The Media's Portrayal of Immigration in Iowa

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Abstract:

This study analyzed representations of immigration in three Iowan newspapers between November 2015 and November 2016, focusing on three types of news organizations with different audiences: the *Iowa State Daily*, the *Ames Tribune* and the *Des Moines Register*. Stories covering immigration were mostly tailored toward political campaigns and rhetoric. Representations of immigrants were often marked by negative connotations and labels – illegal immigrants, discrimination, marginalization, etc. Immigrants were mostly portrayed as Mexicans or Latin Americans, and the topic was often linked to terrorism, crime, and Donald Trump's rhetoric of building a wall to keep undocumented [Mexican] immigrants out and banning "bad people" from terror-prone countries. Articles focusing on immigration did well on reporting facts from the political campaigns, and some analyses/editorials focused on personalized narratives and humanitarian frames of immigration. These news mediums, however, enacted minimal effort to cover in-depth stories about immigration based on more diverse samples, sources, facts, and angles. Iowa is one of the most important states in the nation because of its role in shaping the outcome of elections. Immigration has become an important factor of political propaganda in the U.S. and in many other countries, especially regarding border control and refugees. The dominant image of immigration and related topics shaped in Iowa through the media may, in turn, influence how other states perceive immigrants and immigration because of the messages received from the media's political coverage and news framing styles.

Theoretical Framework: Media's Coverage of Immigration

Journalists worldwide are expected to serve as watchdogs for the community, and the media serve as a platform of discussion among people. According to Tichenor et al (1980), "newspapers are basically creations of the communities they serve"; their content is decided by the unique attributes of the town or region within which they operate.

In his comparative analysis of French and American media from the early 1970s through 2006, Benson (2013) showed that U.S. media successfully served as a democratic public forum for debating immigration over the past 40 years; news coverage on immigration was often in-depth and serious through compelling close-up examinations of the immigrant experience and hard-hitting investigative reports about agencies that deal with immigration. His study, however, did not capture the months before and after the Paris attacks, nor the rise to prominence of the topic in the recent U.S. election. It is still relevant, nonetheless, and serves as a framework that the current study builds on.

Benson noted that since the mid-1970s and mid-2000s, U.S. immigration news coverage shifted from a focus on jobs and the global economy to an increasing focus on racism, threat to public order, and humanitarian concerns about immigrant suffering. He also noted that government officials and unaffiliated individuals were heavily relied on as sources. Foreign governments and international organizations cognizant of the deep-rooted immigration issues are hardly used as sources in U.S. immigration news (Benson, 2013). He reached these conclusions through a content analysis study of the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and *Los Angeles Times*. These media groups depicted how immigration issues became highly politicized over the years.

Paul Krugman, a *New York Times* columnist interviewed by Benson, said that "[he's] instinctively, emotionally pro-immigration. But a review of serious, nonpartisan research reveals some uncomfortable facts about the economics of modern immigration." (Benson, 2013). Krugman was referring to immigration from Mexico in particular. Also acknowledging this matter, *New York Times* immigration reporter Julia Preston said, "Every time [she] was on any form of talk radio in the southwest … no one wanted to know anything about Mexican politics, they only wanted to talk about immigration." (Benson, 2013). This recognition typifies the average American public's concern with the immigration issue.

Benson compared Preston's immigration coverage to that of most U.S. immigration reporting styles, which place emphasis on the human dimension and the lived experience of individual immigrants. He said her reporting style lacks "a critical analysis of the links among the local, the national and the global," and this is still a continuous problem with major news groups regarding immigration news coverage.

In another study, an "immigration reform" presented by former President Bush in 2007 was analyzed as an "issue-defining conceptual frame – the Immigration Problem Frame – a frame that imposes a structure on the current situation, defines a set of 'problems' with that situation, and circumscribes the possibility for 'solutions.'" (Ferguson and Lakefoff, 2007). As with the political climate then leading up to the 2008 presidential elections, the recent elections included immigration as one of the underlying issues faced by the nation. In justifying his proposed immigration reforms for building a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, Trump (referring to Mexicans) said, "They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists and some, I assume, are good people." (Lawson, 2016). He also said, "The U.S. has become a dumping ground for everybody else's problems." (Lawson, 2016). In this way, Trump shaped the debate to focus on a narrow set of issues with immigration solely based on his views.

