong" amongst waste, they can, at least in more recent discourse, renew the landscape by purifying urban wasteland. More often, as I will later discuss, the narrative of (purely financial) renewal is used to argue for the expansion of casino gambling.

Disillusionment

Another very common narrative in the data is that of disillusionment, which usually means that communities' aspirations of being a wealthy resort town have been disappointed. For example, in 1989, when reporting on the first town to legalize gambling outside of Atlantic City or Las Vegas, Deadwood, South Dakota, one article notes that, "Atlantic City, like Deadwood, thought casino owners carried magic wands that could turn the city's slums into palaces of former years. Instead, the wands waved selectively" (*USA Today*, April 14, 1989). In this quotation we have the two semantic objects, wealth and poverty, and a narrative that connects them, the "magic wand." False hopes are contrasted with sobering reality. Often, these false hopes are connected with the promises of politicians and other leaders in the community that have worked as advocates (some might even say cultural entrepreneurs) for the expansion of casino gambling. Of these promises, one article says, "When casino gambling came to Atlantic City, politicians and assorted vested interests promised that it would be a unique tool for urban development. While it has turned into an extraordinary profit-making tool for the casinos, the gambling dream has turned into a nightmare for many of the area's citizens, especially the poor" (*New York Times,* July 18, 1980). Here again we see how the disillusionment narrative connects the semantic polarities of wealth and poverty. It was thought that casinos would bring wealth to the community, but the "gambling dream" has turned into a "nightmare" for the citizens, many of whom are poor. The failure to fulfill these promises is articulated in terms of financial distribution of revenue.

Other articles depict disillusionment through the mixture of good and bad results of casino gambling saying, for example, "[i]t's not that casinos don't bring in money and jobs. Atlantic City's experience proves that they do: thousands of them. But the price is high. A blockwide strip of sparkling new high-rise casino hotels sprouted along the Boardwalk. But at their feet, slums fester as they have for decades, immune to the infusion of money a block away. Atlantic City has become two cities: one for rich visitors, the other for poor residents" (*USA Today*, April 14, 1989). This article uses two concepts, wealth and poor, but makes a finer argument by acknowledging that, while wealth is generated by casinos, it is not properly distributed to "slums" that continue to "fester."

Renewal

By way of contrast to disillusionment, the narrative of urban renewal is also used to connect wealth and poverty. This narrative has come to have increasing prominence in the last 10 years (roughly from 1994 to present) and is applied most often to geographical areas outside of the Northeast. For example, in Joliet, IL, casino gambling is described as saving the city. The article reports that,

> Legalized gambling, which opened in Joliet almost four years ago, also has been the salvation of this city of 83,000 that was best known for a jail,

> dead factories and, in Will County, an unemployment rate that reached 27.6 percent for a month in 1983. Thanks largely to casinos, it is now about 5 percent. Casinos became Joliet's biggest employer almost overnight, having surpassed a Caterpillar tractor plant with 3,500 workers. All this has made Joliet, like many other once-ailing communities that have brought in casinos, a place of relative prosperity. (*New York Times,* February 28, 1996)

"Salvation," a spiritual term, is used here to describe the transition in Joliet from poverty to wealth. Although salvation has the connotation that one might connect with the nodes of purity and filth, the process is described in this quotation as purely economic. That is, unemployment decreased, and Joliet became "a place of relative prosperity." The use of this term and the elaboration on the process it describes underlines the connection between spiritual and economic dimensions, but also illustrates their distinction. A similar process is described in the case of Tunica, Mississippi. As one editorial letter reports,

> The fortunes of Tunica County, Miss., have been turned around since our state allowed legal gambling in 1992. Unemployment has been reduced from a high of 26.2% in 1992 to about 7% today. The number of residents receiving welfare benefits has fallen over 40% since 1992, and the welfare department's collection of child support has nearly doubled. This county has people who had never held "meaningful" jobs until the casinos opened and provided training and education. New hotels are going up as I write this letter. Our local bank is opening a new branch, and a new primary

> health-care center is about to open. Legalized gambling is transforming Tunica into a major tourism destination. Webster Franklin, exec. Dir. Chamber of Commerce Tunica County, Miss. (*USA Today*, November 7, 1994)

Renewal is described here in economic terms, as an increase in employment and the rise of other businesses such as a bank and health care center.

The transition from poverty to wealth, a transition articulated as a renewal narrative, has been extensively covered in reference to Native Americans. For example, an article from 2000 reports that Native American tribes, once plagued by problems of unemployment, and addiction, found financial renewal through gambling: "The review of federal records by The Associated Press found that the explosive growth of the Indian gambling industry – to $8.26 billion in 1998 from $100 million in 1988 – has slowed the growth of welfare on reservations and given some tribes hope of reversing decades of poverty" (*New York Times*, September 3, 2000). This quotation first states statistics about wealth and then concludes that this could save tribes from "decades of poverty." The redemption narrative, while extensively covered in Native American communities, is not without its qualifications, as recent corruption scandals like the Abramov scandal have indicated (e.g. *New York Times*, April 3, 2002). As I will discuss, the synthesis of semantic binaries like wealth and poverty finds root in the increasing prevalence of concepts like corruption and revenue cycling in connection with discourse about casinos.

In conclusion, we see that the semantic binaries of purity/filth and wealth/poverty are used as basic tools for constructing narratives that make sense out of the reality of casino gambling and its expansion in the United States. As archetypal narratives, stories of contamination, disillusionment, and renewal help organize the semantic universe (Frye 1957). However, these preliminary concepts used for framing casino gambling lend themselves to synthesis over time. I will now examine the manifestations of this semantic synthesis in the discourse.

SECONDARY SEMANTIC CONCEPTS

In synthesizing these semantic poles, we find four crystallizations of combined concepts in the data (Figure 3-2). Evolving over time, synthesis is most often found when abstract semantic polarities are applied to empirical instance. The extremes, purity and wealth, on the one hand, and filth and poverty on the other hand, come together in the cultural objects of Las Vegas and Atlantic City respectively.

Utopian Mecca versus Failed Project

Las Vegas and Atlantic City embody the imaginaries of the utopian mecca and failed utopian project. The utopian mecca synthesizes ideas about both wealth and cleanliness. Las Vegas is the embodiment this synthesis. It is represented both as unimaginably profitable and as clean, both in the literal sense of sanitization, but also in the figurative sense of integrity in regulatory processes. What George Ritzer terms "cathedrals of consumption" (Ritzer 1999) are depicted in hyperbolic detail. For example, when the Excalibur, a new Medieval-themed hotel and casino opened, it was depicted in exacting detail. The following lengthy quotation illustrates the ways in which articles elaborately depict casino extravagance.

> Huge pink, turquoise and gold cones crown towering white spires in this 117-acre extravaganza that is more resort and theme park than hotel and casino. Excalibur, named after King Arthur's sword, has an eye-popping 4,032 rooms, seven restaurants (from Lance-a-lotta Pasta to the RoundTable Buffet), four snack bars and a rodeo-sized showroom where shining knights clash on horseback and strolling minstrels, a village idiot, candlemakers, jugglers, magicians and Merlin entertain twice nightly. And, of course, it has 100,000 square-feet of gambling space… "It's so huge it's scary,'' says Robin Miller, a Las Vegas resident for 17 years and one of 4,000 people who streamed in here Saturday and Sunday night so employees, dressed in medieval garb, could stage a couple of dress rehearsals. "It's spectacular,'' says Julie Arosemena, also of Las Vegas. "It's so precious. It really takes you back in time. And it's gonna be a winner for Vegas.'' (*USA Today*, June 19, 1990)

A premium is placed on "the new" in Las Vegas, and articles rarely cover casinos that are older than five years. This newness is closely associated with cleanliness and purity, as well as with wealth. Las Vegas, as a place in the desert, is a clean slate. In contrast to Atlantic City, as we will see, this means that it is free of older institutional entanglements like organized crime. Las Vegas is a desert playground-oasis where everything is free and fantasies come true. This idealization aligns with utopian ideals expressed in the movie data of non-marketized exchange, money for nothing, and non-regular 'work hours.' One article says, "Here in the Mojave Desert, this city is an aquatic wonderland of waterfalls, swimming pools, green lawns and imitation volcanoes. At the

Excalibur Hotel-Casino, water-guzzling English oak trees grow in a desert version of Robin Hood's Sherwood Forest" (*USA Today*, November 17, 1997). Speaking more of his investments than his own consumption experience, Jack Binion, casino owner, says, "Vegas is just magic," says Jack Binion, a longtime casino operator in Las Vegas who sold the family's Horseshoe Gaming Holding to Harrah's earlier this month" (*USA Today*, July 14, 2001).

Accommodations in Las Vegas are depicted as making dreams come true. For example, one article reports that "hoop dreams can be fulfilled year-round in the new Hardwood Suite at the Palms Casino Resort in Las Vegas. There's a bar and Jacuzzi. But the centerpiece of the two- level, 10,000-square-foot suite is a half basketball court with scoreboard. Customized basketball jerseys and cheerleaders can be ordered." (*USA Today*, March 3, 2006). The combination of wealth and novelty constructs Las Vegas a utopian paradise, in many cases infantilizing the consumer by constructing liminoid, themed spaces within which consumers are likely to transgress norms of daily life and aspire to dream-like cultural roles such as King Arthur (Belk 2000).

Elevating Las Vegas to a utopian Mecca, the synthesis of both an integral regulation process and an attractor of wealth is important because it can then be used as an example by gambling proponents. In addition, the focus on Las Vegas as a prototypical gambling destination supports the reframing of casino gambling as an entertainment experience. For example, one article says, "if a line forms at the Las Vegas Hilton's new Star Trek attraction, you may wind up waiting in the casino to get on board. Likewise, if you plan to see the tiger-loving illusionists Siegfried and Roy, you must stroll through the casino at the Mirage. Although the hotels have done a brilliant job of creating a smorgasbord of entertainment, the city's raison d'etre is never to be ignored: Las Vegas is still a gambler's paradise" (*New York Times*, February 15, 1998). A "paradise," in this context, is a place where the synthesis of gambling and entertainment can be achieved harmoniously in one locale.

In contrast to Las Vegas, Atlantic City is depicted as a failed project, a place of hope in the early 1980s (*New York Times,* July 5, 1980), but now a place of failure, decay, and crime. In this way, Atlantic City is the embodiment of the synthesis between filth and poverty. Donald Trump's famous bankruptcies in the early 1990s contribute to this image (*New York Times*, July 21, 1991) as well as repeated and persistent doubts about the Atlantic City "market" (*USA Today*, April 4, 1990). Atlantic City is described variously as a "seaside slum that calls itself the Queen of Resorts" (*USA Today*, October 27, 1992), a place filled with "welfare hotels, crumbling boardwalks, no major shops'' (*New York Times*, July 18, 2003), and "an ugly and dreary kind of place" (*USA Today*, April 4, 1990), with a "shabby convention hall." (*New York Times*, June 23, 1981).

The imaginary of the "failed project" is the semantic synthesis of both poverty and dirtiness, a warning to any city considering the legalization of gambling. Assessments of Atlantic City are often opposed to the success of Las Vegas. An article about gasoline prices, for example, says "Skyrocketing gasoline prices also could hurt Atlantic City casinos. The bulk of the city's gamblers are low-rollers and retirees who drive in from New York City, Philadelphia and other Northeast cities. Las Vegas casinos, meanwhile, may fare better, since they attract far more air travelers and the city markets itself as a destination resort and convention center" (*USA Today*, October 12, 1990). Semantically, Las Vegas is associated with the ethereal sky, while Atlantic City is associated with the dirty ground. Transportation to Atlantic City happens by car, by bus, or by train (*USA Today*, December 26, 1989), while gamblers regularly fly in and out of Las Vegas to stay at places like the Stratosphere, "a $500 million, 1,500-room hotel and casino. It's topped by a 1,149-foot tower, the tallest building west of the Mississippi, with the High Roller coaster encircling the outside and the Big Shot thrill ride rocketing visitors 160 feet up" (*USA Today*, April, 26, 1996; *USA Today*, March 22, 2000).

The economic and social trajectories of the two cities are depicted as direct opposites. Las Vegas grows at a magical pace, while Atlantic City becomes mired in regulation, decay, and poverty. One article reports, for example, that "'[b]usiness [in Las Vegas] is phenomenal. Everything seems to be going our way.' For now. Unlike Atlantic City, where billionaire Donald Trump's glamorous new Taj Mahal casino has hurt other casinos, most analysts expect Las Vegas' booming tourism industry to soak up Excalibur as easily as it absorbed the Mirage. Indeed, Lady Luck is smiling on Las Vegas tourism – gaming revenue rose 20% in the first quarter vs. the same period last year, and hotels filled 85% of their rooms, 16 percentage points better than the national average" (*USA Today*, June 19, 1990). Granted, Atlantic City's image has had brief moments of hope or hype, in this travel article from 2003: "Those who once rejected Atlantic City are considering it again because the area has been upgraded. We're giving people an opportunity to trade up" (*New York Times*, July 18, 2003), but these success stories are often framed in comparison to the mecca of Las Vegas.

Corruption versus Tax Cycling

Corruption in government and tax cycling—the skimming of revenues from casinos for placement in government coffers—embody the syntheses of both the purity/filth and the wealth/poverty binary structures. Corruption and tax relief from casino gambling operate as two sides of the same coin. Both practices mix government with market structures, but one is feared to be market control of government, while the other is touted to be government control of the market. Because of these normative connotations, corruption is depicted in the register of filth and purity, while tax cycling is depicted in the more clinical, detached register of wealth and poverty.

One of the common arguments for the legalization of gambling in a community is that it can be taxed, producing revenue that the local government can use for education, infrastructure, and to displace the tax burden from residents onto visitors. Some straight-forward examples of this type of argument are the following: "Lousiana Governor says 'he would not consider gambling a positive form of economic production if it were not for the state's need for revenue'" (*New York Times*, August 31, 1993). Or, as one article reports, "Gambling ventures like video poker, off-track betting and scratch-off card games are increasingly being introduced in Rhode Island as a way to supplement declining government revenues (*New York Times*, November 16, 1992).

The lure of tax revenue is not only an end in itself, but also a reason to adopt gambling as a competitive response to legalization other states. This competition is perhaps the most common reason legislators give for permitting gambling. For example, one legislator says, "[b]ut I also recognize…that there is a large amount of dollars flowing out of the state into casinos in New Jersey and Connecticut, so maybe we should be part of the action.'' (*New York Times*, March 14, 1997). In this way, competition for tax revenue becomes an engine of expansion as states compete by legalizing gambling. "State Representative Paul Santilli, a Democrat from Johnston, has argued that Rhode Island was merely one of many states seeking revenue from gambling. Limiting gambling would be foolish, given potential earnings for the state, he said in arguing in favor of the video poker bill. 'Let's not be the last state to jump on a good idea,' he said" (*New York Times*, November 16, 1992). Granting that legalizing casino gambling is a "good idea" is hastened in part because of competition from neighboring states. Whereas states may have been cautious in the past to legalize gambling, the threat of state competition and the lure of instant revenue causes politicians to hasten the process of legalization.

Competition comes not only from other states, but also from other organizations such as native American tribes or, in the case of Niagara Falls, other countries. One article reports, for example that, "The New Orleans venture brings a new level to the competition, in which casinos on riverboats and Indian reservations have been spreading and putting pressure on state and city officials to open gaming halls. (*New York Times*, August 31, 1993). We can see then how regulatory legitimacy is gained through competitive dynamics. As neighboring states or Indian tribes legalize gambling, nearby states consider legalization as well according to a financial motive to gain tax revenue.

This financial logic competes with moral or cultural logic. For example, one article reports "[a]s for people who oppose gambling on moral grounds, [Lee] Iacocca says the success of the Windsor casino – in Ontario, Canada, across the Detroit River – should open their eyes. 'When you see $1 million a day going over to Windsor, it gets your attention fast,' he says" (*USA Today*, February 23, 1995). As Iacocca suggests, moral concerns decrease over time (Chapter 4), and that business framing comes to surpass moral framing of casino gambling.

Tax cycling is the synthesis of these two ideas about casino gambling. Regulators therefore use it in part because it brings together two concepts, wealth and poverty, that are commonly associated with casino gambling. Some people associate it with poverty, while others associate it with wealth. Tax cycling, the process of taking wealth from the casinos and distributing it to government, is a policy to which both proponents and opponents can give meaning. For opponents, it makes sense that casinos should be taxed heavily, like cigarettes or alcohol, for the damage they do to the community. For proponents, it makes sense that casinos, being lucrative businesses, should share the wealth with the community. Thus tax cycling is a way to acknowledge that the casino organization is a 'business,' but one that is a special business, with special responsibilities in the community.

Theoretically-speaking, corruption is simply the flip side of incorporating markets into the political process. If a locality becomes dependent on tax revenue from casinos, then casinos obtain some power in the political process by virtue of their ability to provide financial resources. From a resource-dependency perspective of organizations, the city government and the casino organization cannot help but to align their interests because they profit from the same revenue stream. In one article, a casino official speaks about this alignment when he says, "We have such an immense investment in the community…that we should have an unrestricted voice in government here…That's only common sense. I see nothing we would want that the general populace wouldn't want'" (*New York Times*, August 29, 1982). What one might euphemistically call the alignment of incentives, however, the general public might call corruption, the undermining of interests of civil servants by financial interests. Coverage of corruption can be direct, as articles that report the conviction of government officials guilty of accepting bribes (e.g. *USA Today*, June 23, 1989). Corruption is also implied. One opponent says, for example, "[w]hen you introduce organized gambling to a state which already has ethical problems, you're throwing gasoline on fire…If you introduce casino gambling, which means lots of money, it's going to have an impact on the way the state is run, managed and perceived" (*New York Times*, November 16, 1992). Or, as in this vivid quotation early in the legitimation process, "[i]n the shadows lurks the casinos' traveling companion: the threat of crime and corruption" (*USA Today*, April 14, 1989). Corruption, especially in early periods of the discourse, is strictly associated with organized crime, and is aligned with impurity.

In more recent discourse, however, corruption and bribery is recoded as lobbying or as groups enacting "political interests." For example, in reference to tribal gaming, one article reports that "[f]ifteen years ago, tribes made almost no political contributions. Most were impoverished, and their dealings with the federal government were primarily through the Interior Department and its Bureau of Indian Affairs. 'They didn't have the wherewithal, the sophistication and the motive to be politically involved,' says Stan Brand, an attorney who represents the Indian gaming association. 'Gaming changed that. They thrust themselves into the political vortex, like many groups with an interest before the government'" (*USA Today*, January 31, 2006). Here we see the language about corruption being re-encoded as language about lobbying and commercial interests in government. In this sense, casino gambling is not unlike "many groups with an interest," as the article states. That is, the entanglement of money from casino gambling and government funds is increasingly taken for granted as the state of the world, not as a controversial or preventable fact. By becoming linked with a system of practices to which all major industries and politicians subscribe, casino gambling becomes one commercial interest amongst many.

Private industry associations also fall under the same recoding from corruption to discourse about 'soft money,' a term that has less innuendo than the words normally associated with bribery. For example, one article reports, "The gambling industry – a major money source for politicians – made its contributions in the form of 'soft money,' legal, unlimited gifts for party-building and other activities. The contributions were strikingly large, even by standards of modern big-money politics. Wynn's meeting 'was a successful fund-raising breakfast,' says GOP chairman Barbour" (*USA Today*, April 19,1994). The text from this article identifies a category of practices, "big-money politics," which are comparable to many other industries. Using this language, of course, makes casinos comparable to other organizations as businesses, but also de-criminalizes the intermingling of money and political action by using terms like "modern," "legal" and "contributions." Although reporting suspicion about the money by reporting that contributions are "strikingly large," the framing of monetary contributions to regulators works against casting normatively inappropriate.

This shift from discourse about simply "dirty" corruption to a settled cynicism about "contributions," may prompt us to reconsider Max Weber's maxim that legitimate bureaucracies must be free of personal interest. In this case, lobbying practices are conceptualized as removed *enough* from the actual operational processes of casino gambling as to be acceptable within a legitimate bureaucratic system. Lobbying practices remain a sore point for anyone considering the true integrity of government, but because they do not directly affect casino operations, community members, or customers, they become cynically taken for granted. To maintain some assurance of isolation from commercial pressures, local regulators do facework in the licensing process to maintain beliefs about this kind of burrecratic legitimacy.

In conclusion, we see how this semantic network informs the way that people conceptualize processes associated with casino gambling. While social actors may work from primitive concepts like purity and filth, wealth and poverty, they use these concepts to form more complex narratives and syntheses for the purpose of both making sense of casino gambling and for arguing for or against its expansion. Through the shifting semantic emphasis, gambling becomes legitimated as a consumption practice, thereby destimagatizing it for consumers who engage in it. Importantly, however, this must be qualified by noting that destigmatization of the generalized practice only comes by categorizing and separating some 'pathological,' forms of it. I will now take a closer look at the ways in which these particular concepts are used to support specific types of legitimacy, and to assess the degree to which these types of legitimacy are mutually reinforcing.

FRAMES, NARRATIVES, AND LEGITIMACY

How do the semantic relationships in the data contribute to the legitimation or delegitimation of casino gambling? In this section, I will detail the ways in which semantic concepts are mobilized to oppose or promote casino gambling. Some mobilizations (e.g. the association of gambling with crime to argue for opposition) are straightforward, while others, like securing casino gambling's cultural legitimacy through "coolness," are more sophisticated.

Cultural Legitimacy

Defining and measuring cultural legitimacy can be problematic because it is often highly contextualized. Cultural legitimacy exists in a field that's determined by distinctions drawn around social class, often through consumption practices (Bourdieu 1984; Holt 1997). From this data as well as data gathered from gambling films, we can say that cultural legitimacy in this context amounts to being "cool." As Belk (2006) defines it, cool refers to a person who "exhibits a nonchalant control of emotions, a rebellious trickster demeanor, an ironic detachment from the regard of others, and a "cool" style of talking, walking, gesturing, and grooming," (p. 77). Undoubtedly, the context of gambling is one in which "cool"—a detachment from the excitements of taking monetary risk and the adoption of a "rebellious demeanor"—can thrive. Coolness is the most appropriate measure of cultural legitimacy in this context because it connects casino gambling with cultural elites (i.e. celebrities) that act as entrepreneurs for the practice. For several generations of celebrities, from Dean Martin to George Clooney, the coolness of casino gambling has been embraced and promoted in film, TV, and print.

Cultural legitimacy can of course differ according to the activity and population in question. Casino gambling is not cool and probably will never be cool to cultural elites in the traditional sense, those who enjoy opera, rare art, and simplicity. To another set of elites, however, those with a cultural capital of a more popular dimension, "coolness" can be a barometer for cultural legitimacy. One example can be found in the Hard Rock

Casino and Hotel, an off-strip casino and hotel in Las Vegas that explicitly caters to young, hip clientele. One article reports, for example, that "[b]y most standards, the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino, which opened with high-decibel pomp last spring, is less than radical. An affiliate of the Hard Rock Cafes, it bills itself as the spot in Las Vegas for people who do not like Las Vegas, but it is ultimately a place to eat, drink and gamble, with plenty of buxom cocktail waitresses" (*New York Times*, November 1, 1995). This cultural legitimacy articulated in the form of 'coolness' destigmatizes gambling and makes it appealing to those who wouldn't otherwise consider it. For example, the same article reports, "For now, [the owner] has demonstrated that someone who might not have favored gambling before can be attracted by the right atmosphere. 'Whoooaa!' said Tony Zaldivar, a 30-year-old auto restorer from Chicago, when asked why he had come to the Hard Rock. 'I always meet cool people here,' said Mr. Zaldivar, who was sporting two earrings in his left ear, long black hair, a goatee and a sleeveless sweatshirt. 'It's more my kind of people, my kind of music. You know?' He added: 'It's just a cool scene'" (*New York Times*, November 1, 1995). This "cool scene" is the result of the Hard Rock Café's role in shifting the image of the typical Las Vegas casino from a space that refers back to the Rat Pack and lounge acts to a rock-star aesthetic supported by celebrity appearances from figures like Slash of the rock band Guns'n'Roses and young model-celebrities like Carmen Electra.

Entertainment figures give casinos cultural legitimacy through performances and patronage. One article, for example, describes the shift from an Indian casino, initially designed to generate charitable revenue for the tribe, to an established entertainment venue, anointed by the performance of one of gambling's coolest entrepreneurs. It says, "Designed to generate wealth on impoverished Indian reservations, the law allows tribes to operate for-profit games of chance not otherwise outlawed by the state. But entertainers until now have not been of the magnitude of a Sinatra, who is believed able to transform a casino's image with one engagement," (*New York Times*, November 20, 1993). One appearance from Frank Sinatra, a figure historically associated with the cultural legitimacy of Las Vegas gambling, anoints this casino far from Las Vegas, conferring cultural legitimacy to the organization through his appearance and performance.

Celebrity appearances in Atlantic City also provide cultural validation. One article reports, "Mr. Natoli, who has been to Atlantic City for many a bachelor party, marvels at the revamping: 'Suddenly, there are gelato shops and oyster bars. I think it will be a backdrop for cool, highbrow events in the future, and I've spotted people like Mary J. Blige, Ashanti and Damon Dash there. Years ago, I never would have had such sightings…It was so cheesy, but there seems to be a cool vibe brewing'" (*New York Times,* July 18, 2003). Here again, celebrity appearances lend a "cool vibe" to the casino, transforming it from "cheesy" to a "backdrop for cool, highbrow events."

Cultural legitimacy, however, exists differentially rather than uniformly in the United States. It is generally not 'cool' to go gambling on the riverboats in Gary, IN, while it is 'cool' to fly to Las Vegas for a quick gambling junket. In contrast to the A- or B-list celebrities that turn out at Atlantic City and Foxwoods in Connecticut, riverboats in Missouri and Mississippi draw celebrities with less cache. One article reports, for example, "Among those expected for maiden-voyage festivities: TV's Vanna White and Howard Keel, who portrayed a riverboat gambler in the 1951 musical Showboat. Illinois will permit cruise-boat gambling this summer. Missouri and Mississippi also are moving toward legalizing riverboat gambling," (*USA Today*, April 2, 1991). These differences again illustrate the heterogeneity of cultural legitimacy within the institutional field of casino gambling. Gambling in Las Vegas or Atlantic City is unquestionably valid, but in Missouri or Mississippi is more tenuously accepted. However, it is important to note that the legitimacy of gambling in Mississippi and Missouri draws from the semantic universe of Las Vegas and Atlantic City.

In general, the cultural legitimacy emanates from the locus of Las Vegas both in the cultural imagination and in geographical space. It can be measured as the degree to which newspaper articles represent gambling as "cool." This shift is facilitated most directly through celebrities who operate as cultural entrepreneurs, those who popularize and legitimate the practice through performances, appearances, and other media outlets like film (Dimaggio 1982). Coolness, however, is differentially distributed in the United States. Las Vegas sets the tone for what it *means* to go gambling in the United States. The practices, images, and schemas generated in Las Vegas are the cultural touchstone for the legitimacy of gambling elsewhere. It is a continual point of comparison for every other gambling institution in the United States.

Normative Legitimacy

Normative legitimacy is conferred in two distinct ways. The first method, represented by "tax cycling," is rhetorically the most direct way proponents attempt to valorize gambling. Gambling of many types—lotteries, casinos, horse racing—gains normative legitimacy through the rhetoric of revenue cycling, the synthesis of wealth and poverty. This rhetoric takes two forms. In the case of casino gambling, proponents argue that gambling will bring economic growth to physical locale. In the spatially deterritorialized practice of lottery gambling, proponents argue that gambling can generate tax revenue that will be given to fund education state-wide. This discourse seems to be generally persuasive (that is, it's use has preceded many successful institutionalizations of gambling), although when dialectically opposed to the reality of funding over time, disillusionment sets in when the revenues are not realized, either because of bait-and-switching (i.e. funding goes to education for the first few years and then is used to replace funding from other sources) or because of over-regulation (i.e. burdening casinos with very high tax rates that dampen commercial enterprise).

