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# Framing the Game: Assessing the Impact of Cultural Representations on Consumer Perceptions of Legitimacy

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# Framing the Game: Assessing the Impact of Cultural Representations on Consumer Perceptions of Legitimacy

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The purpose of this article is to understand how media frames affect consumer judgments of legitimacy. Because frames exist on the sociocultural and individual level, our research takes a multimethod approach to this question. On the sociocultural level, we conduct a content analysis of operant media frames for discussing online gambling and perform an event analysis, finding that a shift in consumer judgments follows an abrupt shift in frame. Then, on the individual level, the causal mechanism for these shifts is investigated in an experimental setting using the Implicit Association Test (IAT). These experiments show that framing affects normative legitimacy judgments by changing implicit associations. Further, users and nonusers respond differently to frame elements, with users favoring an established frame and nonusers favoring a novel, legitimating frame. This suggests that media frames play a critical role in establishing legitimacy at the sociocultural level and that framing potentially bridges cognitive and normative legitimacy.

Legitimation is the process through which a product, idea, or industry becomes commonly accepted (Downling and Pfeffer 1975). Over time, industries gain or lose legitimacy through a complex process involving both cultural representations and individual responses to those representations. Scholars have suggested that the framing of an object or concept in the media can have a profound effect on its legitimacy (Gamson and Modigliani 1989; Lakoff and Ferguson 2006). For example, marijuana seems illegitimate when grouped with so-called “hard drugs” like heroin in public service announcements, yet it begins to seem legitimate when associated with medical treatments in news coverage. When a product like Botox is framed as a poison on

a television show like *Entertainment Tonight*, its legitimacy is called into question, yet it begins to seem legitimate when classified as a cosmetic procedure like a skin peel on reality television (Giesler 2012). This paper examines the process through which media frames affect consumer perceptions of legitimacy. From ample research on priming in psychology, we know that stimuli in the environment have an effect on consumer memory (Tulving and Schacter 1990), categorization (Higgins, Bargh, and Lombardi 1985), and goal pursuit (Chartrand et al. 2008). But we do not know the broader role that exposure to such stimuli plays in social processes like legitimation, which to this point has been studied primarily at the sociocultural rather than individual level.

In this paper, we investigate the process through which cultural frames affect cognitive legitimacy, or the degree to which an industry is understood and integrated with other knowledge, and the implications of these cognitive shifts for judgments of normative legitimacy. Combining content analysis of frames with a field study and psychological methods for assessing implicit associations, we examine how exposure to frames at the cultural level produces changes in individual assessments of legitimacy, which may, in turn, lead to greater normative acceptance at the sociocultural level.

Our study makes three contributions that go beyond prior research. First, by better understanding the process through

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which an industry acquires cognitive legitimacy, we can understand how frames might work differently for different kinds of market actors. Previous research has tended to focus on the tactics of market actors who have a vested interest in the industry, assessing how either proponent marketers (Giesler 2012; Humphreys 2010a; Kates 2004), proponent consumers (Coskuner-Balli and Thompson 2013; Scaraboto and Fischer 2013), or activists (Snow et al. 1986) create and manipulate frames. Yet little work has directly examined how members of the general public who may be the targets of these framing efforts shift perceptions in response. Research in organizational behavior has noted the importance of the general public for granting normative approval of an industry (Deephouse 1996). As Weber (1922/1978) notes, true legitimacy comes not from endorsement of interested parties but from the tacit, normative approval of those with no obvious instrumental interest. This type of consumer may not actively participate in an industry, but they grant a generalized sense of appropriateness that leads to legitimacy. Yet although the views of nonusers have a critical impact on perceptions of legitimacy, they remain understudied in consumer research. In this paper, we unpack the cognitive processes involved in framing in order to examine its effects on different types of market actors—users versus nonusers. How do nonusers, those who might be considered the “general public,” receive and interpret frames?

Second, by understanding the precise relationship of cognitive legitimacy to individual judgments of normative legitimacy, we gain a fuller picture of the sociological process through which full, sociopolitical legitimacy emerges. Previous research has assumed that simply being known is itself a legitimating attribute (Aldrich and Fiol 1994; Baum and Powell 1995). However, we demonstrate that the way a practice is framed as it becomes known can have a crucial impact on its legitimacy, especially for those unfamiliar with the practice.

Finally, we provide a methodological innovation to the study of cognitive legitimacy by using the Implicit Association Test (IAT), which enables a more precise measurement of cognitive legitimacy. While previous research on cognitive legitimacy has often deferred to proxy measures (see Freeman, Campbell, and Hannan 1986), we use psychological theory to predict and test the effects of cognitive legitimacy on judgments of normative legitimacy. This paper consequently understands cognitive legitimacy as a psychological process involving knowledge integration and classification rather than a construct based on prevalence or endorsement.

To investigate the impact of media framing on different kinds of market actors, we chose to study the case of online gambling and compare it to the more established industries of casino and lottery gambling. Scott (1995) contends that the most informative studies of legitimacy are those that identify the sources of legitimation on two or more levels of analysis, from individual consumers and organizations to cultural norms and values. Toward that end, we connect the legitimation of online gambling on the macro level of cul-

tural framing to the micro level of categorization by first examining what frames are active in media coverage and then testing their effects on individual consumers, both users and nonusers, using the IAT. Combining sociological research on collective frames with psychological theory of priming and categorization, we study the impact of collectively held frames on different types of consumers and explore the ramifications of these effects for legitimacy at the sociocultural level.

In this research our overriding hypothesis is that the media shapes how consumers perceive the legitimacy of an industry by activating a legitimating or delegitimizing frame, which shifts cognitive legitimacy by creating implicit associations with a legitimate or illegitimate field of practice. These shifts in implicit association, in turn, affect individual judgments of normative legitimacy. We address this hypothesis through a series of studies. First, we investigate what frames exist in the media discourse surrounding gambling, and online gambling in particular. Then, to bridge the macro to micro levels of analysis, we use a natural event—the FBI seizure of three online gambling companies—to compare consumer legitimacy judgments before and after an abrupt shift in media discourse.

To isolate the impact of media framing on consumer judgment, we then conduct two experimental studies. In experiment 1, we assess how media framing influences cognitive and normative legitimacy for users and nonusers. To understand the process, we manipulate event sequence frames and employ the IAT as a measure of cognitive legitimacy to test (1) if frame affects cognitive legitimacy and (2) if these changes in cognitive legitimacy mediate normative legitimacy judgments. In experiment 2, we perform a stronger test of frame effects by manipulating frame by label (i.e., “gambling” vs. “gaming”) and assessing the effects on users and nonusers in terms of cognitive association, normative judgment, and behavioral intention.

## CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

### Legitimacy and the Legitimation Process

Legitimacy is “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, 574). Foundational research in institutional theory has examined three pillars of legitimacy—cognitive, normative, and regulative (Scott 1995). Cognitive legitimacy refers to the degree to which an industry can be classified, understood, and integrated within existing cognitive schemas and cultural frameworks (Aldrich and Fiol 1994; Scott 1995; Shepherd and Zacharakis 2003; Suchman 1995). Normative legitimacy refers to the degree to which an industry is viewed as being socially acceptable according to dominant norms and values (Ruef and Scott 1998; Scott 1995). Regulatory legitimacy is the degree to which the industry conforms to existing rules and regulations, usually as defined by government institutions (Deephouse and Carter 2005; Grewal and Dhar-

wadkar 2002). In this article, we evaluate how changes in framing affect cognitive legitimacy, which in turn, can affect individual judgments of normative legitimacy.

Previous research on legitimacy in consumer behavior has focused on normative legitimacy but has not extensively studied its relationship to cognitive legitimacy. For example, we know that company actions affect consumer perceptions of a company's legitimacy, which in turn affect perceptions of quality (Handelman and Arnold 1999) and brand adoption (Kates 2004). In some recent research on the legitimization of consumer groups, Scaraboto and Fischer (2013) and Coskuner-Balli and Thompson (2013) show the process through which previously stigmatized groups of consumers attempt to gain legitimacy. Noting the interrelation of cognitive and normative elements for destigmatizing at-home fathers, Coskuner-Balli and Thompson (2013, 28) say the "narratives [of at-home fathers] . . . indicate that the collective identity of at-home fathers does not simply lack cognitive legitimacy. Instead, it exhibits a form of cognitive illegitimacy whereby their deviance from dominant gender expectations is readily interpreted through pejorative cultural frameworks, such as the Mr. Mom stereotype." That is, at-home fathers are not readily classifiable and, thus, lack cognitive legitimacy, but they are also perceived to deviate from dominant norms and values and, thus, lack normative legitimacy as well. Similarly, in Scaraboto and Fischer's (2013, 1246) examination of fatshionistas, users of "fat-fashion" work to place images in magazines and other mainstream media and make fatness explicit in these images in order to achieve greater legitimacy for the stigmatized sector of which they are members. However, the precise mechanism for how the presence of these images in media changes generalized perceptions has not been fully investigated. Thus although the legitimization process represented by these two cases seems to involve the co-emergence of cognitive and normative legitimacy, the critical relationship between these two aspects of legitimacy at the individual level remains unexplored.

On a cultural level, we know that the media plays a role in the legitimization process by framing how consumers categorize industries through the language used in reporting (Elsbach 1994; Gamson and Modigliani 1989; Humphreys 2010b; Rosa et al. 1999). Particular consumption practices can become legitimate to consumers through the gradual change in norms and agreements between the producer and the consumer, a process that Deighton and Grayson (1995) term "seduction." Inevitably, some alignment in categorization occurs throughout the seduction process. Consumers who might have once viewed marijuana as a drug come to see it as a medical treatment. In the case of gambling, consumers who once thought of online gambling as a "scam" come to see it as a "game" or just "play," what Goffman would call a shift in frame (Goffman 1974). Yet while research on normative legitimacy has begun to unpack the effect of categorization on legitimacy through a discussion of framing (Deighton and Grayson 1995; Humphreys 2010b), this effect has not been explicitly and empirically linked to cognitive legitimacy.

## The Relationship between Cognitive and Normative Legitimacy

*Construct.* Scholars have debated the relationship between cognitive and normative legitimacy (Baum and Powell 1995; Jepperson 1991; Zeitz, Mittal, and McAulay 1999, 751). Some scholarship has noted that cognitive and normative legitimacy are analytically distinct but blurred empirically (see, e.g., Zeitz et al. 1999). Other work has suggested that in many contexts the two constructs can be both empirically and theoretically disentangled (Aldrich and Fiol 1994; Baum and Powell 1995; Jepperson 1991; Scott 1995; Suchman 1995; Zeitz et al. 1999, 751). Golant and Sillince (2007) argue that narrative provides a link between cognitive and normative legitimacy. For example, telling a story about how a charitable organization is on a quest to cater to AIDS patients provides both cognitive legitimacy (understanding) and normative legitimacy (approval) for employees and potential funders (Golant and Sillince 2007).