Ferguson and Lakeoff noted in their study that the language used to frame the 2008 debate on immigration was continuously linked to illegal immigrants, illegal aliens, illegals, undocumented workers, undocumented immigrants, guest workers, temporary workers, amnesty, and border security. (2007). The same can be seen in the recent elections, which focused more on undocumented immigrants, especially those from Latin America. As Ferguson and Lakeoff illustrated, "[w]hatever noun is attached to 'reform' becomes the locus of the problem and constrains what counts as a solution." They predicted that the way the immigration debate was formed then will produce similar issues and trends in the next 10 years.

Bush highlighted the main problems of immigration as: lack of border control, ease of access through the border, and illegal immigrants seeking cheap labor, thereby depriving legal immigrants and U.S. citizens of jobs and local services. (Ferguson and Lakeoff, 2007). Similarly, Trump was concerned with the issues of "bad hombres" sneaking across the border to steal jobs from Americans. His solution of building a wall only addresses "the narrow problem identified by framing it as an 'immigration problem'." (Ferguson and Lakeoff, 2007). On the contrary, some studies have shown that "immigrants have only a minimal impact on reducing the jobs available … because they live in segregated parts of the country, have different levels of education, and work in different occupations." (Fryberg et al., 2012; citing Current Population Survey, 2009).

In sum, Ferguson and Lakeoff (2007) suggest that the immigration issue is "a complex mélange of social, economic, cultural, and security concerns – with conservatives and progressives split in different ways with different positions."

In a similar 2010 study on framing labels used to discuss immigration in the 2008 Iowa Caucuses, Benjamin Knoll et al. found that political candidates "employ[ed] negatively charged out-group labels like 'illegal immigrant' to frame the immigration issue both to appeal to fervent supporters of deportation and to lead people to support more punitive immigration policy preferences." (2010). The main themes during the debates were how candidates viewed illegal immigration and how their administration would solve the problem of undocumented immigrants living in the U.S. Their study also found that "specific ethnic cues from the news media may affect immigration policy preferences to a much greater degree than cues related to economics or immigrant skill level" and that the words used and values held by elites may condition voters to view immigration policy in the manner framed by such elites. (Knoll et al, 2010).

According to a 2012 study by Fryberg et al. examining the role of location and politics in the media's framing of immigration, the authors noted how "exposure to a particular frame … powerfully impacts both the attitudes that people form and the ways that people behave" and also, "the way in which the media frames arguments plays an important role in how social and political issues, such as immigration, are presented in the national debate, as well as how people respond to this controversial issue." The authors analyzed both local Arizona newspapers and national newspapers, and their content analysis demonstrated that newspaper location, whether local or national, and political ideology, whether conservative or liberal, influenced how the media frame immigration. According to Fryberg et al, "national newspapers were more likely than Arizona newspapers to frame support for the [state's anti-immigration] bill in terms of threats" and "national newspapers were more likely to frame arguments opposing the bill in terms of civil rights issues." (2012). The authors noted that the media are critical in influencing attitudes and behavior about immigration and "newspaper media provides a potent metaphor of threat that has the potential to shape what the American public deems to be appropriate 'solutions'."

The study further examined how the media framed immigration before and after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. The authors saw a shift in framing because of several

economic and social factors. Before the attacks, immigrants were perceived positively to the U.S. economy, but after the attacks, immigrants were framed negatively as a threat to the U.S. (Fryberg et al, 2012). "In response to these changing attitudes … policy makers would feel more pressure to pass restrictive immigration policies that would allegedly protect Americans from immigrants," said Fryeberg et al (citing Esses et al, 2002). These threat theories have been repeated in several political campaigns following the attacks till date.