The second way that normative legitimacy is conferred is by making assurances that organized crime is absent from regulation and by maintaining the image of integrity in all procedures for regulation and the financial practice. For example, in a licensing dispute in Indiana, one article reports that, "[t]he judge, Solomon Metzger, had concluded…that Mr. Kallman, 'a credible individual' with no criminal record, should be granted a license. Mr. Read argued that the question was not 'whether we should protect Kallman from himself,' but rather 'whether the legitimate concerns of public confidence and trust in the integrity of the regulatory process are served' by granting the license" (*New York Times*, March 30, 1989). As gambling has evolved over time, however, the compromises in this integrity have become more or less taken for granted. The rhetoric of purity is required primarily when gambling is first established in a community or state, but once the practice gains regulatory legitimacy, purity becomes less important. Articles and sources regularly imply corruption, as in this quotation from 1996: "'The power of money, the color of gold, the coin that will tinkle in some people's pocket has bought out the integrity of this house,' Assemblywoman Nia H. Gill, Democrat of Montclair, said" *New York Times*, September 27, 1996). Despite quotations like this one, innuendos of corruption have little effect on the operations and regulation of casino gambling. The oppositional semantics of clean and dirty are synthesized into community cynicism about the integrity of the business, but normative legitimacy is still maintained, perhaps, as I will discuss, due to other "pillars" of legitimacy.

Commercial Legitimacy

In addition to the primary types of legitimacy outlined by previous research, a distinct kind of legitimacy emerges in this market context, namely commercial legitimacy. Commercial legitimacy is the legitimacy an organization has by virtue of being viewed as a successful commercial enterprise. Success can be framed in several ways, but is most often associated with growth in profits, number of locations, financial solvency, and a large customer base. Politicians and journalists often refer to this kind of commercial legitimacy when arguing for its normative and regulatory acceptance. When the *Wall Street Journal* speaks of mergers and increases share value, this indicates acceptance that the organization has gained as a commercial enterprise, irrespective of its legal or normative status. People tend to place trust in larger, burrecratic organizations because of the seeming transparency and publicness of its practices. Another way to state the same thing is to acknowledge that isomorphism, the way in which all casino organizations have come to adopt similar organizational forms and practices, lends legitimacy to their existence (Dimaggio and Powell 1989). We must note here, however, that legitimacy comes not specifically from isomorphism; a failing company may be isomorphic, but still a failed company, i.e. financially insolvent (Deephouse 1996)

Commercial legitimacy supports a broader normative legitimacy. Many people feel that if something is a commercial enterprise, it is and should be a legitimate organization. Relative to small, independently-run casinos, large conglomerates are given more trust because of their size and the seeming transparency of their organizational processes. Previous literature has cited commercial or financial interest as a reason that some organizations may lose legitimacy (Elsbach 1994), but in this case, commercial practice itself helps organizations to gain legitimacy because it presumably provides transparency in accounting practices and instills an image of stability and relative integrity to an industry that has been suspect in the past.

Commercial legitimacy in this case rises in tandem with the framing of casino operations as entertainment companies, lending normative legitimacy to the organization. In this way, casinos become comparable to any other normal business. For example, *USA Today* reports that, "'Casino stocks also are benefiting from an improved image. 'These companies are the epitome of recession-resistant,' says Dean Witter Reynolds' Willard Brown, who notes that Nevada casinos have seen revenues rise every year since 1946. Casinos in Atlantic City have had a rougher time because of strict regulations, higher taxes and short stays by gamblers. 'They're starting to be considered not as gambling companies, which carries some sort of evil innuendo, but rather as entertainment companies'"(*USA Today*, June 2, 1989). Because casinos, according to these sources, bring several benefits like steadily increasing revenues and "recession resistance," they should be accepted as legitimate business, as "entertainment companies," rather than "gambling companies."

Commercial legitimacy has a curious orthogonal relationship to regulative legitimacy. The text of legislation, especially in communities that heavily rely on casino revenues, stipulates that casinos in financial trouble will undergo scrutiny by the regulatory board and may have their license revoked, but gaming commissions often overlook or approve of companies that have financial woes. In Atlantic City, for example, this is repeatedly the case between 1987 and 1991. One article reports, that "While the Casino Control Act mandates that casinos and owners present "clear and convincing evidence" of their "financial stability," nothing in the statutes or regulations defines the terms…the commission has allowed casinos under bankruptcy protection to go on operating: the ailing Atlantis in 1987 and Merv Griffin's Resorts International in 1989" (*New York Times*, April 18, 1991). In this case, the casino as a commercial enterprise is in serious jeopardy, yet it continues to maintain regulatory legitimacy. One reason for this gap, I argue, is because of the casino's physical instantiation, a form of territorial legitimacy.

Territorial Legitimacy

The concept of territorial legitimacy can be used to explain the clear disjuncture between commercial and regulative legitimacy that often occurs as companies lose commercial legitimacy (i.e. they go bankrupt), but are able to maintain regulatory legitimacy. Territorial legitimacy is the legitimacy that organizations may gain as a result of being physically instantiated in some form. Organizations that are present tend to take on some legitimacy by virtue of being a physical reality (Carroll and Hannan 1989; Freeman, Carroll, and Hannan 1986). Territorial legitimacy thus plays a secondary role in the formation of normative legitimacy. Once casinos are *physically present* in a community, their existence comes to seem inevitable and unchangeable. As imagined structures, casinos can be vilified and lauded by activists, but once emplaced in a community, the reality of the building, the people who work in it, and the other infrastructural modifications change the discourses surrounding the existence of the organization.

One similar measure to territorial legitimacy in previous research is a concept population ecologists call "population density," the number of organizations that exist in a field (Hannan and Freeman 1989). Previous research has often used population density as a measure of cultural-cognitive legitimacy (Baum and Oliver 1992; Freeman et al. 1986; Hannan and Freeman 1989), but many concerns have been raised about the construct validity of this measure (Baum and Powell 1995; Scott 1995; Zucker 1989). The primary problem with using organizational density as a measure of cultural-cognitive legitimacy is that it likely misses the many institutions that have cultural-cognitive legitimacy because of their prevalence in cultural representation, but are not widely established territorially. Casinos, for example, were not prevalent in the United States in the 1950s, yet the organizational form of a casino was understood (perhaps not accepted, but understood) due to its extensive dissemination through cultural representation in movies, novels, and television. Although many people in the United States had never been to a casino in 1950, they certainly had a schema for recognizing and categorizing a casino. I argue, therefore, that territorial legitimacy—or what population ecologists might call organizational density—is itself a supporting type of legitimacy to normative and cognitive legitimacy that cannot be identified strictly with the cultural-cognitive realm.

Casinos, clearly, have become a physical presence since 1980 (Figure 4-1), with a 2500% increase in the number of casinos (outside of Nevada) between 1980 and 2000, and have therefore gained territorial legitimacy. Although they have been cultural-cognitively identified for many decades, only recently have they been territorially instantiated in communities. This kind of territorial legitimacy can partially explain the uni-directionality of institutionalization of casino gambling by state. No state in recent history has repealed casino gambling once is has been permitted. Once casinos are set up as real, physical entities, the discourse shifts to regulating and controlling them, but never to removing them. This kind of path-dependence is common in many organizational settings, but here it is informed by contestation in normative and regulative domains. The physical imposition of casinos is therefore necessary for understanding discursive shifts.

DISCUSSION

The findings here contribute to our knowledge of the interaction between frames, ideologies, and discourses (Ferree and Merrill 2000; Johnston and Baumann 2007) in consumer research. Within this framework, cultural binaries are the building blocks with which social actors construct frames. Frames, in turn, are composed to generate a particular discourse. These discourses contribute to and are motivated by more implicit, sweeping ideologies. For example, the frame of gambling as a criminal activity can be used to argue for its abolishment (e.g. *New York Times*, June 23, 1981) or to fight for its legalization (e.g. United States Commission on the Review of the National Policy

Toward Gambling. 1976). On the one hand, anti-gambling activists will argue that organized crime follows in "the shadows" or as a "specter." On the other hand, members of the Commission to Review the national Policy Toward Gambling (1976) argue that gambling should be legalized precisely *because* it is associated with criminal elements and should be controlled by the state (U.S. Commission 1976). These discourses are motivated by a particular ideological position, either a belief in governmental paternalism or a belief in market individualism. In this example, social actors can take a frame (e.g. gambling is associated with crime), apply it to an anti-gambling discourse (e.g. casinos are impure and corruptive), that is driven by an abiding ideology (e.g. a government should protect its citizens from harm). Discursive processes, therefore, link a particular frame with a particular ideology, but frames themselves can be tied to any one of a number of ideologies. It is important, therefore, not only to track frames that exist over time, but also to spot-check how they are used and for what purpose. By studying these elementary particles, we can discern the disjunctions between frames, ideologies, and discourses and assess their role in constructing legitimate consumption practices.

Secondly, legitimation is not just about "talk;" real structural changes have occurred as well. Laws have changed; physical structures have been built. We are prompted to consider which has come first, the "talk" or the structural change. In general, they are part of the same bi-directional process of legitimation. Newspapers report structural changes along the way, and as they do so, they shift the way in which the issue of casino gambling is framed. This research, then, informs us about the interaction between semantic categories and occurrences in the world. Certain semantic categories exist in the minds and talk of people (Figure 3-2, time 1). Then, through a network of regulative and normative transformations, these categories adjust to incorporate and explain a new state of the world (Figure 3-2, time 2). Semantic categories are synthesized to take account of new realities. In this way, a network of discursive and institutional factors operate to legitimate certain consumption practices like casino gambling.

Secondly, not only do categories change, but they are supported by the creation of specific narrative structures (Stern 1995; Swidler 2001) to explain their change (Figure 3-3). Contamination narratives are harnessed to explain the newly synthesized category of corruption. Disillusionment narratives are used to explain the "failed" promises of wealth to impoverished locales, and redemption narratives are used to explain the "successes" of these promises. If we take these two narratives, for example, we see how the discursive process is not over-determined; just because a discourse can be harnessed to support an agenda does not mean that it will inevitably find success or resonance. The paths it takes depend on other normative and regulative structures. This contrasts to previous work that has focused primarily on the discursive realm and has tended to emphasize a particular discursive outcome, without acknowledgement of other institutional structures at play.

Lastly, we can examine here how these mechanisms—categories, frames, and discourses—contribute to the process of legitimation, and therefore transform a consumption practice that was once nationally stigmatized into one that is now normatively accepted. Cultural legitimation is obtained through customer beliefs about 'coolness,' while normative legitimacy is obtained through beliefs about purity. Commercial and territorial legitimacy play supporting roles in normative legitimacy by making the consumption practice 1) part of an integrated, functioning, and financially solvent market system (Thompson and Coskuner-Balli 2007), and 2) by making casinos themselves a concrete physical reality. An enumeration of these two types of legitimacy constitutes a contribution to the literature on consumer legitimacy by prompting our awareness of the power and physical and financial realities that shape discursive processes and structures. The physical and commercial imposition of casinos has fundamentally changed the ways in which consumers think and talk about gambling.

In this chapter, I have enumerated the various semantic structures that orient discourses about casino gambling and explored their enactment throughout the legitimation process. In the next chapter, I will quantify these changes and explore the ways in which these semantic relationships change over time, as gambling becomes an institutionalized practice.

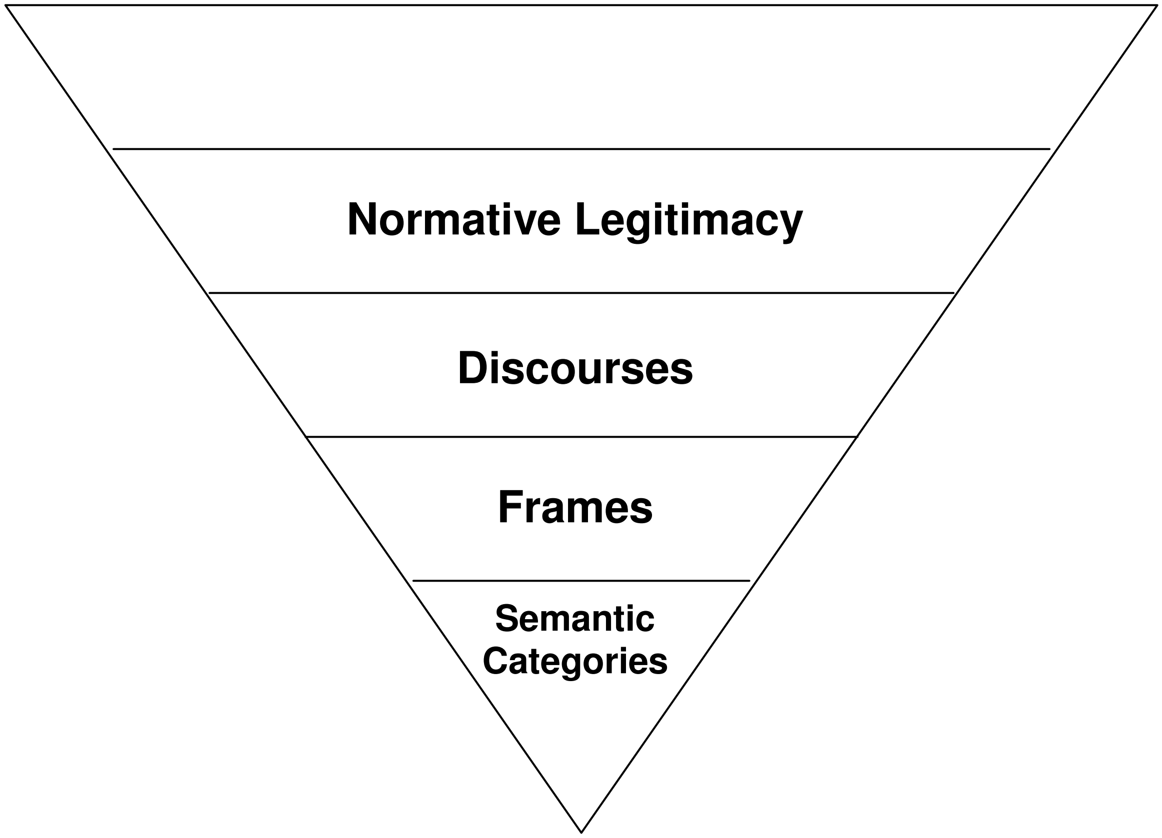

Figure 3-1: Levels of Theoretical Tools for Studying Legitimacy

Name	Sex	Ethnicity	Age
Luke	M	White	33
Mark	M	White	55
Vincent	M	Chinese American	34
Eric	M	White	23
Jim	M	Chinese American	53
Charles	M	Chinese American	32
Dave	M	White	45

Table 3-1: Interview Participant Information

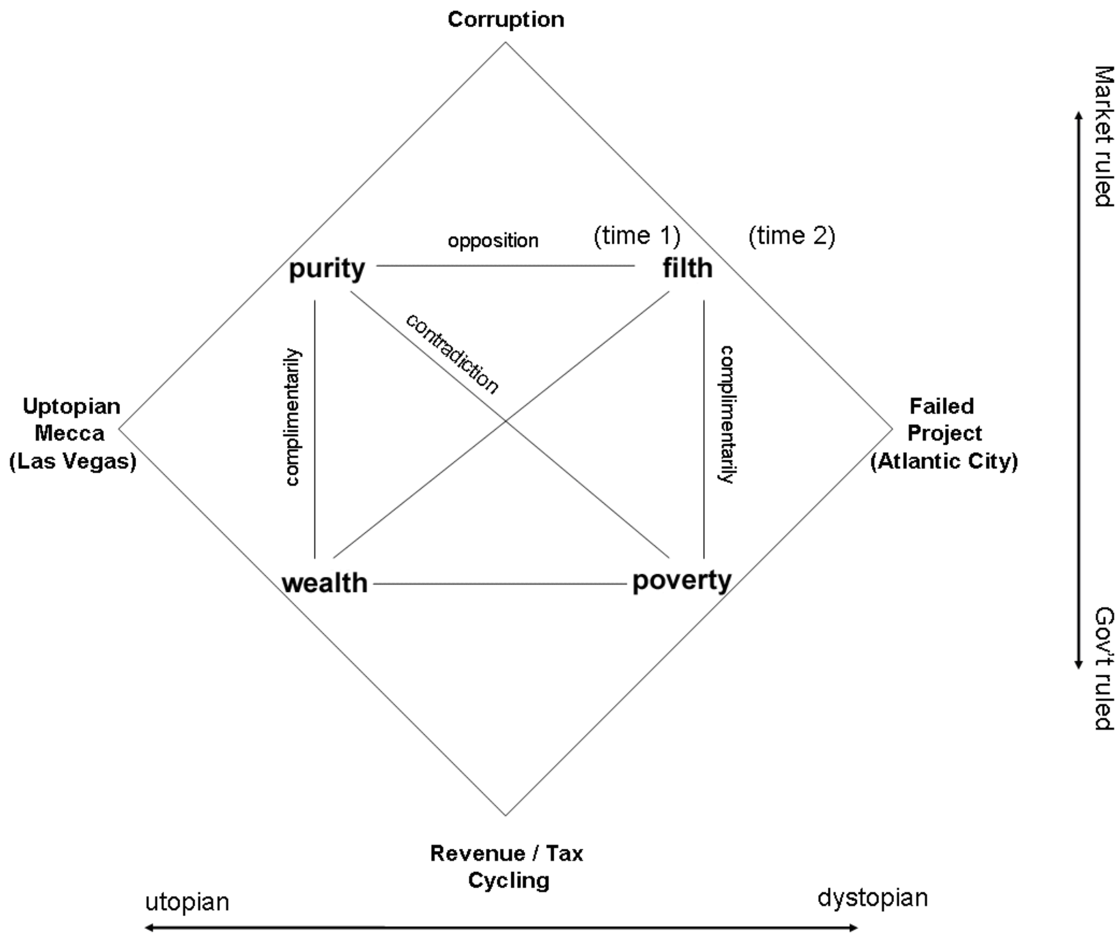

Figure 3-2: Semiotic Square for Newspaper Discourse

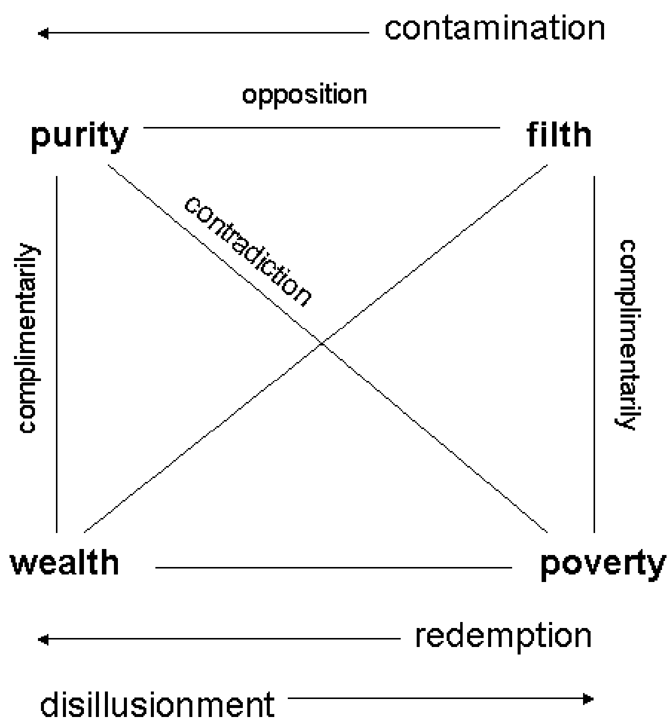

Figure 3-3: Narrative transitions between semiotic nodes

Chapter 4 : Normative Legitimacy (Quantitative Analysis)

Understanding Diffusion through the Social Process of Legitimation: The Case of Casino Gambling, 1976-2006

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter furthers the analysis of normative legitimacy begun in chapter 3 by quantitatively assessing changes in the semantic framing of casino gambling over time. Using new methodological tools such as computer-assisted content analysis, I evaluate shifts in framing in three major national newspapers, finding a shift from early emphasis on crime and regulation to a more recent emphasis on business and social problems. By identifying these frames with deeper semantic categories, we can see how the discourse about casino gambling shifts from moralistic concepts like filth and purity to more techno-rational terms such as poverty and wealth. I find that this semantic shift—endemic to many processes of commercialization—happens along with a linguistic shift from past to present language and an affective shift from positive to neutrally-valanced language.

Here I have chosen to link legitimacy with the research diffusion because understanding the multiple "pillars" of the diffusion process can make important contributions to our understanding of the evolution of new industries in marketing, a process that has traditionally been framed as diffusion and not as legitimation (also see Scott 1995, p. 115-116 and Strang and Meyer 1993). Simply put, I argue that traditional diffusion research has studied diffusion by omitting normative and regulatory structures in models of the diffusion process. Using the case of casino gambling, I show how these normative and regulative structures have played a role in limiting the number of potential adopters and demonstrate the way in which an understanding of normative constraints can be incorporated into diffusion models.

INTRODUCTION

In the last thirty years, casino gambling has grown from a marginal business operating in one US state to a thriving, multi-billion dollar industry that now exists in 28 states (National Gambling Impact and Policy Commission 1999). As part of a larger expansion that has included lotteries, off-track betting, and online gambling, casinos have provided the territorial accompaniment to a growing cultural and social acceptance of gambling more generally. What explains the shift in casino gambling from marginalized practice to thriving industry? How has gambling, as a consumption practice, become legitimate? More generally, how do new industries come to be accepted in the marketplace?

The goal of this chapter is to understand the legitimation of consumption practices through the case of casino gambling. In marketing, the study of legitimation can most directly inform research on the diffusion of innovations and the development of new industries. Previous work has assumed that new markets are created from innovation (e.g. Min, Kalwani, and Robinson 2006; Sood and Tellis 2005), the source of which is technology, rationalization of production or distribution, or the discovery of some previously unrealized consumer market or need. The theory and assumptions about diffusion, however, do not account for industry expansion as a cultural and social process, and measure it only partially with marketing mix variables such as advertising and word of mouth. To truly understand diffusion, one needs a theoretical understanding of the cultural and social variables of the environment and an account of the systematic relationships between these variables and industry expansion.

Casino gambling is an ideal case for studying the effects of social and cultural institutions on the diffusion process. In casino gambling, there has been no one significant technological innovation, no sudden change in process, and no discovery of an unrealized consumer needs. Instead, market 'space' has been created through a network of social actors working through cultural, social, and legal structures (Kim and Mauborgne 1999). As Kotler (1986) notes, breaking ground in new markets, both domestic and international, requires megamarketing, "the strategically coordinated application of economic, psychological, political, and public relations skills to gain the cooperation of a number of parties in order to enter and/or operate in a given market," (p. 117-118). I extend his logic in this chapter to argue that any innovation requires the same strategic efforts. Rather than look toward discrete, exogenous technological innovation as a force in creating new markets, it may be more appropriate to look toward the structuring of relevant cultural, social, and legal fabrics that open gaps for new markets and that provide resources for the establishment of a new industry. Thus, one must understand the place of technological innovations within the larger and more complex process of industry legitimation, a process that involves cultural and social as well as material factors. Just as Holt (2004) advocates for a cultural approach to branding, this research will advance an agenda for a cultural approach to diffusion.

In addition, this chapter makes a contribution to diffusion research by studying a market not open to free entry. Previous research has tended to focus on diffusion in industries that are relatively open to free entry, yet few markets are completely free of institutional barriers. The seemingly aberrant case of a 'protected' market actually becomes quite commonplace when conceptualizing multinational corporate enterprise in many different countries and cultures. For example, doing business in China comes with the need to understand regulatory, normative, and cultural structures in addition to basic financial facts. A model of diffusion based on technological innovation is ill-equipped to adequately theorize about innovation in markets where competitive advantage may come from finessing one or more of these legal or cultural constraints. While it is commonly acknowledged that industry stakeholders do megamarketing, the process through which this happens has not been fully explored. Understanding this complex process of positioning a commercial enterprise such as casino gambling within legal and institutional structures can inform us about the diffusion process in general.

THEORY

Legitimation

To understand the diffusion of casino gambling, I draw from theories of legitimation in sociology. Legitimation is the process of making a practice or institution socially, culturally, and politically acceptable within a particular context (Johnson et al. 2006; Suchman 1995). For sociologist Max Weber, legitimacy is a mechanism for explaining why people regularly and voluntarily submit to authority. He says, "so far as [social action] is not derived merely from fear or from motives of expediency, a willingness to submit to an order imposed by one man or a small group, always implies a belief in the legitimate authority" (p. 37). That is, social action under beliefs of legitimacy is more than blind obedience; it includes the complicity or approval of action on the part of the subject (p. 215). Social actors need not fully accept a practice or institution for it to be legitimate, but they must conform their behavior to its existence. Further, legitimacy is solidified by a network of norms and beliefs, "the legitimate order," that make some forms of power, namely authority, legitimate and some forms of power illegitimate (Weber 1922/1978, p. 31). Theories of legitimacy focus on the ways in which this network of norms and beliefs is constructed and maintained for a particular entity. If we compare this with the concept of adoption (Rogers 1995), we see that adoption can come in two forms, full adoption through endorsement or partial adoption through acceptance. Previous research has tended to study only the former, forgetting that the later can be a gateway for further diffusion. Legitimacy is a construct that can be used to study this intermediate step between acceptance and endorsement.

Since Weber's initial theoretical groundwork, research has refined legitimacy into a multi-dimensional construct. Previous research has looked at three types of legitimacy: regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive (Scott 1995). Regulative legitimacy is the degree to which an organization adheres to "explicit regulative processes: rule-setting, monitoring, and sanctioning activities" (Scott 1995, p. 42). These activities are overseen and enforced by super-ordinate institutions such as government or regulatory agencies. Regulative institutions conform to the "guaranteed law" that is represented by formal legal and political structures (Weber 1922/1978). Singh, Tucker, and House (1986), for example, assess the regulatory legitimacy of voluntary social service organizations when they evaluate their compliance with charity organization law in Canada.

Normative legitimacy is the degree to which an organization coheres to the norms and values in the environment. Pfeffer and colleagues define legitimacy as "congruence between the social values associated with or implied by [organizational] activities and the norms of acceptable behavior in the larger social system" (Dowling and Pfeffer 1975; Pfeffer and Salancik 1978). This definition places legitimacy as a relation between the organization and its generalized environment, and frames legitimation as a process of garnering normative acceptance in this environment. This type of legitimacy exists at two levels of acceptance. One level is the acceptance of an organization's right to exist, but the stronger form of acceptance is knowledge and endorsement of an organization's social function and values.

Lastly, cultural-cognitive legitimacy is the degree to which an organization is known and understood by social actors. Cultural-cognitive legitimacy is most often measured as the quality of being 'taken-for-granted' by social actors, that is, the degree to which an organization or innovation fits with existing cognitive and cultural schemas. Both cognitive and cultural elements fall under this pillar because although cognitive schemas exist individually, these schemas are created and reinforced through cultural processes and representations. As Scott (1995) says, "internal interpretive processes are shaped by external cultural frameworks" (p. 57). Meyer and Scott (1994), for example, adopt the cultural-cognitive angle when they define legitimacy as "the extent to which an array of established cultural accounts provide explanations for [an organization's] existence" (p. 201). The National Gambling Impact and Policy Commission's Executive Report (1999) alludes to this type of legitimacy when it speculates that

> [i]n the next 25 years, gambling could, at its present rate of growth, become more and more like other common and legal, but somewhat restricted, business activities, such as the sale of alcohol or cigarettes…it

> is conceivable that someday gambling enterprises may be franchised, and, at least in parts of the country be as common as fast food outlets are today" (p. 1-2).

Cultural-cognitive legitimacy measures the degree to which people understand casino gambling and have an available cognitive model for it. Cognitive legitimacy, of course, is not inevitable when a product becomes legitimate, but rather is the result of continued repeated cultural reinforcement and integration with common schemata such as, in this case, our beliefs about fast food outlets and more generally, what it means to be a 'regular' business (Dimaggio 1997).

These three types of legitimacy can also reinforce one another or can be in conflict. Full legitimacy can be achieved by complete regulatory compliance, normative acceptance of social actors, and eventual 'taken-for-grantedness' of the institution. On the other hand, organizations and products can have varying degrees of legitimacy of different types. An organization, like the casino, may have regulatory legitimacy, but still lack normative legitimacy in the community. Driving over the speed limit, on the other hand, may have complete normative and cognitive legitimacy, but it does not have regulatory legitimacy because it violates state law. An innovation like Bluetooth, for example, may have regulatory legitimacy, but lack normative and cultural-cognitive legitimacy.