Yet while scholars have discussed the links between cognitive and normative legitimacy, there is little agreement on the order in which they occur. Different scholars highlight different parts of cognitive legitimacy according to how they view its role in legitimation (Suchman 1995). Some scholars view cognitive legitimacy as the beginning of the legitimation process (Rao 2002), while others view it as the end of the legitimation process (Freeman et al. 1986). Those who view cognitive legitimacy as the beginning of the legitimation process define it as the integration of an industry with existing knowledge structures, while those who view it as the end of the process define cognitive legitimacy as "taken for grantedness" (Hannan and Freeman 1986). Yet some have objected that the criterion of "taken for grantedness" actually combines aspects of cognitive and normative legitimacy (Jepperson 1991). To be "taken for granted" implies both cognitive recognition and unquestioned normative acceptance. Our assessment is that degrees of cognitive legitimacy occur throughout the legitimation process and enable or impede normative legitimacy. Correspondingly, an order of effects can occur such that some level of cognitive legitimacy (i.e., the integration of new knowledge with existing knowledge; Suchman 1995) is required for normative legitimacy, which in turn enables complete cognitive and normative legitimacy—being "taken for granted" (Jepperson 1991).

In this article, we explore differences in the legitimacy perceptions of different types of marketplace actors, specifically perceptions of members of the public who have not used the controversial product as opposed to perceptions of those who have used it. Hereafter, we refer to these two groups as nonusers and users. Although nonusers may know some things about the practice from what they see or hear from others, they still lack the knowledge that comes with the experience of engaging in the consumption practice, experience that users possess. Of course, nonusers represent a heterogeneous category. There are a number of reasons one may not engage in online gambling, from explicit op-

positional attitudes to lack of availability or opportunity. Yet, nonusers will by definition all share a lack of extensive experience with the practice.

Previous work has shown that differences in experience produce differences in knowledge structures of consumers (Alba and Hutchinson 1987) and that those with less experience will have less developed schemas (Peracchio and Tybout 1996). We thus predict that nonusers may be more susceptible to the effects of sociocultural framing. Framing is likely to play a role for nonusers who are still integrating new knowledge with existing knowledge, while it will play less of a role for existing consumers who already have robust knowledge structures and fixed attitudes for judging the industry.

Bitektine (2011) provides some rationale for this prediction, proposing that individuals first consult classification and only then refer to more involved feature-based, evaluative judgments when those classifications fail. He notes that conferring cognitive legitimacy on an object or concept makes the judgment process easier from a psychological perspective. That is, if one can classify an industry as aligned with either “good” or “bad” practices, it reduces the amount of cognitive effort it would take to make a judgment based on attributes. He says, “Given the high efficiency and very general nature of cognitive legitimacy, this form of judgment is likely to be reserved for routine, low-involvement tasks where the evaluator can be satisfied with any member of the selected class of organizations” (168). Based on this logic, we argue that cognitive legitimacy conferred through classification is more likely to influence novices or nonusers, who have less experience with an industry and will therefore seek the most efficient way of understanding it (Yamauchi and Yu 2008).

*Measurement.* As noted, extensive debate has ensued over the measurement of cognitive legitimacy. Some argue that it should be measured at the sociopolitical or “population” level (Freeman et al. 1986; Hannan and Campbell 1995), while others see it as a construct that emerges—and thus should be measured—at the individual level (Bitektine 2011). We concur with this second approach and argue that response latency measures (Fitzsimons et al. 2002) can be an effective but unobtrusive technique to show differences in cognitive legitimacy at the individual level. Recent research has maintained that cognitive legitimacy involves “classifying [a focal industry] into a preexisting (positively evaluated) cognitive category/class” (Bitektine 2011, 159). By taking a measure of response time—or how long it takes an individual to access an association between a focal object and a legitimate class of objects—we measure the degree to which a focal object is integrated with other positively valenced cognitive objects. We therefore use the IAT (Implicit Association Test; Greenwald, Nosek, and Banaji 2003) to measure consumers’ ability to associate online gambling with either known legitimate or illegitimate practices. Although the IAT has been used most often within consumer and psychological research on eliciting stereotypes, Gibson

(2008) suggests that the method would most enhance consumer research in the area of associative learning processes.

While measuring cognitive legitimacy has been widely debated, there is more consensus on the measurement of normative legitimacy, at least on an individual level. In a study of the California cattle industry, Elsbach (1994) develops and tests a 12-item scale to measure individual judgments of normative legitimacy that has implications for furthering legitimacy at the sociopolitical level. While cognitive legitimacy represents what individual consumers think of a practice, normative legitimacy requires changing what consumers think others think as well (Weber 1922/1978). Previous research, for example, has argued that media coverage increases normative legitimacy by providing endorsement or the perception that a practice is accepted by others (Zimmerman and Zeitz 2002). In this article, we focus on the cognitive effects of media framing as a means to understand the relationship between the cognitive and normative aspects of legitimacy.

In sum, sociological research has tracked many effects of “taken for grantedness” but has not well understood the psychological process that underlies the formation of cognitive legitimacy. Psychologists have well understood the process, but they have not appreciated its implications for social processes such as legitimation. We combine these approaches to show that there are important effects of priming on social processes, but they require particular, preexisting cultural knowledge and exist differently for different kinds of market actors. Further, because the judgments of nonusers play a critical role in attaining full legitimacy, the effects of frames on these types of actors have profound implications when considered again at the sociocultural level.

Combining approaches in this way leads us to three empirical questions. First, do sociocultural representations affect individual legitimacy judgments? Second, what is the process by which representations shape cognitive legitimacy? Last, does this process differ for users versus nonusers? The key to answering these questions lies in theorizing frames and the effects of framing on cognitive legitimacy.

## The Relationship of Cognitive Legitimacy to Frames and Framing

Frames exist on collective, sociocultural and individual, psychological levels. As a shared social reality, a frame is “a central organizing principle that holds together and gives coherence and meaning to a diverse array of symbols” (Gamson et al. 1992, 384). On the individual level, frames are “mental structures that allow human beings to understand reality—and sometimes to create what we take to be reality” (Lakoff 2006, 25). Barsalou (1992, 21) defines frames broadly by writing that “frames can represent conceptual combinations, event sequences, rules and plans.” On the individual level, a frame is a cognitive schematic representation of the target category. It is “essentially identical [to the] construct of schema” (Barsalou 1992, 29; see also Lakoff 1987). The distinction, if any, is that frames can have

more structure that can incorporate relationships of hierarchy, temporality, or modality (Barsalou 1992).

In applying the concept of a frame, researchers distinguish between latent and manifest frame elements (Fillmore 1976; Gamson 1989). For example, a manifest frame element like the word “buyer” can activate a host of latent elements like “store,” “seller,” and “money” (Fillmore 1976). Researchers have shown that frames can be activated by units as small as the presentation of a single word (Fillmore 1976, 1982). Thus manifest frame elements can also become organizing labels for industries, organizations, or policies seeking legitimacy (Benford and Snow 2000; Snow et al. 1986). For example, using the term “death” rather than “inheritance” to describe a tax brings emotional associations to a once unemotional tax (Lemann 2000). Sociological research has argued that media stories consist of frame elements that work together to activate particular cognitive schemas (DiMaggio 1997). Thus even narrative structures—common stories that share a pattern of events—can be considered a type of frame, what Barsalou (1992) would call an “event sequence” frame.

Media frames present different combinations of cognitive objects and can therefore change the way consumers think about an industry. They do so in several ways. First, frames direct attention. For example, extensive media coverage of unusual events like homicide or airline accidents makes them seem more likely than routine events such as common diseases or car accidents (Tversky and Kahneman 1981). Within the realm of legitimacy, media coverage can make an illegitimate industry appear more commonly accepted, thereby influencing normative legitimacy (Humphreys 2010b; Zimmerman and Zeitz 2002).

However, media framing can also enable cognitive categorization, or what Zerabuev (1991) calls “lumping and splitting.” “Whenever we classify things,” he writes, “we always regard only some differences among them as significant and ignore others as negligible or irrelevant. Yet which differences are considered significant is something we learn. . . . Separating the relevant from the irrelevant is not just a logical, but also a normative matter” (13). Because frames direct attention to a particular aspect of an industry, they highlight commonalities between some industries and differences between others. This information allows consumers to assimilate the frame information into existing belief structures and contrast it with others (Sherif and Hovland 1961). As ample research has shown, people construct categories by maximizing similarity among category members while reducing the similarity across categories (Rosch and Mervis 1975). For example, Moreau, Markman, and Lehmann (2001) demonstrate that categorization of new products can determine expectations of performance. When a digital camera was presented as being like a scanner, consumers expected lower picture quality than when it was presented as being like a film camera.

However, although Moreau et al. (2001) demonstrate these types of effects for consumer products, they do not connect them with the broader evaluative and social implications of categorization. For example, Lakoff and Ferguson

(2006) suggest that framing immigrants as “illegal” calls attention to the fact that they broke the law and therefore groups them with criminals (murderers, burglars, prostitutes, etc.). Another frame, say labeling immigrants as “undocumented workers,” directs attention to their potential similarities with the working class. Frames thereby shape cognitive legitimacy by creating linkages between relatively unknown industries and known industries about which attitudes exist. Frames help us learn about the world by extending what we know to what we do not know (Meyer and Scott 1983). However, to understand the meaning of these frames for consumers requires investigation of the broader, cultural meaning of frames. Frames are based on selective, preexisting cultural meanings; however, as a frame becomes adopted by more and different users, social meaning can further change, resulting in shifts in legitimacy at the aggregate level.

### Legitimacy in the Gambling Context

Our primary focus in this article is the framing of online gambling using the comparison cases of land casino and lottery gambling. As popular opinion and the political and economic climate have shifted, gambling has gone through many stages of prohibition and legalization. Even as new forms of gambling have emerged, the arguments for and against legalization have remained remarkably consistent. Critics of gambling offer moral objections and point to its association with crime while proponents justify it as a source of tax revenue and form of entertainment. We will briefly review the history of these forms in order to better understand differences in legitimacy and category type.

The legitimacy of gambling in the United States has waxed and waned since British settlement. The first Anglo-American lottery was approved by King James I in 1612 in order to help the Virginia Company of London raise money to sustain its settlement in the Chesapeake Bay (Johnson 1966). Lotteries played a significant role in the financing of the colonies. However, as with other types of gambling, lotteries have had their own scandals. For example, the Louisiana State Lottery (1868–92) became the most notorious state lottery because it was a breeding ground for corruption (Asbury 1938). Banned in 1892, lotteries remained illegal in the United States until 1964.

Casino gambling became legalized beyond the state of Nevada in the late 1970s. Its growing acceptance in American society in the 1990s was accompanied by huge profits for gambling providers. From 1992 to 2003, the revenue for the US casino industry doubled, from \$10.2 billion to over \$27 billion, and consumers spent more money in casinos than they spent on movies or amusement parks (American Gaming Association 2004; Roush 1993). More than 25% of US citizens visited a casino at least once during that year, with total visits adding up to nearly 310 million trips (American Gaming Association 2004). This means that Americans made more visits to casinos than they did to major league baseball games. Once associated with mobsters and bootleggers, the casino industry gained legitimacy

largely through recategorization from crime to entertainment in the media (Humphreys 2010a). It is further noteworthy that the industry adopted the term “gaming” rather than “gambling,” although industry proponents have denied strategic intent (American Gaming Association 2012).

Online gambling is a unique context in which to explore the effects of framing on consumer judgments of legitimacy. Online gambling has existed as an industry since 1994, when the Antigua government passed a law allowing online casinos to be established within its borders. However, its legal status in other countries, particularly the United States, has been in limbo. In 2009, media coverage by *60 Minutes* and the *Washington Post* exposed a scandal at one of the major online casinos, Ultimate Bet, and publicly called into question the overall integrity of the online gambling industry. On April 15, 2011, in what the media and participants dubbed “Black Friday,” the FBI shut down and seized control of the three largest online casinos.

