

An Analysis of Media Representation of the Australian Electronic Gaming Machine Industry

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Abstract

Marketers of legal but potentially harmful products face a number of challenges. This paper examines the influence of media on the legitimacy of the electronic gaming machine (EGM) industry, and focuses on the largely negative portrayal of EGMs in Australia. Academic literature on gambling focuses overwhelmingly on problem gambling. EGMs have been accused as being the most addictive type of gambling. However, statistical evidence suggests that most persons who play EGMs do not in fact become addicted to them. The media are generally expected to present both sides of an issue. In reality, however, competing ideologies influence the stance various newspapers take. An initial content analysis of 343 newspaper articles from three major Australian newspapers was undertaken. Further analysis of a “representative slice” of a media article using discourse analysis adds weight to the negative portrayal towards EGMs by the media using “framing.” This lack of balance in the Australian media is at odds with the historical social acceptance of gambling, thereby creating bias and causing somewhat of a conundrum for marketing managers in this industry. Furthermore, all external advertising of EGMs is now banned in Australia, making it extremely difficult for marketing managers to develop effective promotional messages to counter negative media coverage. We recommend that government take a leading role for open and transparent dialogue to make its democratic voice heard. We also argue it could be done through research, independent panels and other suitable means.

Keywords: electronic gaming machines (EGMs), media content analysis, discourse analysis, media bias

Résumé

Les spécialistes du marketing de produits légaux, mais potentiellement dangereux, sont confrontés à un certain nombre de défis. Cet article analyse l'influence des médias sur la légitimité des appareils de jeu électronique et porte sur la représentation largement négative de ce secteur en Australie. La littérature universitaire sur le jeu se concentre essentiellement sur la dépendance au jeu. Les appareils de jeu électronique ont été pointés comme le type de jeu le plus addictif, mais les statistiques démontrent que la plupart des personnes qui jouent avec ces appareils ne deviennent pas dépendantes. On s'attend généralement à ce que les médias présentent les deux facettes d'un problème. Dans la réalité, cependant, les idéologies concurrentes influencent la position prise par les différents journaux. Une première analyse de contenu de 343 articles de trois grands journaux australiens a ainsi été entreprise. Un examen approfondi d'une « tranche représentative » d'un article à l'aide de l'analyse du discours renforce le portrait négatif des appareils que font les médias par le « cadrage ». Ce déséquilibre dans les médias australiens est en contradiction avec l'acceptation sociale historique du jeu, créant ainsi un parti pris et posant ainsi un véritable casse-tête aux directeurs du marketing dans ce secteur d'activité. De plus, toute publicité externe des appareils de jeu électronique est maintenant interdite en Australie, ce qui rend extrêmement difficile, pour les directeurs du marketing, de concevoir des messages promotionnels efficaces pour contrebalancer la couverture médiatique négative. Nous recommandons donc au gouvernement de jouer un rôle de chef de file afin de créer un dialogue ouvert et transparent par l'entremise de recherches, de groupes d'experts indépendants et d'autres outils adaptés pour la communauté dans son ensemble et de faire entendre sa voix démocratique (et celle d'autres parties prenantes comme les acteurs de ce secteur d'activité).

Introduction

An important responsibility for many marketing managers is to increase profits through customer satisfaction, a satisfaction produced by offering an appealing marketing mix. However, when products and services are indeed legal but also potentially harmful, community members, government and other concerned stakeholders are often vocally critical, particularly in those cases where company profits are also rising (Davidson, 2003). Adequate communication before parties therefore becomes correspondingly more important. This situation is particularly the case when the influence of messages emanating from external sources, such as media and other critics, can, to varying degrees, drown out the voice of the message the marketing manager has developed.

Building up good relationships with stakeholders is paramount for organizations. A mutually understood and accepted “social contract,” one based on both legitimacy and institutional theory, is critical to an effective establishment of those

relationships. A strong link connects the expectations of a society and the marketing goals of organizations. Abratt and Sacks (1989) argued that “it is only when a conflict between the interests of the business and society is perceived that companies generally see the relevance of societal marketing” (p. 28). This is thus a situation that reinforces the relevance and necessity of legitimacy. Several authors emphasize the importance of the existence of moral and/or ethical leadership, and of good reputation for corporate legitimacy (Bronn and Cohen, 2009; Brønn and Vidaver-Cohen, 2009; Deephouse and Carter, 2005; Dowling and Pfeffer, 1975; Palazzo and Scherer, 2006; Suchman, 1995).

However, a number of authors have also stressed the influence of government regulations or media on the perceived legitimacy of gambling. Humphreys (2010), for example, determined that journalists, through their role in shaping those semantic categories used to discuss casinos, in turn helped to influence gambling regulations. Kingma (2007) examined the interplay between gambling regulation and economics, emphasizing the importance of ongoing communication between the political and economic side of gambling cultures, a practice which works to avoid any further deterioration in the social meaning of gambling. Palazzo and Scherer (2006) discussed the rise of moral legitimacy over pragmatic legitimacy (for example, lobbying and brand building) and the importance of public discourse through deliberative democracy. The issue of social relations was specifically investigated by Bronn and Cohn (2009), whose work reinforced the importance of moral management, and by Patten (1991), who concluded, meaningfully, that voluntary social disclosures should be related to societal expectations rather than to profit motives. Social contracts impose additional obligations on gambling organizations beyond their normal business imperatives, especially when society grants privileged and scarce “licences” to such organizations as clubs, pubs and casinos.

The 2010 Productivity Commission report states that most gambling problems are associated with EGMs, “reflecting their design and wide accessibility” (Productivity Commission 2010, p. 11.1). EGMs “involve complex design features” (p. 11.3). It is the configuration of these “complex design features” “that can generate highly intensive or problematic game play” (p. 11.3). EGMs account for the dominant share of gambling turnover and losses in Australia. Australia has 20% of the world’s total number of EGM. New South Wales (NSW), the highest populated state in Australia, maintains half of these (Productivity Commission 1999).

Many consider that EGMs (colloquially known in Australia as poker machines, or “pokies”) are the most addictive form of gambling to the player (e.g., Becoña 1996). This fact makes the marketing of EGMs the most financially lucrative. Most gambling revenue in Australia comes from EGMs: 135,696.045 billion dollars’ turnover in 2014–2015, with 11,588.907 billion dollars’ expenditure (losses to gamblers, income for operators), and only a relatively small percentage of players providing most of the profits. Disagreement abounds as to whether EGMs are the “crack cocaine of gambling,” leading, as claimed by Barker and Britz (2000, p. 164), to gambling addiction. Dowling, Smith, & Thomas (2005) argue that

[d]espite overwhelming acceptance that gaming machines are associated with the highest level of problem gambling, the empirical literature provides inconclusive evidence to support the analogy likening electronic gaming to “crack-cocaine” (p. 33).

In addition to the influences of government and the media on gambling legitimacy, the epistemological community also affects government and media attitudes. A review of the gambling literature by Buchanan and Elliott (2011) identified an overwhelming focus on “problem gambling.” Through Google Scholar, and using identical search terms (“problem gambling,” “recreational gambling,” “gambling from the organization perspective,” and “non-problem gambling”) we found the following. The number of “academic journal gambling ‘hits’” had increased since 2010 for all categories. This finding was not surprising. However, it was interesting that the number of articles retrieved through “problem gambling” increased from 168,000 on November 8, 2010, to 462,000 on March 29, 2017. In comparison, “recreational gambling” had increased from 31,200 to 40,100, “gambling from the organizational perspective” from 30,200 to 32,100, and “non-problem gambling” from 1,210 to 3,010, all for the same exact period.

