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This thesis titled
Framing and Xenophobia in the Media: A Content Analysis of the Illegal Immigration
Debate in Time, Newsweek, and BusinessWeek, 2000-2009

by

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ABSTRACT

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Framing and Xenophobia in the Media: A Content Analysis of the Illegal Immigration Debate in Time, Newsweek, and BusinessWeek, 2000-2009 (78 pp.)

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This study examined how three major U.S. magazines, Time, Newsweek, and BusinessWeek covered news topic about illegal immigrants. A content analysis of 173 articles about illegal immigrants between 2000 and 2009 was conducted. Findings indicated that the three magazines portrayed illegal immigrants in a negative light in general. However, differences in the degree of negative framing were found among magazines. BusinessWeek held a more positive perspective toward illegal immigrants than Time and Newsweek did. In addition, the study attempted to establish a relationship between unemployment rates and the frequency of negative framing but failed to find statistical significance. Finally, in line with previous studies, the study found that officials were most favored by reporters. Possible reasons for the differences and the implications are discussed in detail.

Approved: _____________________________________________________________

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Immigration Issue

Illegal immigration has been a longstanding issue in the United States, a nation founded by immigrants (Bean, Edmonston, & Passel, 1990). Since the 1970s, Americans’ opinions on how to approach the issue have ranged from liberal perspectives of full acceptance to conservative notions of deporting undocumented workers and closing off the border (Dvorak, 2009). The recent immigration reform proposals and media coverage have fueled the debate over the economic, social, and cultural impact of illegal immigration. Economic threat, which mainly refers to the belief that the high numbers of illegal workers reduces job opportunities, is a main argument. Public opinion regarding the economic impact of illegal immigrants is divided by those who insist illegal immigrants steal jobs from Americans and those who believe illegal immigrants take jobs that Americans consider demeaning and not willing to do. Advocates argue that undocumented workers pay taxes and benefit the U.S. economy by providing cheap labor for American business, whereas others claim that the economic and national security costs of illegal immigration outweigh benefits (Dvorak, 2009).

People become illegal immigrants in two ways: (a) by entering the U.S. without valid documents, such as crossing US-Mexico border clandestinely; and (b) by entering the country legally but overstaying their visas’ expiration (Passel, 2005). Today, depending on the source, it is estimated that there are more than 7 million to 20 million undocumented persons in the United States (Knickerbocker, 2006). According to a Pew Hispanic Center report, most of them are from Mexico and over 85% of them arrived in the U.S. after 1990. While the number of legal immigrants arriving did not vary very
much from 1980 to 2004, the number of illegal immigrants increased significantly and
has already exceeded the number of legal immigrants (Passel, 2005). It comes as no
surprise that the historic numbers of illegal immigrants have sparked public discussion
and media coverage about whether to set more restrictions on immigrants and to
strengthen the southern border (Klonsky, 2008).

Illegal immigrants are usually lured to the United States by dreams of prosperity.
According to the Center of Immigration Studies (2009), a typical Mexican worker can
earn 10 times the wages in the U.S. than he can in Mexico. The employers find illegal
immigrants attractive because of low labor costs. Between 22% and 36% of America’s
labor-intensive jobs are performed by undocumented workers. Illegal immigrants can be
found working in many sectors: 33% in service industries (including domestic maids);
17% in installation and repair; 16% in construction, and 3% in agriculture (Lynch &
Woodyard, 2006). Though their earnings are increasing, illegal immigrants still receive
lower incomes than legal immigrants do (Passel, 2005).

Affected by the economic downturn, American workers now face the toughest job
market in the past 26 years (Goodman, 2009). As many Americans are losing their jobs, it
is no surprise that the anti-immigrant sentiment is sweeping across the country. An ABC
News/Washington Post poll showed that 74% of Americans think that the United States
is not doing enough to keep illegal immigrants from coming into this country
(Washington Post, 2009). In order to curb illegal immigration, former President George
W. Bush signed the Security Fence Act of 2006 for 700 miles of new fencing along much
of the southern border with Mexico (Seper, 2006). In the 2008 presidential elections, both
Democrat Barack Obama and Republican John McCain supported increasing border security and a “guest worker” program backed by former President George W. Bush (Dvorak, 2009).