These events show that online gambling is far from gaining full legitimacy. Unlike casino or lottery gambling, it does not contribute to the tax base or to educational or nonprofit initiatives. It has been frequently associated with deceptive or unfair practices (as in the coverage on *60 Minutes*). Unlike casino or lottery gambling, there is no industry association or governing body. Finally, online gambling lacks regulatory legitimacy, as represented by the current Unlawful Internet Gambling and Enforcement Act (UIGEA).

## MEDIA ANALYSIS

In the context of this history, we investigate the differences in the framing of online gambling, which lacks full legitimacy, in contrast to casino gambling and lotteries, the legitimacy of which is more established. We expect that casino and lottery gambling will share legitimate frames, while online gambling will be associated with illegitimate frames. However, we do not know a priori which frames will be associated with legitimacy or illegitimacy. To better understand the relationship between frames and the legitimacy of online gambling, we conducted a media analysis of newspaper articles about online, lottery, and casino gambling published between 1980 and 2010.

### Data and Methods

*Sample.* A data set of newspaper articles on three topics—lottery, casino, and online gambling—was created. A search was conducted via Factiva for all articles in the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *USA Today* with the key term in the headline or lead paragraph. For lottery, the key terms were “lottery” or “lotto”; for casinos, the key terms were “casino” or “casinos”; for online gambling, the key terms were “online” and “gambling” or “online” and “gaming.” This resulted in 12,772 newspaper articles for analysis ( $N_{\text{lotto}} = 5,008$ ;  $N_{\text{online}} = 553$ ;  $N_{\text{casino}} = 7,211$ ). For this study, we sampled from the three national newspapers with the highest circulation in the United States (Alliance for Audited Media 2012). Data availability was from 1980 to

2010, which covers the period of national casino expansion and the introduction of online gambling in 1994. Lottery gambling was well established before the beginning of our data set. We therefore have two comparison cases to online gambling—the lottery, which was legalized in 1964, and casino gambling, which began to be legalized on the national level beginning in 1988.

Newspapers were chosen for several reasons. First, they have often been used in communications research to represent public opinion (Gamson et al. 1992; Schudson 2003). As a conglomeration of quotations from law enforcement, civic and cultural leaders, consumers, and opponents, they can be used to represent the landscape of public opinion and semantic association about a given topic (Deephouse 1996; Gamson 1992; Gamson and Modigliani 1989; Schudson 2003). Second, they represent a range of publics, from the financial focus of the *Wall Street Journal* to the cultural focus of the *New York Times* to the popular focus of *USA Today*. Finally, they are relatively stable indicators. Unlike online data, newspapers form a metric for established cultural associations that is comparable over time.

*Procedure.* Articles were analyzed by first selecting a stratified random subsample for qualitative analysis (1,800 articles; 200 from each publication for each type of gambling). These articles were first open coded, then axially coded (Strauss and Corbin 1990). Open codes included concepts such as “leisure,” “fun,” and “sports,” while axial codes included broader groups of these concepts under categories like “entertainment.” Theoretical coding was then introduced to link axial codes to the concepts of legitimation. Through this process, categories related to legitimacy and illegitimacy emerged. For example, language relating to entertainment framed gambling as a type of consumption in line with going to the movies, while crime language framed gambling as a type of consumption in line with robbery or money laundering. Regulatory frames positioned gambling as a sanctioned yet controlled practice, grouping it with other regulated industries such as alcohol, tobacco, and firearms. Following the qualitative analysis, an automated content analysis was conducted to assess changes in frames over time. A custom dictionary was created from the emergent categories that arose in the qualitative analysis. Word lists from the qualitative analysis were generated and then validated according to procedures outlined by Pennebaker, Francis, and Booth (2007). Dictionary categories and coder agreements can be found in table 1. In addition to a custom dictionary, a standardized dictionary was used to count emotions and other standard, psychometrically tested dictionary categories (for details, see Pennebaker et al. 2007).

### Results

*Media Frames.* In the analysis of media frames, a clear pattern emerges whereby lotteries and casinos are associated with legitimating frames like entertainment and business and online gambling is associated with delegitimizing frames like crime and regulation (fig. 1). As figure 1 shows, the



**TABLE 1**  
 DICTIONARY CATEGORIES AND AGREEMENTS

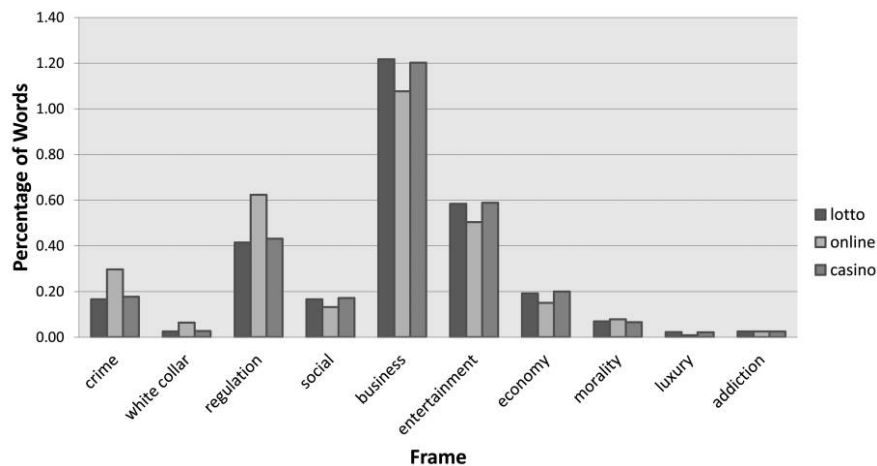
Category	Sample words	No. of words	Agreement
Crime	charged, trial, arrested, investigation, illegal	27	.96
White collar	corruption, bribe, laundering, kickback, extortion	19	.79
Regulation	committee, commissioner, government, audit, tax	35	.92
Social	citizen, community, neighborhood, residents, welfare	13	.93
Business	industry, company, revenue, customer, service	19	.89
Entertainment	hotel, entertainment, fun, exciting, hotel	20	.90
Addiction	addiction, clinical, habit, mental, dependence	13	.94

mean number of words associated with crime is higher for online gambling than lottery or casino gambling ( $M_{\text{crime,online}} = .30$ ,  $M_{\text{crime,casinos}} = .18$ ,  $M_{\text{crime,lotto}} = .17$ ;  $F = 14.01$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The same pattern exists for white collar crime ( $M_{\text{crime,online}} = .06$ ,  $M_{\text{crime,casinos}} = .03$ ,  $M_{\text{crime,lotto}} = .03$ ;  $F = 17.35$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In fact, one central undermining frame appears to be the association between online gambling and white collar crime—fraud, tax evasion, and racketeering. For example, several high-profile arrests of online gambling operators were made in 2004, 2006, and 2007 (*New York Times*, September 8, 2006; March 31, 2007; July 11, 2007; November 3, 2009). Each of these arrests was covered extensively by newspapers and included language like “racketeering” and “wire fraud.” As one article reports: “The authorities have arrested 597 people in 22 provinces and major cities in connection with an illegal Internet gambling network thought to have handled bets worth more than \$60 million, the official New China News Agency reported. The arrests—395 people suspected of organizing the network and 202 suspected gamblers—are part of a nationwide crackdown on overseas gambling” (*New York Times*, January 22, 2005). As this news story makes clear, there is a network of meaning surrounding online gambling—an “il-

legal . . . network” of “suspects”—that frames the practice according to categories we recognize from gambling’s history, such as the involvement of organized crime in gambling rackets of the 1920s and 1930s. Thus the crime frame directs attention to aspects of online gambling that are potentially illegal or associated with the history of illegal gambling. Online gambling is grouped with practices like prostitution, illegal drugs, and other black-market activities. In the data set, the correlation between crime and negative emotion is  $r = .114$  ( $p < .001$ ).

In contrast, articles about lotteries and casinos depict issues related to business contracts with suppliers (*Wall Street Journal*, August 22, 1988) and other legitimate companies (e.g., *Wall Street Journal*, February 2, 1993). For example, one article covers a deal between several state lotteries and the Walt Disney Corporation to produce a television show: “An association of state lotteries has teamed up with the Walt Disney Company on a new television show that could, in effect, create the first nationwide lottery. Disney said it would produce the show, scheduled to be shown starting in the fall of 1992, to enable participation by all 33 state lotteries plus the one run by the District of Columbia” (*New York Times*, April 6, 1991). The alignment of lottery gam-

**FIGURE 1**  
 MEAN USE OF MEDIA FRAME BY GAMBLING TYPE



bling with a company like Walt Disney categorizes this form of gambling as entertainment. Similarly, articles report on the association of casino gambling with entertainment figures such as Merv Griffin, the producer of *Wheel of Fortune* (*Wall Street Journal*, March 23, 1988), television producer Aaron Spelling (*Wall Street Journal*, February 20, 1992), Miss America (*New York Times*, September 16, 1995), and Celine Dion (*USA Today*, June 8, 2004), all relatively legitimate performers or purveyors of entertainment. The entertainment and business frames call attention to the profitable aspects of gambling, highlight its role as an industry that contributes to economic growth, and demonstrate its congruence with mainstream cultural values and practices.

Another form of framing revealed by our qualitative analysis is the rags-to-riches story—an example of what Barsalou (1992) calls an “event sequence” frame. Coverage of rags-to-riches stories, tales of the poor becoming suddenly wealthy, pervaded lottery and casino articles, creating an association between gambling and individual betterment. The lottery is associated with the hopes and dreams of the “working man.” For example, one article reports: “BIG WIN: Italian immigrant Antonio Bueti of Bedford Hills, N.Y., with his wife, Francesca, claimed the \$35 million state lotto drawing. Bueti, 49, may keep his \$35,000-a-year auto worker job. He said he went to work Monday ‘to see how I feel, a millionaire working the assembly line’” (*USA Today*, January 10, 1990). Stories like this one draw on the Horatio Alger myth and typically depict the elation of winners (see, e.g., *USA Today*, January 26, 1996). Similarly, an article about casinos reports, “Don Sarbaugh, a 54-year-old homeless man, says that despite the \$2.7 million jackpot he won at a Las Vegas casino, he’ll keep his recycling plant job: [he says] ‘I’m no different than a week ago’” (*USA Today*, February 8, 1989). These rags-to-riches stories integrate lottery and casino gambling with cultural narratives that are familiar and accepted, especially to nonusers. As one editorialist trenchantly states, “powerball and other lotteries aren’t so much about winning as about fantasizing about winning. Like George Bailey in *It’s a Wonderful Life* striking a fortune-telling gizmo and saying, ‘Wish I had a million dollars,’ you can dream up plans to build a business, help the poor or sail around the world. There’s nothing wrong with that—for most people” (*USA Today*, July 8, 1993). Hitting the jackpot in the lottery or at a casino is bound up with hopes, dreams, and sudden wealth. No such association exists for online gambling, which in the data is regarded as a suspicious practice. One article, for example, associates online gambling with petty crime or hustling, framing it as a way that “wise guys” make money off of “squares”: “‘This is a clearly growing phenomenon, and a cheaper way for players to bet,’ said Sebastian Sinclair, an analyst with Christiansen Capital Advisors. He added that the new operations had become a forum where astute gamblers could solicit hundreds of bets, effectively becoming semiprofessional bookies. ‘The wise guys love it,’ he said, ‘because there are all kinds of squares out there to take advantage of’” (*New York Times*, July 6, 2004). Here online

gambling is depicted as a way to make money off of naive gamblers through “solicit[ing] hundreds of bets,” which many sources in the data set perceive to be on a continuum with outright fraud. Playing off of the Protestant ethic, which poses an equivalency between work and reward (Weber 1930/2002), this event frame, the get-rich-quick story, serves to delegitimize online gambling.