The common trend emerging from these research studies on framing immigration is that the media have often framed news coverage on immigration based on the bias or popular angle of their source material. All in all, the studies found that in-depth expert analysis and a diverse set of angles examining the deeper rooted issues associated with immigration were lacking in the way the media frame the topic.

This current study builds on all of the aforementioned researchers' immigration framing research and sets out to apply it to three types of newspapers in Iowa (a student newspaper, the *Iowa State Daily*, a local paper, the *Ames Tribune*, and a regional one, the *Des Moines Register*). This study lends support to the effects of media framing on the population. It demonstrates a common pattern of coverage surrounding immigration in local news media and identifies the problems with such coverage.

The following research questions are addressed in this study:

Research Q1. How do student, local, and regional newspapers in Iowa differ in their framing of immigration?

Research Q2. How do student, local, and regional newspapers in Iowa differ in their treatment of immigration stories (episodic v. thematic coverage)?

Research Q3. How does coverage of immigration differ in tone across student, local, and regional newspapers in Iowa?

Research Q4. How does coverage of immigration differ in source attribution across student, local, and regional newspapers in Iowa?

Methodology:

This study relied on textual analysis to analyze the content of communication rather than its structure in the *Iowa State Daily*, the *Ames Tribune* and the *Des Moines Register*. This method is best used to analyze narratives, which is the main point of this study – to examine the narratives portrayed in Iowa local media regarding immigration. Using the keyword "immigration," the author conducted a systematic selection of articles. Out of 92 total articles sampled in the *Iowa State Daily* that focused on immigration, every 9th article was systematically sampled, resulting in a final sample of 10 articles. Out of 330 total articles sampled in the *Ames Tribune* that focused on immigration, every 30th article was systematically sampled, resulting in a final sample of 11 articles. Out of 640 total articles sampled in the *Des Moines Register* that focused on immigration, 10 articles were randomly sampled, resulting in a final sample of 10 articles. It was important to use this replicable sample considering that the results of this study can be recreated and different outcomes are possible.

The author included straightforward news stories and editorials/columns/letters as the unit of her analysis.

Results:

Analysis of Representations in the *Iowa State Daily*:

The *Iowa State Daily* often focused on personal narratives from students regarding the coverage of immigration. Adopting a more human-interest angle, the *Daily* sought after people from immigrant families to tell their stories and discuss how they felt about the political campaign. It also adopted a focus on the cultural aspect of immigration – what it means to people and how it affects immigrants who are now U.S. citizens.

In a 2016 opinion article by Angelica Lawson, she said, "Immigration has been a hot-button topic throughout this election cycle, and an unfair portrayal of the immigrants in the country has surfaced. They have even been othered by some candidates, which is unfair considering they are a vital part of this nation we all call home." (Lawson, 2016).

The *Daily* used a more episodic approach to framing their news stories. Many of the articles in the sample were either opinion articles or editorials, which focused on responses to

specific events such as political debates. The *Daily* focused on providing students, especially those marginalized by the popular political campaign rhetoric, a voice to shed light on their experiences. In an analysis by Scott London on the media's framing of political issues, he warns that "[t]he preponderance of episodic frames in … news coverage provides a distorted portrayal of 'recurring issues as unrelated events … [which] prevents the public from culminating the evidence toward any logical, ultimate consequence.'" He also says "the practice simplifies 'complex issues to the level of anecdotal evidence' [and] encourages reasoning by semblance – people settle upon causes and treatments that 'fit' the observed problems." (London, 1993, quoting Iyengar, 1991). Another media study on framing argues that the media's focus on episodic framing "means that news as a whole tends not to encourage a reading of the issues that takes into account broader themes, issues, or undercurrents." (Mediatexthack, 2013).

The human interest stories that covered immigration during the year examined in this study used student opinion and perspectives as main sources. While this is a good angle for a campus newspaper with a diverse background of students, expert analysis of the subject matter is needed to provide greater context for the deep-rooted issues and history of immigration and for better audience enlightenment.