In this paper, I focus on shifts in normative legitimacy by analyzing changes in the semantic framing of casino gambling that exist in popular discourse, as reflected by newspaper journalism. Because normative legitimacy in this discourse does not develop on its own, my analysis also touches on representations of regulative, cultural, and cognitive legitimacy. For example, writers may appeal to legality as grounds for arguing that gambling is an acceptable practice. Using the analysis of newspaper articles, I assess changes in normative legitimacy by borrowing framing theory and methods from sociology of culture and institutions (e.g. Gamson 1992; Gamson and Modigliani 1989; , for a review see Matthes and Kohring 2008).

Frame analysis has been used extensively in sociology to study changes in political and cultural discourses over time (Ferree and Merrill 2000; Gamson and Modigliani 1989; Johnston and Baumann 2007). Frames are "individual cognitive structures … that orient and guide interpretation of individual experience" (Oliver and Johnston 2000, p. 41). They enable individuals to "selectively punctuate and encode objects, situations, events, experiences and sequences of actions within one's present and past environment" (Snow and Benford 1988, p. 137). To accomplish this punctuation and encoding, they "draw from the supporting ideas and norms of ideologies, but are understood as more specific cognitive structures advanced by social actors to shape interpretation and understanding of specific issues" (Johnston and Baumann 2007, p. 172). Frames are the linguistic tools by which social actors can attempt to manipulate normative legitimacy over time. Theoretical questions about legitimation can now be reframed as empirical questions about frames. What semantic frames are present in the gambling debate? How are these frames received and used by journalists? Do the uses of these frames legitimate the practice? Lastly, does legitimation, if it does occur, result in action; do more people actually adopt casino gambling because it becomes legitimate?

Diffusion

I will now briefly review the relevant research in diffusion to show how an understanding of the legitimation process might enrich our understanding of diffusion. The most common generalization of all diffusion research is that innovations diffuse in a pattern that can be represented by an S-curve (Mahajan, Muller, and Bass 1995b). That is, the innovation is adopted slowly at first, then at an accelerated rate until diffusion reaches an inflection point where adoption of the innovation slows and finally levels off (Figure 4-1). The largest area of diffusion research in marketing has come from the Bass diffusion model (Bass 1969), where it has been used to describe the diffusion process (Golder and Tellis 2004; Talukdar, Sudhir, and Ainslie 2002; Van den Bulte 2000), predict sales of new products (Moe and Fader 2002; Srivastava et al. 1985), and to serve as normative benchmarks introducing new product strategically (Kalish and Sen 1986, Moe 2002, Roberts 2005). Although diffusion studies in marketing have focused on the diffusion of consumer durables (Gatignon, Eliashberg, and Robertson 1989; Olshavsky 1980; Takada and Jain 1991), researchers have also modeled the diffusion of organizational structures (Mahajan, Sharma, and Bettis 1988), nationalized oil production (Kobrin 1985), and movies (Ainslie, Dreze, and Zufryden 2005; Krider et al. 2005). Although modeling the diffusion process is not the focus of this paper, I offer an estimation of the two most commonly used coefficients, those of innovation and imitation, in the Appendix.

The second common generalization in diffusion research concerns the influence of intrinsic and extrinsic drivers of the diffusion process. Bass proposes two sources of diffusion: 1) the “external” influence from mass media, which is represented by a “coefficient of innovation,” and 2) the interpersonal or “internal” influence of word of mouth, represented by a “coefficient of imitation” (Bass 1969). The model proposes that there are two kinds of actors in the diffusion process, “innovators” who receive and respond to mass media and “imitators” who receive and respond to word-of-mouth communication. In general, the implicit assumption is that mass marketing and word of mouth have a linear and positive effect on diffusion, and that these communications are unambiguously and uniformly picked up by adopters of the product. Among other things, the present research suggests that there are actually more actors in the diffusion process than accounted for by current models. Communications have as their targets not only adopters, but other stakeholders such as journalists, politicians, and citizens. When we consider the impact of regulatory, normative, and cultural structures on diffusion, these stakeholders become important.

Because the Bass and related models are meant to describe or predict aggregate market growth, they lack the behavioral specificity that might describe the individual adoption process. As Mahajan, Muller, and Bass (1990) outline, the model rests on nine assumptions that can be usefully evaluated through a case study such as this one that utilizes multiple levels of analysis. The assumptions as they are outlined are as follows:

> (1) The market remains constant over time.
> (2) Diffusion of an innovation is independent of other innovations.
> (3) The nature of the innovation does not change over time.
> (4) The geographic boundaries of the social system do not change over time.
> (5) The diffusion process is binary. Consumers either do adopt or do not adopt the innovation.
> (6) Diffusion of an innovation is not influenced by marketing strategies.
> (7) Product and market characteristics do not influence diffusion patterns.
> (8) There are no supply restrictions.
> (9) There is only one adoption by an adopting unit.
>
> Mahajan, Muller, and Bass (1990)

Of the nine assumptions listed by Majahan, Muller, and Bass (1990), four (assumptions 1, 4, 6, and 7) are at issue in this particular study, and several more will be enumerated and assessed.

The first assumption at issue in this study is the assumption that the market remains constant over time. In the case of casino gambling, as with many other cases, the market opens up incrementally as innovations are 'rolled out,' or, in this case, legalized (see also, assumption four). What are the effects of incremental growth in potential adopters? Through a case study of incremental market expansion, one can assess the cross-over effects of potential and actual markets. Concomitantly, the market for casino gambling may shrink as people come to oppose the practice or as they choose to spend their money in other ways. I conceptualize this process as an increase or decrease in the total number of potential adaptors in the model. As Figure 4-2 shows, the total number of potential adopters can increase according to legitimation efforts. If we estimate, for example, that 50 casinos (outside Nevada) were possible in 1983, but through legitimation, 200 casinos were possible in 1998, the upper bound, N, changes over time. Again, my aim in this paper is not to quantitatively model or predict the process, but rather to show the mechanisms by which legitimation occurs to increase this upper bound.

The third and fourth assumptions at issue in this study are the assumption that diffusion of an innovation is not influenced by marketing strategies and the assumption that product and market characteristics do not influence diffusion patterns. Previous studies have relaxed this first assumption by evaluating the effects of marketing mix variables such as advertising (Dodson Jr and Muller 1979; Horsky and Simon 1983), but have not looked at the role of discursive strategies more broadly. With two exceptions

(Arnould 1989; Takada and Jain 1991), the diffusion research has neglected to study the effect of cultural variables on the diffusion process. Because these variables are important, yet hard to capture with quantitative models, diffusion research would benefit from an analysis that looks more broadly at the environment of consumer values and ideologies that precede the innovation and facilitate or impede the adoption process. Instead of making an analytical distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic drivers of diffusion—those variables related to the product and to the environment respectively—I conceptualize the diffusion process as achieving a 'fit' between the innovation and the social and cultural environment (Dowling and Pfeffer 1975). Marketing strategies change the product to be either superficially or fundamentally more congruent with the market environment. Concurrently, the market environment itself changes as political and cultural structures change to incorporate new products and institutions.

The fifth assumption of the model that I will address is actually an empirical omission. In marketing, nearly all studies track the diffusion of material products rather than services. In two reviews and one meta-analysis of diffusion research in marketing (Mahajan, Muller, and Bass 1995a; Mahajan, Muller, and Bass 1990; Sultan, Farley, and Lehmann 1990), only one study looks at the diffusion of services (Bass 1969). Including services is important for several reasons. First, diffusion theory has tended to be transaction-centric, meaning that 'adoption' is measured by purchase. It has been noted, however, that this purchase-based measurement may not be the best way to define the construct of adoption (Shih and Venkatesh 2004). The inclusion of services, contributes to diffusion theory theoretically because services cannot be confined to one particular transaction (Vargo and Lusch 2004). The inclusion of services highlights the institutional nature of the diffusion process. Although any ‘product’ can be framed as a ‘service’ in theory (Vargo and Lusch 2004), services are particularly reliant on institutions and organizational structures. Unlike material instantiations of specific technological innovations, diffusion in services occurs through the establishment of retail outlets and other physical instantiations of the innovation. Diffusion theory in the case of services, in other words, requires an understanding of institutions.

Further, prior research has tended to approach adoption from a utilitarian perspective (e.g. Chatterjee and Eliasberg 1990), and has thus focused on the localized interaction between the consumer and the innovation, omitting the influence of larger social norms and values. In this sense, the inclusion of services provides theoretical advancement beyond a utilitarian perspective. Although the object-person dyad tends to be the focal point of diffusion research when a material object is chosen, choosing a service context like casino gambling that is tied clearly to norms and values that can be overlooked when studying a material object.

The final assumption in the diffusion model that this study will address is the implied linearity in the diffusion process. The Bass model notwithstanding, diffusion is not always a smooth, mechanical, uncontested process. Few studies have looked at industries that have considerable barriers to entry such as high sunk costs or legal barriers to entry. Some have pointed to the need to investigate diffusion when products are ‘rolled out’ in different markets (Mahajan et al. 1990), but no research has yet taken up this issue, primarily because of the lack of methodological tools for tacking discontinuous or contested innovation. Chief amongst these limits is the employment of metaphors of epidemiology, the theorization innovation as a ‘virus’ that ‘spreads.’ In actual cases, the diffusion process is rarely as contagious as a virus. Instead, it is fraught with social, political, and cultural barriers (Strang and Meyer 1993). Here again the construct of legitimacy in sociology will be helpful for theorizing diffusion as a political, cultural, and cognitive process.

In general, the agenda of this research is to assess the social and cultural factors of the diffusion process through a case study of casino gambling by bringing institutional theories of legitimation to bear on the case data. How do new industries come to be accepted in the marketplace? Through what social and cultural processes does diffusion occur? Can we measure these changes over time and then come to understand the role of these changes in the diffusion process?

The remainder of this chapter is structured as follows. I will first present the data and methods through which I studied the social environment of casino gambling. I will then present findings that demonstrate changes in the environment. Lastly, I will discuss the ways in which an understanding of these changes informs our study of diffusion and review the strategic implications of this research.

DATA AND METHODS

Data

For this study, I evaluated newspaper articles about casino gambling from 1980-2007. Using the Factiva database, I identified all articles that appeared in *The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal*, and *USA Today* containing the keyword “casino” in the article’s title or lead paragraph (n=7211). Because these three publications have the three largest circulations in the United States (2,524,965; 2,068,439; and 1,627,062 respectively), cover news on a national level, and have readership across all 50 states (Audit Bureau of Circulations 2007), they were selected as reasonable and likely indicators of normative legitimacy.

In addition to quantitatively analyzing the above data set, a second, smaller subset of 600 articles was constructed for qualitative analysis. From the original data set, a stratified random sample of articles was selected from three time periods, 1980-1988, 1989-1999, and 2000-2007. These dates were chosen according to important regulatory actions in order to ascertain the impact of regulation on the content of the articles.[1] Using these two datasets, I was able to make two kinds of comparisons: a comparison across the three publications, and a comparison across time periods within publications. In addition to a comparison across the three time periods analytically drawn, I was able to observe trends across time on a yearly basis as well. These data sets were also compared with data collected from several other sources: the number of casinos built each year (American Gambling Association), crime statistics (UNCRS), government documents (NISCG), cultural materials such as films, and several other secondary sources.

Methods

In this study, I use three types of content analysis—thematic, linguistic, and affective—to assess trends in the coverage of casino gambling over time and to compare those trends against data, documenting its diffusion in the United States. Thematic or

[1] In 1988, a Supreme Court decision paved the way for regulatory nationalization by permitting Native American tribes to operate casinos. In 1999, a committee appointed by the United States Congress to study the effects of gambling released a report concluding that gambling expansion in the United States should be halted until the effects of gambling were better understood.

semantic analysis compares changes in themes over time and looks at changes in the way casino gambling has been 'framed' as a consumption activity. The thematic analysis here draws from the methodology of frame analysis to understand the ways in which casino gambling has been framed and the changes in those frames over time. Linguistic analysis compares changes in parts of speech, verb tense, and word origin over time. This can give us insight into the more subtle ways that language may have affected legitimation. Finally, affective analysis tracks changes in language valence (positive or negative) and emotion (anxiety, sadness, and anger) over time, giving us more or less direct insight into the valence with which casino gambling has been represented.

The thematic or semantic analysis of the newspaper articles was done in several stages. First, I qualitatively analyzed a stratified random sample of about 200 articles from each newspaper (600 total), coding for common themes and frames using the program Atlas.ti and a process of analytic induction, tracking between theory and data, until some stability was reached in my interpretations (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Katz 2001). I then conducted a automated quantitative content analysis of the population of articles from 1980-2007 using a computer program called LIWC (Pennebaker, Francis, and Booth 2007). LIWC uses pre-specified dictionaries to perform word counts of relevant words that represent a given construct or concept. "Arrest," "guilty," and "criminal," for example, would all be counted as mentions of the concept of "crime." More refined semantic analyses can be conducted by comparing correlations between themes and valence.

Two dictionaries were used to assess trends in newspaper content. The first was a dictionary constructed and tested by Pennybaker et al (2007; 2001) that counts basic concepts such as valance, and parts of speech such as past, present, and future verb-tense. The default dictionary contains words taken from common emotion rating scales, such as the PANAS (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen 1988). For full validity and reliability measures, see Pennybaker et al (2007). A second, custom dictionary was constructed using the following method (for the full procedure see Pennybaker et al 2007). After a qualitative analysis of a separate sub-sample of the population of articles, a list of words was generated for each of 13 concepts: crime, white collar crime, regulation, social concerns, business, entertainment, economy, morality, luxury, addiction, probability, substances such as alcohol and drugs, and casino games (see Table 4-1). Three judges were then asked to indicate whether each word should be included or excluded from the dictionary category. They were also asked to offer any suggestions for additional words. Words on the list were then added or eliminated based on the following rules: a) if two coders agreed that it should be included, it was left on the list, b) if two coders agreed that it should be removed from the list, it was removed, c) if two coders suggested the same word, it was added to the list.

Descriptive statistics for the main variables are listed in Table 4-3. Business words, for example, make up about 1.23% of all words that were coded. Because this may seem small to those unfamiliar with the content analysis of popular media, it is important to note that about 50 words (articles, pronouns, prepositions, auxiliary verbs, etc) make up a full 40% of common word usage, leaving the remaining 59% to 16,000 of the most commonly used English words, and 1% to technical language (Zipf 1949; Zipf 1935). It is also important to remember that, because the sample size of words is so large, a .1% change in business-words in the data set means an increase of about 4,000 more business-related words.

Analysis by Word vs. Article

Analysis of newspaper articles was done at two levels: at the article level and at the word level. The convention in Communications research is analysis at the word level due to the ease and transparency of analyzing data using computer programs (Mehl and Gill 2008). Analysis by article, however, is more appropriate for answering some of the research questions posed here because it is more appropriate for counting and reporting primary article topics (Matthes and Kohring 2008). For example, if we want to know how much crime is mentioned in connection with gambling, it is more appropriate to count all articles about crime and gambling (as 1 or 0 for each article) than it is to count all words related to crime. One article can have many words related to crime, but it still remains one article out of many. To adapt computer analysis to the article-level of analysis, word counts were done by article, and an article was coded as being 'about' a concept at a particular threshold, calculated according to the mean. If the article contained a percentage of words above the mean for that newspaper, it was counted as being 'about' a topic. If it contained a percentage of words below the mean, it was counted as not being 'about' a topic. To ensure construct validity, a qualitative spot-check was conducted on a sub-sample of the articles to ensure that this method accurately represented article topics.

Analysis by word, however, does have merit for some research questions posed in this research. In a linguistic analysis, for example, we want to know how many times gambling is spoken about as something in the past, present, or future. In an affective analysis, we may want to know how often anxiety is associated with gambling. In these cases, it makes sense to compare word counts across the entire data set, as these constructs are more diffuse in the data and more subtle than article topic. For this reason, thematic analysis is reported by percentage of total articles, while linguistic and affective analysis is reported by percentage of total words.

RESULTS

One preliminary measure of legitimacy is the visibility or invisibility of a topic in public discourse (Schneiberg and Clemens 2006). In this case, we can measure visibility by the number of articles published in each newspaper. As Clemens and Schneiberg (2006) note, however, visible topics are likely to be those where legitimacy is being actively negotiated, while invisible topics are those where questions of legitimacy are settled, being definitely legitimate or illegitimate. Figure 4-3 shows the number of articles about casinos published per year. Although the total number of articles published in each newspaper has remained roughly constant over time,[2] articles about casino gambling have had several periods of prominence during which legitimacy was actually being negotiated. As I will later discuss, each periodical has its own discursive logic and therefore represents casino gambling slightly differently. Overall, however, the thematic patterns over time are consistent, despite differences in actual thematic quantity.

[2] The article averages in *The New York Times* over the three time periods, for example, are 138,731, 113,586, and 127,180. Calculating casino articles as a percentage of total articles does not change the pattern of results.

There were roughly three periods where casino gambling became more visible in the newspapers examined: around 1981 in *The New York Times* when gambling in New Jersey was first being expanded, 1989 in *USA Today* and the *Wall Street Journal* when casino gambling first became legally feasible on a national scale (1988), and in 1995, directly after the number of casinos in the United States increased by 80%, from 39 casinos in 1993 to 70 casinos in 1994. Figure 4-1 shows the growth in casinos from 1980 to 2006, fitting the typical diffusion pattern observed in other contexts (Bass 1969; Rogers 1995). The most rapid increase occurs between the years 1993 and 1995, and then growth levels off around 1998. This rapid increase in "territorial legitimacy" in 1993 stirred coverage in *The New York Times* through 1995 that, in part, led to the initiation of the National Gambling Impact Study Commission Act in 1996 (104th Congress 1996). Without analyzing the content of these articles, however, one cannot discern what these increases in visibility mean, whether gambling is being portrayed as a good, wholesome economic activity, a seedy, insidious, criminal practice, or something in-between.

Thematic Analysis

The thematic analysis focuses on changes in four major frames that are used to talk about casino gambling—crime, business, regulation, and social issues. Each frame carries with it some degree of normative weight, and can be used to support a larger, more implicit ideology. From the qualitative analysis of articles, we know, for example, that crime usually associates gambling with bad things such as murder, drugs, and prostitution, while business tends to associate casino gambling with 'good' things like economic growth and employment. More specifically, each of these frames points to an underlying semiotic concept used to understand the practices associated with gambling.

As we saw in Chapter 3, discourse about casino gambling is structured by four semantic concepts organized into two binaries, filth/purity and poverty/wealth (see Figure 3-2). The crime frame in this case is the expression of the semantic concept of "filth" because it represents disorder and decay, a disruption to the social order (Douglas 1966). Regulation, on the other hand, represents purity, the assertion of order onto disorder. When articles use the frame of regulation, it is to depict the assertion of purity onto the 'filthy' world of organized crime or corporate corruption. The business frame often signifies wealth, the indication that the casino industry can generate financial capital, not only for shareholders of the companies involved, but also for the communities in which casinos are embedded. Lastly, the social frame stands in contrast to the wealth frame because it signifies the semantic category of poverty within the community. Put simply, the frames of crime, regulation, business, and social issues operationalize the deeper semantic concepts of filth/purity and poverty/wealth.

Although these frames exist consistently in the data set, they do not always or necessarily mean the same thing. For example, while the frame of gambling and crime could be used to emphasize gambling's lack of legality, it could also be used to argue for gambling's increased legality because, one might argue, it needs to be controlled and monitored by the state (United States. Commission on the Review of the National Policy Toward Gambling. 1976). According to my previous qualitative analysis of the data, the regulation frame often contains the presupposition that gambling is being controlled and monitored, making it 'safe' for a community or state and giving integrity to regulatory and licensing processes. Some of the pre-tested words used to represent each frame can be found in Table 4-1.

Crime. The association between casino gambling and crime goes down precipitously in all three publications. In the 1980-1988 period 26% of all articles on casinos in *The New York Times* were about crime, while in the 2000-2006 time period only 15% of all articles were crime-related (a t-test reveals that these means are statistically significant at the $p < .001$ level, $t = 5.68$). In the *Wall Street Journal*, articles about crime made up 18% of all casino articles in 1980-1988, but only 11.5% of all articles in 2000-2007 ($t=3.12$, $p<.001$). In *USA Today*, 24% of all casino articles were about crime in 1989-1999, while only 11% of articles were about crime in 2000-2006 ($t=3.74$, $p<.001$). If we look at the general yearly pattern of crime framing, we see that it declines most notably in 1988 in the *New York Times*, and in 1992 in the *Wall Street Journal*. In *USA Today*, the crime frame was used variably in the years that followed, only to permanently decline around 1999 (Figure 4-5).

Generally, coverage of crime in connection with casino gambling through the 26-year time period decreased over all journals, and this frame tends to associate casino gambling with its negative effects on the community. For example, coverage of casino gambling in 1980 included articles like the following: "The coming of the casinos has brought a number of problems, including rising street crime. 'Casinos bring a lot of people and money to town, but also a lot of muggers and pickpockets and prostitutes,' said the Rev. Russell Gale, rector of St. James Episcopal Church, a block from Resorts International. 'The whores come right up on our porch'" (*New York Times*, August 29, 1982). Some articles detail links between organized crime and gambling: "Law-enforcement officials in New Jersey and Philadelphia now believe that the murder of a 60-year-old union leader in Philadelphia last Tuesday night was related to organized-crime rivalries over potential spoils from casino gambling and newly enriched union treasuries in Atlantic City." (*New York Times*, 20 December 1980). The articles about crime that exist in 2006, though rare, are generally related to white-collar crime like bribery or extortion of public figures.

Business. In the *Wall Street Journal*, 37% of articles on casinos were about business in the 1980-1988 time period, while by the 2000-2006 time period, 54% of the casino articles were about business (t= -6.64, $p<.001$). In *USA Today*, 26% of the articles on casinos were about business in 1989-1999, while they comprised 34% of all articles in the 2000-2006 period (t= -2.00, $p<.05$). Notably, however, this is true only for the *Wall Street Journal*, and *USA Today*. In the *New York Times*, 38% of articles were about business in the first period, while 27% of the articles were about business in the last period. Next, the yearly trends displayed in Figure 4-5 show that the business frame peaked in the *New York Times* in 1988, but that the *Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today*, have continued to use it, with marked increases in 1996 for the *Wall Street Journal* and 2004 for *USA Today*. *The New York Times*, which has grown skeptical of casino gambling over time, deemphasizes the business frame in favor of other frames such as social problems. The social frame often applies more directly to the Atlantic City case, which is covered more heavily in New York than in the other national newspapers.

The business frame does two things to shape the way casino gambling is represented in the data. First, business articles about casinos tend to frame gambling as entertainment, and often draw explicit parallels to other, more legitimate, forms of recreation such as going to movies, concerts, and sporting events. For example, one article reports that, “Donald Trump is fond of telling the managers of Resorts International Inc. that the casino business isn't just a matter of gambling. ‘This is show business,’ he tells them” (*USA Today*, March 23, 1988). To casino owners, of which Donald Trump is an (albeit extreme) example, running a casino entails controlling many of the same logistics as an entertainment or service company. The image of wealth is paramount in the atmosphere of corporately run casino gambling. Talent must be employed for lounge acts, a fun atmosphere must be built, and the illusion of glitz and glamour must be maintained. This is not “just a matter of gambling,” as Trump says, but it’s “show business.” This metonymical trick elides the seediness normally associated with gambling dens and provides a bridge for thinking about casino gambling *as* something else, namely show business, a business that is perfectly legitimate in American culture.

Reports of the casino space frame gambling as entertainment by focusing on other amenities in addition to the space allotted to casino gambling. Between 1993 and 1999, a number of articles focus on the numerical grandeur of the casinos being built at the time. For example, one article reports, “The project will also contain 300,000 square feet of retail space, 2,400 hotel rooms, theaters and other entertainment sites” (*New York Times*, 23 February 1996). Illustrating Trump’s proclamation about show business, casinos, especially new casinos, are depicted as full-service entertainment locales with shopping, movies, water parks, and night clubs, to name only a few amenities. More directly, one article reports that a government official, “said going to Atlantic City – ‘an overall entertainment destination with gaming’ -- was completely different from playing a slot machine at a race track or going to a small casino boat" (*New York Times*, June 2, 2002). Again, the distinction between 'mere' gambling at a slot machine or at a race track is counterpoised to the over-the-top experience of an "entertainment destination," which uses the basic semantic frame of wealth.

Not only do business and government representatives frame gambling as an entertainment business, but consumers also adopt this frame as well. Consumer quotations include comparisons to other leisure activities like watching TV or going to the movies. For example, two gamblers in Atlantic City note, "'We don't have anything bad to say,' said Mr. Gold, who was a jeweler, specializing in repair, before he retired six years ago. 'If we didn't come here, we would probably just sit home and watch television'" (*New York Times*, January 25, 1998). These consumers think of casino gambling as interchangeable with other recreational activities like watching TV. Because TV watching is legitimate, this comparison elevates gambling into the world of common, taken-for-granted leisure activities. Similarly, when speaking about the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino, a gambler in Las Vegas says, "'It's more like a party than a casino' Mr. Weck observed, taking a break from a post-midnight romp at the roulette table in the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino here. 'It's more familiar to people like me than the Strip'" (*New York Times*, November 1, 1995). Being "more familiar" here is one mechanism through which cultural-cognitive legitimacy makes gambling seem more legitimate.

Secondly, traditional business reporting frames casino gambling as a business, like any other, by reporting mergers, acquisitions, divestments, profit statements, and growth projections. Using financial rhetoric and logic, these articles speak of casino companies as if they are any other business. These reports rely on the semantic category of wealth—financial capital—to motivate existence of the industry. When casinos earn profits and attract investors, they are not different from other companies, and are indeed welcomed as such. This company status also means that decisions are made about casinos according to financial, rather than cultural or social, logic. For example, “[g]ambling is a business and if it makes economic sense, we'll go anywhere to operate" said Tom Gallagher, the executive vice president and general counsel of the Hilton Corporation” (*New York Times*, October 14, 1997). The alternative to this logic is that casinos would be considered ‘special’ businesses that must calculate the social and cultural costs as well as the financial costs. While they may be subject to social constraints in actuality, the business frame identifies them with the traditional form and depicts their actions as a product of financial calculation rather than social or cultural calculation.

In the domain of advertising, casinos over time become like any other company. Although they were once barred from advertising on TV, this law was revised because of a Supreme Court opinion citing free-speech violations. As the article reports, “This opinion affirms that local broadcasters be accorded the same commercial free-speech rights as state lottery sponsors and newspaper publishers in advertising a legal product," said Edward Fritts, president of the National Association of Broadcasters” (*USA Today*, June 15, 1999). Casinos, the article says, are a legal product like any other product, and can thus be advertised like any other product. Again, this metonymy does the work of legitimating casino gambling by removing it from the sphere of stigmatized activities like smoking and drinking, and placing it alongside legitimate activities like reading the newspaper.

Much of the data collected and analyzed support the proposition that both aspects of the business frame, entertainment and financial logic, work together to increase the legitimacy of casinos over time in the *Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today*. However, it is also important to note that in *The New York Times* business articles decline. As noted previously, this is likely because of the relatively local focus of *The New York Times*. Atlantic City, where business expanded primarily in the first period, becomes more commonly associated with social problems in the second and third periods. Because *The New York Times* tends to report on the northeast rather than other regions, this association may explain the anomaly. Although an increase in the business frame generally indicates that casino gambling becomes more legitimate overall, and nationalized legitimacy finds its place in locales like Mississippi and Indiana, casinos may still be resisted locally in places like New York (Johnson et al. 2006).

Regulation. In *The New York Times*, articles about regulation fell from 42% in the 1980-1988 period to 28% in 2000-2006 period ($t=6.97$, $p<.001$). Similarly, coverage dropped in *USA Today* from 32% in the 1989-1999 period to 17% in the 2000-2006 period ($t= 4.59$, $p<.001$). The yearly measures of the regulation frame show that it declines early in the diffusion process, beginning in 1984 in the *New York Times*. The *Wall Street Journal* follows a similar trend, until an increase in regulation frame in 1999. This is likely because of the importance of regulation to investors and the coverage of international regulation, a matter that was actively being negotiated in locales like Macau during the later part of the period. The regulation frame in *USA Today* was at its highest point in 1994. In general, the regulation frame declines in importance as casinos become diffused throughout the United States. However, counter to this trend for the two general-interest newspapers, coverage in the *Wall Street Journal* remains constant in all three periods. This may be due to the importance of regulatory issues to the investment-oriented audience. While regulation became more taken-for-granted to the general public, it remains important to investors and industry readers.