Media Coverage of Illegal Immigrants

Illegal immigration is such a controversial issue that studies about how illegal immigrants harm or benefit the U.S. economy can be found. People are exposed to many pros and cons that the media frame about this issue. Three kinds of arguments are discussed most in the media. The first argument is whether illegal immigration represents economic costs or economic benefits for the country. Are illegal immigrants taking jobs from American citizens and driving down wages? Do the uninsured immigrants in emergency rooms push up the cost of medical care? Are schools overtaxed by the needs of children of illegal immigrants? Anti-immigration groups claim illegal immigrants are a burden to the social service system while others insist the cheap labor creates economic boom and jobs (Drehle, 2008).

The second issue discussed is the cultural assimilation of immigrants. A brief review of United States history demonstrates that immigration is not a recent phenomenon and that the country has long been enriched by immigrant culture. However, immigration also brings social problems and tensions. In California, Texas, or Florida, for example, people may encounter individuals who are living in the United States but only speak Spanish. When newcomers insist on speaking their own language, it is seen as disrespect for the hosting culture and national identity (Larsen, Krumov, Le, Ommundsen, & Veer, 2009). Being from the largest immigrant group, Latin-American
immigrants are currently seen by some as reluctant to be Americanized, an accusation that Irish and Italian immigrants also faced when they first came to the United States (Dvorak, 2009). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2008), minorities will comprise half of all children in this country by 2023, and minorities, if counted together, are expected to be the majority by 2042. Stories questioning cultural assimilation abound in the media. The image of newcomers unwilling to assimilate stirs the fear of social instability.

The third argument is about the link between illegal immigrants and crime. In addition to illegal immigration itself being a criminal activity, illegal immigrants are often linked with other unlawful acts, such as theft, drug, and human trafficking. Lamm and Imhoff (1985) argued that most immigrant groups commit crimes at higher rates than the general population. Accordingly, Gilliam et al. (1997) observed that crime was identified as the most severe problem facing the country, and non-European-Americans were overrepresented in violent crime depictions. Moreover, in the post-September 11 world, the national security issue gained more public attention since terrorists may cross the U.S.-Mexican border undetected. The U.S. government has enacted several policies to deal with this problem. For example, in 2002, the United States Department of Homeland Security formed a new agency, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, to help with deporting illegal immigrants (Dvorak, 2009).

Media Framing

Frame analysis is a common approach for producing media content. Entman (1993) pointed out that “to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and
make them more salient in a communication text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (p. 52). By framing news issues in specific ways, journalists have the ability to influence what issues are presented and how the issues are perceived (Tuchman, 1978). In other words, mass media play a crucial role in shaping people’s attitude toward a specific issue or group.

As Tuchman (1978) suggested, “News is a window on the world. Through its frame, Americans learn of themselves and others” (p. 1). What did immigrants look like through this window? Research has demonstrated that a new group of immigrants is frequently viewed as aliens and is, therefore, not welcomed (Ono & Snoop, 2002; Santa Ana, 1999; Simon & Alexander, 1993). For example, in an analysis of the metaphors used in The Los Angeles Times coverage of the debate about 1994’s Proposition 187, a plan to deny illegal immigrants social services, Santa Ana (1999) found that immigrant workers were separated from citizens by media. Immigrants were dehumanized in the media since the dominant metaphor used was “immigrants are animals” (Santa Ana, 1999, p. 200). She concluded that “immigrants are seen as animals to be lured, pitted or baited, whether the token was intended to promote a pro-immigrant or an anti-immigrant point of view” (Santa Ana, 1999, p. 200). In another Proposition 187 study, Ono and Snoop (2002) also confirmed that the media’s representation about the debate was an “us against them dichotomy” (p. 158).

As Gans (1979) asserted, there are enduring values in the news that are privileged. The metaphors used in media portrayals of the debate about immigration reflected the
embodied values dominant in the news in one way. In the other way, how media frame the issue also reflected the values of gatekeepers and may have great impact on people’s perception of the issue. Given the importance of media framing and the recent policy debate of illegal immigration, it is crucial that the media’s treatment of illegal immigration be assessed and studied.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to explore how the media framed the debate on illegal immigration at the start of the 21st century and if the economic climate correlated with the media frame of this issue. A content analysis was conducted to examine how the media, specifically the three news magazines in this study, covered the controversial issue of the illegal immigration debate. The 2000 to 2009 time frame was selected because both the dotcom boom and the 2008 economic crisis occurred during this period. During the 10 years, the U.S. unemployment rates ranged from a low of 4.0% in 2000 to a high of 9.3% in 2009 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010). This 10-year time span was thought a sufficient period to examine the relationship, if any, between the economic climate and media framing. Magazines’ portrayal of the issue was worth study because previous studies on illegal immigration coverage all focused on newspapers’ coverage. Magazines may cover the issue differently because magazines usually have more time to review news events and more pages to add details that newspapers may have ignored.