According to researchers such as McGowan (1997), McMillen (2009) and Shaffer (1997), taking a firm “pro- or anti-gambling stance” arguably contradicts the scientific requirement of objectivity. As demonstrated, the majority of gambling academic literature and research focuses on problem/pathological gambling. This pattern of scholarship is seemingly at odds with the statistics demonstrating that the majority of EGM players do not in fact experience a problem with addiction to EGMs (Productivity Commission, 2010, vol. 1, pp. 47–66), although the focus on problem gambling is understandable because of the serious negative consequences from gambling problems, particularly relating to EGMs. Nevertheless, EGMs are a legal product and therefore have the right to operate, and be sold, in society. Although positives do exist—among them the fiscal contribution to the economy and the associated entertainment value—monetary spending on EGMs does present a problem for many persons. Accordingly, it is extremely important for the gaming industry to be socially responsible at the corporate and functional levels. Doing so minimises any role they may play in contributing to “the problem of problem gamblers.”

One sees a regular diet of negative media stories in Australia and studies such as those by GRP (Gambling Research Panel, 2004) reveal largely negative attitudes by Victorians. On closer examination however, the GRP study also found that Victorians (a) prefer gambling taxation over other forms of taxation, and (b) agree that the primary responsibility for a gambling reduction lies with the individual, although respondents of the study recognize that gambling operators and government also have an important role to play.

Despite the legal right to operate and the fact that the majority of gamblers play EGMs without becoming addicted, the print media in Australia regularly publish articles concerning the perils of electronic gaming machines EGMs and the representations of stakeholders in the gaming industry. However, news articles may in fact also be “slanted” towards a particular viewpoint by media, even when they are based on the

same “objective facts” (Xiang and Sarvary, 2007). Baker, Graham, & Kaminsky (1994) identified the selection of sources for the article, while Gentzkow and Shapiro (2005) argue that a combination of omission, credibility of sources and choice of words is the main cause of media bias. Mullainathan and Shleifer (2002) suggested that media bias also results from their attempt to create a memorable story. Furthermore, the distinction between media bias may not really be distinct from media positioning or how the story is presented (Xiang and Sarvary, 2007). Nonetheless, the media exerts significant influence on society (Bowers, Meyers, & Babbili, 2004), and on government in their formulation of policies and regulations, so it is therefore pertinent to examine the impact of media bias on the legitimacy of gambling in Australia.

Notwithstanding the generally widespread cultural acceptance of gambling historically (Caltabiano, 2004; Productivity Commission, 1999; Victorian Casino and Gaming Authority, 1999), it is now widely acknowledged in Australia that problem gambling imparts a significant social cost of what otherwise is a largely recreational activity (Productivity Commission 1999, 2010). More specifically, why has one form of gambling, namely EGMs—colloquially known in Australia as poker machines or “pokies”—shifted in Australia from being viewed for many decades largely as a legitimate consumption practice to one seen by many stakeholders as being socially harmful and therefore unacceptable (e.g., Australian Institute for Gambling Research, 1999)? The aim of this study is to analyse the Australian media’s representation of the gambling industry, with a particular focus on EGMs in the light of media’s ethical obligation to present a balanced view of controversial issues. This study is important for EGM operators whose medium and longer term operating strategies may be adversely affected by those government policies implemented as a result of negative media campaigns. It seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ 1: Is there a bias in the portrayal of the EGM industry by the media?

RQ 2: How is this bias influenced by the discursive framing of the industry?

RQ 3: How does the historical context influence biases in the discursive framing of the industry?

To answer these questions, the analysis was conducted in two separate phases. In the first phase, Leximancer (a software for computer assisted qualitative data analysis) was used to calculate if a potential skew existed in the representation of gambling in the media. The method and findings of this phase are presented in Phase 1. The second phase consists of taking a discourse analytic approach to investigate the reason for any skewing found and to locate it within the socio-political context. The method and findings of this phase are presented in Phase 2. Our final section consolidates and discusses these findings to answer the research questions, and recommends ways to mitigate the media bias.

The Data

The raw data for this study formed a “representative slice” of press articles exploring a period of twenty years dealing with the subject of gambling and EGMs. A selection

strategy was developed after initial sorting and content analysis. Three hundred and forty-three valid newspaper articles were obtained from three major Australian newspapers. The date range for the articles was January 1995 to March 2015. The search terms used were as follows: (“electronic gaming machines” OR “pokies” OR “poker machines”) AND (NSW or “New South Wales”) AND (pub* OR club* OR venue* OR operator*) AND (responsibilit* OR duty OR counselling OR consultat*) AND (Communit* OR political OR social OR society OR problem*) AND (editorial or opinion). This selection of newspapers represents the most widely circulated major publications in Australia. One of them, *The Australian*, is a national paper. The remaining two newspapers enjoy state circulation (specifically, within New South Wales, or NSW). John Fairfax Holdings Ltd. owns *The Sydney Morning Herald*, and NewsCorp, under Rupert Murdoch, owns *The Australian* and *Daily Telegraph*. Appendix A (Table A1) provides circulation figures for these two broadsheets and one tabloid for the period of 1995 to 2016. A truncation of Table A1 (in Appendix A) for 1995, 2010 and 2015 is provided below, as Table 1. While all three newspaper circulations have decreased during this 20-year period, their figures remain significant.

This 20-year time period was chosen because in 1997 NSW pubs (the colloquial term given to small hotels in Australia) were allowed for the first time to operate EGMs within their venues. In 1999, the Australian Productivity Commission released the first worldwide empirical report into gambling. As a result of the report, the government introduced, in the same year, formal legislation concerning harm minimisation in relation to EGMs: the NSW Responsible Gambling Act. This law was followed by the 2000 Gaming Machines Restrictions Act and the 2001 Gaming Machine Act. Appendix B (Table A2) in provides a summary of the various NSW Acts and Regulations for the period from 1976 to 2013.

Subsequent to the information captured in Table A2, the Gaming Machines Act 2001 was amended on June 3, 2013 to allow small clubs with 33 or fewer gaming machine entitlements to operate up to five multi-terminal gaming machine (MTGM) player terminals (Queensland Government Statistician’s Office, 2014). Another significant legislative change in recent years is that EGM operators now have to justify the social impact of EGMs. The regulatory body controls the obligatory Local Impact Assessment (LIA) process. For more information, see Liquor and Gaming (n.d.) <http://www.liquorandgaming.nsw.gov.au>

Table 1
Daily Circulation Figures: 1995, 2010 and 2015

Year	The Australian	Daily Telegraph	The Sydney Morning Herald (SMH)
1995	122,250	441,335	233,943
2010	133,310	360,420	207,522
2015	102,222	254,722	107,127

Method and Analysis

Phase 1: Leximancer analysis

Method. Leximancer uses “seed words” to create lexical concepts (Smith, 2003). These seed words build a vocabulary of similar words that are identified in the documents under examination. Using Leximancer, articles were first sorted according to whether their overall portrayal of the gaming industry was negative, neutral, or positive. The list of post-seed words constructed by Leximancer was then cross-checked with a random sample of press articles to ensure accuracy. To examine the extent of balance in media coverage, we identified each of the cited sources to which journalists attribute the positive or negative views that they claim to represent through both their direct and indirect quotations. Because Leximancer does not differentiate between sources cited in each newspaper, each was manually identified, after which the ratio of positive to negative attributes for each source was determined. We then classified these positive and negative “voices” according to whether each represented industry, politicians, interest groups, individual users of EGMs, or reports, in each case to attain a sense of whose perspectives or interests were given representation by the media.