The regulation frame does two things. First, it generally assures the public that casinos are being held to standards of financial, ethical, and social accountability. Articles generally depict licensing procedures, proposals to grant a gambling license after formal vetting or, less often, to take away a license after misconduct. One article from the *Wall Street Journal* reports, for example,

> The Gaming Control Board investigates licensing applicants as the enforcement arm of the state gambling commission. Earlier this year the control board ruled Mr. Baldwin was unsuitable to hold a gambling license because it alleged he participated in an illegal blackjack game in Oklahoma. The control board staff also ruled that Mr. Baldwin, who won the 1978 World Series of Poker, had played poker with and associated with individuals deemed by Nevada law to be "undesirable." Licenses can be denied on the basis of such associations. (*Wall Street Journal* November 30, 1984)

As guardians of public welfare, regulatory committee members seek out "undesirables" and ban them from participating in the industry. The public nature of this process helps to establish casino gambling as an industry removed from the influence of organized crime and transparent in its business practices.

To accomplish this, however, the regulatory body must *itself* do some legitimacy work to assure the public that its practices and members have integrity and are themselves accountable. Articles commonly report procedures for isolating the regulatory body from the influence of other organizations like companies or organized crime. For example, one article reports that "A new ethics bill … would prohibit state legislators and most state and Atlantic City officials from working for a casino or casino-related company for two years after they left their government jobs" (*New York Times*, July 5, 1980). The restriction of personnel, meant to check conflicts of interest, enhances perceptions of legitimacy of the regulatory body, and thus of gambling itself.

The casino control boards argue for their existence by using narratives casting themselves as guardians of integrity in the casino business. For example, when considering a bid for a license from a wealthy individual with a rumored association with organized crime, a gambling commissioner in one article reports that "despite the tremendous economic and political impact brought to bear … it is important to follow our regulatory mandate to scrutinize applicants for licenses, and their associations, to determine whether any associations pose a clear and present danger to the welfare of the state. If they do, we must have the intestinal fortitude to deny the license" (*New York Times*, April 24, 1983). Narratives of defending the public trust are often be used by policy makers to justify their own purpose to the public (Jacobs and Sobieraj 2007). By casting themselves as protectors of public interest in the fledgling casino industry, policy makers and other regulatory officials make their role appear vital to the existence of the casino industry. This occurs when regulating individuals as well as companies. For example, one article reports that, "Mr. Read argued that the question was not 'whether we should protect Kallman from himself,' but rather 'whether the legitimate concerns of public confidence and trust in the integrity of the regulatory process are served' by granting the license" (*New York Times,* March 30, 1989).

The regulatory frame cognitively couples gambling with legal processes that are themselves overseen by a network of oversight. This conforms well to Weber's initial conceptualization of legitimacy in that bureaucratic authority is gained by a system of public offices that are (at least in theory) separated from instrumental, economic or personal concerns. However true this separation may or may not be in reality, the rhetoric of the regulatory frame serves as an origin story for legitimating casino gambling as an industry. The overall decrease in coverage of regulatory issues implies, paradoxically, that casino gambling becomes *more* legitimate. This is because as the practice becomes less controversial, it requires less coverage of regulation and less scrutiny of regulatory bodies. The decrease in coverage of regulation indicates that the existence of casinos in a community is more accepted. However, that their existence is more accepted does not imply that the effects of their presence go unmentioned or uncovered. In the discourse, we see a shift from discussions in the domain of regulatory legitimacy to discussions in the domain of normative legitimacy, specifically to a focus on social problems.

Social Issues. Articles about social issues went up in *The New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal*. In *The New York Times*, 24% of articles were about social issues between 1980 and 1988, while 35% of articles were about social issues between 2000 and 2007 ($t=-6.15$, $p<.001$). In the *Wall Street Journal*, this percentage rose from 18% to 38% ($t=-8.59$, $p<.001$). In *USA Today*, articles went up from 26% in 1989-1999 to 29% in 2000-2006, but this difference was not statistically significant ($t=-.974$). The yearly analysis (Figure 4-5) shows a slow but steady increase in the social frame. In the *New York Times*, this frame overtakes the business frame around 1996. In the *Wall Street Journal*, which primarily covers business, the social peaks at 2003, but does not overtake the business frame. In *USA Today*, its use is highly variable, and overall does not show an upward or downward trend.

The social frame often casts casino gambling in a local light, depicting community issues such as traffic, employment, or real estate prices. Most often, the social frame co-occurs with discourse about economic issues in the community such as jobs and local businesses. For example, in this article from *The New York Times*, the governor notes that casino development "is creating certain social, economic and community problems" and that "while 10,000 new jobs have been created, unemployment in the area is still high and equal employment opportunities for the jobs were not being offered" (*New York Times,* July 5, 1980). The social frame expands concepts associated with casinos beyond the financial. For many of the areas in which casinos locate, they are the focal businesses in the community. Because of this importance, changes to the area after their arrival are extensively documented, from general topics like economic vitality to mundane issues like traffic. Social articles speak most directly about contamination. For example, "Anthony Cellini, supervisor of the Town of Thompson and a casino supporter, told The Times last week that people are getting nervous now that the number of casinos seems to be rising. 'Five casinos could be a problem,' he acknowledged in a clear example of understatement. Five casinos will overwhelm Mr. Cellini and his fellow citizens -- their roads, their police, their way of life" (*New York Times*, December 26, 2004).

The social frame often registers community discontent with the effects of casino gambling. In an article about Atlantic City, for example, one resident says, "Before, the whole neighborhood was on the beach, and everybody was like a family. We'd play rummy on the beach till the water came up. That's when Atlantic City was Atlantic City. This ain't no Atlantic City. This is a jungle" (*New York Times*, 29 August 1982). The article further explains, “[l]ast year, nearly 200,000 buses rumbled in from all over the East - and a record 27,301 arrived last month, authorities say - fouling the air with fumes and noise, clogging and rutting streets and breaking sewer lines. ‘Getting in and out of that city is a nightmare, and moving in and around that city is a nightmare," the Governor said. ‘That's one of the things which was never examined at all by those who originally suggested casino gambling’” (*New York Times*, August 29, 1982). Semantic concepts like cleanliness or dirtiness are mobilized to oppose or valorize casino gambling on the local level, and these basic cultural categories run deep in issues of community formation. Over time, as social issues are increasingly covered, the narrative of disillusionment is used to understand the transition from a ‘clean’ to ‘dirty’ community, and to articulate disappointment with the failure of casinos to deliver on community hopes.

Overall, the thematic analysis shows quantitatively that articles about crime and regulation went down, while coverage of business and social issues went up. Pairing this with a qualitative analysis, we see that crime tends to depict gambling as illegitimate, unclean, and exploitative. Regulation works as a founding myth to ensure that gambling is ‘safe’ for the public, but as gambling becomes more legitimate, it is not needed to encourage public trust in the industry. The business frame tends to emphasize economic growth and lends casino companies cognitive legitimacy by employing familiar schemas of business forms. The one caveat to all of these indicators of increasing legitimacy, however, is that coverage of social issues increases over time. This indicates that normative legitimacy of gambling moves from the national level to the local level, and is contested more often on the grounds of small, local issues like traffic, rather than grand moral or economic issues. A look at the results on a yearly basis (Figure 4-5) shows the same trend.

This pattern of results thus serves as a reminder that even as gambling becomes legitimate on a national scale, the focus on the problems associated with it shifts to the local level, making it somewhat contentious on a community-by-community basis. Thinking about this in terms of the diffusion process, this means that after an innovation becomes “adopted” by the user (in this case a community), it may not be completely accepted. Although casino gambling overcomes the hurdle of regulatory legitimacy on a national and even local level, it must contend in the arena of public opinion that adjudicates issues of normative legitimacy. That said, regulatory legitimacy bolsters normative legitimacy because it provides a rhetorical stopgap that proponents can use to frame gambling as a legitimate consumption practice, a practice metonymical with entertainment and finance, and a practice approved and controlled by government officials with integrity.

Linguistic Analysis

The linguistic analysis focused on verb tense. Verb tense can be an important indicator of the way that a consumption practice is perceived and then represented in discourse. By speaking about gambling as a past or a present activity, writers of the articles clearly indicate their view, and this wording, in turn, influences the way that readers perceive the activity. Over the thirty-year time period, present-oriented language became more common than past-oriented language just before 1988; casino gambling changed from something that ‘was’ to something that ‘is,’ (see Figure 4-6). Overall, article year is positively correlated with an increase in present-tensed verbs (Pearson correlation = .144, $p<.01$) and slightly negatively correlated with past language (Pearson correlation=.096, $p<.01$). This shift in writing represents a shift in thinking from gambling as something that happens in remote locations in the country, that's tied with a culturally distinct past, to something that is or could be present today. The two tenses then permanently diverge, with present-oriented language becoming more common and past-oriented language becoming less common.

To further explain the change in tense, we can look for correlations between verb tense and theme by article[3]. Articles about crime tend to occur with past-oriented language (Pearson correlation= .21, $p<.01$) and are negatively associated with present-orientated language (Pearson correlation = -.12, $p<.01$). Conclusions about tense and legitimacy remain tenuous, however, because linguistic conventions can be one explanation for the findings. Further qualitative analysis of the data is required to fully explain the shift in tense. When coupled with the other analyses, however, they provide a metric for assessing how more subtle thinking about gambling may have shifted over time, and even within one year.

Affective Analysis

Affective analysis provides insight into the evaluative weight placed on each frame and therefore also the relationship between the frames and overall legitimacy of

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[3] Both year-level and article-level correlation analyses were conducted and yielded very similar results. Reporting on the article-level, however, makes more sense because we can be sure that, for example, past-tensed verbs were contained within the same article as crime-related words, not just that co-occurred in the same year, which is a weaker claim.

casino gambling. Table 4-4 shows a correlation analysis between positive and negative emotion and each frame. Because article year is included in the correlation analysis, it provides a sense for the evolution of affect over time. Overall, positive and negative emotion did not change over time. Neither category is correlated with article year in *The New York Times* or *Wall Street Journal*, which means that on balance these words did not appear with more frequency in later years. Despite this generalization, we see that positive emotion did increase over time in *USA Today* (Pearson correlation=.247, $p<.01$).

A measure of net positive emotion words in the text can also be constructed. A measure of net evaluation was calculated by measuring the number of words associated with positive emotion and subtracting the total number of words associated with negative emotion. The results are displayed in Figure 4-7. This yearly measure shows that casino gambling was viewed most positively around 1988, just before the Indian Gambling Act of 1988 was passed by the US Congress. After 1988, net evaluation of casino gambling in newspaper articles has declined. When the measurement is decomposed into positive and negative language, it indicates that the effect is driven primarily by the decrease in positive emotion, beginning in 1988. Over time, casino gambling has been covered, not more negatively, but less positively, as frames such as business that are more neutral replace overtly negative frames like crime.

There are, however, notable correlations between emotion and topic. Pairing this information with the thematic analysis implies that although emotion words themselves did not significantly increase over time, the topics with which positive or negative emotions are associated did increase or decrease over time. These correlations also lend validity to the conclusions of the qualitative analysis. In all three periodicals crime is, not surprisingly, negatively correlated with positive emotions and positively correlated with negative emotions. Business, on the other hand, is positively correlated with positive emotions and negatively correlated with negative emotions. These two correlations support hypotheses generated by the qualitative portion of the thematic analyses. Crime, which is associated with negative emotion, tends to support gambling as illegitimate. Business, which is associated with positive emotion, buttresses the image of gambling as being fun, thus helping to increase its acceptance in public discourse.

Regulation, interestingly, is negatively correlated with positive emotion, but is generally not correlated with negative emotions. In the qualitative analysis regulation tends to seem neutral, being associated with neither positive nor negative emotions. Here, however, we see that positive emotion is consistently absent from discourse in the regulatory frame. Qualitative analysis can pick up positive correlations (the business frame was coded with many positive emotion words), but is less likely to pick up word absence. In other words, it is much harder for a reader to detect and take note of the absence of positive words with the regulation frame than it is for the reader to notice word co-occurrence. As a methodological aside, therefore, one should note the important contribution of correlation measurement to the previous interpretive analysis.

Social issues tend to be negatively correlated with both types of emotion, albeit extremely weakly. This is likely because social words like community tend to be used in both positive and negative ways (as in, “this is great for the community”) and negative ways, (“this is bad for the community”). Thus although the social frame of gambling shifts the scope of normative legitimacy formulation, as noted earlier, it may do so somewhat neutrally. That is, coverage on this new local level mixes the good with the bad, providing a picture of the industry that is no uniformly denounced or embraced.

To better understand the changes in types of emotion expressed over time, rather that simply valence, consider the data in Figure 4-9. Figure 4-9 shows the changes in three types of negative emotion, anger, anxiety and sadness for all newspapers combined. Between the first and third periods of analysis sadness decreased from .35% to .28% ($p<.001$, $t=4.50$), while anxiety rose from .11% to .14% ($t=-5.55$, $p<.001$). Anger declined slightly from .44% to .42% ($t=-3.73$, $p<.001$). If these patterns are paired with the findings on the changes in themes, they indicate that as casino gambling has become diffused from a topic debated on the national level with reference to issues like crime and proper regulation, to one debated on a local level with reference to issues like community social problems, emotions have shifted from 'hot' emotions like anger to cooler, but more subtle emotions like anxiety. The emotional tenor of anxiety makes sense if one considers that the writers and the sources they quote consider casino gambling a fact in their community, but is still a fact with troubling local consequences from the minor (i.e. traffic), to the more sweeping (i.e. decline of local business).

From the affective analysis, I find that although newspapers differ on thematic emphasis, they generally do not differ on the correlations between emotion and theme. One can conclude, therefore, that each theme is consistently associated with a particular affective valence, but that the emphasis of the frame merely differs according to newspaper readership, its editorial policies, and its geographical scope. I also find that negative emotion shifts from 'hot' emotions like anger and sadness to the more subtle emotion of anxiety.

DISCUSSION

Overall, the results of this analysis of newspaper coverage of casino gambling indicate that obtaining normative legitimacy is not a straightforward, mechanical process. Diffusion is accompanied by shifts in cultural, normative, and regulative structures that have been unaccounted for in previous models. And yet, the observed shifts in language, from a moralistic to techno-rational, open gaps through which new industries can be established. The data on news coverage over time points to the conclusion that territorial expansion was made possible by shifts in normative and regulative structures. More specifically, its move from marginal practice to thriving industry has been facilitated by shifts in semantic association, from a practice associated with crime in the public mind, to one that's now congruent with existing cognitive models of business.

Prior to the rapid expansion of casino gambling in the mid-1990s, the lowering of regulatory and normative barriers paved the way for diffusion to occur. Empirically, we see semantic concepts of filth and purity were used less while semantic categories of poverty and wealth were used more over time. This discursive shift occurs directly prior to the diffusion of casinos themselves, and implies an increasing propensity to see casinos and related practices as commercial rather than as political or cultural entities. In fact, the dissemination of regulation and cultural perception is itself a diffusion process, where the "carriers" include mass media and politicians (Scott 1995).

As Strang and Meyer (1993) note, previous diffusion research has often assumed that transmission of an innovation is a purely relational process, and has therefore focused on networks of actors and their relationships. Such work adopts spatial and epidemiological metaphors to suggest that adopters are connected only by specific social and communicative networks (e.g. Bass 1969; e.g. Coleman et al. 1966; Rogers 1995) rather than participants that are influenced by normative, cultural, and legal institutions. When innovations are more or less "rational" to adopt, as in the case of practices for cleaning water in Peru (Wellin 1955), previous diffusion models based on simple transmission may be intuitive. If an innovation is obviously superior to existing products, diffusion is mostly an informational process. However, if one understands diffusion as an institutional process, which explicitly includes cultural and normative structures, diffusion comes to seem less like a "mechanistic spread of information," and more like a "complex exercise of social construction" (Strang and Chang 1993, p. 498). In cases where innovations are not clearly "better," an extensive process of legitimation is a more intuitive model. With this approach in mind, we can now see how the study of legitimation can inform some basic assumptions of the diffusion model.

Assumptions of the Diffusion Model

The market remains constant over time. This case study has demonstrated an instance of diffusion where the market has changed significantly over time due to regulatory, normative, and cultural transformations. Thirty years ago, the market was limited to a single state and a handful of companies, whose reputation was continually questioned. Today, the market exists nationally in the United States, encompassing 28 states and producing 30 billion dollars per year. This study has focused primarily on this market transformation as a dependent variable by outlining the various institutional shifts required for market expansion to occur. The geographic boundaries of the social system (assumption 4) have changed over time, but this too has been facilitated by shifts in thematic, linguistic, and affective content of public discourse.

Product and market characteristics do not influence diffusion patterns. This research has taken the nature of the innovation to be endogenous to the diffusion process. That is, representations in public national media have been shown to alter the way the innovation is perceived by the general public. This makes the "innovation"—or what we may re-term the diffusion object—more palatable over time. By creating linkages with charity, community service, and tax revenue, public relations efforts have changed the nature of innovation, producing a 'fit' between culture and the diffusion object itself.

Empirical omission of services. This case study of service diffusion clearly illustrates the institutional nature of diffusion. Diffusion requires the employment of particular "carriers" (Coleman et al. 1966; Gladwell 2000), those agents who work to spread a product or idea. In many cases of diffusion, relevant carriers include "innovators," the early adopters who spread the word to many people, and imitators, those who receive the information and adopt the product. The present case-study of service diffusion shows the additional importance of territorial carriers, that is, retail outlets, the physical buildings in which the "product" is sold. In Chapter 3, I referred to this as territorial legitimacy, and argued that this factor, physical instantiation in the community, served to support normative legitimacy by shifting discourse from discussion of abstract evils to concrete, logistical problems which, by their very nature, assumed the existence of the institution. In the diffusion of services, of course, territorial expansion in the form of retail is crucial for the success of a service.

Linearity of the diffusion process. As this case study has shown, the diffusion process is not an uncontested, linear process. Instead, regulatory expansion and normative acceptance have been contested periodically by multiple stakeholders, community members, politicians, and other competitive forces like Native American tribes. The ability to semantically navigate those forces on a firm- or industry-level ultimately makes diffusion successful. One might think of the process as a punctuated equilibrium. A stasis of industry obtains due to institutional factors. Then, due to shifts in regulation the industry shrinks or expands as a response to institutional changes, and then obtains a new stasis. Figure 4-2 demonstrates one way in which this punctuated equilibrium occurs. Shifts in the diffusion curve are spurred by institutional changes such as regulation and public opinion. I will now discuss a few ways that this research can aid managers in "macromarketing."

Managing the diffusion process

Increasing the Upper Bound of Potential Adopters. If we return to the literature on diffusion, we can now conceptualize the way in which these findings fit with current diffusion models. In the language of the model, the reconfiguration of normative and regulatory constraints increases the number of potential adopters (Figure 4-2). It does so in two ways. First, regulation can extend the geographical territory in which diffusion is permitted. This clearly means that more people may potentially adopt the innovation. To expand regulation, a company must consider frames used by multiple stakeholders such as regulators and journalists. Secondly, shifts in normative structure may work as an intermediate step between the progression from non-adopter to adopter, as people grow to normatively accept (i.e. tolerate) the practice, but may not yet engage in it. Although this is a refinement in the behavioral specificity of diffusion models, normative acceptance does not directly imply adoption. In models, however, adoption after initial normative acceptance could be predicated with some probability. Thus, generalized public relations efforts prior to innovation launch may provide favorable bedrock on which the diffusion process can occur. Chief amongst these PR efforts should be making the innovation culturally and cognitively intuitive by comparing the innovation to existing products or schema for consumption.

Gaining Competitive Advantage through Regulative Approval. In the case of casino gambling—as with many other industries—regulatory approval is one key driver of success because, when scarce, it gives the firm a competitive advantage. We can look at this advantage either historically or cross-sectionally. Historically, regulatory approval was given to Native American tribes in 1988 by the Native American Gambling Act (1988). This legislation touched off competitive dynamics that intensified expansion, as states began competing with tribes and then with each other. Economic rents to tribal casinos were high because they had the exclusive rights to run casinos. Then, to compete with Native American tribes, state legislatures sought to legalize casino gambling in order to reap the tax revenue from gambling. Through this process, however, casinos were established on rivers and other bodies of water, which were often located on state borders. States therefore began competing with one another to capture the tax revenue from casino gambling.

Cross-sectionally, competition is a factor not only between states, but also between firms. On the Mississippi river, for example, Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri, all legalized casino gambling within 3 years of each other, largely because of competitive dynamics. Within a state, where the number of casino licenses is often capped, competitive advantage is gained by firms who are awarded a license. Individual casinos are successful to the degree that they are able to manipulate frames through the bidding process to gain regulatory and normative legitimacy within the community (see Chapter 5). Chief amongst the appeals to these stakeholders should be an understanding of the frames that regulators use and attempts to appeal to these legislative narratives of heroes of public interest.

Managing Normative Legitimacy through Public Relations. Understanding shifts in semantic framing can inform marketing managers about the appropriate frames to use in marketing communications. Because the primary frame for talking and thinking about casinos is now wealth, the company, as Donald Trump intuits, can signify wealth rather than regulatory purity, which is now a "cost of entry" in the category. Conversely, because the social problems frame is increasingly prevalent, companies are faced with a strategic decision. They can accept the frame and compensate for it by publicizing programs to treat problem gamblers or they can attempt to reframe their business along another semantic binary. As Tybout, Calder, and Sternthal (1981) have shown, it is often a better strategy to reframe than to work within existing frames. This move, however, can be costly if the frame is culturally entrenched and requires a greater dedication of marketing resources.

To strategically reframe, one must have an awareness of the relevant cultural and normative structures surrounding the organization both to assess the method and feasibility of culturally reframing. The methodology used here can effectively be used by managers to survey the semantic landscape of an industry. As Holt (2004) shows, iconic brands are be positioned to resolve underlying cultural anxieties. This is no less true for diffusion objects. An understanding of the cultural environment can provide strategic insights that can be used to position an innovation that will appeal to multiple stakeholders—consumers, investors, and other organizations. Marketing managers should be aware of the operant frames that exist and carefully choose among them.

Future Research

Here I have introduced a theoretical tool—legitimation—to add conceptual depth to our theories of diffusion and a methodological tool—automated content analysis—to measure changes in legitimacy over time using data from textual communications. The primary focus in this article has been to show how the legitimacy process works. Future research in empirical modeling could incorporate these variables into existing models of diffusion. Beyond advertising and word-of-mouth, measured in dollars or volume, one can now assess the valence and content associated with communications and attempt to predict their effects on diffusion. One should keep in mind, however, that cultural variables often act in surprising and counter-intuitive way. Semantic measures must themselves therefore be carefully interpreted through qualitative analysis.

Secondly, instead of this process approach, future research could also take a cross-sectional, variance approach by comparing different regulatory and normative contexts for diffusion. By drawing comparisons between these different contexts, one could model the various effects of institutional variables on the diffusion process. For example, one could compare diffusion in two environments that differ in regulatory or normative structure, modeling variables such as the coefficients of innovation and imitation and assessing the effects of normative variables on these coefficients.

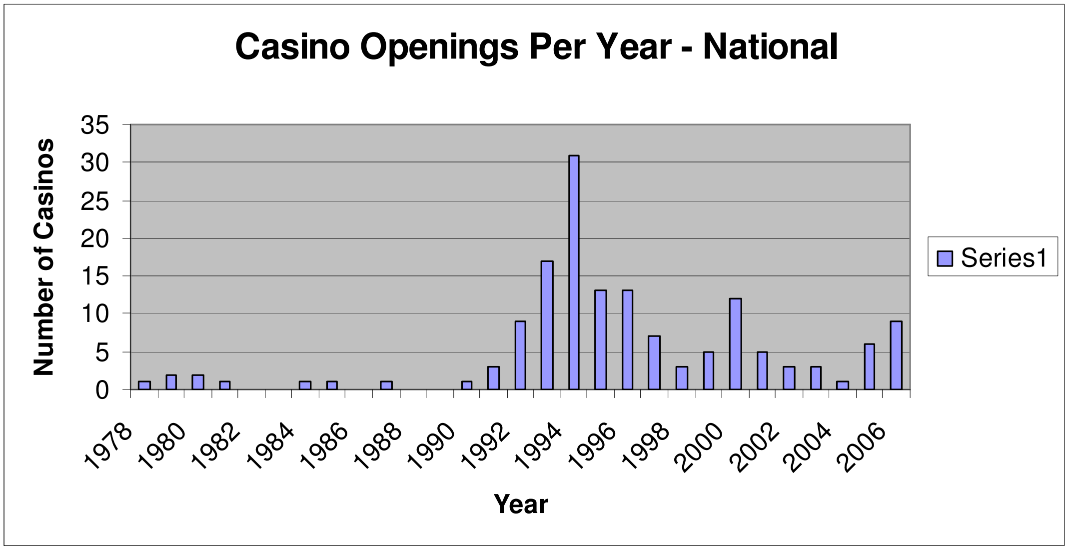
Conclusion

In general, this article has set an agenda for bringing an awareness of cultural, normative and regulatory factors to our understandings of the diffusion process. By theorizing the institutional environment in which diffusion occurs, marketing scholars will be better able to understand multiple facets of diffusion extending beyond mechanical relay of information and to account for some of the social dynamics that enable or hinder diffusion. Marketing managers will be better able to realistically position, predict, and model the diffusion process and industry growth. The broader agenda for this stream of research is to introduce an understanding of cultural variables to important and enduring topics of marketing research. Only by understanding social and cultural environments will we be able to understand the ways in which markets function.

Category	abbv	Examples	Words in Category	Alpha*
crime	crime	trial, arrested, robbery	26	96%
white collar crime	white collar	bribe, kickback, extortion	18	79%
regulation	regulation	license, commission, law	34	92%
social issues	social	community, neighborhood, residents	12	93%
business issues	business	industry, revenue, profit	18	89%
entertainment	entertainment	fun, play, junket	19	90%
economic issues	economy	jobs, growth, tax	8	100%
morality	morality	sin, vice, values	30	94%
luxury	luxury	campaign, jet, rich	9	94%
addiction issues	addiction	psychology, treatment, diagnose	11	94%
probability	probability	luck, odds, tossup	9	94%
illegal substances	substances	drugs, alcohol, narcotics	9	100%
casino games	games	craps, poker, slots	10	100%

Table 4-1: Dictionary Words and Agreements

*Alpha is the percent agreement of three coders on dictionary words in the category.