To understand the associations between the frames of crime and entertainment and the labels of “gambling” and “gaming,” we conducted an inner-article correlation analysis. As table 2 shows, gambling is positively related to crime and regulation frames, while it is negatively related to the entertainment frame. Gaming, conversely, is positively related to the entertainment frame but negatively related to the crime and regulation frames. This offers some evidence that the manifest labels “gambling” and “gaming” are associated with other latent semantic content. That is, gambling tends to be associated with delegitimizing frames, while gaming tends to be associated with legitimizing frames.

By comparing articles about online gambling with lottery and casino gambling, we see that frames differ significantly and systematically by topic. But how have these frames changed over time? We conducted several further historical analyses to assess the change in frames over time. Figure 2 shows the change in frames by industry (lottery, casino, and online gambling). To avoid the potentially spurious effects of periodization, yet reduce the inherent noise in the data, we segmented articles into 5-year increments. Robustness checks for 2- and 3-year time periods provided the same pattern of results. While there is a great deal of variability between days and over years, a few trends can be discerned.

First, in online gambling articles, frames like white-collar crime and regulation have decreased ( $r_{\text{white collar, date|online}} = -.088, p < .01, r_{\text{reg, date|online}} = -.107, p < .01$ ). Business, entertainment, and economy frames have steadily increased from 1995 ( $r_{\text{business, date|online}} = .016, r_{\text{entertainment, date|online}} = .053$ ). Corroborating this shift, we observe that positive emotion has increased over time ( $r_{\text{pos emo, date|online}} = .144, p < .01$ ), and addiction language has decreased ( $r_{\text{addiction, date|online}} = -.098, p < .01$ ). While this indicates that online gambling may have improved in popular sentiment with the general public, it also indicates that it is still subject to shifts in legitimacy.

TABLE 2

CORRELATIONS OF “GAMBLING” AND “GAMING” WITH CRIME, REGULATION, AND ENTERTAINMENT FRAMES

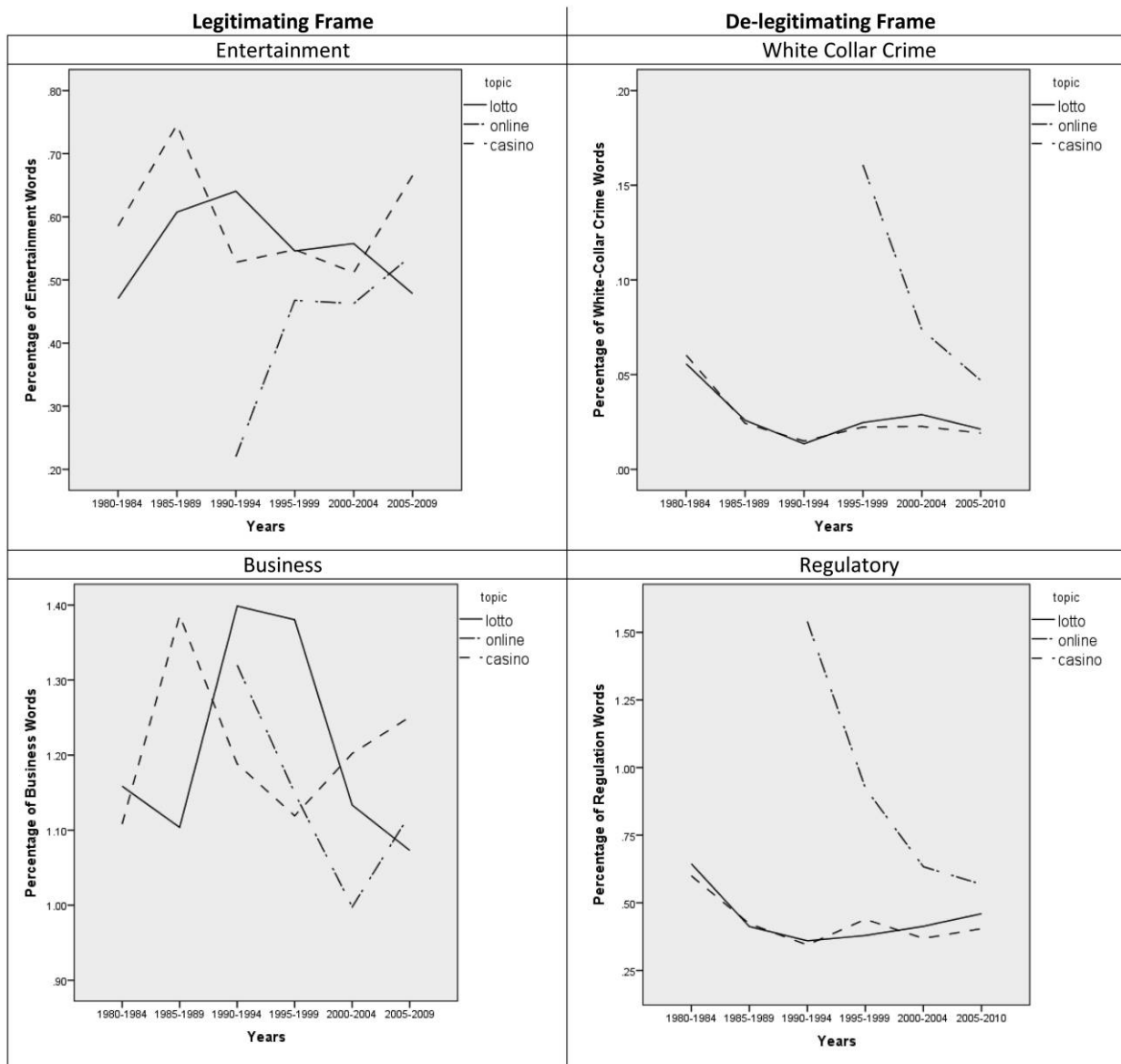
	Pearson correlation	
	“GAMBLING”	“GAMING”
“GAMBLING”	1	.099
“GAMING”	.099**	1
CRIME	.019*	-.024**
REGULATION	.187**	-.028**
ENTERTAINMENT	-.093**	.020*

\*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (two-tailed).

\*\*Correlation is significant at the .01 level (two-tailed).

FIGURE 2

SHIFT IN FRAMES OVER TIME, BY GAMBLING TYPE



Second, over time discourse about casino gambling has begun to look more like discourse about lotteries. This suggests that there is a systematic framing process through which an industry in the field of gambling becomes congruent with the dominant norms and values of users and nonusers alike. Although casino gambling entered the data set associated with crime in 1980, it left the period of data coverage bearing a low association with crime in 2010 ( $M_{crime,1980-1989|casino} = .21$  vs.  $M_{crime,2000-2009|casino} = .14$ ,  $F = 9.354$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Notably, however, legitimating frames ap-

pear to rise during the period in which legitimacy is being actively negotiated (1990–99 for casino gambling, 1976–89 for lottery gambling) but then decrease following legitimation.

### Discussion

The media analysis reveals that, in contrast to lottery and casino gambling, online gambling is associated with the frames of crime and regulation. Further, over time, these

frames remain relatively constant or cyclical for lottery and casino gambling but have changed for online gambling since 1995 (fig. 2). Crime and regulation frames have decreased in articles about online gambling, while entertainment and business frames have increased. Online gambling's existence as a deterritorialized practice, one both physically located outside the United States and pursued only in people's homes, continues to contribute to its reputation as an illegitimate industry. Coverage of racketeering charges places online gambling in the same category as organized crime. State-sponsored lottery gambling and heavily taxed casino gambling, on the other hand, draw from a rich world of positive cultural associations, such as hitting the big "jackpot" and the eternal hope offered by the rags-to-riches story. However, while we know the universe of available cultural frames and have a sense for how they change over time, we do not know how they affect individuals. After all, legitimacy requires some individual mechanism by which generalized perceptions change over time. To begin to assess the link between frames and the perceptions of legitimacy held by individuals in the field, we conducted an analysis of an event that precipitated media reframing of online gambling.

## EVENT ANALYSIS

On Friday, April 15, 2011, a day dubbed "Black Friday" by the poker community (Silver 2011), the FBI seized the three major online gambling operators. Media coverage was extensive, and frames changed abruptly from entertainment to crime. We were interested in the effects of this event on perceptions of legitimacy of both users and nonusers of online gambling. We predicted that consumer judgments of legitimacy would be lower after the event than before the event and that nonusers, in particular, would be influenced by the negative media coverage.

## Data and Methods

Our initial point for comparison was a survey conducted for another purpose in December 2010, a time when online gambling was presented favorably in the news media. At the time, politicians like Harry Reid extolled the tax benefits of legalization, and users appeared in the media discussing their income from online poker. We surveyed a national sample of online and land gamblers, obtained from Qualtrics, Inc., Provo, UT (239 users, 192 nonusers). Note that the nonusers in our sample all had some previous experience gambling in a casino. This will be true for our other studies as well. Although we opened the sample to nongamblers in some studies, very few of the participants (about 3%) reported having never gambled. Further, the effects of frame on this type of nonuser appeared to be the same as for land gamblers. All studies also feature national sampling of actual gamblers rather than students in order to provide a realistic sample to study framing. For the event analysis, first we asked them whether they gambled online and to explain why or why not. We then measured their current judgments

of normative legitimacy using the scale initially developed by Elsbach (1994). The scale was pretested using methods described in appendix B.

A month after Black Friday (May 15, 2011), we conducted another short online national survey of 23 users and 20 nonusers drawn from the same national database and having characteristics similar to those in the first survey. (See table 3 for a demographic profile of both pre- and post-event samples. Similar characteristics have been reported in other online gambling studies; see Woodruff and Gregory 2005.) Although these samples were different sizes, consumers in both samples were roughly equivalent in age and gender. Both samples were compensated similarly for their time and recruited by the same agency. In both surveys, the legitimacy scale questions came immediately after the screening questions. Although these samples contained different participants, the results, as a preliminary field test, shed light on the impact of negative media coverage on legitimacy judgments, especially at a generalized level.