Analysis and Findings. Analysis with Leximancer assessed each of the newspapers (as indicated in Table 2) according to a “sentiment” scale that counted the number of emotive descriptors used in each article.

The analysis was based primarily on frequency, especially as presented here. In the case of *The Australian*, for every seven words used to express a positive sentiment there were ten words used to express a negative one. The ratio weakened greatly for the other two Australian papers with around four positive terms to every ten negative ones.

The passage in Appendix D provides an example of this “sentiment” bias.

Table 3 indicates an average breakdown of the number of quoted sources used in each article. For example, 1.2 in the SMH indicates that, on average, each article used between one and two sources to verify its discussion. This approach generally presented a sub-optimal balance, thereby limiting objectivity, as can be gleaned from

Table 2

Grouping of Articles According to Their Respective Percentage of Positive-to-Negative Stances

Source	Percentage Positive: Negative
The Australian	71%
SMH	39%
Daily Telegraph	39%

Table 3
Inferred Balance by Newspaper

Source	Number of Contrasting Viewpoints/ Number of Articles	Average Viewpoints Per Article
The Australian	156/68	2.3
SMH	135/111	1.2
Daily Telegraph	199/99	2
Total	490/278	1.8

the quotation from the Chairman of the Australian Press Council from 2000 to 2009, Professor Ken McKinnon:

Ethics demand that the press make sufficient enquiries to ensure that what they publish is accurate, fair and balanced. This usually involves checking the facts with more than one source. Regrettably, Press Council research has shown that Australian newspapers rely far too frequently on a single source for a story, and do so more often than is the case in comparable countries. (Australian Press Council, 2009, p. 4)

The number and type of sources used in this media analysis is summarised in Table 4 (below), which assesses these articles according to the various groups of stakeholders.

Interestingly, all three newspapers displayed strikingly similar ratios of negative to positive representation, with The Australian and Daily Telegraph both at 65% negative to 35% positive (see Table 4 – ‘total references’: 106:195 and 121:229, respectively), and the Sydney Morning Herald at 66% negative to 34% positive (Table 4: 223:429).

On reflection, it seems reasonable that industry sources are more positive and other sources more negative (which results in a skewing of 60 to 70% versus 30 to 40% positive), since the majority of the sources used by the journalists are not from the industry. Consider this example of an industry source: “People who gamble are not deluded, [t]hey choose to do so in knowledge of their basic odds and are content to “budget” a “spend amount” (Clennell, 2009). Table 4 shows that politicians/regulators enjoy a much higher ratio of negative to positive than do academic reports and research. For example: “I hate poker machines and I know something of their impact on families”—a statement by Kevin Rudd, former Prime Minister of Australia—in Onselen (2009). Further, religious/NGO groups are almost exclusively negative, as one might expect.

The Leximancer analysis has revealed a link between the selectivity of reported sources in the media and the framing of EGMs in negative terms. However, to explain why such an observable trend operates in the selection of sources, it is necessary to follow up the findings with a discourse analytic approach.

Table 4
Total Number of References According to Article Type and Media Source. References are coded according to the (1) sentiment the journalist ascribed to the article and (2) information source the journalist used.

Media Source	Article Type														Total References
	Industry		Academic/ Govt. Reports/ Research		Politicians/ Regulators		Problem Gambler/ Victim		Welfare Agencies / NGOs/ Religious Groups		Total				
	pos	neg	pos	neg	pos	neg	pos	neg	pos	neg	pos	neg			
Number of references	53	7	30	63	19	70	4	23	0	32	106	195			
AUS	135	71	61	124	16	125	9	62	2	47	223	429			
SMH	70	40	20	53	27	62	4	52	0	22	121	229			
DT	258	118	111	240	62	257	17	137	2	101	450	853			
Total ref															
Indices showing strength of sentiment bias	7.57			2.10		3.68		5.75		n/a		1.84			
AUS	1.90			2.03		7.81		6.89		23.50		1.92			
SMH	1.75			2.65		2.30		13.00		n/a		1.89			
DT	2.19			2.16		4.15		8.06		50.50		1.90			
Total bias															

Phase 2: Discourse analysis

Method. We apply a Foucauldian discourse analysis, one that takes a social constructionist orientation towards the understanding of social phenomena (e.g., Willig, 2003, 2013). A key insight from this approach is that the same social phenomenon can be potentially construed in different ways. The Leximancer analysis has suggested that the phenomenon of EGMs is tenable to interpretation by different interest groups, such as industry, politicians, and individual users. It would therefore be useful to understand how the interpretations are linked to the socio-political context of these groups. While journalists may be guided by their common-sense notions of which are the “obvious” sources to cite, another key understanding in a Foucauldian approach is that discursive constructions and subjectivities are legitimated by social structures that may change over time. Our analysis therefore involves two stages: (1) a textual analysis of how EGMs are textually represented, and (2) a historical analysis of the contexts of the articles’ publication. This allows us to examine the socio-political motivations behind the choices made by the journalists regarding who is given a voice and how EGMs are represented.

We begin the analysis by identifying different ways in which the same discursive object is constructed. Following Willig (2003, p. 156), we took our object of research, in this case EGMs, as the discursive object. We began by identifying all instances when EGMs are mentioned in the three newspapers. We then identified the various ways in which the discursive object is framed in the text, both explicitly and implicitly.

For instance, direct mentions of EGMs as a governmental responsibility, social problem or a source of revenue are coded accordingly:

The Government will also hand over to the privatised TAB the responsibility for monitoring poker machines, to make sure clubs and hotels are paying appropriate levels of gaming tax. (Daily Telegraph, 23/4/1997, \$1bn TAB BET / Privatisation Opens Door to Small Investors)

The Opposition Leader said that governments had not recognized social problems caused by gambling and should no longer have control over it. (SMH, 23/1/1999, Chikarovski Offers Curb on Gambling)

Family and Community Services Minister, Jocelyn Newman, said the States “seemed more interested in preserving their gambling revenues than in addressing their social responsibilities”. (SMH, 24/6/2000, Space Your Bets)

We also included implicit references that are clear from the context even if that theme was not named directly:

A Federal Labor government would have to make up the shortfall if Kevin Rudd went forward with his plan to wean states off the pokie cash cow. (Australian, 12/9/2007, State Cold on Labor Pokie Plan)

This coding procedure was carried out in multiple iterations, whereby related themes are collated into a common category, such as the category “crime” for the examples below:

“The gamut of crippling social effects such as family and relationship break-ups, financial ruin, and the obvious connections of gambling addiction to crime, depression and suicide must be investigated,” he said. (SMH, 24/2/1998, Hotels Attack Club Poker Machine Deal)

Allcock warns that it is only a small step from labelling gambling an “addiction” to allowing gamblers to use it to excuse theft and fraud to finance their gambling. “They all know what they are doing,” Allcock says. (SMH, 18/6/2002, Born to Play, Born to Lose)

The example above also demonstrates that the themes are not mutually exclusive. For instance, these quotations frame EGMs simultaneously in terms of “social problems” (“crippling social effects”) and “crime” and/or “crime” and “individual responsibility” (“They all know what they are doing”). We therefore allowed the same text to be coded more than once.

Following this coding procedure, seven dominant discursive themes emerged from our data: (1) responsibility (either government, industry or personal); (2) morality; (3) revenue/tax; (4) harm/problem; (5) crime/legal issues; (6) (social) recreation; (7) emotional replacement/compensation (see Table 5).