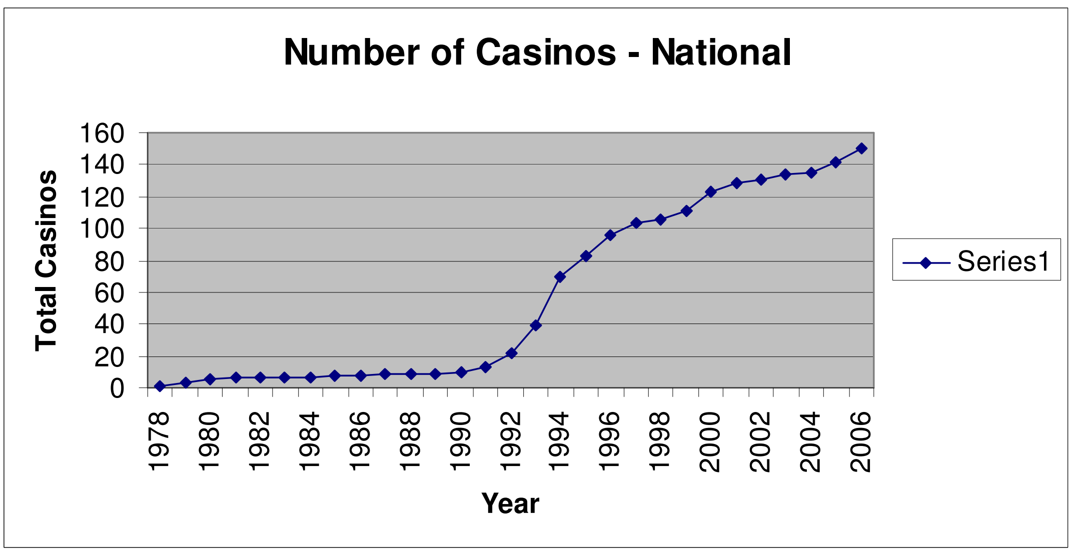


Figure 4-1: Number of Casinos Cumulative and per Year

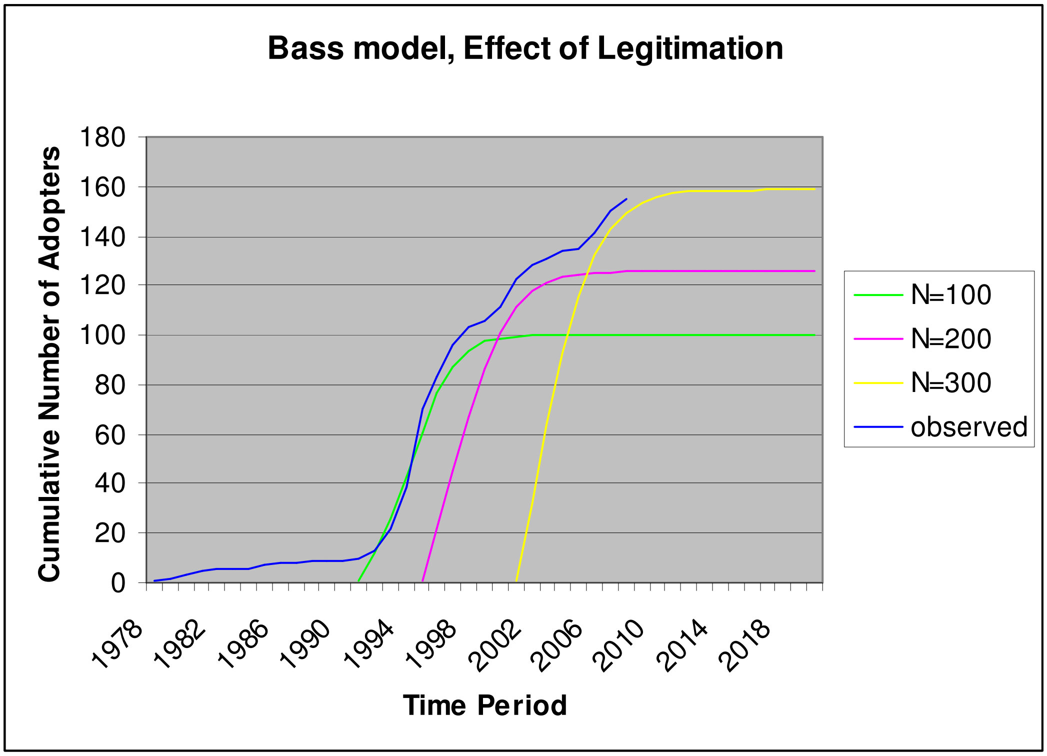


Figure 4-2: Bass Model, Effect of Legitimation
p=.105, q=.478, see Appendix for coefficient estimations

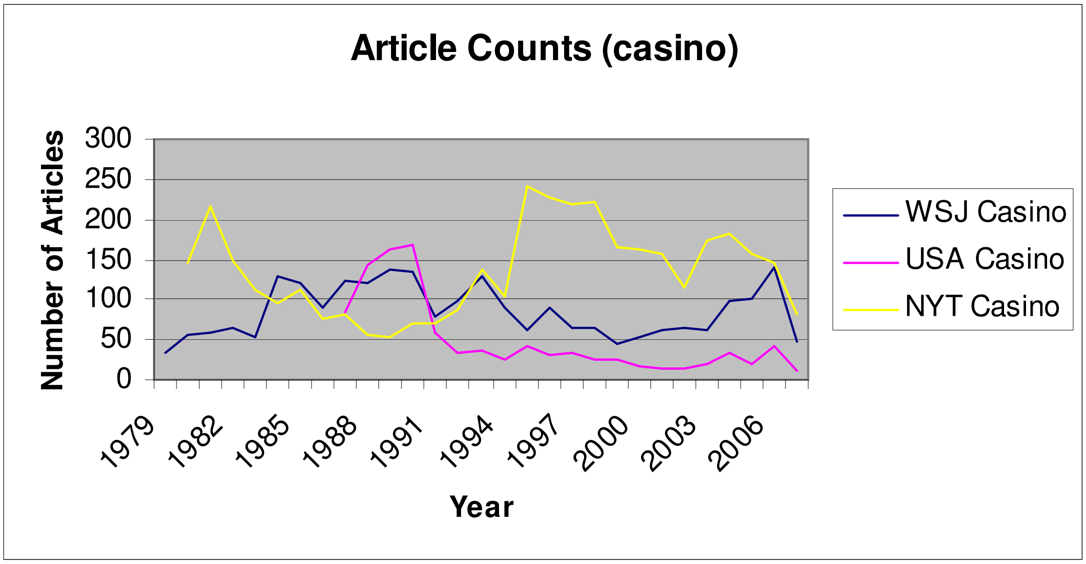


Figure 4-3: Number of Articles about Casinos per Year

Descriptive Statistics

	Crime	Bus.	Reg.	Social	Past	Present	Future	Pos.	Neg.
Mean	0.18	1.20	0.43	0.17	2.79	2.91	0.84	2.00	0.93
Std. Deviati	0.55	1.26	0.67	0.36	1.68	1.78	0.72	1.26	0.86
Minimum	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Maximum	8.26	9.47	6.91	3.95	12.64	11.87	4.76	10.67	6.98

Table 4-2: Descriptive Statistics, Percentage of Total Words

Total Observations

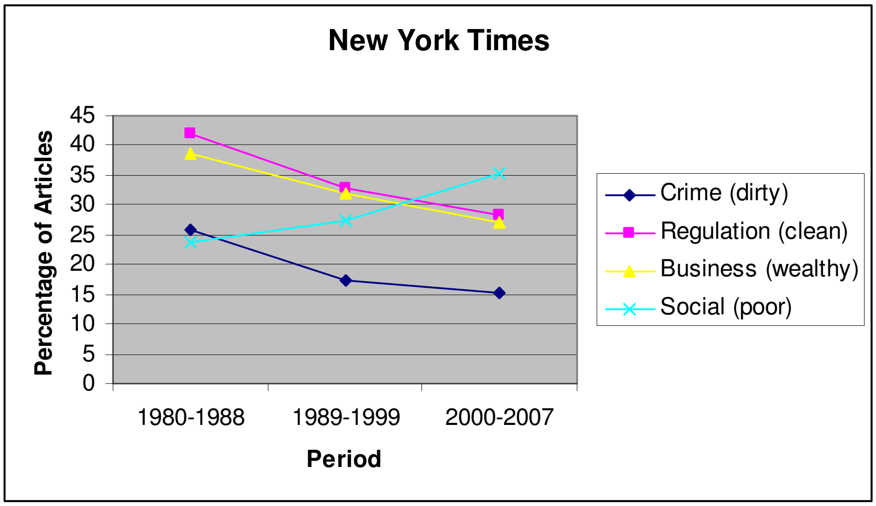
Words

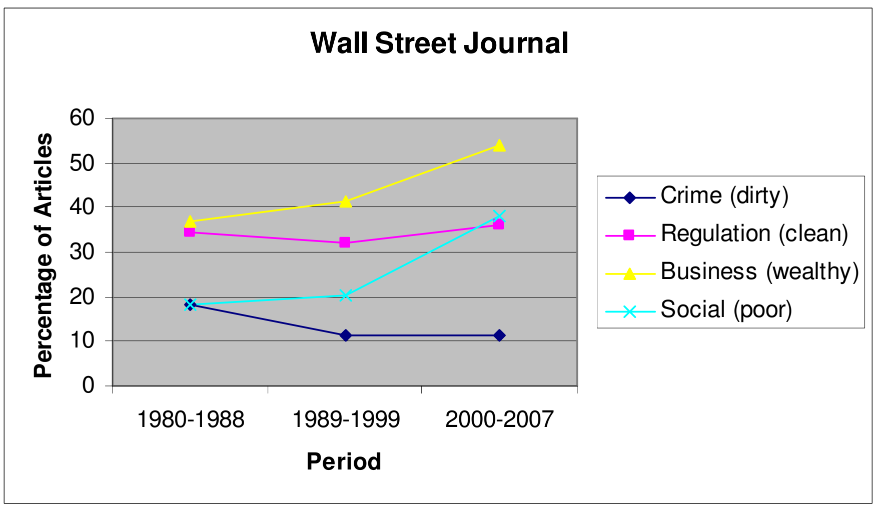
	NYT	WSJ	USA	Total
1980-1988	642708	293125		935833
1989-1999	1057482	406545	272338	1736365
2000-2007	954811	353212	141197	1449220
Total	2655001	1052882	413535	4121418

Articles

	NYT	WSJ	USA	Total
1980-1988	1043	816		1859
1989-1999	1600	996	647	3243
2000-2007	1260	662	187	2109
Total	3903	2474	834	7211

Table 4-3: Total Observations, by word and by article


New York Times
Percentage of Articles
45
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
1980-1988
1989-1999
2000-2007
Period
Crime (dirty)
Regulation (clean)
Business (wealthy)
Social (poor)


Wall Street Journal
Percentage of Articles
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
1980-1988
1989-1999
2000-2007
Period
Crime (dirty)
Regulation (clean)
Business (wealthy)
Social (poor)

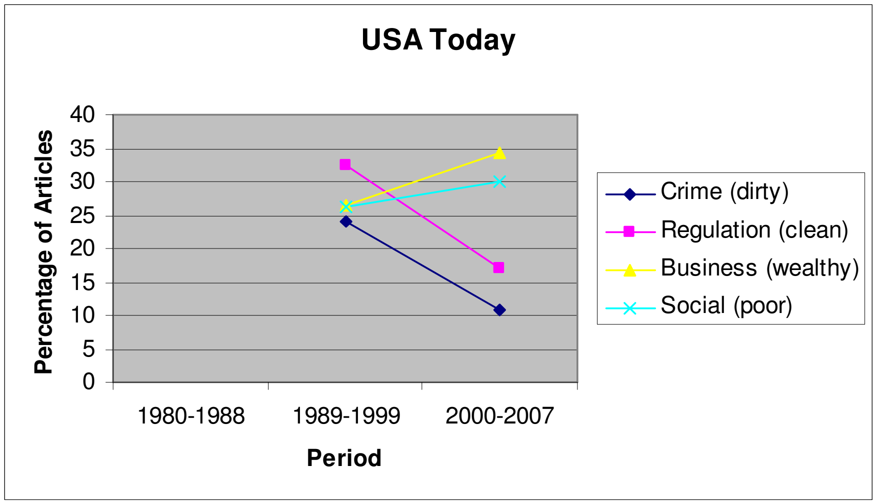
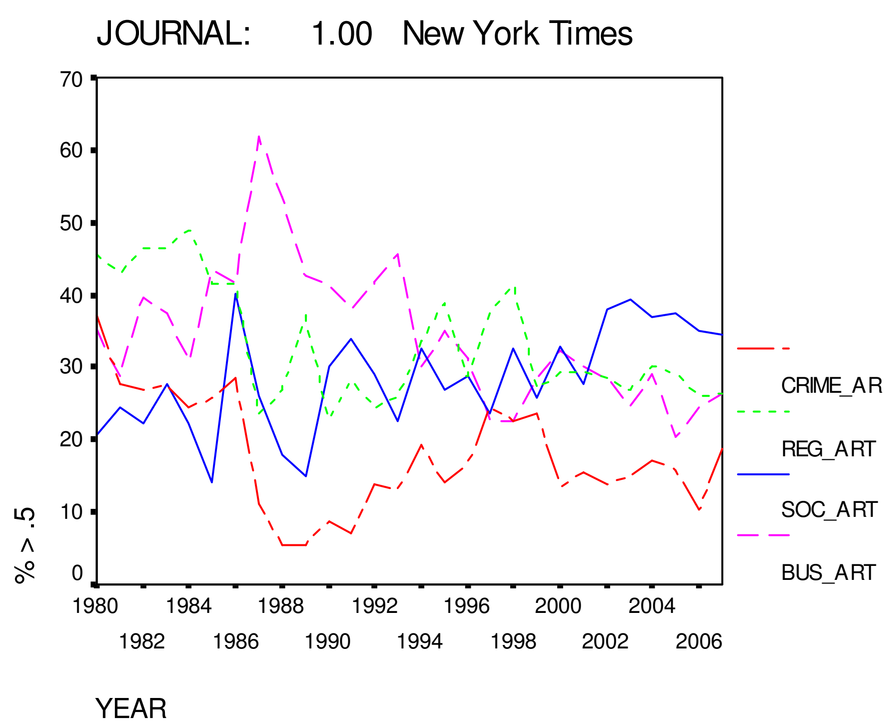
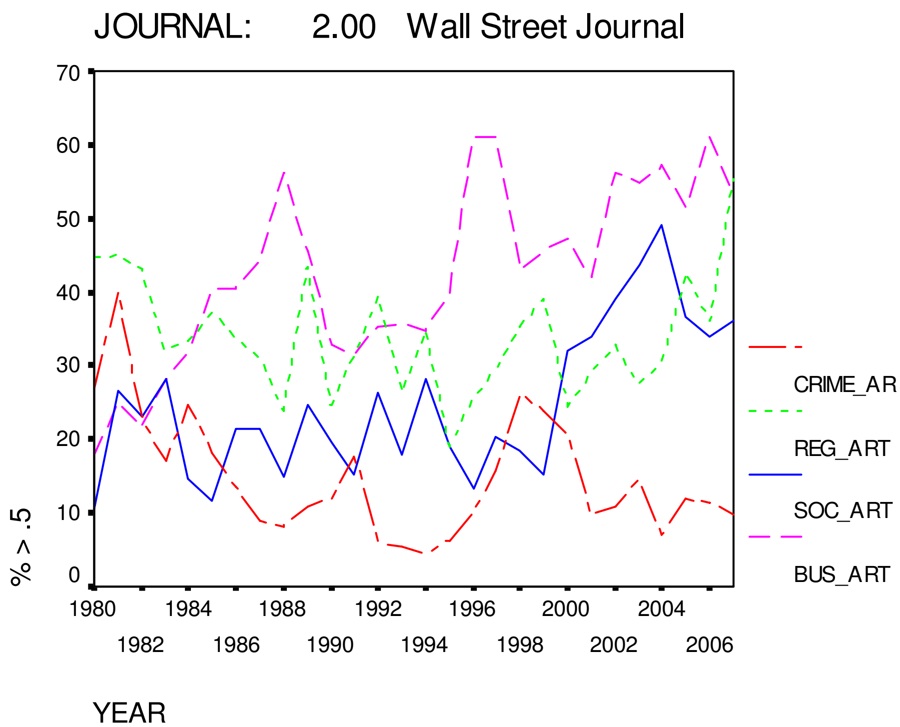


Figure 4-4: Changes in Frames over Time, by time period





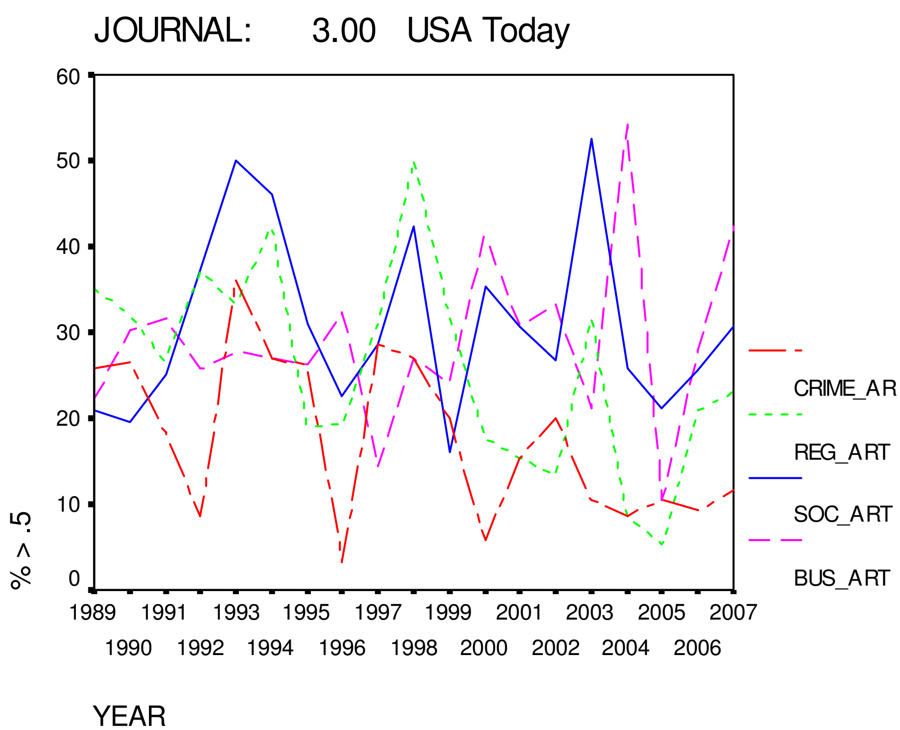


Figure 4-5: Changes in frames over time, by year

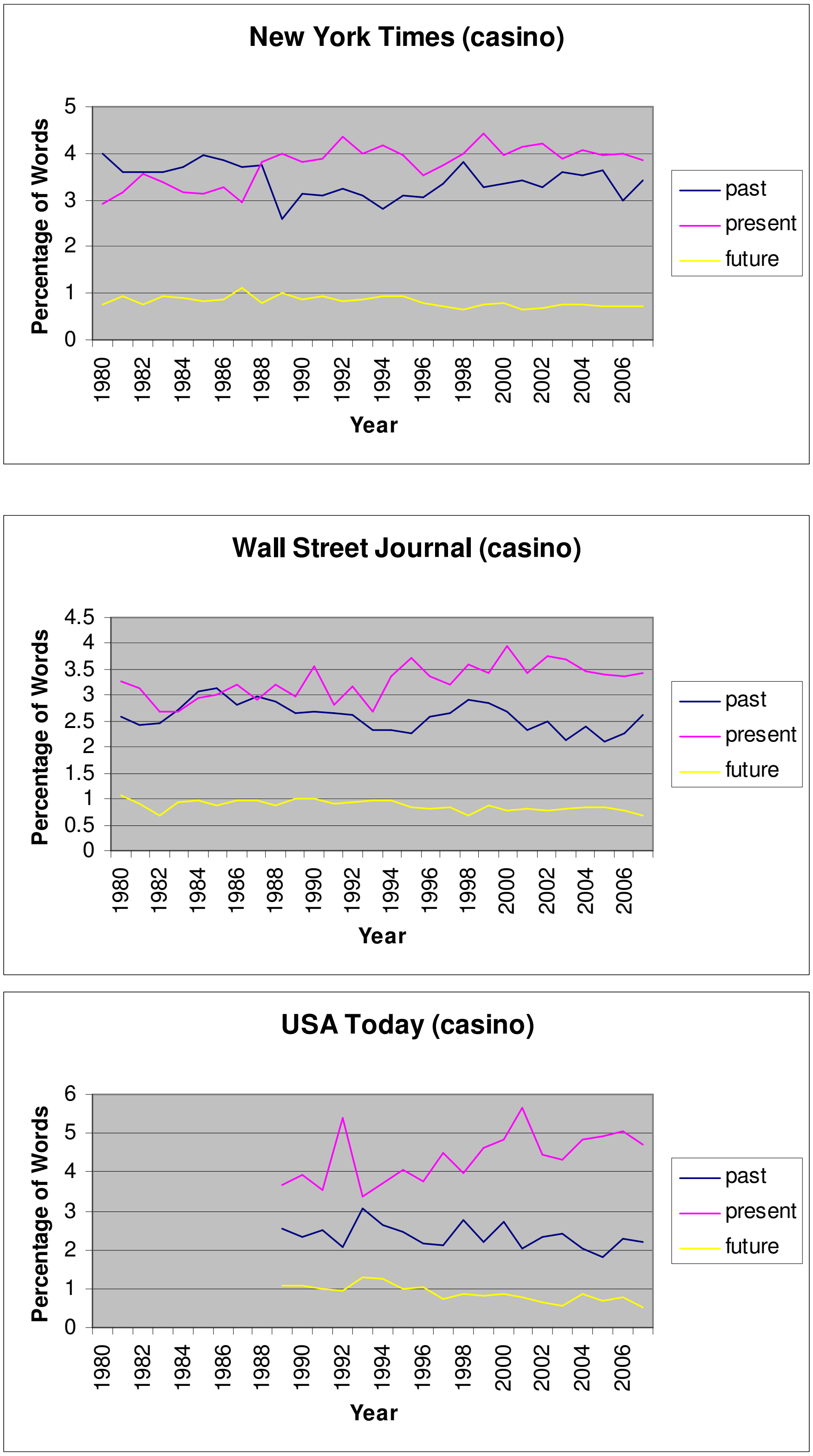


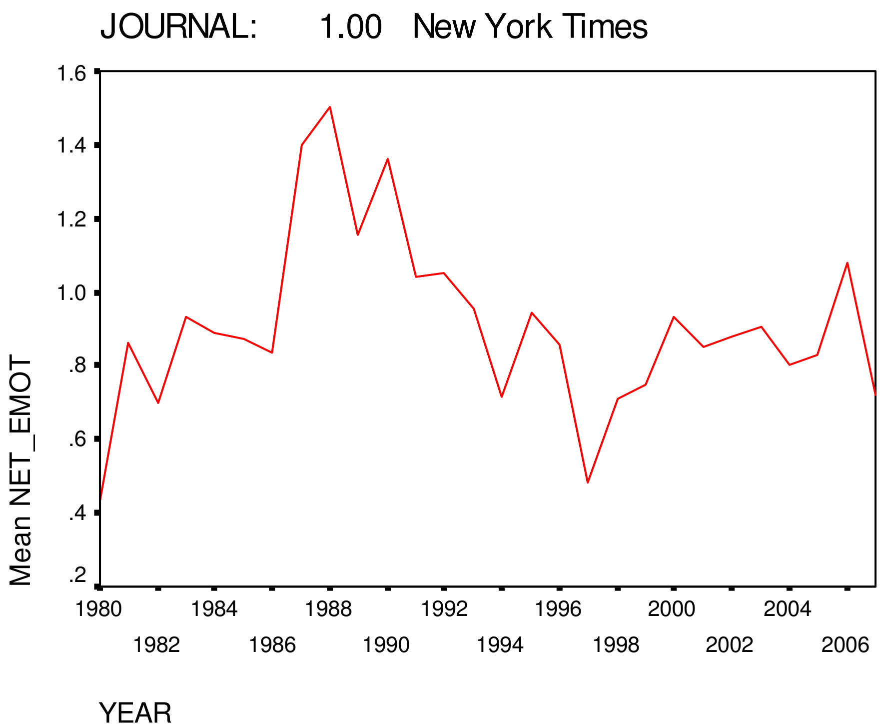
Figure 4-6: Past, Present, and Future Tense Verbs over Time

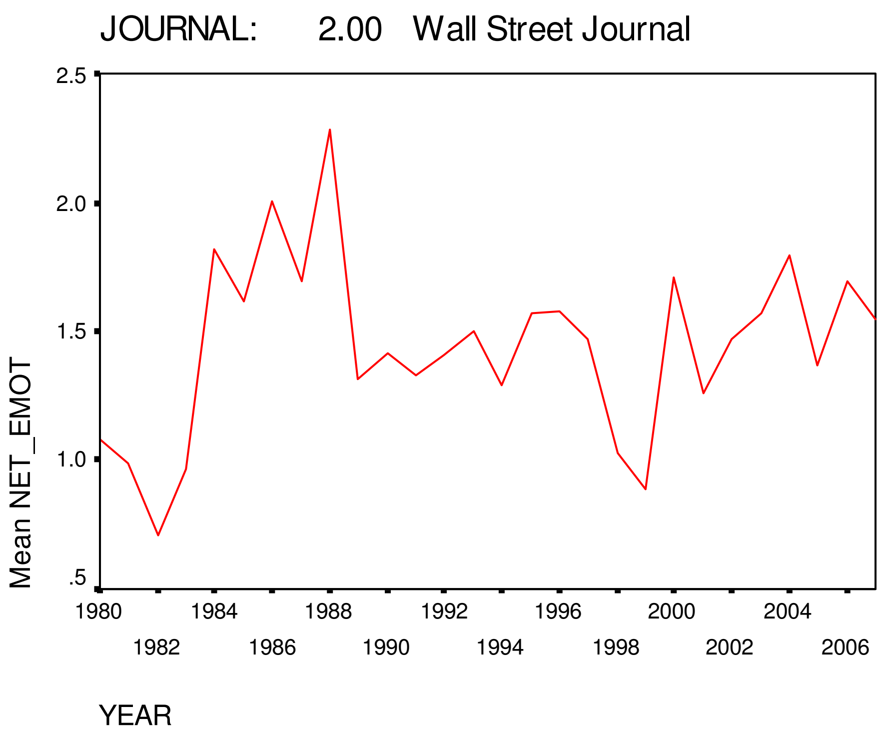
JOURNAL		YEAR	CRIME	BUSINESS	REGULATI	SOCIAL_C	POSEMO	NEGEMO
		Pearson Correlation						
New York Times	YEAR	1	-.028	-.110**	-.095**	.086**	-.020	-.021
	CRIME	-.028	1	-.120**	-.027	-.083**	-.202**	.223*
	BUSINESS	-.110**	-.120**	1	-.074**	-.095**	.097**	-.172*
	REGULATI	-.095**	-.027	-.074**	1	.020	-.098**	.012
	SOCIAL_C	.086**	-.083**	-.095**	.020	1	-.041*	-.012
	POSEMO	-.020	-.202**	.097**	-.098**	-.041*	1	.008
	NEGEMO	-.021	.223**	-.172**	.012	-.012	.008	1
Wall Street Journal	YEAR	1	-.134**	.208**	-.031	.118**	.002	-.028
	CRIME	-.134**	1	-.135**	.100**	-.051*	-.088**	.135*
	BUSINESS	.208**	-.135**	1	-.054**	-.022	.204**	-.103*
	REGULATI	-.031	.100**	-.054**	1	.003	-.114**	.062*
	SOCIAL_C	.118**	-.051*	-.022	.003	1	-.041*	-.065*
	POSEMO	.002	-.088**	.204**	-.114**	-.041*	1	-.004
	NEGEMO	-.028	.135**	-.103**	.062**	-.065**	-.004	1
USA Today	YEAR	1	-.166**	.054	-.139**	-.092**	.247**	-.026
	CRIME	-.166**	1	-.144**	.133**	.074*	-.255**	.178*
	BUSINESS	.054	-.144**	1	-.121**	-.046	.108**	-.002
	REGULATI	-.139**	.133**	-.121**	1	.202**	-.178**	.048
	SOCIAL_C	-.092**	.074*	-.046	.202**	1	-.141**	-.029
	POSEMO	.247**	-.255**	.108**	-.178**	-.141**	1	-.047
	NEGEMO	-.026	.178**	-.002	.048	-.029	-.047	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4-4: Correlation Analysis by Newspaper
N= 3903 (*New York Times*), 2474 (*Wall Street Journal*), and 834 (*USA Today*)


JOURNAL: 1.00 New York Times
Mean NET_EMOT
1.6
1.4
1.2
1.0
.8
.6
.4
.2
1980
1982
1984
1986
1988
1990
1992
1994
1996
1998
2000
2002
2004
2006
YEAR


JOURNAL: 2.00 Wall Street Journal
Mean NET_EMOT
2.5
2.0
1.5
1.0
.5
1980
1982
1984
1986
1988
1990
1992
1994
1996
1998
2000
2002
2004
2006
YEAR