## Results

We ran GLM (general linear model) with time (4 months prior to Black Friday vs. 1 month after Black Friday) and user type (users vs. nonusers) and their interaction as the independent variables and the Elsbach index as the dependent variable (Cronbach  $\alpha = .9$  and these items therefore summed, as in the pretest). We predict a main effect of time with higher legitimacy prior to the incident, a main effect of user status, with current users holding overall higher legitimacy judgments, and an interaction where nonusers would be more influenced by the negative media coverage than users. The model was significant ( $F(3, 470) = 27.6, p < .0001$ ); time was significant ( $F(1, 470) = 7.5, p < .01$ ), with more positive legitimation judgments prior to Black Friday ( $M_{\text{before}} = 49.7$ ) than after ( $M_{\text{after}} = 44.1$ ; significantly different in post hoc tests at  $p \leq .05$ ). User status was significant ( $F(1, 470) = 68.7, p < .0001$ ), with users having overall higher legitimacy judgments ( $M_{\text{users}} = 53.5$ ) than nonusers ( $M_{\text{nonusers}} = 43.7$ ; significantly different in post hoc tests at  $p \leq .05$ ). The interaction between user status and time was significant ( $F(1, 470) = 6.6, p < .01$ ). Current users did not significantly differ between the two time periods ( $M_{\text{users}|\text{before}} = 53.6, M_{\text{users}|\text{after}} = 53.1$ ), whereas nonusers did ( $M_{\text{nonusers}|\text{before}} = 44.8, M_{\text{nonusers}|\text{after}} = 33.8$ ; in post hoc tests at  $p \leq .05$ ).

To confirm a corresponding change in media coverage, a media analysis was conducted to assess the change in frames before and after the event. We found that the crime frame rose significantly in the month after the event ( $M_{\text{crime, before}} = .0002, M_{\text{crime, after}} = .20; z = 3.66; p < .001$ ), as did the white collar crime frame ( $M_{\text{white collar, before}} = 0, M_{\text{white collar, after}} = .06; z = 2.08; p < .05$ ), while the entertainment frame remained relatively constant ( $M_{\text{entertainment, before}} = .65, M_{\text{entertainment, after}} = .51; z = 1.51; p = .13$ ).

These results suggest that negative media coverage can shift consumer legitimacy judgments for nonusers. However,

**TABLE 3**  
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF EVENT ANALYSIS SAMPLES

	Money spent gambling/week	Age	Gender	Race	Education
Initial survey					
Online gamblers ( <i>N</i> = 239)	\$77.9	38	57% male 43% female	78% Caucasian 6% African American 8% Hispanic 7% Asian 1% Native American .5% Pacific Islander	11% high school 33% some college 15% 2-year college degree 28% 4-year college degree 10% master's degree 1% doctoral degree 2% professional degree (JD, MD)
Land gamblers ( <i>N</i> = 192)	\$35.1	45	45% male 55% female	88% Caucasian 4% African American 3% Hispanic 4% Asian 2% Native American	20% high school 32% some college 15% 2-year college degree 24% 4-year college degree 8% master's degree 1% doctoral degree
Follow-up survey					
Online gamblers ( <i>N</i> = 23)	57% <\$50 13% \$51–\$100 17% \$101–\$200 9% \$201–\$300 4% \$301–\$500 \$500+	33.8	48% male 52% female	74% Caucasian 8% African American 4% Hispanic 13% Asian	17% high school 43% some college 4% 2-year college degree 20% 4-year college degree 4% master's degree
Land gamblers ( <i>N</i> = 20)	15% 0 75% <\$50 10% \$51–\$100	47.2	25% male 75% female	95% Caucasian 5% American Indian	25% high school 40% some college 15% 2-year college degree 10% 4-year college degree 5% master's degree 5% professional degree

some obvious limitations to this event study exist. First, the events in our study are correlational rather than causal. Second, we cannot determine how much or to what news coverage the individual people might have been exposed. Third, the samples contained different consumers, so we cannot assess change at the individual level. However, the results do suggest that frames might have an effect on the generalized level, especially for nonusers. We therefore moved to a more controlled experimental setting where we could isolate the effects of media exposure on legitimization judgments.

**EXPERIMENT 1**

The purpose of this experiment is to understand the process by which media framing affects consumer judgments of legitimacy. While prior research has focused on the normative effects of media exposure through endorsement (Deephouse 1996; Zimmerman and Zeitz 2002), our intent is to test the effects of framing on cognitive associations with legitimate and illegitimate categories in a more controlled setting and to examine how these cognitive shifts translate to changes in normative legitimacy judgments. We believe that frames can change cognitive legitimacy by caus-

ing a shift in implicit associations, a shift that can be measured using the IAT. Based on the reasoning of Bitektene (2011), we believe that the process may be different for users, who have experience with the industry, and nonusers, who have less experience. Thus we may be able to use these two different groups to better understand the process through which judgments of legitimacy are formed. Based on the literature we propose the following:

**H1:** Exposure to a legitimating (delegitimizing) frame will cause consumers to implicitly associate a focal industry with another legitimate (delegitimate) field of practice.

**H1a:** Nonusers will experience framing effects to a greater degree than users.

Further, users offer us a window into a stage where the legitimacy of online gambling may be taken for granted, while nonusers allow us to explore the emergence of cognitive legitimacy. Because nonusers have less experience with the industry, we predict that they are more likely to be guided by implicit associations in making their normative judgments. Hence, we predict that:

- H2:** Cognitive legitimacy will mediate normative legitimacy judgments for nonusers, but not current users.
- H3:** Cognitive legitimacy will mediate behavioral intentions for nonusers, but not users.

Figure 3 shows our proposed model. We predict that user status will moderate both the effect of frame on cognitive legitimacy, the ability of frame to shift implicit associations, and the effect of frame on normative legitimacy judgments. That is, users will have more fixed explicit judgments regardless of frame. Implicit associations prompted by differences in frames will affect normative judgments, but nonusers will be particularly affected by frames.

## Data and Methods

**Participants.** Two hundred twenty-three participants were recruited from a national database by Qualtrics, Inc., a survey company (98 users, 125 nonusers). Participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: legitimating story, delegitimating story, or no media story condition (for control). The media stories were designed to present either a legitimating event sequence frame, a rags-to-riches story or a delegitimating event sequence frame, a get-rich-quick story involving someone who tried to cheat the system. See figure 4 for this type of media story. Within the story, 10 words from the media analysis that were found to be associated with the legitimating, rags-to-riches frame (win, play, payout, vacation, reward, thrill, diversion, hotel, excitement, recreation) or 10 words associated with the delegitimating, get-rich-quick frame (busted, cheat, fixed, arrest, bribe, handcuffs, illegal, corrupt, unfair, rigged, kickback) were included in the article text. Media stories were embedded to look as if they were part of the *New York Times* website, which provided the same level of endorsement across conditions.

**Procedure.** Participants were recruited online and read one of the news stories (or nothing in control). They were then directed to another website hosted by millisecond.com where they took the IAT. They then returned to the main survey page where they answered some additional questions about the legitimacy of online gambling.

**Measures.** The IAT was used to measure cognitive legitimacy, consumers' association of the online gambling industry with a legitimate or illegitimate field of practice, entertainment or crime. In this task, participants group words associated with either online or land gambling as belonging to either entertainment or crime. The basic assumption is that consumers should find it easier to classify concepts that are associated in their mind than those that are not. After reading the legitimating story, consumer response time should be faster when pairing an attitude concept (online gambling) with a legitimate field of practice (entertainment) than when consumers have read the delegitimating story. This latency indicator—the ease with which participants classify objects—is our measure of cognitive legitimacy. In computerized versions of this task (as used here), the pairing is achieved by assigning a keyboard key (e.g., *e*) to be pressed in response to two linked categories, such as online and entertainment, while another keyboard key (e.g., *i*) is used for the other pair, that is, land and crime. The net IAT score (D-score) is obtained from these conditions and represents the tendency to associate online gambling with a legitimating rather a delegitimating practice. For details on calculating the D-score, see Greenwald et al. (2003). The Elsbach scale was used to measure individual judgments of normative legitimacy. User status was determined by asking participants, “Have you ever gambled using an online website?” We also asked all participants, “Have you ever gambled (played a game of chance for money) in a business locale (either casino or online)?” One hundred percent of respondents responded that they had gambled either in a casino or online. We included only those with some exposure to gambling in the analysis to mitigate some of the heterogeneity issues referenced in the previous discussion of user status.

**Pretests.** In designing the IAT task, it is best that the words chosen are clearly associated with one category (and not the other). Words chosen to represent online and land gambling were based on Cotte and LaTour's (2009) discussion of differentiating these gambling contexts. For land casinos, the words were chosen to focus on the current physical land casino operators and what the land casino experience offers: Las Vegas, Atlantic City, touching chips, Bel-

FIGURE 3

MEDIATION OF COGNITIVE LEGITIMACY, MODERATED BY USER STATUS

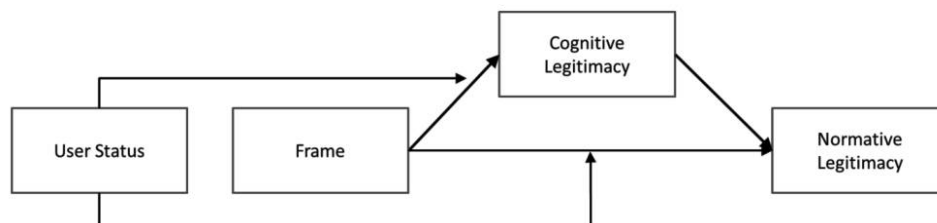


FIGURE 4  
LEGITIMIZING MEDIA STORY

The screenshot shows a New York Times article from December 2, 2011, by Kirk Johnson. The article is titled "Online Gambler Rewarded" and reports on Rich Henderson, an Illinois resident, who won a 12 million dollar tournament on the online site "BETUP." Henderson won during a vacation in Las Vegas. The article includes a photo of Henderson, a "Related" section about a microhouse, and a "What's Popular Now" sidebar with a watch advertisement. The article text describes Henderson's life as a plumber by day and an online poker player by night, and discusses the growth of the online gambling industry.

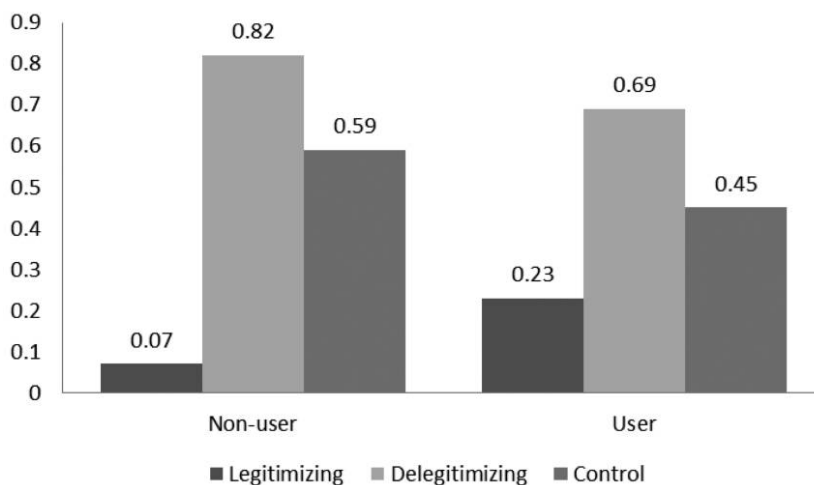
lagio fountain, buffet, valet parking, casino floor, drink service. For online, the words were chosen to represent the current online industry and aspects of gambling on a computer: web betting, online blackjack, Pokerstars.com, Internet casino, computerized betting, playing alone, virtual dealer, and mobile gambling. Terms were pretested with a sample of 22 participants drawn from a similar population through an online survey company (Mechanical Turk, Seattle). Participants rated the terms according to their fit with

land or online gambling on a scale where 1 = strongly fit land casino, 4 = could fit either land or online casino, 7 = strongly fit an online casino. The proposed land and online items were summed, and their means were compared to determine differentiation, with lower values indicating greater fit with the land casino ( $M_{land} = 10.4$ ,  $M_{online} = 53.9$ ;  $t(21) = 117.3$ ,  $p < .0001$ ).