The seven discursive themes (derived from Table 5) are plotted on the Z-axis of Figure 1 (below), with the years of the data plotted along the X-axis. The Y-axis plots the number/percentage of articles giving voice to each of these discursive objects. Where a large number of articles appear at a certain point in Figure 1, the contextual (historical/social) event that triggered it is examined.

Analysis and Findings

One way to understand why EGMs are framed in these themes is to explore the question “What is gained from constructing the object in this particular way at this particular point within the text?” (Willig, 2013, p.386). The SMH article “Profit Wins as Problem Gamblers’ Plight Ignored” (see Appendix C) demonstrates how the framing of EGMs relates to the function of the text within the context of a debate around a second casino in Sydney. The article is divided into two halves, with EGMs constructed largely as a source of revenue in the first half, and as a “social harm” in the second half.

In the second half, EGMs are presented as a “harm,” to position the interviewee, Ralph Bristow, as “The Victim.” It is subsequently revealed that he is in the management committee of the Gambling Impact Society. Presenting the interviewee as a “victim” who “lost everything and everyone” positions him as a credible source

for asserting that the casino will “exacerbate Sydney’s gambling addiction” without the need for further evidence to ground the claim. The subject position also serves to legitimise his claim that “[t]he state government will be getting its slice of the pie, so it doesn’t care.” This claim, presented at the end of the article, underlies the strategy of juxtaposing the construction of EGMs as “revenue” and “harm.” While this is an analysis of a specific news article, it demonstrates how EGMs are constructed in very particular ways as part of a memorable story (Mullainathan and Shleifer 2002) and media positioning (Xiang and Sarvary 2007).

Many of the news articles are also similarly triggered by specific socio-political developments. A number of significant external events occurred around the peaks in Figure 1, such as the release of the Australian Productivity Commission gambling reports in 1999 and 2010, the “media frenzy” around the 2010 federal election and the arguably extreme measures demanded by the Independent politicians in return for their continued support of the minority Labor government.

The Y-axis plots the number/percentage of articles giving voice to each of these discursive objects. Where a large number of articles appear at a certain point in Figure 1, the contextual (historical/social) event that triggered it is examined. A number of significant external events occurred around the peaks in Figure 1, such as the release of the Australian Productivity Commission gambling reports in 1999 and 2010, the “media frenzy” around the 2010 federal election, and the arguably extreme measures demanded by the Independent politicians in return for their continued support of the minority Labor government.

As can be seen from Figure 1, media reporting on EGMs started to gain ground from 1999 through to 2001 inclusive. This shift was attributable to the effects of the Australian Government 1999 Productivity Commission Report on Gambling (Productivity Commission, 1999) and the NSW EGM regulatory Acts in 1999, 2000 and 2001. The relatively high activity in 2003 can be explained by the NSW legislated six-hour ban from May 1, 2003, extending the previous three-hour ban. The following newspaper quote highlights the enormous continuing reverberations resulting from the release of the 1999 Report, which exposed to society for the first time substantiated evidence into the prevalence and harmful effects of EGMs.

SMH 11 April 2003 “Leaders — A Spin on the Pokie Profits”

The Government might have blissfully ridden the gambling wave but for a groundswell of public anger at the prevalence of poker machines and their social damage coinciding with a 1999 Productivity Commission report which found that one in 50 Australians is a problem gambler. The issue became too hot to ignore and the Government capped overall poker machine numbers, imposed the compulsory shutdown, banned advertising and demanded operators facilitate counselling for the addicted.

Little media reporting on EGMs occurred between 1995 and 1996. Table 5 shows a breakdown of the results of analysis for each discursive object for each year of analysis.

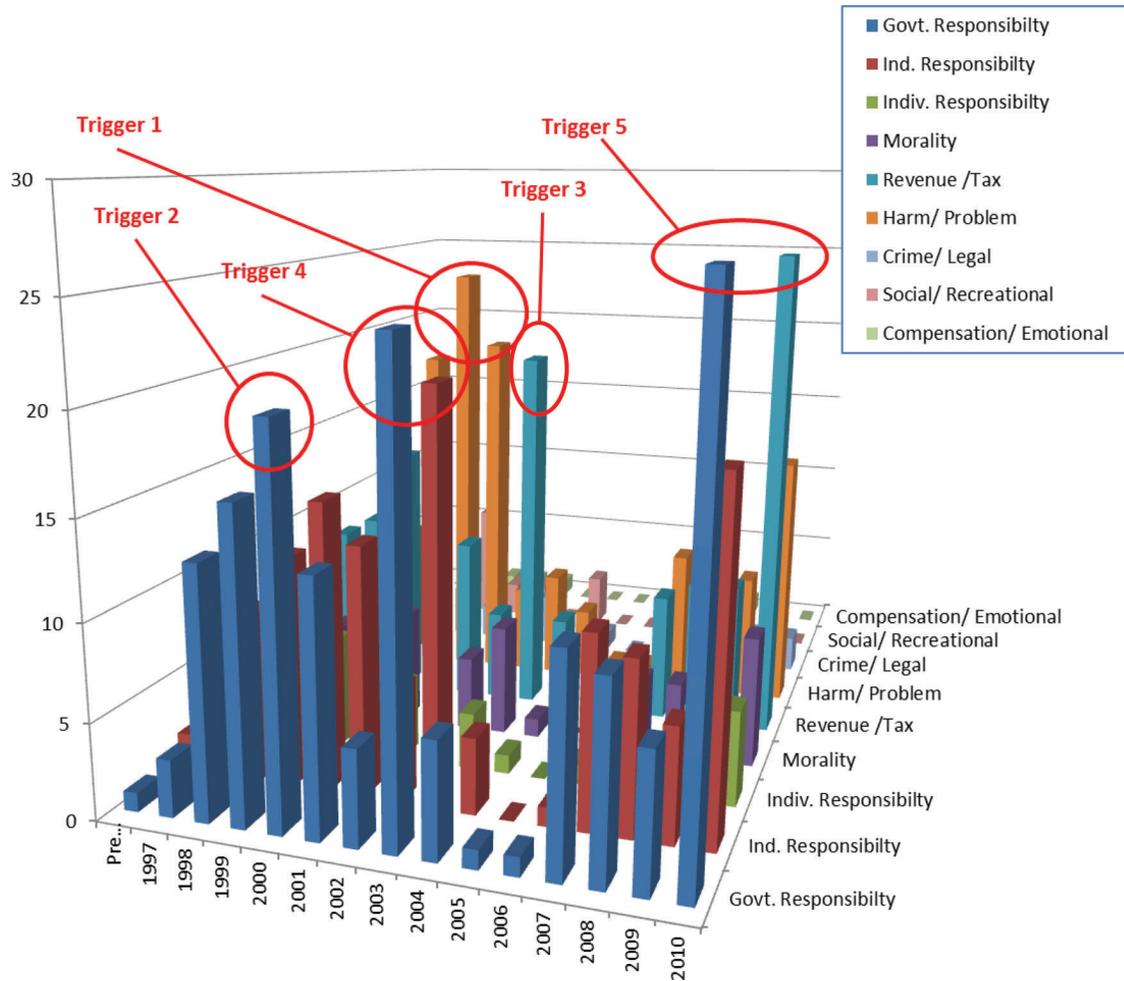


Figure 1. Breakdown of Key Events showing surges in reports, based on socio-political triggers. **Trigger 1:** EGMs allowed into Pubs from April 1, 1997; NSW State Govt. IPART Report released late 1998—SMH first reported on IPART findings on November 27, 1998; Australian Government Productivity Report on gambling released 1999. NSW Gambling Legislation Amendment (Responsible Gambling) Bill 1999. 1999 NSW Gambling Legislation Amendment (Responsible Gambling Act). **Trigger 2:** NSW 2000 Gambling Legislation Amendment (Gaming Machines Restrictions) Act. **Trigger 3:** Number of regulations, including the NSW Gaming Machines Act, 2001. **Trigger 4:** Legislated 6-hour ban for EGMs (pubs and clubs, not Star City) from May 1 2003, extending the 3-hour ban introduced in December 2002. **Trigger 5:** Australian Hung Parliament. Two Independents pledge allegiance to Julia Gillard’s incumbent Labor Govt., only on the condition she implements radical EGM reforms/restrictions. 2010 Australian Govt. Productivity Report.