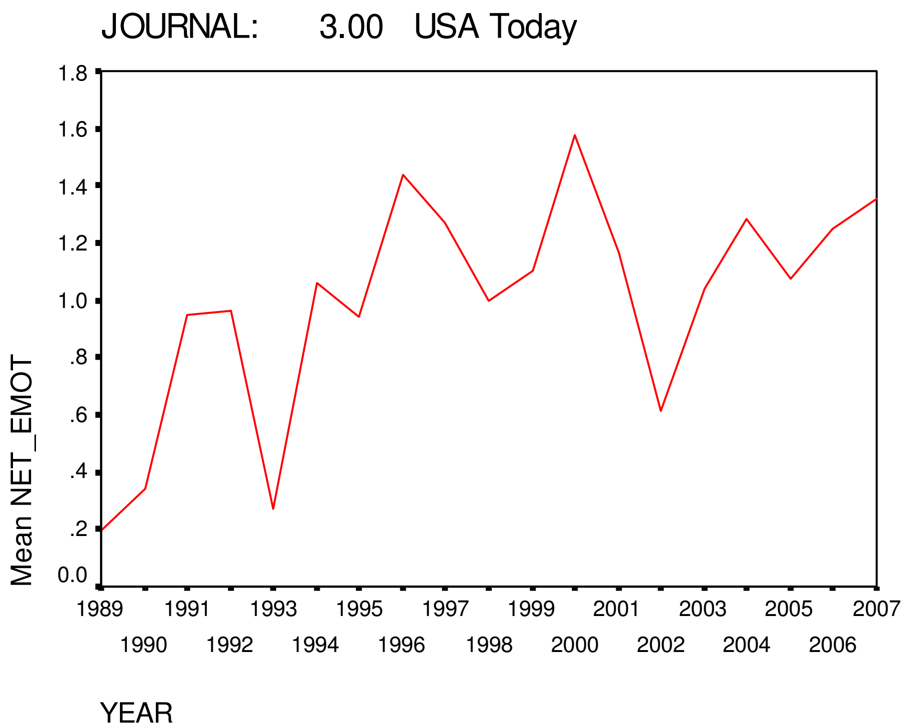


Figure 4-7: Net positive emotion per year

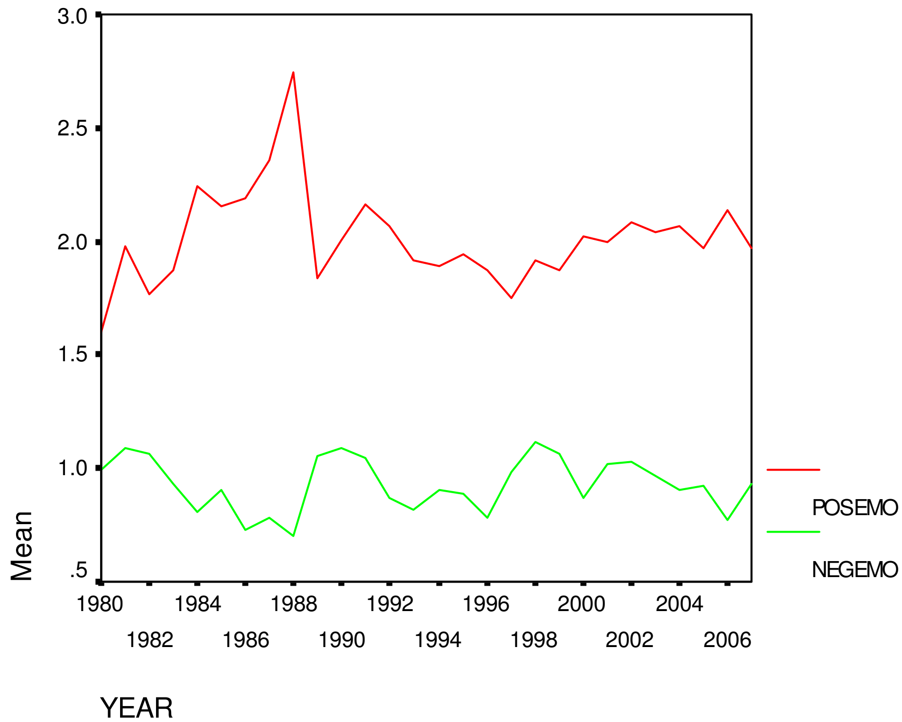


Figure 4-8: Positive and Negative Emotion per year, Newspapers Combined

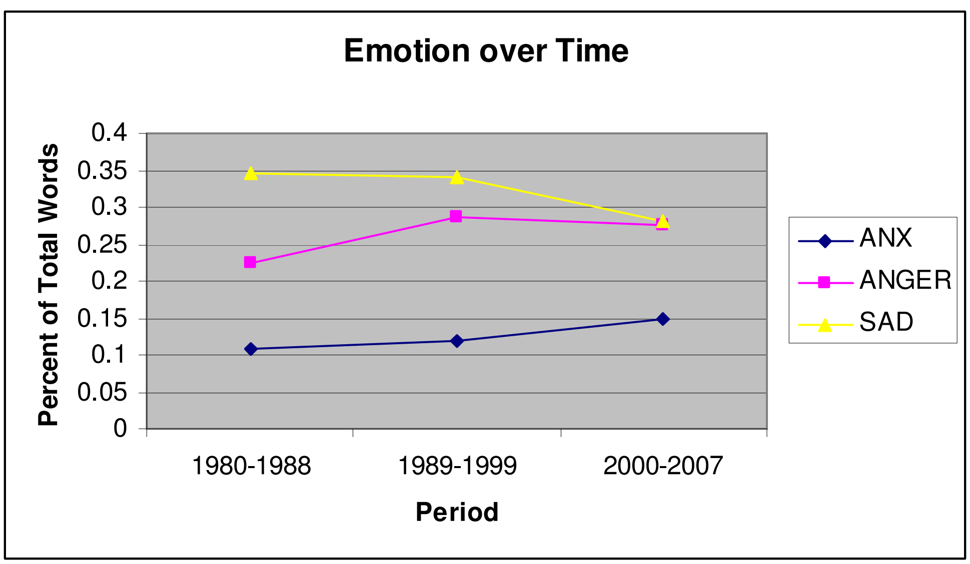


Figure 4-9: Emotion over Time, Newspapers Combined

Chapter 5 : Normative and Regulative Legitimacy

The Ways and Means of Legitimation: Assessing Normative and Regulative Legitimacy on Multiple Socio-Political Levels

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter engages more directly with the literature on legitimacy in sociology and organizational studies to refine the constructs of normative and regulative legitimacy. Specifically, this article measures normative legitimacy and regulative legitimacy on multiple socio-political levels and evaluates the effects of these levels on organizational success. From a data set of 48 casinos in 4 states (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, and Missouri), a cross-sectional and historical analysis was conducted to compare the effects of three levels of normative legitimacy (state, national, and international) and three types of regulatory legitimacy (legislative action, local referendum, and state referendum).

First, I find that normative legitimacy on the national level leads to the most success and argue that this is because the national level is placed at the optimal socio-political level at which casinos can negotiate both external and internal legitimacy. Second, I find that regulative legitimacy via legislative action is associated with the most financial success and argue that this is because legislative action is the least unsettling to the institutional field. Several conclusions can be drawn from these results. First, they prompt reconsideration of the unity in the core constructs of normative and regulative legitimacy. Both normative and regulative legitimacy come at different levels of socio-political organization and therefore have differential effects on organizational success. Both should be interpreted with a specific target of social actors in mind. Second, the findings prompt reconsideration of the process by which legitimacy is gained and the meaning of obtaining it.

Viewed in light of the larger aims of the dissertation, this chapter shows how regulative legitimacy can skirt normative legitimacy via different regulatory methods.

The top-down institution of regulation, I argue, is more successful because it does less to stir up public discourse, the type of discourse studied in Chapters 3 and 4. A certain form of regulative legitimacy, in other words, can quell the mobilization of different cultural narratives, frames, and categories. This may come at the expense, however, of careful consideration and true public debate.

INTRODUCTION

Legitimation is a fundamental social process for many marketplace actors and organizations (Dowling and Pfeffer 1975; Johnson et al. 2006; Suchman 1995). Phenomena ranging from the development of new industries (Freeman et al. 1986), to the configuration of channel structures (Grewal and Dharwadkar 2002), to the orientation of specific brand choices and consumer practices (Kates 2004), can all be better understood by studying the process of legitimation. Previous research has usefully parceled the concept into three domains—regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive (Scott 1995; Suchman 1995)—and although this typology has been immensely clarifying for the study of legitimacy, it may have obscured important distinctions existing within and across these three "pillars." Licensing, law-abiding, and certification, for example, can all be grouped as regulative legitimacy, and yet by grouping them in this way, we take for granted that one type of regulative legitimacy is as good as another. There are, however, several distinct socio-political levels on which regulative legitimacy can exist—state, national, international—and several means of obtaining regulative legitimacy—through voting, legislative action, or agency monitoring—and these levels and methods themselves make an important difference in the success or failure of legitimating efforts. The goal of this chapter, then, is to evaluate the legitimation process on different socio-political levels in the context of casino gambling.

This study redresses two gaps in studies of organizational legitimacy. Although previous studies have measured normative legitimacy through membership in trade associations (Baum and Oliver 1992; Ruef and Scott 1998), they have not taken into account the different socio-political levels on which normative legitimacy exists.

Membership in trade organizations on the community level is likely to have different effects on normative legitimacy and thus organizational success than membership in trade organizations on the national or international level. Because different associations exist in different relational fields, with different audiences and different stakeholders, their legitimating efforts may systematically differ. For example, local or state-level associations may focus on giving back to the community, while national associations may focus on broader symbolic efforts aimed at legitimizing the industry as a whole. In this chapter, I study normative legitimacy in casino gambling, measuring normative legitimacy as a latent variable that can be affected by membership in three different levels of organizations: the trade organization in each state, the American Gaming Association on the national level, and the International Gaming Association in the international level.

Secondly, previous research on organizational legitimacy has not compared the various methods of attaining regulative legitimacy and the differences in success that each method may imply. For example, organizations can gain regulative legitimacy through a 'top-down' process represented by legislative action or through a 'bottom up' process represented by referendum voting on the state or even community level. If legitimacy is first gained from the 'bottom up' through referendum voting, this could make the organization seem less legitimate by highlighting its controversial nature. In this way, we might expect regulatory legitimacy gained through a top-down process to lead to more legitimacy than through a process like referendum voting. On the other hand, we might expect legitimacy gained from the bottom-up to be more successful because it is grounded in public consensus. In general, different methods of legalization therefore represent different degrees and types of acceptance and may therefore lead to different levels of success in achieving legitimacy.

Overall, this paper argues that different levels and methods of attaining normative and regulative legitimacy are important when considering the success and overall legitimacy of an organization. Further, it analytically differentiates these levels and methods of legitimation and measures the effects of each empirically in the field of casino gambling. The remainder of the chapter is organized as follows. The first section reviews previous research on normative and regulative legitimacy. The second section presents two analyses: the first assesses the differential effects of three levels of normative legitimacy and the second considers the effects of three methods for gaining regulatory legitimacy via a comparative historical and a quantitative analysis. The final section draws the findings together and discusses their implications for the study of legitimacy as a social process.

THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT

Research on organizational legitimacy has divided legitimacy into three domains—regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive (Scott 1995; Suchman 1995). Regulatory legitimacy is the degree to which an organization is compliant with the relevant legal structures, rules set by governing bodies, and standards of supra-organizational licensing boards. Deephouse (1996) finds that regulative legitimacy of banks at the national level is not highly correlated with normative legitimacy, and yet each has an independent effect on the success of an organization. In a study of Progressive and New Deal legislation, Scheinberg and Bartley (2001) find that reliance on regulative legitimacy (here, at the federal level) is the result of normative legitimacy crises in the private, market sector. In this sense, regulative legitimacy compensates for a lack of normative legitimacy.

Although these studies clearly demonstrate the differential effects of regulative and normative legitimacy, owing to limitations in scope, they have left the method of obtaining regulative legitimacy an open question. In the majority of studies, regulative legitimacy is obtained through the ‘top-down’ process of sanction by political elites, certification by regulatory boards, or government inspectors (Deephouse 1996; Ruef 2000; Schneiberg and Bartley 2004), and few, if any, studies measure regulative legitimacy that is attained through the deliberation and collective sanctioning by those constituents served by the organization. Although Reuf (2000) measures both state and national regulatory events in healthcare, he does not distinguish the effects of each level (p. 674). These levels remain important in public policy, however. Bans on public smoking, approval of affirmative action, and the licensing of landfills are all cases in which regulatory legitimacy can be gained through voter referendums. In contrast to the regulative legitimacy imposed by politicians, these initiatives represent a collective, democratic process through which regulative legitimacy can be obtained. Yet this type of legitimacy remains distinct from normative legitimacy. A populous can vote to legalize a practice or organization that they would deem incongruent with dominant norms and values. Further, also consider that a practice can gain regulative legitimacy via approval by a slight majority of *voters*, which would not imply that the practice is normatively accepted by all *citizens*.

In the organizational field of casinos, there are three ways for an organization to obtain regulative legitimacy. The first is through legislative action, a process in which representatives in the state legislature vote to approve casino gambling in the state, absent voter consideration. The second way that casino gambling can gain regulative legitimacy is through a combination of legislative action and local referendum voting. In this case, the state legislature approves the right of local counties to hold referendums that would allow casino gambling in the county. The third way that casino gambling can gain regulative legitimacy is through a state-wide referendum in which every voter in the state votes to allow or to ban casino gambling in the state as a whole.

Several issues should be considered when theorizing the efficacy of regulatory method on the legislative, state, and local level. Each level of regulatory action implies approval of casino gambling by a specific group of people. In the case of legislative action, this group of people are political elites, the state senators, who may approve or disapprove of casino gambling for a variety of (often abstract or strategic) reasons such as lobbying, competition with other states, or moral positions (see Chapter 2). In the case of local voting referendum, the group of people who grant regulatory legitimacy are local community members who may approve or disapprove for a variety of (often concrete) reasons such as crime, addiction, tax revenue, or tourism (see Chapter 2). Because these two methods of legalization represent the views of two different stakeholder groups, we cannot make specific predictions about which action will lead to the most organizational success. Comparison of the two methods is of considerable interest, however, because one represents top-down legalization while the other represents bottom-up legalization. Previous theorization in sociology has extolled the effectiveness of both top-down legitimation by elites through rules and bureaucracy (Foucault 1977; Weber 1922/1978), and bottom up legitimation by those with concrete techne or experience (Scott 1998). Comparing these two methods of legalization will inform us about the effectiveness of different types of power and knowledge. On the one hand, top-down regulation by elites is accompanied by less upheaval, less discussion, and therefore perhaps less controversy. On the other hand, it may come at the expense of grounded, local community discussion and grass-roots support.

The second pillar of legitimacy—normative legitimacy—is the degree to which an organization and its activities are congruent with the larger configuration of social norms and values (Douglas 1986; Dowling and Pfeffer 1975). Previous studies have found that both relational density, the degree to which the organization is connected with its peers, and population density, the number of organizations in the field, lead to greater normative legitimacy, and thus more success as an organization (Baum and Oliver 1992). Both managerial and technical legitimacy, representing competence in the bureaucratic and technical aspects of the organization respectively, increase normative legitimacy, which leads to greater success as an organization (Ruef and Scott 1998). Finally, isomorphism, or the degree to which an organization is congruent with other organizations in its field, is of course, one of the most important ways in which normative legitimacy is gained (Deephouse 1996; Dimaggio and Powell 1983). Both isomorphism and burrecratic legtitimacy can be facilitated through membership in trade organizations.

Normative legitimacy has been measured in multiple ways and may correspondingly have several slightly different meanings. The first way that previous research has measured normative legitimacy is through the analysis of public discourse

(Deephouse 1996; Chapters 2 and 3; Elsbach 1994). These studies generally code newspaper articles, editorials, or other artifacts of public discourse to measure acceptance of an organization, as it's reflected through media or editorial channels. There are two advantages to this method: first, it is able to pick up the tenor and valance of public approval and second, it ensures normative legitimacy has been received by a larger public. On the other hand, the disadvantage of this method is that it does not tell us much about the organizational structure which normative legitimacy is gained, and the impact of that structure on normative legitimacy. Undoubtedly, normative legitimacy is reflected in public discourse and even caused by some shifts in semantic framing, however, structural and relational alliances amongst organizations are also important ways in which normative legitimacy can be gained (Baum and Oliver 1992).

To capture these structural dynamics, some scholars have measured normative legitimacy through membership in industry-specific organizations (Ruef and Scott 1998). This method provides measurement of one important signal of normative legitimacy, acceptance by peer organizations, although it does not measure the effects that this acceptance has on generalized legitimacy in the public sphere. Taking both of these measures into consideration, one can conclude that the measure of membership in trade organizations is a sufficient, but not necessary, condition for normative legitimacy. For a new industry like casino gambling, membership in trade organizations helps to organize a recognizable organizational field and orchestrates efforts by which member firms can systematically pursue normative legitimacy. However, membership in trade organizations, is not necessary for normative legitimacy. Tobacco companies, for example, may be members of their respective organizations, but this does not make them normatively legitimate in more generalized, public arenas.

In this way, trade organizations serve as quasi-formal methods of certification. Although trade organizations are not, strictly speaking, integrated with the law, they can give the impression of oversight. As Scott (1995), quoting Somers (1969) says, "whereas licensing is a governmental regulatory process, accreditation is a 'nongovernmental, professional-sponsored process' aimed at promulgating high standards for the industry," (Scott 1995, p. 118, Somers 1969, p. 101). The measure of normative legitimacy via membership in trade organizations is therefore somewhere in-between measures of regulative legitimacy and measures of normative legitimacy in public discourse.

Organizational bodies like trade organizations differ in their strategic orientation, often according to the level and interests of its members. One focal organization can belong to many different types and levels of trade organizations, and the level and activities of these trade organizations may themselves affect normative legitimacy in systematic ways. Normative legitimacy, then, can be a slightly different construct, depending on method of measurement. In order to distinguish different levels of normative legitimacy in a systematic way, this study will use the latter method of measuring legitimacy through membership in trade organizations of different socio-political levels.

When theorizing the efficacy of normative legitimacy on different levels, several issues should be considered. On the local level, organizations tend to be more competitive because they're located in proximity to one another and therefore compete for the same consumers (Hotelling 1929). At the same time, forming a trade organization on the local level confers several benefits, chief among them the ability to organize legitimation efforts in the community that are aimed at securing external legitimacy, that is, legitimacy in the generalized environment (Dowling and Pfeffer 1975). As the level of socio-political organization increases, companies are less proximal, competition between them decreases, and they can work together to share information and industry insights. At the very highest level of socio-political organization, companies can standardize organizational structure and practices, may tend to focus on efforts aimed at internal legitimacy within the industry as a whole, and yet will be unable to secure specific external legitimacy because of their decontextualization from the community. In sum, a trade-off exists as one moves up the socio-political hierarchy. At lower levels, companies are resistant to working together, but need to do so in order to secure external legitimacy. At higher levels, companies are eager to work together, yet cannot establish external legitimacy because of decontextualization from the local context.

The remainder of the chapter presents two analyses. The first analysis assesses the effect of three levels of normative legitimacy on organizational success. The second analysis tests the effects of three different methods of legalization, each representing a different type regulatory legitimacy, on organizational success over time.

DATA

The context for this study is the legitimation of casinos in four comparable US states: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, and Missouri. Each state has legalized only riverboat or dockside casinos, and all did so around the same time period, from July 1989 to August 1993. Tribal gaming has not played a large role in these states, existing only in Iowa where it accounts for 3 of the 20 casinos in the state and operates 325 miles from other state-regulated casinos. The data set thus includes all 48 state-run casinos in the four states (17 in Iowa, 9 in Illinois, 11 in Indiana, and 11 in Missouri). This set comprises 38% of all commercial (i.e. non-tribal) casinos in the United States outside of Nevada. For descriptive statistics see Table 5-1. Opening dates for the casinos range from 1991 to 2007. Because of licensing procedures, the survival rate for each casino is very high—only 2 of the 50 casinos have closed—so organizational success is measured by total revenues for the 2007 calendar year, as recorded by the gaming commission in each state.

Normative legitimacy is measured by membership in three trade organizations: the state organization (e.g. Indiana Gaming Association), the American Gaming Association, and the Gaming Standards Association. In general, these organizations set operating standards, provide contacts with suppliers, fund and organize public relations efforts, and hold annual conventions where organizations can exchange information and enrich social networks. Regulative legitimacy is measured by the method of legalization in each state—referendum voting on the community-level, referendum voting on the state-level, or legislative action—according to records kept by the American Gaming Association (see Table 5-3). Because local referendum voting is always accompanied by legislative action in the data set, the pure effect of local referendums cannot be ascertained. Several other variables such as casino size and organizational life span, both obtained from state commission records, and were used in the analysis.

NORMATIVE LEGITIMACY ON THE STATE, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

The first analysis compares normative legitimacy obtained through membership in trade organizations on the state, national, and international level. On the state level, associations were established directly after gambling was legalized in each state. When established, most casinos joined the association, but over time some have discontinued their membership (in an informal interview, an administrator at the Illinois Gaming Association says this is usually for "political reasons"). Trade associations on the state-level perform several legitimizing tasks. They produce billboard advertising campaigns promoting the tax revenue benefits of casinos, provide funding for the identification of treatment of problem and underage gamblers, and publish monthly newsletters to disseminate information about regulatory changes, out-of-state competition, and job growth. The language in these publications aims at having a sanitizing effect on a stigmatized industry. For example, the mission statement for Indiana's association says, "We will utilize the highest standard of ethics and integrity to promote and protect the interests of the Indiana Casino Gaming Entertainment Industry through advocacy, communications and education" (Casino Association of Indiana 2008). In their communications, the state associations make assurances that member casinos act responsibly. For example, when describing a program to identify intoxicated patrons, the Missouri Gaming Association says, "[a]ll casinos participate in initiatives to intervene with intoxicated guests. Each property participates in a designated driver program or arranges cab rides as needed" (Missouri Gaming Association 2008). Regarding underage gamblers, the Iowa Gaming Association says, "[b]ecause it's often difficult to determine a person's age by sight, the properties card everyone who appears to be under the age of 30" (Iowa Gaming Association, 2008). All of these activities and communications are aimed at increasing legitimacy on a local level within the community and at the state-level, where regulatory policy is decided and implemented.

On the national level, the American Gaming Association serves as the primary trade organization for casino gambling in the United States. Established in 1995, the association collects industry data, studies the effects of casinos on communities, and sets standards for casino outreach to pathological gamblers. One of the primary activities of the association is its lobbying efforts on the national level. From its location in Washington D.C., the association regularly makes campaign contributions to congressmen and senators. In 1998, for example, the Association made $45,000 in campaign contributions and spent $760,000 in lobbying expenses (Multinational Monitor 1999). Secondly, the American Gaming Association also serves as an "information clearinghouse" (American Gaming Association 2003). It collects financial and regulatory information from its member casinos and disseminates this information to the public via its own publications and the media. Lastly, the association funds research on the economic and criminal impact of casino gambling and selectively promotes findings from studies done by third parties (e.g. National Gambling Impact and Policy Commission 1999). Like many state organizations, the AGA also provides funding for the study and treatment of problem gamblers, although this occurs on a more symbolic than practical level, with public-service announcements and lecture series. In this sense, legitimization efforts occur symbolically on the national level. In contrast, association efforts on the state level are more practical, in that they are aimed at funding and organizing specific programs targeted at a concrete group of people or community.

On the international level, the Gaming Standards Association serves as the trade organization established to "facilitate the identification, definition, development, promotion, and implementation of open standards to enable innovation, education, and communication for the benefit of the entire industry" (Gaming Standards Association 2007). The Association was established in 1997 by a group of casino game manufacturers. In 1999, the association began incorporating casino operators like Harrah's and Bally's as association members. It is primarily focused on coordinating relationships between members rather than engaging in explicit efforts to legitimate the industry. However, forming a trade organization that encourages standardization of its member organizations is likely to have the secondary effect of increasing legitimacy of its individual members through isomorphism (Deephouse 1996; Dimaggio and Powell 1983). In addition, the value of standardization itself is not normatively neutral in this context. For example, the association promotes standardization in order to operate "with integrity, fairness and transparency," a classic re-statement of the order-integrity link as theorized by Weber (1922/1978), Douglas (1966), and the findings from the assessment of normative legitimacy in Chapter 2.

In addition to the data collected from these organizations, financial and admission data was collected for all 48 casinos in the four states for the calendar year of 2007. Annual gross revenues, admission statistics, age, and square footage of each casino were gathered from gaming commissions in each state. Membership in each association was gathered from each association.

Results

In this analysis, recall that we want to test the effects of different socio-political levels of normative legitimacy, as measured by membership in different trade organizations. Before doing this analysis, the correlations between membership in state, national, and international organization should be examined. Casinos that are members of the state association are not necessarily members of the national or international associations. State membership is uncorrelated with membership in the national (Pearson correlation=-.147, p=.317) or international association (Pearson correlation=.184, p=.211). However, casinos that are members of the national association tend to also be members of the international association (Pearson correlation=.356, p=.013), although not at a high level. These casinos are primarily owned by large companies such as Harrah's or Bally's rather than mid-size chains like Isle of Capri or local casinos like Iowa's Catfish Bend casino. Descriptive statistics can also be found in Table 5-1.

Next, recall the first set of hypotheses that normative legitimacy existing at various socio-political levels would lead to different levels of organizational legitimacy, and thus success. Specifically, I assess the relationship between membership and success, as measured by revenue for each casino, but control for other factors such as casino size. Recall the prediction that membership in the state organization would be associated with less success than membership in the national or international organization because state-membership would carry less normative legitimacy than national or international associations and perform fewer legitimating tasks, which focus on building relationships between members. As Figure 5-1 shows, casinos who are members of the state association are less successful than casinos who are not members of the state association, after controlling for casino size. After accounting for size, revenue for casinos who are members of the state association is about 130 million, while revenue for casinos who are not members is about 360 million, as predicted ($F=21.723$, $p<.001$). In fact, membership in the state-level organization has a negative effect on revenues rather than a null effect. This effect exists not only when we control for casino size by square footage, but for many other variables as well (see regression analysis, Table 5-2).

Secondly, normative legitimacy on the national level is associated with greater success than non-membership. Casinos that are members of the national trade association had revenues of around 230 million, while organizations who are not members had revenues of only 110 million ($F=3.13$, $p<.10$). Again, this is true when we control for other important variables such as casino size, market size, competition, time since legalization, and company age in a regression analysis.

Lastly, the analysis shows that membership in the international organization has little effect on success. Revenues for casinos who are members of the Gaming Standards Association were not applicably different from non-members, when using size as a covariate ($x=1.8x10^8$ vs. $1.7x10^8$, $F=.164$, $p=6.87$). This could be for several reasons. First of all, the international organization is relatively new, having accepted members only as recently as 1999. Association age, however, does not imply less association efficacy. In the case of state associations, for example, some of the associations are quite old, but their age does not have a positive effect on organizational success. As I will argue, normative legitimacy at the international level is less beneficial precisely because of its abstractness, its removal from the normative and regulatory context in which casinos operate.

These results suggest that normative legitimacy has an effect only when it exists in a middle-range of socio-political organization. Membership in the national association confers benefits such as influence over regulators and the symbolic production of meaning surrounding casino gambling. Legitimacy on the national scale is at a high enough level in socio-political organization to have the resources to promote legitimacy of casino gambling both symbolically through communications and materially through contributions to lawmakers. Yet it is not at such an abstract level of social-political organization that its influence cannot be felt. On the state level, normative legitimacy is too limited to community constituents to be meaningful, while on the international level, normative legitimacy is too broad to be meaningful to stakeholders and customers.

This conclusion should be qualified by noting several things. First, although we have controlled for the effects of many important factors such as casino size, age, competition and several state-level variables, there could yet be some third variable that explains the relationship. One may propose, for example, that "name brand" casinos are members of larger associations and also more successful because of brand equity. In an important way, this is exactly what is being argued. Being a 'name brand' casino means the organization has gained legitimacy, and further, that it has done so through important signals such as membership in the American Gaming Association. This implies, then, that building brand equity is not merely a result of direct consumer-to-company associations (e.g. Keller 1993), but also the result of an entire social and semantic network that surrounds an organization.

REGULATIVE LEGITIMACY ON THE LEGISLATIVE, STATE, AND COMMUNITY LEVEL

The second analysis assesses the effects of the method of legalization on casino success. There are two methodological challenges in analyzing the data. The first methodological challenge is the nested order of the data. The data set consists of four states with different regulatory profiles (see Table 5-3), and 48 casinos within those four states that have different levels of success. By comparing different levels of success by different states, however, we can make conclusions about the effects of legalization in a particular state. The second methodological challenge is parsing the independent effects of legislative action, state-referendum voting, and local-referendum voting when we observe several of these methods together in one state. This second issue limits our ability to draw conclusions about the independent effects of local voting because it always co-occurs with legislative action. The actual comparisons being made, then, are between pure legislative action, a combination of legislative action and local voting, and state-wide referendum. Lastly, it should be noted that our measure of "success" is total revenue. Although this is a commonly-used measure in research on organizational legitimacy (Deephouse 1996; Deephouse and Carter 2005; Fombrun 1996; Hirsch and Andrews 1984), it must be carefully interpreted. Legitimacy is a multi-dimensional construct, composed of regulatory, normative, and cultural-cognitive components. Any measure of firm performance or "success" will therefore appeal of a single dimension out of many. The amount of revenue generated is therefore one measure of success, a financial measure, and may imperfectly correspond to the fuller, socialized meaning of successful legitimation.