The words chosen to represent entertainment or crime as legitimating and delegitimizing fields of practice came from

FIGURE 5

## IAT SCORES BY USER STATUS



dictionaries used in the media analysis. To avoid mere exposure effects, we made sure that these words were not the ones used in the media stories. The entertainment-related words were fun, resort, joy, sport, pleasure, hobby, leisure, and amusement. The crime-related words were prison, sin, mobster, dishonest, felony, con, banned, and wrongdoing. Similarly, participants rated the entertainment and crime items on a scale where 1 = strongly fit crime, 4 = could fit either entertainment or crime, and 7 = strongly fit entertainment. Means again showed that the words were associated with their target concepts. Here lower values indicate more association with crime ( $M_{\text{entertainment}} = 55.4$  vs.  $M_{\text{crime}} = 9.2$ ;  $t(21) = 210.3$ ,  $p < .0001$ ).

## Results

**Manipulation Check.** To ensure that users were different from nonusers on the variable we assume—comprehension of the industry—we conducted a brief manipulation check, asking two self-report questions after our main dependent measures of interest: “How difficult do you think it would be for you to learn online gambling?” (1 = very difficult, 7 = very easy) and “Do you feel you know how online gambling works?” (1 = definitely not, 7 = definitely yes). The two measures were correlated ( $r = .67$ ) and summed for analysis. Users were higher than nonusers ( $M_{\text{users}} = 10.59$  vs.  $M_{\text{nonusers}} = 8.24$ ;  $t(221) = 6.23$ ,  $p < .0001$ ), indicating that they had greater self-reported knowledge.

**Effect of Media Frame on Cognitive Legitimacy.** Hypothesis 1 predicts that exposure to a legitimating event sequence frame will result in more implicit associations with a legitimate field of practice, while exposure to a delegitimizing event sequence frame will result in more implicit associations with an illegitimate field of practice. IAT data were

aggregated using the D-600 algorithm (Greenwald et al. 2003). Scores were calculated such that lower values indicate a stronger relationship between online gambling and entertainment (association with the legitimate frame). GLM was run with frame, user type, and their interaction as the independent variables and the IAT D-score as the dependent variable. The overall model was significant ( $F(5, 217) = 19.33$ ,  $p < .0001$ ). There was a main effect of frame ( $F(2, 217) = 44.81$ ,  $p < .0001$ ), with means in the expected directions, which were significantly different from one another in post hoc tests ( $M_{\text{legitimizing}} = .15$ ,  $M_{\text{delegitimizing}} = .77$ ,  $M_{\text{control}} = .45$ ;  $p \leq .05$ ). This supports hypothesis 1. However there was also a significant interaction where nonusers were more affected by the frame than users ( $F(2, 217) = 3.1$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ;  $M_{\text{nonusers} | \text{legitimizing}} = .07$ ,  $M_{\text{nonusers} | \text{delegitimizing}} = .82$ ,  $M_{\text{nonusers} | \text{control}} = .58$ ; and in post hoc tests these all were significantly different at  $p \leq .05$ ). For users the means were  $M_{\text{users} | \text{legitimizing}} = .23$ ,  $M_{\text{users} | \text{delegitimizing}} = .69$ ,  $M_{\text{users} | \text{control}} = .45$ . While legitimating and delegitimizing frame were significantly different from one another in post hoc tests ( $p < .05$ ), neither were significantly different than the control (fig. 5). Thus both users and nonusers showed shifts in cognitive legitimacy that resulted from exposure to different frames. Nonusers, however, were more influenced by frames, supporting hypothesis 1a.

**Implicit Association as the Mediator.** Hypothesis 2 posits that cognitive legitimacy (as measured via the IAT) will mediate normative legitimacy judgments (as measured by the Elsbach scale) for nonusers but not users. To test this hypothesis, we conducted a bootstrapping analysis for moderated mediation developed by Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes (2007) using the PROCESS macro in SPSS for Model 8 (Hayes 2012). In this analysis, frame was the independent variable, cognitive legitimacy was the mediator, normative



legitimacy was the dependent variable, and user status was the moderator (fig. 3). The number of iterations for the bootstrap was set at 1,000, with the confidence interval at 95%. Dummy variables were created for the independent frame variable so that our analysis would test the difference between the legitimating and delegitimizing frames. The analysis began by considering the effects of frame, user, and the interaction of frame and user status on cognitive legitimacy. The overall model was significant ( $F(4, 218) = 24.27, p < .0001$ ) with a significant frame  $\times$  user status interaction ( $\beta = .29, t = 2.49, p \leq .01$ ). We then looked at the effects of cognitive legitimacy, frame and user-status effects on normative legitimacy. The overall model was significant ( $F(5, 217) = 9.9, p < .0001$ ). Cognitive legitimacy (IAT) was significantly related to normative legitimacy ( $\beta = -8.4, t = -4.48, p < .0001$ ); and importantly the interaction between frame and user status was significant ( $\beta = -8.97, t = -2.67, p \leq .01$ ). We then used the bootstrapping analysis to look at both the direct and indirect effects of frame on normative legitimacy as mediated by cognitive legitimacy (IAT) and moderated by user status. Conditional direct effects of frame on normative legitimacy for nonusers were positive and significant ( $\beta = 6.4, t = 2.25, p \leq .05, 95\% \text{ CI} = .79 \text{ to } 11.8$ ) but were not significant for users ( $\beta = -2.6, t = -.98, 95\% \text{ CI} = -1.9 \text{ to } 7.1$ ). When the conditional indirect effects of frame on normative legitimacy via cognitive legitimacy were considered, the effect was significant for both nonusers ( $\beta = 6.4, 95\% \text{ CI} = 3.2 \text{ to } 10.2$ ) and users ( $\beta = 3.9, 95\% \text{ CI} = 1.9 \text{ to } 7.08$ ). Indirect effect of the highest order interaction with cognitive legitimacy as a mediator was significant ( $\beta = -2.5, 95\% \text{ CI} = -5.9 \text{ to } -.65$ ), confirming that cognitive legitimacy is mediating normative legitimacy judgments when user status is taken into account (i.e., moderated mediation). The results of this analysis thus support hypothesis 2; frame prompts shifts in cognitive legitimacy which in turn affect judgments of normative legitimacy, and this varies by user status, with nonusers being more influenced by the frame.

*Effects on Behavioral Intention.* Similar to the effects on normative legitimacy judgments, we expected cognitive legitimacy to mediate behavioral intention for nonusers. Normative legitimacy and behavioral intention were correlated overall ( $r = .28$ ) and more so for nonusers ( $r_{\text{nonusers}} = .58, r_{\text{users}} = .07$ ). For behavioral intention, the frame  $\times$  user-status interaction was significant ( $\beta = -1.9, t = -2.3, p = .02$ ), but the relationship between cognitive legitimacy and behavior was not significant ( $\beta = -.67, t = -1.5, p = .14$ ). Conditional direct effects of frame on the behavior were significant for nonusers ( $\beta = 2.27, t = 3.39, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI} = .95 \text{ to } 3.59$ ) but were not significant for users ( $t = .56$ ). However, conditional indirect effects of frame on behavior via cognitive legitimacy were not significant for either group as effects fell within confidence intervals containing zero ( $\beta_{\text{nonusers}} = .50, 95\% \text{ CI} = -.18 \text{ to } 1.3; \beta_{\text{users}} = .31, 95\% \text{ CI} = -.10 \text{ to } .97$ ), indicating that while frame has a direct effect on behavioral intentions for nonusers, it

was not mediated by shifts in cognitive legitimacy. Thus hypothesis 3 is not supported.

## Discussion

In this experiment, we found that media frame had a direct impact on implicit associations for both users and nonusers. Yet as predicted, nonusers were more influenced by the media frame than users. For nonusers these implicit associations mediated normative legitimacy judgments. Current users, in contrast, were less swayed by media frames in forming normative judgments. However, although users were less affected by media frame according to their IAT scores, they still experienced shifts in cognitive legitimacy due to framing. This is important because it shows that cognitive legitimacy is fluid even with consumers who have more developed knowledge of an industry. The IAT's sensitivity to changing cognitive organization is a strength for assessing such subtle associative changes.

In experiment 1, we used a news story to manipulate frame. Yet the stories used to manipulate frame in experiment 1 include a host of other information and associations that could affect legitimacy judgments—implications about those who gamble, the risk of gambling, or the settings in which gambling occurs. Avoiding articulation of latent content and relying only on one manifest label to manipulate frame would provide a stronger test of framing effects.

In experiment 2, we therefore manipulate frame by label, using either the current label “gambling” or the newer label “gaming.” Our media analysis found “gaming” to be more associated with the legitimizing entertainment frame while the “gambling” label was more associated with the crime and regulation frames. Based on the results of experiment 1, we expect nonusers to be influenced by the new gaming label. However, we do not know how the new label will affect users—they too may be positively influenced by the legitimizing label, or they might view this new label as unfamiliar. Thus, in our next experiment, we test the potentially different effects that frame label may have for users versus nonusers on cognitive, normative, and behavioral intent measures.

## EXPERIMENT 2

In this experiment, we manipulate frame by using either the label “gambling” or “gaming” within the article text. Based on our review and media analysis, we predict that label may mean different things to different user groups. Specifically, based on the results from experiment 1, we predict that cognitive associations of nonusers will be more affected by the newer label (gaming). Formally:

- H4:** Frame label will cause a shift in cognitive associations with either legitimating or delegitimizing practices for nonusers. Specifically, the newer label (“gaming”) will increase implicit associations with a legitimate field of practice for nonusers.

However, although we expect nonusers to be affected by the

new frame, we do not know how it will affect users. One possibility is that their thinking will be facilitated by the label they know, gambling. They might feel a sense of fluency with the gambling label that they do not feel from the newer gaming label. Alternatively, previous research on expertise suggests that with elaborate knowledge structures, experts are able to assimilate disparate information more readily than nonexperts (Alba and Hutchinson 1987). It could be that users are flexible enough in their categorical structures to accommodate either label. Thus we have no formal hypothesis for the effect of label on the cognitive associations of users.

As found in experiment 1, however, while frame may affect the cognitive associations of both current users and nonusers, we predict that this shift in associations will be stronger for nonusers because they do not have fixed normative judgments about online gaming/gambling. The newly formed implicit associations will thus mediate normative judgments. Because normative judgment is often aligned with behavioral intention (Ajzen and Fishbein 1977), we also test for the effects on behavioral intentions, predicting that cognitive legitimacy will mediate the effect of frame on behavioral intention as well.

- H5:** Cognitive legitimacy will mediate the effect of label on normative legitimacy judgments for nonusers.
- H6:** Cognitive legitimacy will mediate the effect of label on behavioral intentions for nonusers.

## Data and Methods

**Participants.** One hundred fifteen participants (48 users, 67 nonusers) were recruited from a national database (Mechanical Turk). We used a 2 (user status: users, nonusers)  $\times$  2 (frame label: gaming, gambling) design. As before, all participants had some previous experience gambling. The same legitimating media story used in experiment 1 was used here, except “gaming” replaced “gambling” in some versions. This word appeared once in the article headline and four times within the article text. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two media conditions.