The total at the end of each row of the table shows the significance of discursive object representation and provides an ability to rank each object. Our analysis focuses on the three highest scoring themes: overall, for the period of pre-1997 to 2010, the framing of gambling as a social problem or harm places itself as third-highest (134), after government responsibility (158) and revenue/tax (141). While most conceptualisations have remained relatively constant over the years,

Table 5
Results of CDA: Discursive Themes showing frequency of articles according to the article's focal topic

Article Focus	2011-2015	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997	Pre-1997	Total
Government responsibility	8	29	7	10	11	1	1	6	24	5	13	20	16	13	3	1	166
Industry responsibility	6	18	6	9	10	1	0	4	21	6	13	15	12	9	6	2	138
Individual responsibility	1	5	5	2	0	1	0	1	3	3	4	7	6	1	0	0	39
Morality	2	7	6	4	4	4	0	1	6	4	6	6	8	5	4	2	69
Revenue/Tax	4	26	8	8	7	2	1	5	20	5	9	15	14	10	9	2	145
Social problem/Harm	3	14	7	8	8	1	1	4	6	5	20	24	19	8	6	3	137
Crime/Legal	1	2	2	0	1	1	0	1	0	3	0	2	3	3	1	1	21
Social/ Recreational	1	0	1	3	2	1	0	0	3	0	2	2	7	0	2	1	25
Compensation/ Emotional	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	8
Annual total	27	99	42	45	45	12	3	22	83	31	68	92	86	50	31	12	748

Please note that there have been few media articles in the five years following 2010. This fact could be because of a lack of news-worthy triggers since 2010.

Of the 10 articles in the three newspapers for 2016 using the search terms “(EGM or pokies or “poker machines”) all but two were focused on the planned new Packer casino in Barangaroo (expected opening occurring in 2024) for which legislation has passed banning EGMs. The low number of media articles since 2010 relating to EGMs could also be because of stabilisation of growth in the market, with caps on the number of EGMs in pubs and clubs and a slowdown in growth in casinos:

The casino industry massively expanded in the 1990s, after liberalisation of gambling regulation. Its growth slowed in the 2000s, and casinos are now chasing growth in an intensely competitive market. They need their customers to lose more money. This is why Sydney is getting its six-star hotels. Great cities don't need casinos to thrive. Australia's cities don't need more of them (“We don't need more casinos,” Tim Diek [Solicitor], January 11, 2016, *Sydney Morning Herald*).

these three ways of talking about gambling spiked in 2000 and again in 2010. Industry responsibility also gained prominence in 2000, equal with revenue/tax at 15, with harm/problem at 24 and government responsibility at 20. Specifically, government responsibility peaked at 24 in 2003 and at 27 in 2010. Industry responsibility peaked at 21 in 2003 and at 18 in 2010. Revenue/tax spiked at 20 in 2003 and peaked at 26 in 2010. Harm/Problem peaked at 24 in 2000, with 19 in 1999, 20 in 2001 and 14 in 2010. This demonstrates the change of focus in the discursive objects caused by historical factors as identified above in Figure 1 “triggers,” and discussed below.

By way of background, political controversy continues to surround the application by Australia’s gambling mogul James Packer, to open a second casino in Sydney. In addition to the requirement by the NSW Government that the large land developer Lend Lease be part of the process, delays have arisen leading to a potential blow out in costs to Packer, but resulting in a potential advantage to long-time incumbent The Star Sydney:

Mr Packer has named the controversial Sydney casino complex as his most important global project, but Crown appears increasingly hamstrung by the planning process, which also involves developer Lend Lease submitting a broader proposal for the larger Barangaroo South development.

Mr Packer had to pay \$100 million up front in 2014 to the NSW government as part of the deal to obtain Sydney’s second casino license.

The delay will give incumbent casino operator The Star Entertainment Group a further boost given it will be able to continue its monopoly on the Sydney market for 18 months longer than initially anticipated. (Williams, P. & Stensholt, J. 2016).

Our discourse analysis of the SMH article (Appendix C) identifies the ways in which the journalist constructs the object. In this case the construction emphasized and reinforced the problems of EGMs in a number of different contexts: (1) a lack of (or ineffective) action on behalf of the NSW government, (2) the unhelpfulness of the NSW gambling regulator, (3) the greed of the venues, and (4) the exploitation of people living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods by pubs, clubs, James Packer, and the NSW government. The journalist also downplays the social benefits made by clubs, by framing them in terms of the power of lobbying by EGM operators to thwart regulations to help problem gamblers. The axiological positioning of the article is used to highlight the harm caused by EGMs. The use of sources is presented in such a way to add support to or justify this positioning. Furthermore the underlying orientation of this and the majority of newspaper articles would preclude any acknowledgement by the media of EGM operators being socially responsible and contributing to the “social good,” thereby limiting the amount of legitimacy attributed to the EGM

industry. This critical analysis adds further support to the claim of negative positioning of EGM articles by the Australian media.

Discussion

Our sentiment analysis (Leximancer) in Phase 1 reveals a distinctively negative preponderance in the Australian media reporting of the gaming industry (Tables 2 and 4). Our findings in this phase has largely corresponded to Gentzkow and Shapiro's (2005) argument that a combination of omission, credibility of sources and choice of words produces media bias.

Our discourse analysis in Phase 2 (Table 5) builds on this argument by identifying the relationship between the findings in Phase 1 and changes that have occurred. Those changes have taken place

- (1) historically: the EGM industry received limited negative press coverage prior to the 1999 Australian Productivity Commission Report, but the coverage since then has increased substantially in terms of negative reporting;
- (2) politically: the relatively recent postulated radical restrictions on EGM players espoused by the previous Australian Federal (Labor) Government under then Prime Minister Julia Gillard (2010–13); and
- (3) socially: the increasingly negative media reporting about the EGM industry has influenced much of society's contemporary attitudes (Buchanan 2013).

By objectifying EGMs as being associated with harmful and negative effects, we argue that, whereas this is true for a small but significant proportion of the adult population in terms of proportion of expenditure, for the majority of gamblers EGMs can be enjoyed as a recreational activity. The treatment of EGM and gambling by media communications is, on balance, critical, and this treatment undoubtedly shapes and reflects community opinion, which in turn affects industry legitimisation, reputation and communication strategies. Given the dominance of this strong trend in negative reporting, journalists would be well-advised to include positive aspects of EGMs in their articles to project a more balanced assessment of this activity.