One feature article in the *Daily* focused on a Latina student's experiences and perspectives on diversity and immigration on campus. Alicia Huerta leads the Iowa State Chapter of Define America, an organization that emphasizes conversations about human differences and diversity. She says the organization's mission is "to learn about people's opinions on different topics" so as not to "deny the way people think, because you can't change people's beliefs or values"; their main initiative is to "share [their] stories and have other people share theirs" (Carlson, 2016). Again, we see a good initiative, but a lack of relevant facts, statistics, and analysis which fails to provide broader context. As we form opinions through the media, we need these aforementioned factors to develop well-informed ideas and opinions and proper understanding of the topic of immigration.

The tone across these articles had a pathos appeal to human emotion to feel what these students feel and experience the situation through their perspective. For example, Donald Trump's main campaign rhetoric was to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. "Hispanic culture is intertwined with American culture," a Hispanic-American student wrote. "Immigration

is at the heart of what makes America great. Without the different cultural influences, this nation would not be as diverse, would not be a leader among other nations and would not have the rich culture that has become American." (Lawson, 2016). This statement, and those similar to it from other students, responds to Trump's message and calls for us to reconsider the concept of immigration. It appeals to our emotions to envision what this student sees and feels.

The other majority of news stories in the *Daily* focused on the presidential election trail, debates, and candidates, still void of ample expert analysis, statistics or diverse sources. These articles relied mainly on popular broadcast news stations, such as Fox News, as sources. One hyperlink in Lawson's article also led to an NBC news article on Trump's words about immigration throughout his campaign. These articles and external sources typically repeated facts from the election trail; they were more informative rather than analytical.

Overall, the majority of *Iowa State Daily* articles and the students who voiced their concerns or opinions focused mainly on immigration as a political topic. It was evident that it affected many students with diverse backgrounds. The articles also played a significant role in informing students on the political process. Without a doubt, these factors are necessary to help students form opinions and engage in relevant political discussions. The *Daily*, however, did not approach a more critical analysis of what immigration means for the United States. This ties in with the politicization of immigration coverage Benson noted in his study.

Analysis of Representations in the *Ames Tribune*:

The stories examined covered immigration reported in news, politics, and opinion stories. Articles in 2015 were more diverse in content with local, national and international news stories. Articles in 2016 focused more on Trump's rhetoric and pushed his messages repeatedly, often discussing what it would be like in the U.S. if Trump's policies were implemented. Other candidates had their own opinions on immigration, but some's messages were louder than others in the news; many of the political news headlines in the *Ames Tribune* reported on what Trump said or did in the debates. This presents a way that would stick to people's memory, and would, in turn, would have an impact on shaping the public's perceptions. For example, many of the opinion stories were responses to Trump's proposed immigration policies; some major headlines

read: "*Here's Why Trump's Immigration speech was so Shocking*," "*On Immigration, Trump doesn't have a Clue*," "*Trump doubles down on primary-season immigration rhetoric in hard-line speech,*" etc. (Barro, 2016; Flowers, 2016; Smith, 2016). The key word repeated in these headlines and many others was "Trump."

Trump often said that the elections were "our last chance to secure the border, stop illegal immigration, and reform our laws to make your life better." (Smith, 2016). His themes were constantly repeated in news stories covering politics and the elections, often overshadowing what his opponents discussed. The headlines and stories repeating or responding to Trump's rhetoric presented a narrow news framing angle, even though the *Ames Tribune* was reporting the facts from the political debate. This manner of framing immigration according to what popular candidates say about it will eventually determine how the audience perceive the topic, viewing it from the eyes of the media.

In her opinion story, Christine Flowers refuted Trump's proposed immigration policies and said, "The suggestion that illegal aliens must be kept out of the country because they have an innate tendency to be more violent and homicidal than the average native-born American is wrong. Debatable, but wrong. Statistics consistently show that immigrants commit violent crimes at a significantly lower rate than the native born." (Flowers, 2016). The statistics she is referring to, however, were not included in the article and are not being presented in media frames and coverage of immigration. Instead, like other news sources, the *Ames Tribune* mainly reflects its news framing of immigration on what the political candidates have to say about it.