Comparative Historical Analysis

Before presenting the results of a quantitative analysis of regulatory method, some important aspects of the regulatory climate in each state should be reviewed, using methodology from comparative historical research as a model. Comparative historical methods are useful for assessing systematic differences in the effects of regulatory policy by comparing multiple cases over time (Mahoney 2003). The data for this analysis was drawn from analysis of annual reports from each of the four state commissions, from a random sample of 600 newspaper articles about gambling from the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *USA Today* from 1980-2007, and from industry data provided by the American Gaming Association.

To understand the process by which casino gambling has become an industry in these four states, it may be helpful to know some facts from the history of gambling in the United States. Gambling in America existed in minor forms before colonization, but settlers brought the most identifiable forms such as card games, craps (or faro), and horse racing. Some of the first settlements such as The Virginia Company were funded by lottery (Ezell 1960). The Mayflower colony, however, outlawed gambling within 10 years of landing, with Connecticut and Massachusetts following suit in the 1670s. Despite Protestant prohibitions against gambling, lotteries made a comeback after independence primarily as a means for funding large-scale proto-social projects (Ezell 1960). Since then, the legality of various forms of gambling has waxed and waned with economic cycles and territorial expansion. Casino gambling in particular became popular in New Orleans in the 1800s and then diffused to riverboats in the Midwest and saloons in the West. In 1830, there were 1500 riverboats in operation along rivers such as the Mississippi (Asbury 1938). As western expansion slowed and economic booms declined in the late 1800s, gambling slowed to a halt and was outlawed in many places (most notably in Louisiana) because of a few highly publicized corruption scandals.

From the 1920s to the 1950s, gambling became culturally associated with organized crime. In 1951 a Congressionally-appointed commission, the Kefauver commission, publicized the link between high-level organized crime figures like Al Capone and gambling rackets, causing public opinion to turn against gambling in the 1950s and early 1960s. Although casino gambling has been legal in Nevada since 1931 and horseracing has been permitted locally in states such as Kentucky, gambling was ostensibly outlawed in most states until 1964 (United States. Commission on the Review of the National Policy Toward Gambling. 1976). The illegality of gambling does not, however, entail that no one in America gambled between 1931 and 1967. In urban areas, people, mostly men, persisted in 'playing the numbers' and betting on sporting events. Despite these underground practices, gambling was marginalized until its legalization in some form in 47 states between 1964 and 2006.

In the most recent expansion, the lottery preceded most other forms of gambling, being legalized first in New Hampshire in 1964 and then in 10 other states by 1975. In 1976, the US Congress convened a commission to study the potential effects of legalized gambling. This commission, tellingly composed primarily of law enforcement, legal experts, and clergymen, recommended that, despite contrary moral opinion, the legalization of gambling would have a detrimental effect on illegal gambling run by organized crime. Gambling expansion incrementally spread as off track betting, electronic gaming, and lotteries became legal on a state-by-state basis.

Casino gambling specifically lay dormant until a 1987 Supreme Court decision that granted sovereign land rights to Native American tribes in the early 1990s, allowing them to own and operate casinos with minimal federal or state oversight. The legislation that followed, The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (1988), touched off competition first between states and Native American tribes and later between neighboring states (National Gambling Impact and Policy Commission (U.S.) 1999; Von Herrmann 2002). After a combination of state referendums and state legislation, riverboat or dockside casinos sprung up in Illinois, Missouri, Indiana, Mississippi, and Louisiana (see timeline, Figure 5-2). Land-based tribal casinos were built primarily in the northeast and southwest, with some encroachment in the Midwest (e.g. Wisconsin) and south (e.g. Cherokee, North Carolina and Seminole Florida). By 2006, 455 commercial casinos were in operation in 21 states (American Gaming Association 2007), often strategically set up along state borders (National Gambling Impact and Policy Commission (U.S.) 1999). In 1999, a second US Congressional commission was convened to study the effects of expansion from 1976 to 1999. The recommendation of the commission was to temporarily halt the expansion of casinos until more research could be conducted.

The materials reviewed indicate that the primary impetus for the legalization of casino gambling, in these states and indeed in most recent cases, was inter-state competition. Following Seminole vs. State of Florida, the Supreme Court case that allowed Native American tribes to operate casinos (1988), South Dakota was the first state to legalize gaming outside of Nevada or Atlantic City, in part to compete with casinos on Native American reservations. Since then, legalization of casino gambling has expanded to include 28 states (National Gambling Impact and Policy Commission (U.S.) 1999, p. 6).

In general, the historical pattern of legalization in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, and Missouri can be gleaned from Figure 5-3. Iowa was the first to legalize in 1989, and the first two casinos were built in 1991, the same year that Illinois rolled out two casinos. In 1993, Missouri and Indiana followed by legalizing casino gambling. Indiana was slow to grant licenses, however, and the first casinos weren't built in the state until 1995. The competitive landscape in all four states essentially stabilized by 2001, and has not significantly changed since. Casino gambling in these states is permitted only on lakes and rivers, and these bodies of water are often located on the borders of the state. As a result, state competition for tax revenues from gambling often becomes a motivating reason for legalization. Tax rates in each state are all around 20% of annual gross revenues, although all states except for Missouri have now instituted a graduated tax rate plus an admission tax of $2 or $3 per person in each state.

Iowa. Casino gambling was approved by the Iowa legislature in July of 1989. Initial local referendums were held in six communities, and five of the six referendums passed. The initial parameters of gambling in Iowa were narrow; a loss limit of $200/day and $5 per hand was set for all casinos in the state. In 1994, these limits were repelaxed, and another set of six referendums were held in different communities, four of which passed. In late 2003 and early 2004, eleven more referendums were held, six which passed. Following a general trend in all states, legislation in 2004 allowed for dockside gambling, and thus permitted riverboats to set up permanent structures on bodies of water rather than circulate on the river. In 2007 and 2008, referendums in two communities were held and failed. From the data available from the 2003-2008 referendums, we know that when referendums passed, they passed by an average of 61% to 39%. When they failed, they failed with approximately the same average margin (40% to 60%). From the 13 data points available, an analysis of variance shows no significant differences in approved versus failed referendums in terms of voter turnout or community size.

Illinois. The Illinois legislature legalized casino gambling in February of 1990, and the first casino was built in September of 1991. The regulatory climate in Illinois has been relatively stable since the legalization of gambling in the state. Since 1990, the five-member regulatory board has offered a set limit of 10 licenses, each permitting its owner to operate 1,200 gambling positions per boat, and a maximum of two boats per operator. The only significant change in Illinois regulation of casino gambling came in 1999, when the legislature voted to permit dockside gambling. This legislation was also aimed at keeping casinos out of the Chicago metro area. To do so, it legalized gambling on any body of water except Lake Michigan, and prohibited licensure of casinos within metro areas of 3 million people or more. Initially, the state collected 20% of all revenues, but in 1998, this was changed to a graduated tax rate ranging from 15% for small casinos to 35% for most large casinos. In 2005, this was extended to a tax rate of up to 50% for casinos with revenues of over 200 million. Currently, Illinois has the highest tax rate of any of the four states in the data set.

Indiana. Casino gambling in Indiana was legalized in July of 1993, authorizing 11 licenses in the state. Due to an extensive referendum, bidding and selection process, casino licenses were slowly awarded from 1995 to 1998. Local referendums have been held in 15 counties since 1993. Eleven of these referendums have passed, and casinos have been built in 8 of these counties. Referendums have been held several times in the same counties, however. In Clark County, for example, referendums failed in 1993, in 1995, when it failed by a margin of 14%, and in 2006, when it passed with 60% percent approval. The tax structure in Indiana is very similar to Illinois. There is an admissions tax of $3 per person and a graduated tax on revenues from 15% at the lowest tier to 35% at the highest. Most casinos are in the top two tiers, paying 30-35%. In general, riverboat gambling in Indiana is a controversial matter of public opinion in the counties where it would be possible, and has been an issue regularly appearing on referendum ballots since 1993.

Missouri. In general, gambling in Missouri has been more contentious than in other states. A bill was passed by the legislature in 1991 requiring a state-wide referendum, which passed by 63% of the voters in the state in 1992. However, in 1993 the Missouri state Supreme Court ruled that games of chance like slot machines violated the state constitution. A subsequently proposed constitutional amendment was defeated by voters in 1994 by a very narrow margin (50.06% of the vote). Although casinos commenced operations without slot machines, they were then permitted by a third state-wide referendum held in November 1994 which was approved by 54% of voters. In 1996, dockside casino gambling was legalized, and all casinos began operating from large buildings built on stilts on the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, or what residents call the "boat in a moat" (Missouri Gaming Association 2004). In 1997, the Missouri Supreme Court again ruled that gambling was unconstitutional, threatening the ten casinos already operating in the state. A year later, voters approved a constitutional amendment legalizing dockside casinos by a vote of 55%. In the four referendums held in the state's history, voters have approved of casino gambling by an average margin of 5%. Although a majority of voters approve of casino gambling, the debate that has extended over seven years may have had an undermining effect on normative legitimacy. Paradoxically, we may find that gaining regulatory legitimacy from the 'bottom up' through state-wide voting may ultimately stymie the legitimation process because of repeated controversy and debate. Unlike legalization in Illinois, for example, where casino gambling has been largely absent from forums of public opinion, legalization in Missouri has made the controversial nature of the practice more salient.

Results

To assess the effects of regulatory legitimacy on casino success, an ANCOVA model was first used to compare means for different modes of legalization, while controlling for the effects of casino size for the year 2007. Secondly, a MANOVA model was used to assess the effects of legalization method over three points in time, 1997, 2002, and 2007 for the 35 casinos that have existed in all three periods (this could not be done for normative legitimacy because membership records were not available for previous years). Finally, a linear regression model was used to compare the effects of regulation, controlling for a number of other variables including casino age, metro population, time of lottery gambling in the state, and inter-casino competition.

First, the results of the first analysis how that legalization through legislative action is associated with the most casino success. The ANCOVA model shows the revenues are different for each legal method ($F=6.30$, $p<.005$), and that revenue is higher for casinos in a state where gambling was approved by legislative action than it is in states where gambling was approved by a combination of local referendum and legislative action. In Illinois, average revenue was 250 million, while in Indiana and Iowa, it was 134 million ($t=-3.28$, $p<.01$, calculated at mean sq ft=44,709). Revenues in the state with legislative action are also higher than those in a state where gambling was approved by a broader, state-wide referendum. In Illinois, casinos had average revenues of 250 million, while in Missouri, they were 113 million ($t=3.15$, $p<.01$). Finally, we observe that casino revenues in states where gambling was approved by local referendums are higher than casinos in the state where gambling was approved by a state-wide referendum, but the two means are not statistically different ($t=.60$, $p=.582$).

Next, when the mean revenues are compared over three points in time using an MANCOVA model, legalization through legislative action is continually associated with more success than states with legalization through referendums ($F=2.86$, $p=.016$, $n=35$), see Figure 5-4. The calculation of marginal means and standard deviations across all states indicates that although revenues have the same general relationship over all three years, they become more variable between cases in 2002 and 2007 (Figure 5-5). This may indicate that while the mode of legalization gives casinos an initial boost, the influence of regulatory environment decreases over time, as casinos become more variable due to many market-based factors.

Because method of regulation is represented here by only a few states, there are, of course, a number of possible explanations. I show that there are consistent differences between casinos in each state, but attributing those differences to method of legalization per se is more difficult. Several steps have been taken to limit the number of explanations that are possible. First, states were chosen to be highly comparable on several important dimensions. Each state has the same type of casino gambling, similar tax structures, and similar populations. We can, therefore, rule out the effects of favorable tax structure, the uniqueness of riverboat gambling, and many population-based explanations. One might speculate that revenues are higher in Illinois simply because the market is bigger, but this is unlikely for two reasons. First, four of the casinos in Indiana, where gambling was approved by local referendum and legislative action, share the Chicago market, being located in nearby East Chicago and Gary, Indiana. In fact, size of metro population per casino in Illinois and Indiana is roughly the same (5,083,732 vs. 5,193,359, t=-.055, p=.957). It is compelling to note that although these casinos exist side-by-side, drawing from the same population of consumers and constituents, they differ significantly in success. Secondly, I find that legislative action remains positively associated with success, after controlling for size of the metropolitan area for each casino, measured using data from the 2000 US census.

Although we can rule out some alternative hypotheses because of the states' similarity vis-à-vis the casino gambling market in general, the possibility remains that Illinois is more successful because of some unknown factor associated with the state itself. A regression analysis was conducted to control for several other variables that could influence differences revenue such as size, time since lottery legalization, and the number of organizations in the field (see Table 5-4). Note, however, that the results should be interpreted with caution because state-level variables like time of lottery in the state are, by definition, confounded with method of legalization. According to the multiple analyses conducted here, casinos in Illinois, the state that has legalized through top-down regulation have been the most successful.

The reason for the success of legislative action, I argue, is that top-down legalization does not undermine normative legitimacy to the same degree that state- or local- referendum voting does. With state and local referendums, values and beliefs about gambling become ‘unsettled,’ as both sides of the issue gain visibility in newspapers, TV news, and radio broadcasts. The debate over the legitimacy of gambling, even if roughly balanced, calls the acceptability of the practice into question, and discourages participation as well as tacit acceptance. Paradoxically, even when casino gambling is approved through referendums, it is ultimately less successful because oppositional values and beliefs have entered into public discourse. The theory that grass-roots acceptance will lead to greater acceptance does not hold for these cases. Rather, dictation of regulatory legitimacy from the top-down is associated with greater organizational success, at least over the decade-long time period examined here.

DISCUSSION

This chapter has analyzed the effect of normative and regulative legitimacy existing on several socio-political levels. In the case of normative legitimacy, membership in trade organizations at the state, national, and international level has been shown to have differential effects on organizational success. The most success is associated with trade association membership on the national level that operates at the middle level of socio-political organization. This middle-level allows for the ideal combination of external legitimation efforts aimed at the general population (Dowling and Pfeffer 1975), and internally-focused coordination efforts aimed at bringing members of the organizational field together and encourages isomorphism. Trade associations at international level focus too heavily on the internal legitimacy of the field, while associations at the local level focus too heavily on external legitimating efforts. These dynamics are due primarily to the competitive dynamics involved in any territorially-based industry that draws from a limited number of customers. Organizations in the local area are not likely to share information, practices, and efforts because they are competitors. On the international level association members are not, strictly speaking, competitors for the same customers, and can therefore focus on building the industry as an organizational field. However, they do this to the exclusion of concrete local actions.

In the case of regulative legitimacy, I find that 'top-down' institutionalization of regulatory legitimacy by a group of political elites is associated with more success than bottom-up legalization by voters. This is likely because local referendum initiatives stir-up norms and values associated with the practice and bring public debate to the foreground. Even when these initiatives pass, it is at the expense of settled public agreement or tacit acceptance of a practice. Legalization by elites, however, is accompanied by less upheaval and can be institutionally controlled. The number of licenses in Illinois, for example, has not changed since legalization, and this has leant stability to the institutional field. In Missouri where regulative legitimacy is controlled by the voters, on the other hand, the institutional field of casino gambling has therefore changed several times since initial legalization, undermining tacit acceptance and interrupting the process of legitimation. This finding that top-down legitimation is "most effective" should come with a note of caution. Although legal action leads to the most revenue, it does so at the expense of public debate and informed normative approval in the community.

These results contribute to our understanding of institutions and the process of legitimization in two important ways. First, we find that it is important to consider the level of analysis when studying the effects of normative legitimacy. Normative legitimacy itself exists in a field where one must consider the audience and the activities of the legitimizing organization. Membership in different kinds of trade organizations has different implications for the success of legitimization efforts. One must consider the implications of the method in which regulatory legitimacy is obtained, because the process itself can unsettle the institutional field. Previous research has tended to assume a socio-political level with each domain of legitimation—regulative with the highest, most collectively-empowered level and the cognitive with the lowest, most individual or atomistic level. Each 'pillar' has thus tended to come with an implied stratum because of methodological constraints or conceptual leanings within each domain of institutional theory (Scott 1995). This research suggests, however, that multiple levels of regulative and normative legitimacy can be analytically and empirically distinguished and that these levels have systematic effects on the success of organizations in the field.

Secondly, the findings challenge the common wisdom of legitimation theory, which suggests that legitimacy progresses in four stages—innovation, local validation, diffusion, and generalized validation (Johnson et al. 2006). Johnson et al (2006) suggest that legitimacy is a function of the breadth of social acceptance. In one sense, this is true. The more social actors who accept an organization, the more legitimate it tends to become. In another sense, this may not be true. If an organization is accepted by a social actors at a general levels, this does not necessarily imply that it will be legitimate in the local context because it leaves it without local grounding. In fact, legitimacy in this broader context may actually challenge legitimacy at local levels. This suggests, then, that the process of legitimation itself may need to be reconceptualized. Perhaps it is best modeled not an evolutionary process of diffusion, but as a rhizomatic process of gaining broader legitimacy while *attempting to maintain* local legitimacy. This tension-based model implies that widespread acceptance can undermine an organization's legitimacy for certain stakeholders, and that organizations are continually working to negotiate tensions between these multiple levels. Rather than linearly progressing from innovation, to local acceptance, to generalized acceptance, legitimation may in fact confront tensions between the generalized and localized context. It should not be assumed that acceptance of gambling, for example, in the generalized context necessarily implies its acceptance on all local levels. Instead, tensions exist between different levels of social and political organization, and by studying these differences, we learn more about the complexities of legitimation as a social process.

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
REVENUE	150,836,613.5250	114,172,934.00784	296,100.00	444320933
DAYS_OPN	3884.9583	1651.25471	300.00	6049.00
SQ_FT	44709.2708	29322.96502	10577.00	140000.00
FORMS	3.7708	.42474	3.00	4.00
LOTTO_TM	8655.5208	1805.16357	6993.00	12237.00

Table 5-1: Descriptive Statistics for casinos in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, and Missouri
Sources: Iowa Gaming Commission, Indiana Gaming Commission, Illinois Gaming Commission, Missouri Gaming Commission (revenues); Iowa Gaming Association, American Gaming Association, State Lottery Commissions in Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri

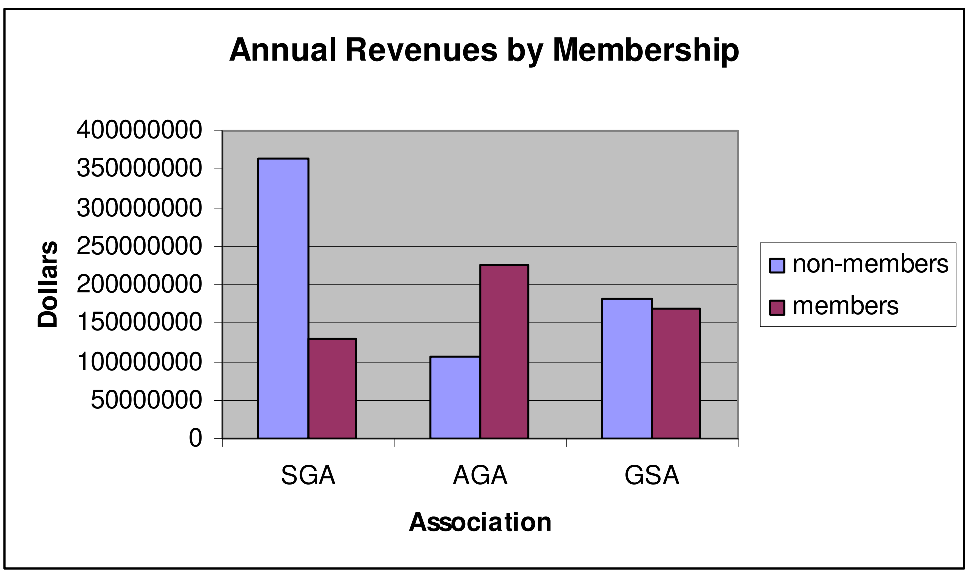


Figure 5-1: Annual Revenues by Trade Association Membership
Sources: Iowa Gaming Commission, Indiana Gaming Commission, Illinois Gaming Commission, Missouri Gaming Commission (revenues); Iowa Gaming Association, Indiana Gaming Association, Illinois Gaming Association, Missouri Gaming Association (SGA membership); American Gaming Association (ASA membership); Gaming Standards Association (GSA membership)
**Casino size was used as a covariate. The means plotted here are calculated at the average size of 44,709 sq ft.

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	7.0E+07	1.5E+08		.480	.634
	AGA	4.6E+07	2.4E+07	.193	1.925	.062
	SGA	-1.8E+08	5.8E+07	-.311	-3.040	.004
	GSA	4.0E+07	2.9E+07	.177	1.401	.169
	SQ_FT	1731.079	432.613	.445	4.001	.000
	CAS_N_ST	-1.4E+07	4985033	-.338	-2.771	.009
	LOTTO_TM	-2022.960	7730.757	-.032	-.262	.795
	FORMS	7.8E+07	3.0E+07	.289	2.591	.013
	DAYS_OPN	5052.395	7464.051	.073	.677	.502

a. Dependent Variable: REVENUE

Table 5-2: Regression coefficients, effect of membership on total revenues

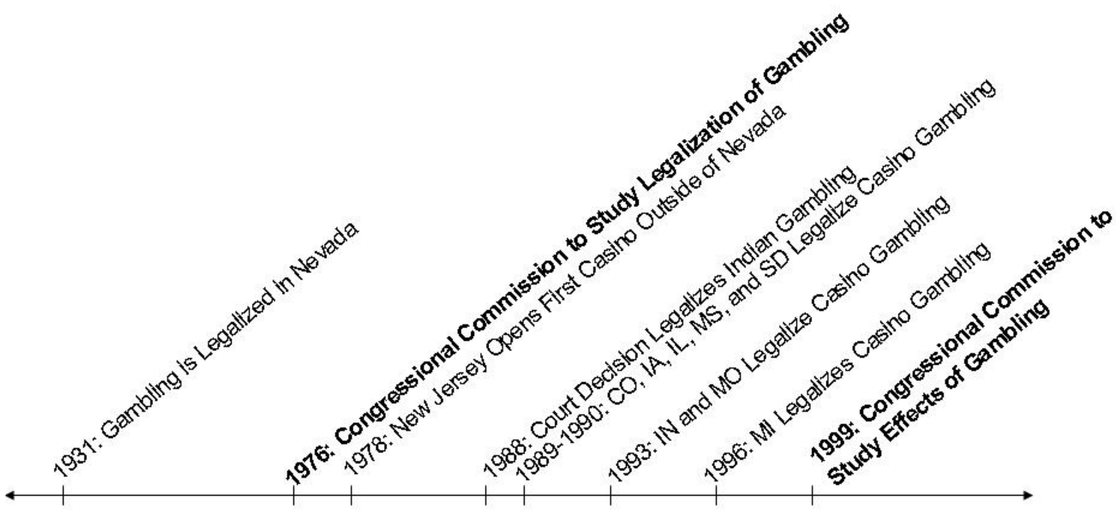


Figure 5-2: Timeline of Modern Gambling Legalization

	Legislative action	State-wide vote	Local vote
IA	**X**		**X**
IL	**X**		
IN	**X**		**X**
MO		**X**	

Table 5-3: Comparisons of legalization method by state.

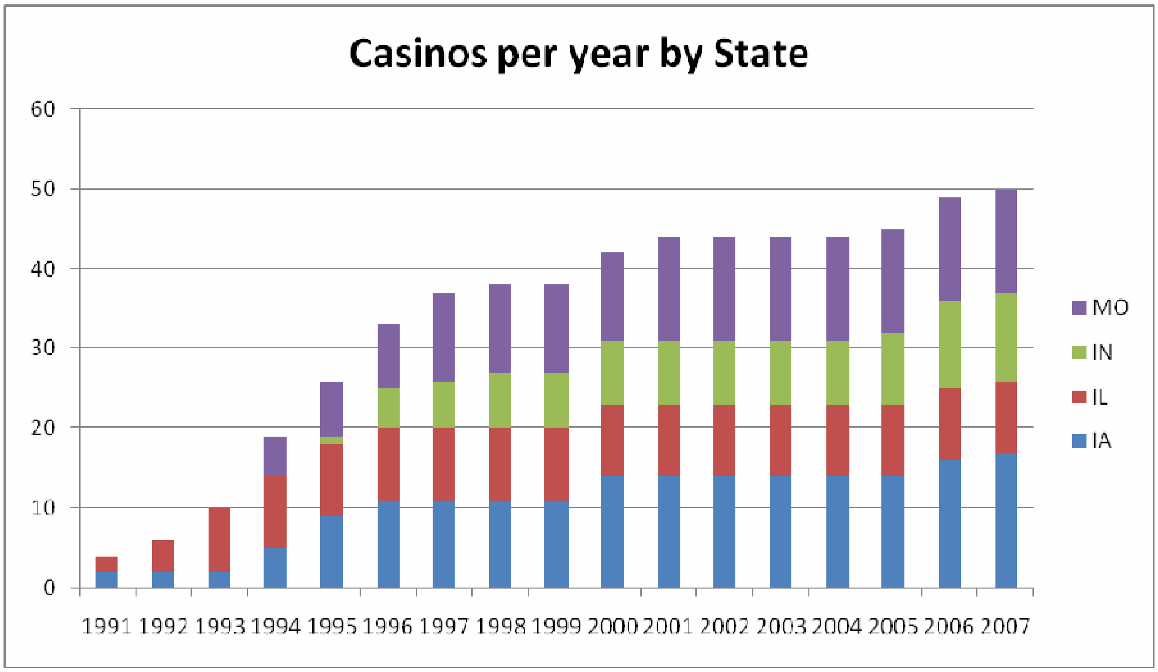


Figure 5-3: Total Casinos per year by State

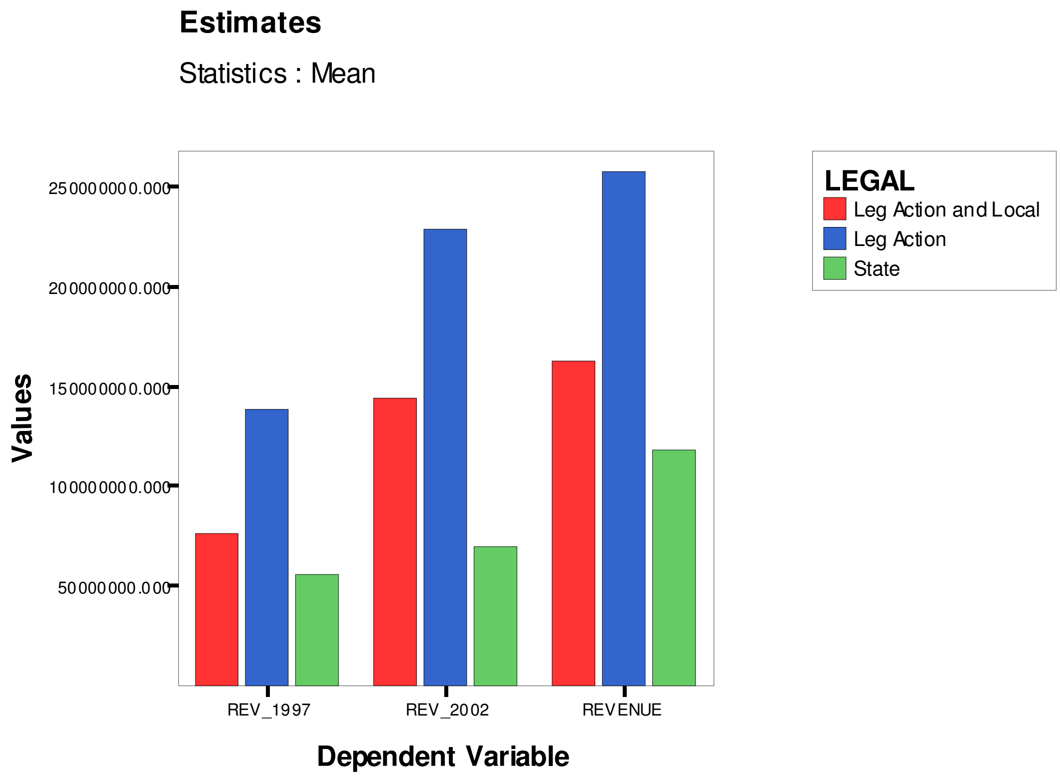


Figure 5-4: Mean revenues from 1997, 2002, and 2007
NOTE: Mean values are calculated using casino size as a covariate. Means are calculated at the average size, 44,709 sq. ft.