Clearly, an imbalance (and therefore bias) occurs when media portrays social harm significantly more than social benefits. Whereas the serious social harm caused to some cannot be discounted or underplayed, social benefits to EGMs do nevertheless exist, as was identified in the 2010 Productivity Commission Report. We acknowledge that, in terms of imbalance in quoting, this problem may not necessarily be a fault on the journalist's part if the industry is the party declining to comment. Nonetheless, this problem unwittingly results in a skewing of representation of voices thus giving the impression of bias. It is also acknowledged that, while there is no value-free way of presenting something, the choices made as to the number and types of sources is the responsibility of the journalist. Findings show that the media is unbalanced in their use of sources and that they invariably frame these source,

through axiological positioning, to support their underlying orientation. In response to our research questions, we therefore argue the following.

RQ 1: Is there a bias in the portrayal of the EGM industry by the media?

Our Leximancer analysis provides quantitative evidence that the EGM industry is portrayed in an overwhelmingly negative light by the Australian media. Whereas the quantitative data on positive/negative expressions presented in Table 2 does not in itself provide information concerning the “objectivity” and “balance” in reporting—because such biases may simply reflect societal consensus, in which case, journalists are not required to adjust the positive to negative ratio artificially—journalists’ obligation to objectivity nevertheless does require a balanced representation of views. However, our source analysis shows that the skewing is caused by a selective use of sources by the media, a finding which corroborates Baker et al.’s (1994) observation that the selection of sources in media may contribute to media bias. Media’s largely negative portrayal and framing of EGMs can be expected to result in largely negative emotions and attitudes held by many stakeholders, such as citizens, politicians, regulatory bodies and NGOs.

It is the skewing in “airtime”—the number and type of sources—and its consequent skewing in positive/negative expressions, which puts objectivity and balance in question. Skewing in airtime may be created in two ways: (1) quoting one source more often than another, and (2) citing certain reports or events (e.g., negative social impacts) more than another (e.g., social benefits). Tables 2 and 3 confirm a degree of skewing in airtime.

Media’s largely negative portrayal and framing of EGMs can be expected to result in largely negative emotions and attitudes held by many stakeholders, such as citizens, politicians, regulatory bodies and NGOs.

It is the skewing in “airtime” (i.e., number and type of sources), thus leading to a skewing in positive/negative expressions, that puts objectivity and balance in question. Skewing in airtime may be created in two ways: through quoting one source more often than another; and through citing certain reports or events (e.g., negative social impacts) more than another (e.g., social benefits). Furthermore, Bas and Grabe (2015) state that, when media present an issue using sources expressing emotions (such as emotional testimonies of problem gamblers), there may be “a facilitative role for emotions in informing citizens” (p. 159)—thus adding support to the way in which journalists can “frame” and/or “skew” a story resulting from, and leading to, bias.

RQ 2: How is this bias influenced by the discursive framing of the industry?

The examples presented in Phase 2 show that the choice of how EGMs are framed—as source of revenue, social problem, crime, etc.—is strategically determined by the kind of story that the journalist is constructing. This finding corroborates Mullainathan and Shleifer’s (2002) argument that media bias can simply result from

the media trying to create a coherent and memorable narrative. We have also shown that the discursive framing of EGMs vary according to the type of source cited. By often relying on one source only, or in the case of two or more sources which acquiesce, these sources are selectively brought in to reinforce the journalist's story. This finding is significant because research identifying a strong link between media representation and behaviour in the community is established, for example, through: (1) meta-analyses studies (Bushman and Anderson, 2001); (2) studies identifying links between scientific reports, the media, and increased awareness in the community (Miller, 2001); and (3) Protesse et al.'s (1987) finding that "[w]hen the media portray an issue in an unambiguous way with dramatic, convincing, and clear evidence, public attitudes are more likely to change" (p. 180). By choosing who is to occupy "airtime" in the media, journalists constrain the ways in which EGMs are construed, and hence the way in which the issue is framed in public consciousness.

RQ 3: How does the historical context influence biases in the discursive framing of the industry?

The historical analysis shows that the choice of framing may not lie completely in the hands of the individual journalist. For example, the trend of negative reporting appears broadly consistent across all three newspapers, which in turn seems to suggest that the industry is being attacked or confronted from both the political left and right. If that is the case, the question is why? One possible explanation is that, while gambling has traditionally been part of the Australian culture, after the release of the 1999 Productivity Report the public became much more aware of the social harm caused by excessive gambling, particularly through EGMs. The three newspapers may therefore be simply reflecting this change in public attitude. However, the 2010 Productivity Commission and the resulting push to implement, through the then-Commonwealth government, quite severe restrictions on EGMs (such as maximum \$1 bets), has possibly also contributed to the stance of the three newspapers. Additionally, the increasing number of scholarly articles focus overwhelmingly on problem gambling, arguably contributing to the backlash.

Figure 1 identifies factors such as the 1999 Productivity Commission Report and political factors as a result of the "hung" Parliament in 2010 (with the then Australian Labor Party coming to power with a minority government), acting as trigger points for peaks in reporting for these three newspapers. The media appear to have become increasingly critical after the release of the 1999 and 2010 Productivity Commission reports. They have also become more critical since EGMs were allowed into pubs (hotels) (for profit). Doing so broke the monopoly registered NSW clubs had long held (ostensibly not-for-profit). The correlation shows that the socio-political context has a bearing on media attention and the dominant media position.

On the other hand, authors such as Kleinnijenhuis, Schultz, Utz, & Oegema (2015) argue that, rather than merely reflecting societal attitudes, "it may be the news which propagates the crisis rather than the incident [gambling harm] itself, thereby affecting the corporation, its publics, and its stakeholders" (p. 409). The initial "crisis"

appears to have been triggered by the release of the 1999 Productivity Commission report into gambling. As demonstrated in the trigger points of Figure 1 the government has been accused of “knee jerk” reactions in implementing policies in reaction to news stories condemning EGMs and the industry. Against the strongly negative presentation of the EGM industry by the media, it should also be recognized that, not only do the media undoubtedly influence many citizens, but they also may also influence other key stakeholders. For example, they can influence the formation of EGM public policy and ensuing regulations which in turn invariably negatively affects EGM manufacturers and operators, making it very difficult for them to plan their operational and marketing strategies. In the words of a large Australian EGM operator (personal communication, July 2015), “It is very difficult to set long- or even medium-term business plans when the government is likely to introduce further EGM restrictions at any given time as a result of negative media reporting”.

Conclusion

One conclusion we can draw from the above observations is that social attitudes towards EGMs are bound to the political context and the role of media. How would one look at this issue across various major stakeholders? Tools typically used by governments include research. We argue that independent panels including industry and government should be developed so that important issues do not get slanted in the construction by the media, a process which in turn can drown out the voice of other stakeholders. If the historical social acceptance of gambling is not to be inadvertently drowned out by media bias through framing and skewing of gambling articles, government must take a leading role for open and transparent dialogue through research, independent panels and other suitable tools for the wider community in order ultimately to make its democratic voice heard.

It can be argued that this view is a reflection still held by many in the wider community who largely appear to accept EGMs as something it wishes to maintain as a recreational activity despite negative media coverage (particularly since 1999) and the increasing awareness in the community of the negative instances of over indulgence. Regardless of negative media coverage and the harmful consequences to some gamblers, the availability of EGMs still seems to relate relatively positively to the many who are recreational players and to the revenue sources coming back to government, as well as to respected community groups and causes.

It is however, widely recognized that EGMs require the most emphasis in terms of public scrutiny of government and in terms of social responsibility by gambling service providers. Accordingly, a genuine effort towards collaboration between key stakeholders is of utmost importance to marketers of legal but potentially harmful products and services such as gambling, to ensure that the desired communications are being heard by key market segments, thus maintaining continued legitimacy for the organization. The critical role of balanced research in fostering objective, open and transparent dialogue in this regard is emphasized.