The *Ames Tribune* took a more holistic approach by examining both illegal and legal immigration. Similar to the *Daily*, some articles focused more on religion and illegal immigrants from Mexico. Many of the news stories and editorials covering immigration in the *Tribune* were one-sided perspectives, void of multiple sources and expert analysis. One article in the sample, however, focused on the decreasing rate of Mexicans flooding into the U.S. It stated that since 2005, "[m]ore Mexican nationals [have left] the U.S. than the number of Mexicans [that have entered] the country." (Ames Tribune, 2015). Information like this is not widely promoted in the current framing of immigration, but yet, more studies like this are necessary to provide a bigger picture on the issue.

The *Ames Tribune* also presented its news coverage on immigration in an episodic manner, focusing on specific events, such as political debate topics, and responding or reporting on that angle alone. Outside sources, such as the *Business Insider*, were commonly used in reporting news stories.

The tone across the *Ames Tribune* articles was more of a logical appeal as the reporters focused mainly on covering facts and sought after opinions and statistics from sources seemingly knowledgeable on the topic. Its coverage was more serious and analytical compared to the *Daily* and the *Register*, which both took on more of a human-interest angle.

There was an additional national focus on events other than politics in the *Ames Tribune* – the bombing in New York City was covered, for instance. Some international stories in the *Ames Tribune* reported mainly on hard news topics such as terrorism. There were stories on Germany boosting its security after attacks and one story comparing Trump's anti-Islam policies to similar German government proposals regarding immigration in the country. Several stories also covered the Paris attacks and relied on law enforcement officials and French media as sources.

Analysis of Representations in the Des Moines Register:

Similar to the *Iowa State Daily*, the *Des Moines Register* had a strong human-interest angle. The majority of the stories on immigration were editorials, letters to the editor, crime and court news involving immigration, and political news from the Iowa caucuses. The news stories focused on the perspectives of those in the community. A dairy farm worker, for example, was interviewed and shared her perspective on how some Americans view the topic of immigration wrongly. She challenged the way politicians and average Americans think about immigration by questioning whether they are all willing to do the types of jobs immigrants do. She also refuted Trump for presenting and generalizing Mexicans as bad people. She explained that she came to the U.S. for a better life, and that does not mean she intends on hurting anyone. (Zamora, 2016).

There was a video of an Iowan mother speaking before Congress on the dangers of illegal immigrants, after her daughter was killed by a drunk driver who was an undocumented immigrant. (*Des Moines Register*, April 19, 2016). By linking illegal immigrants to drunk drivers

or criminals, a narrow frame of immigration is presented because not only illegal immigrants may drive under the influence. No statistics or further research was provided in the coverage of this story.

The *Des Moines Register* delved into the lives of undocumented immigrants by conducting actual interviews with some of them. A 2016 story about an undocumented immigrant facing problems with his immigration attorney provided reasons why Mauricio Ramirez left Mexico City to California and ended up in Iowa to find a better job. In the interview, Ramirez said he feared separation from his family and deportation "back to the country he left in January 1996 to escape violence." (Rodgers, 2016). The author cited current U.S. immigration laws as his main sources to provide support for the narrative.

In a letter from a Polk County sheriff speaking against anti-immigration efforts, he said, "Policies, laws, and lawsuits that keep immigrants and their families from cooperating with local law enforcement make our communities less safe." (McCarthy, 2016).

On the political news frame, the *Des Moines Register* seemed more diverse with its presentation of campaign rhetoric. Unlike the *Ames Tribune*, the *Des Moines Register* shifted focus from mostly Trump to all candidates' views on immigration. Headlines included a balance of what each candidate vocalized about immigration and even personalized some stories on how candidates relate with the topic in their lives. For example, a story covered Republican presidential candidate Marco Rubio detailing his parents' immigration story and tying that in with his views on the debate surrounding immigration. (Boyden-Holmes, 2016). However, many of the stories were still editorials or letters to the editors in response to the campaign trail, providing people's personal opinions and views.