**Procedure.** Participants were recruited online and read one of the media articles. They only saw the term “gambling” or “gaming” in the media story. At other times, the online gambling industry was called “online casino industry.” Participants were then directed to another website hosted by millisecond.com, where they took the IAT. They filled out some additional measures regarding the online casino industry, such as the Elsbach scale, where “online gambling” was replaced by “online casino.” Finally, to measure behavioral intentions, participants answered two questions: “How likely are you to consider gambling online once it is legal in the US?” (1 = very unlikely, 7 = very likely) and “How much interest do you have in learning more about online gambling?” (1 = none, 7 = very much). These were

correlated ( $r = .82$ ) and summed to form the behavioral intention measure.

## Results

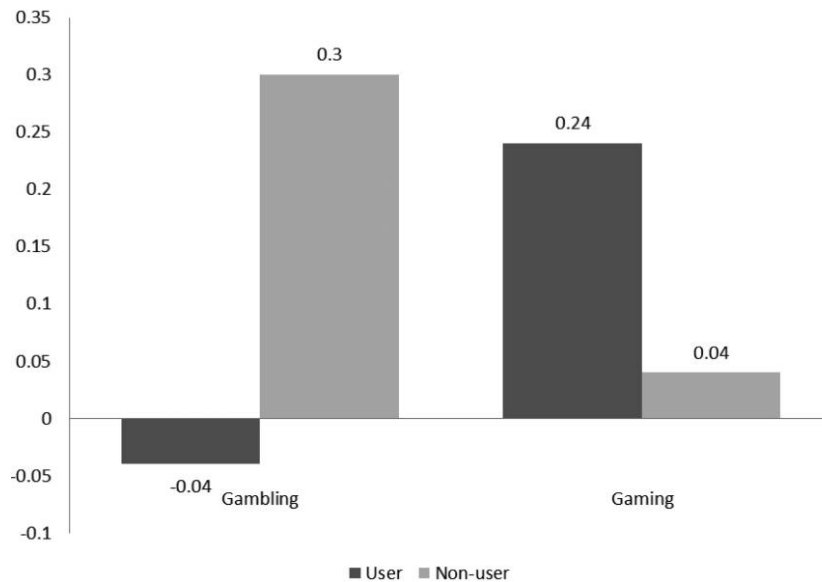
**Manipulation Check.** We conducted the same manipulation check as in experiment 1 to assess differences in experience between users and nonusers. After finding these two items were correlated ( $r = .76$ ), we summed them for analysis. We expected that users would rate themselves higher on comprehensibility than nonusers, and this was supported ( $M_{\text{user}} = 12.2$  vs.  $M_{\text{nonuser}} = 8.8$ , significantly different at  $t(114) = 39.1, p < .0001$ ).

**Impact of Category Label on Cognitive Legitimacy.** Hypothesis 4 predicts that nonusers will be more likely to associate online casinos with legitimate practices after being exposed to the new label, “gaming.” GLM was run with user status and frame label as independent variables and the IAT D-score as the dependent variable. As before, lower scores indicate more associations between online casinos and legitimate practices. The overall model was significant ( $F(3, 111) = 3.7, p < .01$ ), and only the interaction between user status and frame was significant ( $F(1, 111) = 9.6, p < .0001$ ). As expected, nonusers had more associations with the legitimate field of practice after being shown the new frame label, “gaming” ( $M_{\text{nonusers}|\text{gaming}} = .04, M_{\text{nonusers}|\text{gambling}} = .30$ ). This supports hypothesis 4. Further, we found that users had the opposite reaction to nonusers, forming more associations with the legitimate field after being shown the current label, “gambling” ( $M_{\text{users}|\text{gambling}} = -.04, M_{\text{users}|\text{gaming}} = .24$ , with post hoc tests in both cases significant at  $p \leq .05$ ; see fig. 6). Although we did not predict particular effects for users, we believe this result makes sense within the larger literature on framing and priming. Consumers utilize accessible experiences when forming judgments (Schwarz 2004). For current online gamblers the term “gambling” is more accessible, as it is the label toward which they have previously formed positive legitimizing associations.

**Implicit Association as the Mediator.** In our previous experiment, cognitive legitimacy mediated normative legitimacy judgments when user status was taken into account. To test hypothesis 5, we conducted a test for moderated mediation, predicting that cognitive legitimacy (measured via the IAT) would mediate normative legitimacy judgments (as measured via the Elsbach scale) for nonusers but not users. As in our first experiment, we used the bootstrapping method to test for moderated mediation with same settings. We first looked at the overall effect of frame label, user, and their interaction on cognitive legitimacy. The overall model was significant ( $F(3, 111) = 3.7, p = .01$ ), and importantly there was a significant interaction between user and frame on cognitive legitimacy ( $\beta = -.54, t = -3.1, p = .02$ ). We then looked at the effect of cognitive legitimacy, frame, and user status on normative legitimacy. The model was significant ( $F(4, 110) = 12.1$ ), and the relationship between cognitive and normative legitimacy was significant ( $\beta =$

FIGURE 6

IAT SCORES FOR GAMBLING VERSUS GAMING BY USER STATUS



$-.10.6, t = -4.8, p < .001$ ). However, the interaction between user and frame was not significant ( $\beta = 6.4, t = 1.5, p = .12$ ). As Zhao, Lynch, and Chen (2010) note, the negative effect of one variable can sometimes cancel out what appears to be an overall significant effect. In this situation, users and nonusers have different directionality in terms of their reaction to the frame. Bootstrapping thus allows us to parcel out the direct and indirect effects. Conditional direct effects of frame on normative legitimacy for nonusers were significant ( $\beta = 6.1, t = 2.3, p = .02, 95\% \text{ CI} = .79 \text{ to } 11.8$ ), but were not significant for users ( $\beta = -.31, t = -.09$ ). Conditional indirect effects of frame on normative legitimacy via cognitive legitimacy were significant for both groups and within confidence intervals not containing zero; nonusers ( $\beta = 2.7, 95\% \text{ CI} = 3.62 \text{ to } 5.8$ ) and users ( $\beta = -2.97, 95\% \text{ CI} = -6.7 \text{ to } -.44$ ). Indirect effects of the highest order interaction with cognitive legitimacy as a mediator were significant ( $\beta = 5.7, 95\% \text{ CI} = 2.26 \text{ to } 10.42$ ), confirming that cognitive legitimacy is mediating normative legitimacy judgments overall once user status is taken into account. This supports hypothesis 5.

*Effects on Behavioral Intention.* We expected the effects of frame on normative legitimacy to exert downstream effects on behavioral intentions for nonusers (but not users). We also expected that this would be mediated by implicit associations (hypothesis 6). Normative legitimacy and behavioral intention were significantly correlated ( $r = .43$ ) for both user groups and more strongly related with nonusers

( $r_{\text{nonusers}} = .55$ ) than users ( $r_{\text{users}} = .21, \text{NS}$ ). In accordance with hypothesis 6, we also considered the direct and indirect impact of label on behavioral intentions. Again using Preacher et al.'s (2007) procedure for testing moderated mediation, we first looked at the relationship between cognitive legitimacy, frame, and user on behavioral intention (model significant at  $F(4, 110) = 15.7, p < .0001$ ). There was a significant relationship between cognitive legitimacy and behavioral intention ( $\beta = -1.1, t = -3.0, p < .0001$ ), and we also found a significant interaction between user and frame ( $\beta = 7.28, t = 5.8, p < .0001$ ). Both users and nonusers showed significant direct effects ( $\beta_{\text{nonusers}} = 3.3, t = 4.2, p < .0001, 95\% \text{ CI} = 1.11 \text{ to } 4.92$ ;  $\beta_{\text{users}} = -3.9, t = -4.19, p < .0001, 95\% \text{ CI} = -5.79 \text{ to } -2.07$ ). Indirect effects for both groups were also significant ( $\beta_{\text{nonusers}} = .51, 95\% \text{ CI} = .069 \text{ to } 1.15$ ;  $\beta_{\text{users}} = -.55, 95\% \text{ CI} = -1.34 \text{ to } -.042$ ). Indirect effects of the highest order interaction with cognitive legitimacy as a mediator were significant ( $\beta = 1.06, 95\% \text{ CI} = .33 \text{ to } 2.12$ ), confirming that cognitive legitimacy mediates behavioral intentions overall but for both user groups, but with different directionality. Thus hypothesis 6 is supported, but the evidence here indicates that frame affects users' behavioral intentions as well. This suggests that the new "gaming" label, while not as associated with entertainment for users as "gambling," has negative effects on their normative and behavioral intentions. The "gaming" frame, on the other hand, positively changes the normative judgments and behavioral intentions of nonusers working through cognitive legitimacy.

## Discussion

In experiment 2, we find that frame manipulated only by label has a direct impact on the legitimacy judgments of nonusers, with nonusers associating gaming more with the legitimate field of practice. Users, on the other hand, are more influenced by the old term, gambling. While users might respond cognitively more favorably to “gambling,” the use of this term clearly impedes normative legitimacy judgments for nonusers. We find that the frame prompts shifts in cognitive associations, which mediates normative legitimacy judgments and behavioral intentions. Although we did not find that cognitive shifts mediated behavioral intentions in experiment 1, we did find such an effect in experiment 2. There are several potential reasons for this. First, experiment 2 provided a cleaner manipulation of frame without attendant associations of risk that might have come with manipulating frame through a story. Also note that the correlation between our two questions for measuring behavioral intention is much higher in experiment 2 than experiment 1 ( $r = .82$  vs.  $r = .28$ ). Thus our experiments together show that frame affects judgments of normative legitimacy for nonusers because it shifts cognitive associations, but the frame context may determine whether or not this shift in normative judgment will carry over to behavioral intentions.

Finding these labeling effects on nonusers has important practical implications concerning the label for the industry. The American Gaming Association (AGA) has been criticized for aligning themselves with “gaming” rather than “gambling.” Critics claim that this name change makes gambling appear more recreational. Indeed, our media analysis found that gaming is used more often in entertainment contexts than in crime stories. We further find that the term “gaming” changes the implicit associations of nonusers. The AGA claims that the term “gaming” preceded “gambling,” and they are returning the practice to its original roots (American Gaming Association 2012), but according to our research they likely benefit from the label change. Whether the online gambling industry should continue with the gambling term or adopt the gaming term is not only an important PR and public policy issue but may also guide how the industry evolves, either as an extension of the current land gambling industry or as part of an emerging social media industry. Research has not previously explored how industry labeling affects consumer views of legitimacy nor has it considered how individual difference in knowledge and experience influences framing effects. We find that industry label does matter and that user status is an important driver for determining how the label is interpreted.

Further, effects of these shifts in judgment have important implications when considered again from a sociocultural perspective. If framing causes more nonusers to consider the practice normatively legitimate, it may come to seem more legitimate at the population level or achieve what Johnson et al. (2006) call general validation. As Weber (1922/1978) and many other sociologists have noted, the judgments of these types of social actors, those without explicit

instrumental interests, can have a profound effect on achieving perceptions of generalized legitimacy at the sociocultural level (Johnson et al. 2006).