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Submitted February 17, 2016; accepted April 26, 2017. This article was peer reviewed. All URLs were available at the time of submission.

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Competing interests: None declared (all authors).

Ethics approval: Not required.

Acknowledgements: The authors would like to express their appreciation for the feedback from the reviewers and for the encouragement from the journal editors and staff.

Appendix A

Table A1

*ABC Average Net Paid Sales—Circulation Figures 1995-2016—Mon-Fri Editions
(Average net paid sales per issue across two half-year reporting periods 1995–2006 /
average net paid sales per issue across four quarterly reporting periods 2006–2016.)*

	The Australian	Daily Telegraph	The Sydney Morning Herald (SMH)
1995	122,250	441,335	233,943
1996	123,000	441,209	232,535
1997	121,030	441,000	234,850
1998	129,032	432,488	235,000
1999	131,083	427,000	230,000
2000	132,777	412,190	227,501
2001	133,010	418,909	222,987
2002	129,592	409,493	225,500
2003	129,336	400,885	223,923
2004	132,772	390,410	215,431
2005	133,680	397,054	212,387
2006	134,805	392,853	212,145
2007	133,500	380,500	212,018
2008	136,750	373,750	211,470
2009	134,986	369,692	210,479
2010	133,310	360,420	207,522
2011	131,769	347,950	196,028
2012	126,659	340,354	167,682
2013	116,317	299,802	139,524
2014	108,042	275,333	119,965
2015	102,222	254,722	107,127
2016	99,475	238,082	212,500

Source: Audited Media Association of Australia; ABC Paid Media Audit

Appendix B

Table A2

Summary of the New South Wales Acts and Regulations 1976 – 2013

1976	Registered Clubs Act Registered clubs could operate an unlimited number of gaming machines. Legislation required manufacturer to obtain approval for each machine sold.
1984	Video technology gaming machines legalized in hotels (Approved Amusement Devices - AADs) limited to five per venue.
1986	Mandatory requirement for all people involved in manufacture, sale and repair of gaming machines to be licensed.
1988	Number of AADs allowed in hotels increased to 10.
1992	Casino Control Act Provision for a Sydney Casino
1997	Hotels able to install club/reel EGMs and clubs permitted to install hotel draw poker machines (AADs). Cap on machines in hotels increased from 10 to a maximum no. of 15 EGMs for every 15 AADs. G-Line established.
1998	Gambling (Two-Up) Act Legalised two-up on Anzac Day and in Broken Hill. Hoteliers able to purchase more than their existing limit of 15 EGMs at a cost of \$A50,000 per permit for an entitlement to purchase each additional EGM in exchange for surrendering the same number of AADs, based upon a tender process. These permits are able to be traded between hotels. Maximum number of gaming machines (any type) limited to 30 per hotel.
1999	Gambling Legislation Amendment (Responsible Gambling Act) Harm minimisation. Self-exclusion. Legislation relating to provision of credit, advertising, promotions, signs, notices.
2000	Gambling Legislation Amendment (Gaming Machines Restrictions) Act Number of gaming machines in clubs frozen. No EGMs in prescribed shopping centres. Social Impact Assessments required. Further limits on Casino advertising of gambling. Hoteliers/clubs to display notices about provision of counselling services (several languages). The odds of winning prizes. Potential problems associated with excessive gambling. Clearly visible clocks in gaming rooms. Limit cashing of cheques. Payouts over \$1,000 must be paid by cheque. ATMs must not be located within dedicated gaming rooms or too close to gaming machines. Limit advertising of gambling. Free liquor and other inducements banned. Personnel training required. Basic requirements for self-exclusion schemes. Signage on EGMs “Your chance of winning the maximum prize on a gaming machine is generally no better than one in a million”. Playsmart Brochures – available in 12 community languages.

Table Continued.

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- 2001 Number of regulations, including the NSW Gaming Machines Act 2001:
 Imposed a State-wide cap of 104,000 gaming machines (Clubs: 78,020; Hotels: 25,980).
 Cap of 450 machines per club. (Reduction in the number of machines in the 18 large clubs to no more than 450 over five years).
 Maximum of 30 machines per hotel retained (but based upon existing freeze on machines that were legally installed and operating as at 19 April 2001 in each respective venue).
 Tradeable machine entitlements permitted as between one registered club and another and similar provision as between hotels subject to strict regulations.
 Social Impact Assessment requirement for each new machine is continued.
 Shut down of EGMs for 3 hours per day then 6 hours per day from May 2003.
 Blanket ban on all external advertising of EGMs for hotels and for clubs.
 Further development of problem gambling counselling.
- 2002 Gaming Machines Regulation
 In addition to the above (Gaming Machines Act), requirements for:
 Changes to dedicated gaming machine rooms in hotels;
 Provision of player activity statements for player reward schemes;
 License fees;
 Self-exclusion and harm minimisation schemes further endorsed.
- 2008 Gaming Machines Amendment Act 2008 No 99
 An Act to amend the *Gaming Machines Act 2001* to make further provision with respect to the regulation, control and management of gaming machines in hotels and registered clubs and for other purposes, e.g.:
 To minimise harm associated with the misuse and abuse of gambling activities;
 To foster responsible conduct in relation to gambling;
 To facilitate the balanced development, in the public interest, of the gaming industry;
 To ensure the integrity of the gaming industry;
 To provide for an on-going reduction in the number of gaming machines in the State by means of the tradeable poker machine entitlement scheme.
- 2010 The new *Gaming Machine Regulation 2010* replaced the *Gaming Machine Regulation 2002* on 1 September. There are no operational impacts. The new Regulation deletes out-of-date information and the clause numbers have changed. New regulations provide for a sunset clause to expire 10 years from the granting of hardship entitlements.
- 2012 A number of changes were introduced in 2012 to be rolled out progressively. *Clubs, Liquor and Gaming Machines Legislation Amendment Act 2011 commenced on 30 March 2012*. For further information, refer to http://www.olgr.nsw.gov.au/clubs_liquor_gaming_machine.asp
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Note: Little legislation has been enacted since— refer to http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_reg/gmr2010221/ for an update on the Gaming Machines Regulation 2010 (made under the Gaming Machines Act 2001) as of August 5, 2016.
 Source: Table compiled from Buchanan, J. (2013), “Corporate Social Responsibility in the Marketing of Electronic Gaming Machines”; “Gambling: Promoting a Culture of Responsibility”; Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of New South Wales—Attachment 9; Bourlioufas (1997); IPART (2004); New South Wales Parliament: Gaming Machines Amendment Act 2008 (NSW); OLGR (2012 and 2013); Personal Communication (respondent 27—NSW Pubs—in unpublished PhD dissertation).

Appendix C: Sydney Morning Herald Newspaper Article

Example of Newspaper (CDA) Analysis

“Profit wins as problem gamblers’ plight ignored” October 28, 2012

Stephanie Peatling

The bid for Sydney’s second casino highlights the *tragedy* of concentrating gaming machines in poor, disadvantaged areas. Stephanie Peatling reports.

Punters push more than \$16 billion through gaming machines in NSW every three months, giving venues a profit of more than \$860 million.

With the O’Farrell government lighting the way for a second Sydney casino, academics and anti-pokies campaigners say there is a *drastic lack of action* to help people who are problem gamblers.

The state government earned \$441.3 million from taxes on gaming machines in the same three-month period, according to figures provided to *The Sun-Herald* by the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing.

Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club was the club to earn the most money for each gaming machine.

The regulator did not disclose how much money the club made, but its annual report reveals the club made \$50.2 million from gaming machines in 2011–2012.

It also gave \$1.9 million to charities and community groups including \$150,000 to Catholic schools, \$60,000 to the Sydney Archdiocese and \$30,000 in bursaries to the Australian Catholic University.

Dooleys declined to comment to *The Sun-Herald*.

The hotel to earn the most money per gaming machine in NSW was the El Cortez Hotel in Canley Heights.

Monash University academic Charles Livingstone said the figures highlighted the concentration of gaming machines in areas of socio-economic *disadvantage*.

“Again, we see large amounts of money being spent in areas like Auburn, Bankstown, Blacktown, Canterbury and Fairfield,” Professor Livingstone said.

“In suburbs where clubs are large, more money will be spent on machines. *NSW demonstrates yet again that the lessons haven’t been learned*. Smaller venues are more convivial and larger venues stimulate spending [on gaming machines].”

In Fairfield there are 21 clubs with 3316 gaming machines. In the three months to May this year, \$1.3 billion went through the machines, by far the largest amount to be spent in any local government area in NSW.

In Bankstown there are 22 clubs with 2309 gaming machines where \$552 million was *pushed through* over the same period.

“Problem gambling is a public health issue and that means looking at all the different ways you can assist people,” the Australian Churches Gambling Taskforce’s Mark Zirnsak said.

“We should be looking at restricting opening hours, \$1 bet limits and allowing people to set themselves enforceable limits on how much they can lose ... federal government reforms have stalled so that puts the onus on the state governments to help people.”

Mr Zirnsak said one in six regular gamblers had a problem, with weekly gamblers losing on average between \$7000 and \$8000 a year. The proposed second casino would not have any poker machines.

The chief executive officer of ClubsNSW, Anthony Ball, said: “After clubs have paid their taxes, wages, electricity bills and other operating costs, 50 per cent of the remaining gaming revenue goes directly to the community through donations to charities, sporting sponsorships and club promotions. Clubs’ contribution to the community is all the more impressive given Australia’s 20 largest companies donate less than 1 per cent of their profits.”

The industry has seen off a federal government plan to curb problem gambling through mandatory pre-commitment, which would have required gamblers to nominate how much money they were prepared to lose in a set period.

A *watered-down* package of reforms, including a trial of mandatory pre-commitment in the ACT, seems unlikely to pass Parliament before the end of the year.

Government figures were provided to *The Sun-Herald* at a cost of \$600. NSW is the only state not to provide free access to gaming industry figures.

THE VICTIM

THIS coming Friday, November 2, is always an important date on Ralph Bristow’s calendar. On that day, 11 years ago, he made a call to the Gambling Help hotline. *It saved his life.* Mr Bristow, 72, from Nowra, said: “I mark the occasion every year with a walk. I quietly reflect and thank God that I woke up to myself.”

Mr Bristow made his first bet at the age of eight and gambled all his life, progressing

from horses and greyhounds to the poker machines. “*I blew hundreds of thousands of dollars. I became antisocial. I lost everything and everyone,*” he said.

Today, he sits on the management committee of the Gambling Impact Society and meets people with an addiction he understands only too well.

Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club resembles a luxury cruise ship that somehow *ran aground* in Sydney’s western suburbs. From the moment you step inside, its monotone surroundings fade, making way for a vibrant leisure and entertainment mecca that is dominated by a sea of pokies—361 of them.

Last year Dooley’s earned \$60 million, \$50 million of which flowed from gaming machines. At 3pm on Thursday, it was easy to see how that *mammoth figure* was reached. The venue itself was quiet and yet the gaming lounge was brimming with about 250 people, most of whom were *locked in the tense, repetitive action* of slapping a red “play” button.

With attendants on hand to serve refreshments, there was *no need to break from the routine*. If punters fancy a smoke, they are able to continue gambling, thanks to the 40-plus pokies outside in a garden-style gaming area.

Mr Bristow says James Packer’s future casino at Barangaroo will only *exacerbate Sydney’s gambling addiction*. “The state government will be getting its slice of the pie so it *doesn’t care*,” he said. “One casino is enough. Two is *asking for trouble*.”

Read more: <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/profit-wins-as-problem-gamblers- plight- ignored-20121027-28d43.html#ixzz2IP4Z20Yy>

Appendix D: Example of Sentiment Analysis

The example below shows the newspaper used only one positive term (underlined and in green) in relation to 15 negative terms (italicised and in red).

MISS Tran finds it *painful* to talk about her gambling *addiction* and asks that we not run a photograph that identifies her.

“The situation I am in is *shameful* and I do not want to have my face in the paper,” she says.

As part of that *shame*, she also asks that we protect her identity by calling her simply Miss Tran – one of the most common Vietnamese surnames.

A single mother after her husband died, and on unemployment benefits, Miss Tran has got herself \$5000 into debt through gambling, which she is trying to pay off \$20 a fortnight when she receives her welfare money.

“I have borrowed money to keep on playing – that is when I can’t sleep,” she says.

Miss Tran says she goes to clubs because “I don’t have a husband and I feel *lonely*”.

Another *addict* also asks to be called “Tran” for anonymity before he talks about his battle with poker machines.

Mr Tran knows only too well the power of his *addiction*. When he was gambling, he would get his fortnightly unemployment money, take his wife and two children to the shops and buy what they needed for the next two weeks. Otherwise, they would have had no money for food or anything else because he would put it all through the pokies before they saw it.

Mr Tran hasn’t gambled since 2004 and is in counselling, but he still feels the pull. “I think about it but I’m glad it’s been a long time,” he says.

These two recovering addicts are real people behind the statistics *blighting* Fairfield in Sydney’s west.

As of last year, this local government area *lost* \$330 million on poker machines in 2005-06 alone, which is put at 78 per cent of household disposable income (after housing, food and essentials).

One of the largest clubs in the area, the Cabra-Vale Diggers Club, which specifically *targets* Vietnam born clientele, is now seeking more machines.

The club’s website has a “Vietnamese entertainment” section and a walk through the club revealed an overwhelming majority of Asian clientele.

The club is seeking another 34 machines for “alfresco” gaming. It is planning a \$12 million development that will include an outdoor area. Although covered,

it will allow gamblers, who currently cannot smoke while playing machines, to smoke and gamble at the same time.

This would mean the club would have as many as 450 machines. In 2006-07, its existing machines collected \$36.5 million for the club.

Thang Ngo, who arrived in Australia from Vietnam as a nine-year-old and has been on Fairfield Council since 1999, is leading a campaign against poker machines. He can see the *destruction* the machines wreak in his community. What has fired him into a renewed attack is that clubs in the area are trying to procure more.

“We earn the least but spend the most on pokies,” he says of his community.

Cabra-Vale Diggers chief executive Bill O’Brien disputes that extra machines will mean more problem gambling.

“Despite the *hype* and *sensationalism* regarding poker machines, the rate of problem gambling in NSW is now just 0.8 per cent of the adult population,” Mr O’Brien said. “This compares to 2.4 per cent in 1999.”

Figures from the NSW Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing show Sydney’s west *lost* almost \$1.5 billion from poker machines in 2005-06.

Mr Ngo finds it difficult to campaign given the state Government’s *reliance* on taxes from gambling. In 2006-07, the Government’s total revenue from poker machines was \$1.107 billion, almost 90 per cent of its total revenue from gaming and racing.

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Lyons, 26 April 2008, The Australian