Although the *Des Moines Register* used the angle of getting to know the deeper issues of immigration by speaking to immigrant families and hearing and promoting their side, the newspaper still lacked expert analysis on the issues and more factual reporting using statistics, historical data, etc. The newspaper relied mainly on personal testimonies, opinions, and authoritative sources in covering their stories.

The *Register* adopted a pathos tone, emotionally appealing to the audience to sympathize with the immigrant community, and to see the issue through their perspective; it calls on us to

put ourselves in the shoes of immigrants, whether legal or illegal, and feel what they feel to understand that the generalized negative narrative presented by political frames is not always true. I noticed a shift in their choice of words compared to the *Daily* and the *Tribune* in constantly using "undocumented immigrants" instead of "illegal immigrants." "Undocumented" presumably has a less negative connotation than "illegal." The publication promoted more understanding by hearing from those in the community in its different styles of news coverage on immigration.

Discussion:

U.S. media are generally void of proper in-depth expert analysis, and multiple, critical perspectives from diverse civil sources; it is always important to consider alternatives in news coverage. Journalists who cover these stories also have little to no expertise on the issue/topic.

Many stories focus mainly on political rhetoric and the editorials analyze political candidates' views on immigration. In describing the challenge and appeal of covering immigration stories, one journalist said, "Immigration stories have everything – history, languages, economics, statistics, class conflict [and] picaresque narratives." (Benson, 2013). These angles offer many variations of analysis that journalists can explore to promote a deeper understanding of the topic and its related issues.

The three publications examined for this project – the *Iowa State Daily*, the *Ames Tribune*, and the *Des Moines Register* – share common patterns of framing immigration in the news. In determining whether news was framed with a thematic focus on the big picture by providing statistics, expert analysis or other information to help the reader develop broader context or with an episodic frame which focuses on the immediate event or incident with little or no context or further analysis (Tiegreen and Newman, 2008), it was found that they generally focused on episodic framing of immigration in response to current news or political climate surrounding the topic. They generally developed a human-interest angle, focusing on the community and students. They relied heavily on opinion stories and editorials, which were largely in response to the current political climate.

The *Iowa State Daily* focused mainly on student perspectives, especially of those directly affected by negative portrayals of immigration. Evidently, because it is a student publication, it is necessary to adopt this angle for the benefit of such a diverse campus population. The *Ames Tribune* focused on local, national and international news more often than the *Daily* and the *Register*. It utilized multiple external sources and diverse story angles. The *Des Moines Register* focused more on editorials more than the *Iowa State Daily* and the *Ames Tribune*. Although all three newspapers strongly used episodic framing, the *Ames Tribune* stood out slightly in striving to include alternative facts, research and statistics about immigration, sometimes adopting a thematic approach in framing immigration news.

The notion of being an immigrant is often limited and linked to those from developing nations, Mexicans, and Muslims. Do U.S. citizens see themselves as immigrants when they travel/migrate to other countries? Maybe not consciously, but this is the same case. Being an immigrant is also negatively linked to stereotypes, crime, threats, etc.

The way Iowan media portray immigration is significant because people's perceptions here are seen as representative of a larger population. Iowa is a swing state – it is neither red nor blue when it comes to political base, as people are split along ideological lines. Why, then, should we care about Iowa and how immigration is shaped here, especially when Iowa seems hardly representative of who or what America is widely recognized for? Because of its first-in-the-nation status, Iowa serves as an early indicator for the rest of the country of which political candidate might win the national convention nominations. The Iowa caucuses are the most significant and impactful electoral event in the entire presidential race process. Voters weigh in on the political candidates for the first time, as the voting process for presidency kicks off here. Because there is so much media coverage during this time, whatever major perceptions are formed in Iowa will reflect on other states. Media shape people's opinions and ideas, as audiences trust journalists to provide them with the news. If major news outlets constantly push specific themes or narratives in their articles and stories, people will shape their opinions from there. Iowa carries significant media power during these times, so focusing on Iowan newspapers and how perceptions of immigration are formed here could determine how those perceptions are also shaped elsewhere.