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

A number of moralists condemn lotteries and refuse to see anything noble in the passion of the ordinary gambler. They judge gambling as some atheists judge religion, by its excesses. (Attributed to Charles Lamb)

Gaming . . . corrupts our dispositions, and teaches us a habit of hostility against all mankind. (Attributed to Thomas Jefferson, who kept meticulous records of his card winnings)

As evidenced by the above quotations, the legitimacy of gambling has been debated for centuries in the United States. Our research concerns a relatively new form of gambling—online gambling—and investigates how media framing affects consumer perceptions of legitimacy. How do sociocultural representations affect individual assessments of legitimacy? We find that frames present in the media—both event sequence frames and frame labels—affect the implicit associations of consumers. For nonusers, cognitive legitimacy—the implicit associations with a particular type of consumption—has a more dramatic impact on their normative judgments and behavioral intentions.

The findings from this research contribute to our understanding of the legitimation process in several ways. First, we find that nonusers respond differently to frames than users. While previous research has investigated the tactics of proponents for pursuing legitimacy (Coskuner-Balli and Thompson 2013; Scaraboto and Fischer 2013), we investigate the development of cognitive and normative legitimacy for different types of market actors. We find that nonusers, whose judgments are important in creating a generalized sense of appropriateness, are more sensitive to the effects of framing than users. Users, on the other hand, respond positively to known terms. For them, old frames facilitate cognitive processing while new terms impede it. One implication of these differences is that users may sometimes impede legitimacy by promoting a frame through word-of-mouth communication or in media quotations that appeals to them but negatively affects the judgments of nonusers. This could pose a problem for the legitimation of the industry. Another important implication of this difference among users and nonusers is that changing the judgments of nonusers has profound implications when considered recursively at the sociocultural level. If nonusers are more susceptible to the effects of framing, their support, which seems disinterested, may come to make the practice seem more legitimate at the generalized level.

Second, this research helps us understand more about cognitive legitimacy, the process through which it is formed, and the basis on which it is linked to judgments of normative legitimacy. We find that media content using a legitimating or delegitimizing frame activates implicit associations that

in turn affect legitimacy judgments for nonusers. We argue that frames direct attention to particular aspects of a practice and direct attention away from other aspects. Through this process, consumers are inclined to group the focal industry in different ways, depending on which aspects are highlighted. Although psychologists have amply demonstrated the effects of priming on judgment and the effects of categorization on consumer expectation (Moreau et al. 2001), they have not appreciated the consequences of these effects for social processes like legitimation. In this research, we find that framing affects nonusers disproportionately and prompts shifts not only in normative judgment but also in intended behavior.

Third, this research provides an innovation in the measurement of cognitive legitimacy. While previous research has only proposed proxy measures at the population level, we find that the subtle effects of framing on cognitive legitimacy can be captured with implicit measures like the IAT. Proponents of the IAT have suggested that language can frame implicit cognitions (Ogunnaiké, Dunham, and Banaji 2010), which supports the Whorfian hypothesis of linguistic relativity (Whorf 1956), the idea that language shapes deeper cognitive structures. Consumer researchers have demonstrated that one's native language can influence associative relations (Schmitt and Zhang 1998), and here we suggest that media frames shape cognitive processes in similar ways by directing attention to some aspects of experience and away from others, thus affecting cognitive legitimacy. Our research uses the IAT to demonstrate that the media's choice of language can affect consumer perceptions of legitimacy, and we believe this is the first demonstration using the test in such a manner.

Finally, our findings demonstrate the potential fluidity of legitimacy perceptions. Whereas previous research has shown fluidity of legitimacy over a few years (Giesler 2012), we find that framing produces immediate, readily observable effects in the legitimacy judgments of nonusers. Further support for this fluidity was found, for instance, in our pretest of the Elsbach scale where we chose industries that had either already attained legitimacy (such as the Hollywood movie industry) or might never attain it (such as drug trafficking). And while each industry was rated as expected, there were comments suggesting that even these industries may be prone to shifts in legitimacy. In the case of Hollywood, for example, there were some who questioned the film industry's treatment of employees and suggested that this could lead to illegitimacy. Conversely, some noted that even the drug trafficking industry possesses some elements of legitimacy, such as having rules and norms. Thus we believe that legitimacy, though a representation of a "social fact" (Durkheim 1895/1982), is subject to fluctuations depending on which aspects of a practice are emphasized and how these associations are reinforced and codified over time.

A few limitations to this research exist and should be noted. First, we studied the legitimacy of a particular kind of industry, one that has some new and some old elements. While some studies of legitimation have analyzed the emer-

gence of previously unknown industries (Aldrich and Fiol 1994; Rao 2002), others have studied the legitimation of known but previously illegitimate industries (Humphreys 2010b; Jensen 2010). Although both require a shift in cognitive structures, cases of illegitimacy and nonlegitimacy have important differences. Specifically, while illegitimate industries need to change some established cognitive structures, nonlegitimate industries need merely to establish new structures and connect with old ones. Both processes present unique cognitive challenges. On the one hand, previously unknown industries must educate social actors at organizational, intra-industry, inter-industry, and institutional levels (Aldrich and Fiol 1994). On the other hand, known but illicit industries must change relatively stable knowledge structures on each sociopolitical level (Humphreys 2010b). Online gambling is a somewhat hybrid case. On the one hand, it has ties to the previously stigmatized gambling industry that make it seem normatively illegitimate. On the other hand, many consumers do not know much about the practice and have not participated in it, and models for engaging in online gambling may be opaque. This lack of knowledge or experience presents challenges similar to those faced by nonlegitimate or new industries.

Second, our studies did not extensively evaluate the views of nongamblers, those who have no experience gambling or who might be strongly opposed to the practice. We might expect that the normative judgments of these types of market actors would not change, even though we may observe similar effects of framing on cognitive associations as found with current users.

This research suggests several fruitful avenues for future investigation. First, although we have shown that frames can affect legitimation judgments on the individual level and that they do so by shifting implicit associations, the longitudinal effects of framing on the individual level have not been investigated. Results from our event study suggest that our findings have external validity, but future research could investigate these long-term effects by studying media exposure and legitimacy judgments over time, especially for users. Here we found that cognitive associations of users shifted, but these did not immediately translate to changes in normative judgment. Does framing have a lasting impact on perceptions or does it require reinforcement over time?

Second, we have begun to investigate the critical role that language plays in shaping consumer attitudes. There is great promise for using theories and methods from linguistics and rhetoric to understand consumer behavior, which could include not only individual-level analyses but macro level historical linguistic and textual analyses as well. Consider, for example, the effects of labeling found in experiment 2. How might labeling subtly affect food choice (see, e.g., Keller, Sternthal, and Tybout 2002; Raghunathan, Naylor, and Hoyer 2006) or brand image? From a public policy perspective, labeling can equally work in the interest of opponents to an industry. Consider the case of fracking. Although industry actors have searched for a replacement term, the practice of extracting energy from

below the earth's surface has become known as fracking, which carries with it rhetorical connotations of fracturing naturally existing rock. This label brings with it obvious cognitive associations, in this case through phonetic similarities between words, which galvanize public opinion about the legitimacy of the industry.

Another promising avenue of research concerns the legitimization of nonterritorialized industries such as online gambling. One key route through which consumers make inferences about the association between white collar crime and online gambling is through the depersonalization facilitated by the Internet. Understanding more about the tensions surrounding the legitimization of computer-mediated industries has potential implications for the future entrenchment and thus value of social networking sites like Facebook and companies like Groupon. How is the legitimization process different when consumption activities and infrastructure are less public and less tied to physical institutions?

Finally, institutional questions remain. One important aspect of legitimating online gambling is strategically reframing it from crime and toward some other legitimating institution, as lotteries have done through their association with state education, or land casinos have done by positioning themselves with theme parks. It had been assumed that the reigning US casino industry would lead the online gambling industry if it became legalized. However, reframing online gambling may mean redefining the institutions involved (Rao, Monin, and Durand 2005). For online gambling, this may mean breaking away from the current gambling industry and realigning with other online platforms. It appears that social networking sites may be in a more strategically advantageous position to do this sort of reframing, and the "gaming" label might facilitate that association. Zynga CEO Mark Pincus has described online gambling as a "natural fit" with his games. Zynga already has the largest online poker game in the world, but Pincus is planning on developing games beyond traditional casino games (Lynley 2012). These strategic framing battles are equally important for those opposing online gambling, who need to find ways to reframe gambling toward social problems and countervailing sociocultural norms. These activists also need to be aware of potentially advantageous routes through which gambling might gain legitimacy.

Our research has shown that representations existing on the sociocultural level can influence individual consumer perceptions of legitimacy. Consumer acceptance of and participation in online gambling is influenced by the ways in which it is represented culturally and socially. Not only are these effects practically and theoretically important, but they also illustrate the value of considering consumption phenomena from multiple disciplinary perspectives. Both sociologists and psychologists have something valuable to add to our understanding of the ways consumer behavior is structured and changes throughout history.

## APPENDIX A

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## APPENDIX B

### LEGITIMATION MEASURES ADAPTED FROM ELSBACH (1994)

(1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

1. The general public approves of the ONLINE GAMBLING industry's operating procedures.
2. The ONLINE GAMBLING industry follows government regulations for operating procedures.
3. Casino workers support the ONLINE GAMBLING industry's operating decisions.
4. Most of the ONLINE GAMBLING industry's employees would recommend working in this industry to their friends.
5. Most of the general public would approve of the ONLINE GAMBLING industry if asked their opinion.
6. The ONLINE GAMBLING industry is committed to meeting casino industry standards in its operations.
7. Most employees would continue working in the ONLINE GAMBLING industry even if they could get a job with any other organization in the casino industry.
8. The ONLINE GAMBLING sites are concerned

with meeting acceptable standards for ethical behavior, fair play, and nonpredatory practices.

9. The ONLINE GAMBLING industry is viewed by business writers as one of the top fields in the gambling industry.
10. The ONLINE GAMBLING industry's leaders believe in "playing by the rules" and following accepted operating guidelines.
11. The ONLINE GAMBLING industry has one of the lowest rates of employee turnover in the gambling industry.
12. Most consumers in the general public approve of the ONLINE GAMBLING's industry's operating practices.

### Pretest of Elsbach Scale

Before conducting experiments, we wanted to pretest our measures for legitimacy to ensure that they were valid measures of their constructs. Using an online sample of 51 consumers, we asked them to assess several industries: a well-known, legitimate practice (the Hollywood movie industry), a known illegitimate practice (drug trafficking), and two industries negotiating legitimacy (Botox and online casinos). For the Elsbach scale, we found in an exploratory factor analysis that the 12 items all loaded highest on a single factor, Cronbach  $\alpha = .95$ . We summed these items for an overall index of legitimacy.

As expected, the Hollywood movie industry had the highest means overall ( $M_{\text{movies}} = 63.5$ ), and drug trafficking scored the lowest ( $M_{\text{drugs}} = 23.03$ ). Both the Botox and online casino industry were between these industries ( $M_{\text{Botox}} = 49.27$ ,  $M_{\text{online gambling}} = 41.82$ ). Pairwise comparisons on the Elsbach measure for all industries were significantly different ( $p < .05$ ). Based on these findings, we felt that the Elsbach scale would be appropriate for measuring the legitimacy of online gambling.

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