

Legalizing Sports Betting Changed Canadian Newspapers: Print Media Trends Before and After Legalization

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INTRODUCTION ↓

- June '21: Canadian single-event betting legalized
- ↑ in sports betting correlated to ↑ in problematic gambling in other countries (Armstrong & Carroll, 2017)
- Mass media doesn't control what we think, but can influence what we talk about by highlighting/ignoring topics (McCombs & Shaws, 1972)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are current sports betting **themes, voices, and perspectives** in Canadian print media?
- Has **frequency** of these elements changed with the legalization of sports betting in Canada?

METHODS

- Analyzed 144 sports betting articles published in three-year time frame utilizing adapted coding framework from David et. al (2017)
- **T1:** Jan '20 – Jun '21 (before legalization)
- **T2:** Jul '21 – Dec '22 (after legalization)

METHODS: KEY DEFINITIONS

- **Primary theme:** prominent theme discussed within article
- **Legality of gambling:** discourse of legal landscape of gambling and sports betting
- **Marketing and communication:** discourse on sports betting advertising, how betting is framed/sold to the general public
- **In-play betting:** betting on an event that has begun but not finished; odds shift according to circumstances happening in real time

RESULTS

Change in Frequency from T1 → T2	#
Articles with legality of gambling as primary theme	↓
Articles with marketing and communication as primary theme**	↑
Voice presence of government officials/politicians**	↓
Articles positive on sports betting reform	↓
Articles with no perspective on sports betting reform	↑
Articles positive on in-play betting	↑

- All items $p < .01$; ** $p < .001$
- Perspectives: positive/negative/mixed/no perspective

DISCUSSION

- Frequency of all three elements of **sports betting content changed since legalization: what is talked about, who is talking, and in what favor**
- Focus on reform dropped in T2
- Discussing sports betting advertising, odds, terminology became focal point in T2
- Positive perspectives of in-play betting potentially problematic; high-risk form of gambling (Killick & Griffiths, 2018)

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Expand analysis on perspectives
- Toronto Star published most articles (63), owned by company with sports betting site. Conflict of interest?
- Does this change in frequency occur in digital media? Ads? TV? Social media?

REFERENCES + EXTRA INFO

- Contains full coding framework, variable definitions, relevant tables, contact info