America is a nation built by immigrants, and the media has the power to make or break perceptions about immigration. For instance, the media may promote "a biased account of reality, both in terms of the information that is included and the information that is left out" of its coverage. (Fryberg et al., 2012). By omitting crucial information or research in news coverage regarding immigration, the media deviate from their role of aiding citizens in developing informed decisions and solid, knowledgeable opinions. The current framings of immigration in Iowan media leave majority of citizens with a biased perception of immigrants and may significantly shape how they would react to future discussions on immigration. Fryberg et al. noted that "if the media links illegal immigration with threats to public safety, such as increased terrorist attacks, crime rates, and diseases, then the media may inadvertently bias the public toward an anti-immigration stance, which could in turn influence people's voting behavior." (2012). This finding may help explain why people were drawn to Trump this past election, as he constantly linked immigration to illegal immigrants, drugs, threat to jobs, crime, and terrorism.

Conclusion:

The purpose of this study was to analyze how different newspapers covered stories on immigration – such an important and far-reaching topic – to see if media portrayals promoted understanding through a neutral tone, in-depth coverage, and a diversity of views. With the increased commercialization of media in U.S. society, journalists will be more inclined to embrace immigration stories that appeal to central news values of conflict, emotion and drama. Certain angles of immigration promoted by the government, such as possible threats to the country, will also carry a lot of weight in determining what receives more media attention.

As Benson noted, "[i]mmigration has become a hot-button political issue in virtually every Western democracy, raising complex policy questions and prompting strong emotional responses." (Benson, 2013). Iowa plays a prominent role in the political discourse and the media here are powerful tools that affect public opinion across the nation. Political candidates have the opportunity to jump right in to the primary season by making a memorable impression on caucus-goers. It is important for caucus-goers to be knowledgeable about campaign rhetoric, what is being presented by candidates, and how deep they dive into the issues presented. In this study, several frames of immigration were presented, often negatively. Knoll et al. explain that

"[a]t first glance, Iowa might not seem [like] a fertile ground for asserting views on (illegal) immigration, as the Latino population is relatively small, just under four percent." (2010). The Latino population in Iowa grew by 45.2 percent from 2000 to 2007, one of the fastest Latino growth rates in the whole country. (Iowa Division of Latino Affairs, 2008). The authors concluded immigration was an important topic in Iowa because of the rapidly growing Latino population and the way immigration was shaped nationally in political discourse from 2005 to 2007. (Knoll et al., 2010). It is still an ongoing debate today and will probably be in the future.

Immigration has been presented as a threat to public order in campaign rhetoric, and politics convey certain powers when it comes to shaping people's perceptions using the media as its tool. Rather than promoting coverage as anti-immigrant or pro-immigrant, the media should focus on how well it enables citizens and policymakers to understand the significance, causes and consequences of immigration, in addition to the backlash against it. (Benson, 2013). It should also include ample research and expert analysis to strengthen angles, perspectives and sources. Fryberg et al. took note of "how the media framing of immigration diverges from the actual research on the role of immigrants in America" while research regarding public policy and the economy "reveals that immigrants can be beneficial for the American economy." (2012, citing Dixon & Rimmer, 2009; Hinojosa-Ojeda, 2010).

For future studies related to this topic, more quantitative content analyses may be used to add more substance to research and produce more generalizable findings on immigration and the deeper-rooted issues linked to it. In-depth interviews with local journalists from across to the country could be conducted to examine how they approach immigration stories and what influences their framing styles. Lastly, other studies may analyze the effect of media coverage on audiences by exploring the different ways frames and tone in news coverage influence their opinions and perspectives.

"Only by broadening the understanding of the situation will the problem, or rather, the multiple problems, be addressed and adequately solved." (Ferguson & Lakeoff, 2007). With the significant role the media plays in shaping people's perceptions, more in-depth coverage and alternate angles of immigration should be incorporated in news stories so as to promote a wider understanding of the topic.

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