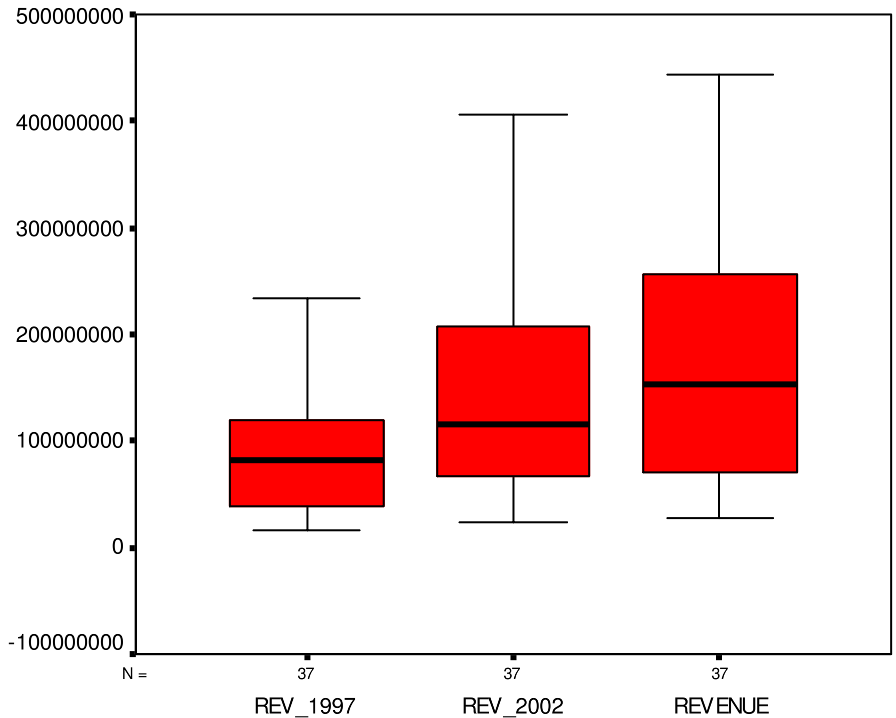


Figure 5-5: Boxplot of annual revenues, 1997, 2002, and 2007

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	8.7E+08	3.9E+08		2.239	.031
	SQ_FT	1882.043	492.560	.483	3.821	.000
	ORG_NUM	2.1E+07	1.7E+07	.155	1.271	.211
	LOTTO_TM	-63142.9	30420.657	-.998	-2.076	.044
	METR_POP	3.318	4.457	.102	.744	.461
	STATE_RF	-3.9E+08	1.4E+08	-1.457	-2.828	.007
	LOCAL_RF	-3.7E+08	1.5E+08	-1.619	-2.546	.015

a. Dependent Variable: REVENUE

Table 5-4: Regression Coefficients for effect of Legalization Method on 2007 Revenues
Note: Legislative Action is represented here as the absence of state or local referendum. Only two sets of dummy variables are needed, and the effect of legislative action should be interpreted as the effect when state_rf and local_rf are set to 0.

Chapter 6 : Conclusion

A Timeline of Legitimation

The goal of this dissertation was to study the complexities of the legitimation process as an integration of cultural and commercial elements into one institution. In this conclusion, I will first present a brief diachronic analysis, placing relevant events from all chapters on a timeline. After the historical summary, I will present a more abstracted summary of the timeline and outline some conclusions that can be drawn from the data concerning each pillar of legitimacy and the interactions between these pillars. Finally, I will conclude by detailing a few of the ways in which culture has shaped the commercial process.

DIACHRONIC ANALYSIS

Using all of the data collected and analyzed in this dissertation, the history of gambling in the United States from 1980 to 2007 can roughly be broken into three time periods, 1980-1989, 1990-1999, and 2000-2007 (see Figure 6-1).

1980-1989

Between 1980 and 1989, casino gambling was viewed positively in national media (see Figure 4-7) and was granted its first national legal grounding via the Indian Gaming Act of 1988. This approval touched off a competitive maelstrom between Native American tribes and states, a contest in which commercial interests were happy to align with either party in order to establish organizations needed to facilitate the distribution of tax revenue from consumers eager to participate in casino gambling to either the state or to the tribe. During this period, casino gambling existed in Nevada and Atlantic City, New Jersey, but occupied a (somewhat romanticized) space in the public imagination.

1990-1999

During the expansion process, from 1990 and 1999, gambling gained regulative legitimacy through state legalization, commercial legitimacy though increases in profits for companies, and territorial legitimacy, as casinos were built throughout the nation. The story in the normative domain, however, was not quite as bright. If valence is used as one indicator of normative approval, the net positive evaluation of casino gambling in newspaper coverage decreased by 48% between 1990 and 1998 in the *New York Times* and 28% in the *Wall Street Journal*. These mixed feelings caused a split in the dominant frames used to discuss casino gambling. While the *Wall Street Journal*, which primarily covers business, maintained a business frame, the *New York Times* and *USA Today* resorted to other available frames including crime, social issues, and regulation. The frames were made available by deeper cultural categories of filth, purity, poverty, and wealth.

In the later part of this period, commercial legitimacy declined as financial performance of casinos waned from 1995 until 2000. Because financial performance depends on many economic variables, one cannot, strictly speaking, attribute causality to the effect of normative legitimacy on commercial legitimacy. However, some leading contending explanations can be ruled out by noting, for example, that important indicators like the Dow Jones Industrial Average had unprecedented growth between 1995 and 2000, while the performance of companies like Harrah’s was poor.

2000-2007

After the rapid territorial expansion of the mid-1990s, casino gambling in the United States slowed, with only 21 new casinos built from 2000-2007 versus more than 100 in the seven years prior. Considering the more generalized international environment, companies such as Harrah's, for example, have continued to thrive financially by building casinos overseas. As a result of these strategic moves, Harrah's stock price increased by 158% from 2001 to 2007. Parallel to this slowdown in the territorial and regulatory domains, normative legitimacy leveled, as public opinion remained steady or even marginally improved in all three newspapers from 1999 until 2006. The framing of casino gambling also solidified behind the social problems frame in all three newspapers, peaking at 2002 for the *New York Times*, followed by *USA Today* in 2003 and the *Wall Street Journal* in 2004. This dissemination from one newspaper to the next is itself a plausible account of diffusion of public opinion when it comes to casino gambling.

COMPONENTS OF LEGITIMACY

From historical analysis, several generalizations can be made concerning the different pillars of legitimacy and their interactions.

Cultural-cognitive legitimacy. Cultural legitimacy, and its related concept, cognitive legitimacy, have existed in some form from the beginning of the period under analysis here (as early as 1951). Chapter 2 shows that knowledge about casino gambling and its related practices was represented in popular films long before gambling was institutionalized on a national scale. The audience in the United States has likely been familiar with casino gambling, at least in an idealized form, for over fifty years. These cultural representations have been buttressed by a deep and abiding history of gambling in human culture. In its recognizable form, casino gambling has existed since the early French and English casinos that grew out of gentlemen's clubs of the early 1800s, to riverboat gambling in the United States in the 1830s, to the more recent forms of casino gambling in Las Vegas that, though territorially marginal, have loomed over the cultural imagination via figures like Al Capone, Howard Hughes, and the Rat Pack.

All of the information gathered in this project therefore indicates that casino gambling was legitimate in the cultural-cognitive sphere (i.e. it has been understood and recognized) long before its regulative and normative legitimacy in the United States. That said, the *meaning* of casino gambling has changed over the time period under analysis. As with many other cultural variables, the binary existence or non-existence of a variable is not as significant was the *way* that the variable exists. The important variable is not *whether or not* casinos are culturally-cognitively legitimate, but *how* they are culturally-cognitively legitimate. The data in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 show how the cultural conceptions of casino gambling have changed over time. Overall, the meaning of casinos shifted from a binary structure centered around filth and purity to one centered around wealth and poverty. This move means several things. First, it has allowed casino gambling to be "rationalized" into a system of recognizable business practices—profits, losses, mergers, and acquisitions. The binary structure, however, also entails that poverty—the semantic other to wealth—is equally highlighted as casinos enter communities that are understood to be impoverished areas. The social issues frame therefore comes to the fore as the wealth that casinos generate is highlighted in public consciousness. As wealthy businesses, casinos are expected to "give back" in the form of tax revenue and social programs in order to support the communities of which they are a part. The structure of cultural concepts together with their normative associations, construct these expectations for a commercial enterprise that promotes gambling.

Normative legitimacy. Normative legitimacy occupies the middle ground between cultural-cognitive and regulative legitimacy, as it can be affected heavily by these other domains. The cultural-cognitive and regulative dimensions are best seen as resources from which social actors draw to manipulate perceptions of normative legitimacy. In this case, normative legitimacy has played a primary role as the dependent variable rather than an independent variable. That is, normative legitimacy is affected by many other variables, but it does not itself exert measurable influence on other types of legitimacy. When felt, its influence is largely intertwined with cultural and regulative domains.

Interaction between cultural and normative legitimacy. The interaction between normative legitimacy—whether or not casino gambling is 'accepted' as a consumption practice—and cultural-cognitive legitimacy has been alluded to, as they are deeply intertwined. Normative acceptance can be affected through the cultural-cognitive categories used to frame practices associated with casino gambling. As sources quoted in newspaper articles demonstrate, social actors strategically use different semantic categories to enhance or diminish the seeming-acceptability of the practice. To some degree, these efforts have succeeded in legitimating casino gambling in the normative space, but resistance is continually posed by the mobilization of counter-frames by those who oppose casino gambling. The business frame and associated concepts of wealth, for example, are used to make casino gambling more legitimate in the normative sphere, yet concepts of poverty and the frame of social issues can always be mobilized to undermine claims to legitimacy. As the semantics of the industry have shifted from moral to techno-rational, evaluation of casinos has become increasingly neutral, as demonstrated in Chapter 4. Thus although counter-frames can be used to undermine the legitimacy of casino gambling, they have moved to granting the right of casinos to exist, but have set an agenda for making them accountable for their environmental effects in the community.

Interaction between normative, territorial, and commercial legitimacy. In this project, I introduced the idea of territorial legitimacy because, I argue, it plays an important supporting role in the formation and maintenance of normative legitimacy. As casino gambling has become territorially prevalent, discourse concerning casinos has moved from heightened talk about the evils of gambling to the mundane annoyances of reality. Casinos become less a space of wild, unorthodox activity, the space depicted by many cultural representations studied in Chapter 2, and more a space of routine behavior. Normatively, this means that what is or is not being "accepted" when social actors consider casino gambling becomes less about the abstract moral threat that casinos pose and more about the concrete economic and the logistical threats that casinos bring to a community.

Commercial legitimacy, the financial solvency of casinos, also buoyed normative legitimacy by making it seem possible that casinos would be perceived as any other business. By mobilizing practices associated with business—revenue, mergers, acquisitions, earnings—newspaper coverage studied in Chapters 3 and 4 could position casino gambling as a legitimate enterprise that was normatively accepted by the business community. In tandem with the cultural category of wealth, this material factor, the ability of casinos to create financial capital, was taken as one reason to accept them.

Regulative legitimacy. The clear increase of the regulative legitimacy of casino gambling in the US has been documented as casinos became legal in 26 states from 1989 to the present. The real story, however, lies in evaluating the regulative climates of different states and assessing interactions that regulation has with other relevant constructs. In the case of casino gambling, regulative legitimacy has been obtained in a variety of ways, and these ways have themselves been important in the ultimate success or failure of casinos.

Interaction between regulative legitimacy and normative legitimacy. Whereas one might expect regulative legitimacy to have a directly reinforcing effect on normative legitimacy, I found that this effect is moderated by the *method* of regulation under consideration. That is, if casino gambling was legalized top-down via legislative action, it was likely to be easily accepted by the populous because it remained outside of debate in the public arena. If casino gambling was legalized bottom-up via referendum voting, however, normative legitimacy was more likely to be undermined through the process of discussion and deliberation. In this way, public officials may be able to skirt public opinion (one form of normative legitimacy) by passing unpopular legislation that goes unnoticed and is then tacitly accepted. This conclusion, of course, has the disturbing implication that practices legalized by fiat may have the normative acceptance that they would be denied if they were truly scrutinized by the public, and further demonstrates the influence of political elites. On the other hand, this finding also illustrates the efficacy of public debate (when it does ensue) in denying normative legitimacy.

Interaction between regulative legitimacy and cultural legitimacy. One fascinating, yet under-explored interaction here is between cultural and regulative legitimacy. As noted in Chapters 3 and 4, regulators do cultural work to justify their position by appealing to their role as protectors of public interest. To make these justifications, they rely on a repertoire of cultural concepts provided by the media and other cultural products like movies. In the discourse about Atlantic City casinos, for example, media representations of the mob played heavily into councilmen's decisions about who to regulate and how strictly to scrutinize certain parties in the organizational field. Those who could be classified using salient cultural categories such as organized crime, were given additional scrutiny. Cultural categories, in other words, were mobilized to justify extension of the surveillance apparatus (Foucault 1977). In addition, politicians mobilized ideas about "fairness" in efforts to increase tax revenues from casinos. For the regulators represented in the data, cultural categories proved to be facile instruments with which they could argue to ennoble or vilify casinos.

CULTURE AND COMMERCE

To conclude, I will describe a few of the things that can be concluded about the relationship between culture and commerce from this study of the legitimation process. As I discussed in the introduction, previous theorists have addressed either the effects of culture on commerce or the effects of commerce on culture. On balance, I have attempted the complex two-way relationship between both of these forces.

First, how does culture affect commerce? I propose culture affects commerce through cultural constraints and culture repertoires.

Cultural constraints. Commercial enterprises are undoubtedly culturally inflected. At a basic level, different practices of gambling are themselves shaped by cultural models. There are many different possible ways in which commercial organization can take place, and the development of industry is guided by these constraints. Why, for example, play a late-night poker game in a friend's basement rather than shoot craps in an ally? Why sit in front of a slot machine rather than play the lotto numbers every week? The consumption choices that people make are shaped by pre-existing rituals and associated meanings that come with certain practices. In this way, particular consumption activities are shaped by cultural categories. In gambling, people largely want to engage in consumption behaviors that have been sanitized, that are associated with purity and with wealth rather than with filth and poverty. To take a more macro-level example from the diffusion process, cultural structures set an upper-bound condition on the number of potential adaptors in the case of casino gambling. If gambling remains "dirty" to a large part of the market, this will cap the possibilities of diffusion.

Cultural repertoires. It should come as no surprise that social actors use cultural narratives and representations to make sense of the world (Swidler 2001). Politicians use the rhetoric of heroism; consumers use the rhetoric of escapism and entertainment. What is relevant here, however, is the way in which cultural repertoires are mobilized to advance or retard commercial interests. Specifically, neo-liberal economic ideologies have furnished a set of concepts to argue that business—any business—has certain rights in the marketplace, and is legitimate to the degree that it is commercially viable. Yet, socially-liberal ideologies of paternalism furnish a set of concepts to argue that government should act in the best-interest of its citizens. Through the expansion of commercial gambling practices and institutions, these two ideologies confront each other.

How does commerce affect culture? I propose that commercial forces impact cultural practices through bureaucratic rationalization.

Burrecratic rationalization. Just as culture pushes commerce, commerce pushes back. Gambling was once consumed via “numbers rackets,” illegal betting parlors, and through bookies who often resorted to extra-legal mechanisms to force repayment. The commercial structuring of the casino industry has provided a venue for gambling that falls largely outside these informal structures. In turn, commercial changes have altered cultural perceptions of gambling in the United States. Gambling is no longer categorized as a seedy, underground, or dangerous practice, but rather a safe, packaged commodity in which consumers can participate without fear of entanglement with organized crime or law enforcement. Fear of the practice, however, hasn’t disappeared, but rather has been displaced. Instead of placing fears about casino gambling inside casinos, opponents have moved to enumerating factors outside of casinos, outside of “intrinsic” properties of the consumption practice. Concerns about gambling persist in articulated forms of addiction, social and community decay in the generalized environment.

In this dissertation several important things have been learned about the legitimation process, and the findings contribute to the separate, but related fields of consumer behavior, marketing, organizational behavior, and cultural sociology. Most generally, this dissertation has demonstrated that both discursive and material factors contribute to the process of legitimation.

When beginning this research, I was struck by the lack of a neutral perspective on casino gambling. Studies of the topic existed either on the utopian side of business studies or on the dystopian side of public policy. Although no one can make claims to be ideologically neutral, this study has been motivated by a desire to study the ways in which these two sides—pro- and anti-gambling—fight it out. By theorizing the legitimation of casino gambling as an institution, I wanted to understand how these debates, especially debates that involve conflicts between commerce and culture, are structured and evolve. I hope what we've learned here can be used by anyone seeking to either study social institutions or to change them.

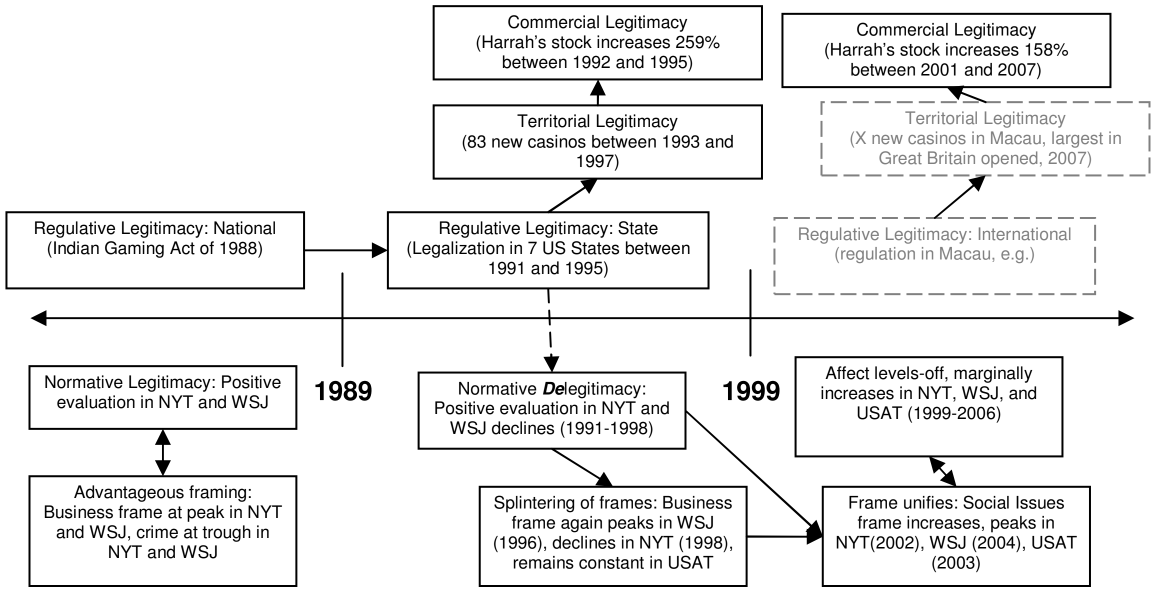


Figure 6-1: Timeline of Legitimation

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APPENDIX

A Bass model was estimated using data available from the American Gaming Association and gaming commissions in each US State (see sources below for a full list). The basic model for product growth (Mahajan and Muller 1979) was used, as follows:

$$n(t)=p[N-N(t-1)]+(N/q)*[N-N(t-1)]*N(t-1)$$

Where

N = total number of potential adopters
N(t-1) = number of total adopters in the previous time period
n(t) = number of new adopters at time, t (i.e. the rate of diffusion at time t)
p = coefficient of innovation
q = coefficient of imitation

Using OLS linear regression, the coefficients of p, the coefficient of innovation, and q, the coefficient of imitation, were estimated, yielding values of $p=.105$ and $q=.478$, with an overall fit of $R=.684$. The model was an adequate fit ($F=11.873$, $p<.001$), and both coefficients were determined to be statistically significant ($t=2.862$, $p<.01$ and $t=4.304$, $p<.001$ respectively).

We can compare these results to estimates obtained from other studies. A meta-analysis of 213 diffusion studies (Sultan et al. 1990), found that p, the coefficient of innovation, is .03 on average and q, the coefficient of imitation is, on average .38. As Sultan et al (1990) report, the minimum observed values for p and q are .00002 and .00003, yet the maximum feasible values of p and q are .23 and .99 respectively. This indicates that in our diffusion model of casino gambling, p is significantly higher than the average in most studies, but not at its maximum value.

Data sources:
American Gaming Association
Illinois Gaming Commission
Indiana Gaming Commission
Iowa Gaming Commission
Missouri Gaming Commission

CURICULUM VITA

ASHLEE HUMPHREYS
a-humphreys@northwestern.edu
(847) 644-8802

Integrated Marketing Communications
Medill School of Journalism
Northwestern University

MTC 3-109
1270 Campus Drive
Evanston, IL 60208

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Marketing, Northwestern University, December 2008 (anticipated).

B.A. Economics, Philosophy, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, June 2003.

RESEARCH

Dissertation: "Betting on the House of Cards: Understanding Innovation and Diffusion in Services through the Case of Casino Gambling, 1976-2006"
Committee: Robert Kozinets and Kent Grayson (co-chairs), Gregory Carpenter, Angela Lee, Wendy Griswold (Department of Sociology)

My dissertation research uses the case of casino gambling to understand the process by which industries, and their corresponding consumption behaviors, become legitimated through macro-historical, institutional, and cultural processes. Over the last thirty years, casino gambling has grown from a relatively marginal consumption practice, legal in one US state, to a multi-billion dollar industry that exists in 28 states. How and why has casino gambling become accepted in the marketplace? At a more general level, how can marketers understand the macro-social processes by which industries are created? How does an industry become legitimate? Lastly, and more specifically, how do the interaction of three variables—regulative, normative, and cultural legitimacy—work to legitimate an industry? The regulative dimension is represented by gambling's legal status (illegal vs. legal), the normative dimension is represented here by being accepted in public opinion polls and media coverage (accepted vs. non-accepted), and cultural legitimacy is represented by an association with other cultural practices in cultural products (e.g. vice vs. entertainment). The focus of my analysis is to assess the causal interaction between two variables—regulative and normative acceptance—in the historical process of the legitimation of casino gambling. That is, does regulative acceptance foster normative acceptance? Or does normative acceptance lead to regulative acceptance? My strategy to answer this question includes theorizing relationships between the three variables, operationalizing each aspect of legitimacy, and comparing differences in types of legitimacy over time to assess the causal relations, if any, between them. Materials for analysis include a sample of newspaper articles from three national newspapers over a thirty-year period, a sample of gambling movies from the same time period of analysis, and interviews with casino gamblers including retrospective histories.

"Stacking the Deck: Gambling in Film and the Legitimization of Casino Gambling," forthcoming, *Exploring Consumer Culture*, eds. John Sherry and Eileen Fischer, Routledge Press.

This article investigates the role of cultural representations (in this case, films) in the legitimation of consumption practices. In 1975, casino gambling was a relatively marginalized consumption practice in the United States. Now, in 2006, casino gambling is legal in 28 states in the US and annually grosses over 30 billion dollars. What part have representations of casinos in films played in this legitimation process? A hermeneutic study of 14 gambling films from 1951 to 2006 was conducted to answer these questions. Over the entire sample, cultural representations of gambling in film depict images of utopian escape from market structures of work and consumption. These representations operate as a 'negative' imprint to dominant ideologies by reflecting practices that resist everyday structures of work and consumption. As gambling becomes legitimate in social and political spheres, the cultural representations of gambling grow increasingly dark, from themes of honor and trust in the 1950s and 60s to themes of disillusionment and loss of control in later periods. This cultural dynamic allows us to understand more broadly how consumption practices are legitimated through cultural representation and how social anxieties about newly legitimatated practices become expressed in cultural forms.

"The Intersecting Roles of Consumer and Producer: Contemporary Criticisms and New Analytic Directions," with Kent Grayson, *Sociology Compass*, 2, 1-18.

Although not traditionally conceptualized as such, customers are an important part of many organizations. They can be invaluable informational, financial, and political resources. How should customers be conceptualized in relation to organizations? To what extent are they legitimately part of an organization whose products or services they purchase, and to what extent are they separate from it? How are customers acquired and integrated into an organization? We evaluate four ways that organizational boundaries have been traditionally conceived and assess the degree to which consumers are part of organizations. We use findings from previous research existing predominantly in studies of organizational behavior to locate places of potential insight into consumer behavior and to expand the theorization of organizational identification into social, cultural, and historical domains.

"The Access/Ownership Distinction in Everyday Consumption Practices," revising manuscript for submission to *Journal of Consumer Research*

In addition to the buying and selling of material goods, a large part of the economy is constituted by selling access to things such as space, information, and use rather than objects that can be 'owned' in any conventional sense. This theoretical article develops a framework for understanding the systematic seperation of ownership from access and cites a variety of evidence to support this distinction. It then explores the implications of this distinction for understanding the way in which consumers relate to consumption objects, to other consumers, and to producers.

CONFERENCE PARTCIPATION

"Attention Economies and the Construction of Value: The Case of YouTube," with Robert V. Kozinets, *International Communication Association*, Montreal, Quebec, May 2008.

Consumer Culture Theory Epistemic Session co-organizer with David Mick, *Association for Consumer Research,* Memphis, TN, October 2007.

"Managing Co-production: The Case of Wikipedia," with Kent Grayson, *Association for Consumer Research,* Memphis, TN, October 2007.

"Stacking the Deck: Gambling in Film and the Legitimization of Casino Gambling," *Consumer Culture Theory Conference*, May 2007.

"The Access/Ownership Distinction in the Media Marketplace," with Markus Giesler, *Association for Consumer Research*, October 2006.

"The Access/Ownership Distinction in Consumer Behavior," Session Chair, *Association for Consumer Research,* October 2006.

"Commodity Fission" at the Circulations Conference, York University, March 2005.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Assistant Professor, Integrated Marketing and Communications, Fall 2008, *Consumer Insight*

Adjunct Professor, Integrated Marketing and Communications, Fall 2007, *Consumer Insight* and *Audience Insight*

Adjunct Professor, DePaul University, Department of Marketing, Spring 2006
Consumer Behavior

Teaching Assistant, Integrated Marketing and Communications, Spring 2007
Consumer Insight

Teaching Assistant, Department of Marketing, Winter 2006 and Spring 2007
Introduction to Advertising

HONORS AND AWARDS

Undergraduate Honors in Economics for the senior thesis, Honors in Philosophy for the senior thesis

Brentano Prize in Philosophy, Best Undergraduate Philosophy Paper, Northwestern University, 2003

First Prize, Best Undergraduate Philosophy Essay, Johns Hopkins University, 2003

COURSEWORK

Marketing Strategy	Gregory Carpenter
Consumer Behavior	Angela Y. Lee
Behavioral Decision Theory	Alexander Chernev
Empirical and Analytical Modeling	Robert Blattburg and Anne Coughlan
Information Processing	Brian Sternthal and Alice Tybout
Philosophy of Science	Bobby Calder
Qualitative Methods	John F. Sherry
Statistical Methods	Lakshman Krishnamurthi

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Member, Association for Consumer Research
Member, American Sociological Association
Member, International Communication Association

REFERENCES

Kent Grayson
Associate Professor
Marketing Department
Kellogg School of Management
4th Floor
2001 Sheridan Rd.
Evanston, IL 60208
(847) 491-7099
k-grayson@kellogg.northwestern.edu

Robert Kozinets
Associate Professor of Marketing
Marketing Department
Seymour Schulich Building, Suite N329
York University
4700 Keele Street
Toronto ON M3J 1P3
(416) 736 2100, Ext. 20513
rkozinets@schulich.yorku.ca

Gregory Carpenter
James Farley/Booz Allen Hamilton Professor of Marketing Strategy
Chair of Marketing Department
Kellogg School of Management
4th Floor
2001 Sheridan Rd.
Evanston, IL 60208
(847) 491-2723
g-carpenter@northwestern.edu