By comparing coverage from three magazines, this study aimed to find out if there were different treatments of the illegal immigration issue and attitudes toward illegal immigrants. Also, the sources cited in those immigration articles were investigated
since researchers have shown sources may affect how media personnel frame news events. The study filled a gap in the research on the coverage of illegal immigrants since most of the previous studies on this topic were qualitative. The magazines’ coverage of the issue was worthy of study because as the economic climate changed, the media’s representation of illegal immigrants likely changed as well. The framing of the illegal immigrants might have effects on people’s attitudes toward illegal immigrants and might influence lawmaking decisions.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Considerable research has focused on the media coverage of minorities and immigrants, with the major focus on African Americans. Only a few empirical studies, however, actually looked at media coverage of illegal immigrants.

Minorities and Illegal Immigrants Studies

Because most of the illegal immigrants are nonwhite, it is important to look at how people of color get covered in the media. One major finding in the existing literature is that minorities were generally excluded from media coverage; whenever they got covered, it was usually in a negative context, especially associated with illegal immigration and crime (Fernandez & Pedroza, 1981; Martindale, 1985, 1995; Pomper, 1996). Although occasionally some special minorities groups were positively portrayed in the media, overwhelmingly the previous studies demonstrated that minorities were negatively portrayed (Pomper, 1996). Johnson, Sears, and McConahay (1971) examined the coverage of African Americans in Los Angeles newspapers over a period of 76 years and found that African Americans only received 2% of the media space, a small number especially compared to the overall black population that was 17% by the mid-1960s. However, the coverage jumped to 15% during the Los Angeles riot of 1965 and reduced rapidly after the riot. They concluded that the coverage of African Americans was below their representation in the general population and the coverage emphasized conflicts (Johnson, Sears, & McConahay, 1971). As Martindale (1985) pointed out, African Americans felt that “[They] have been largely invisible in the white press, that
newspapers have emphasized stereotypical portrayals of blacks, have failed to cover the everyday life activities of black community” (p. 321).

As far as the coverage of Latinos, who represent the greatest share of illegal immigration in the United States, Martindale (1995) also found the same pattern that they were usually portrayed in a negative light. In an analysis of The New York Times’ 50-year portrayal of Latinos, she noted that although the amount of coverage of Latinos climbed sharply in the 1990s, they were mentioned most often as criminals. In a similar fashion, Mize and Leedham (2000) observed the majority of news coverage negatively portrayed illegal Latino immigrants in the areas of economy, social services, demographic, culture, and crime. Wilson and Gutierrez (1985) contended that this pattern of xenophobia in the media is due to the historical tradition of neglecting and stereotyped minorities in mass media.

A similar situation has been observed in the media’s portrayals of immigrants. In a study concerning coverage of immigrants over a period of 15 years, Pomper (1996) examined how the press portrayed immigrants during the 1980s and 1990s. She observed that the print media devoted the most space towards illegal immigrants, who were covered the most when a story was associated with crime or government affairs. In addition, the press reinforced the stereotypes by depicting legal immigrants as hard working citizens, while mentioning illegal immigrants in conjunction with crime (Pomper, 1996).

Even when the minorities received coverage because of conflicts or crime, the stories were still found to be distorting. A major problem was the sources used by the
media. In line with the sourcing studies, minority studies have suggested that journalists tended to rely on institutional sources, especially politically affiliated sources, to report minorities (Adas, 2007; Fernandez & Pedroza, 1981). Media often cited different elites’ viewpoints to ensure the “objectivity” of the coverage of illegal immigration; nevertheless, it was still problematic because the two sides did not necessarily represent all aspects (Parenti, 1986). In fact, those who have power shape the immigration news contents and set the parameters of the public discussion (Williams, 2000).

What is more, research has demonstrated that when the country suffers from a recession, a backlash against immigrants would be triggered (McCarthy & Vernez, 1997; Omi & Winant, 1994). In a study of U.S. media’s immigration coverage, Williams (2005) suggested that illegal immigrants were welcomed when the times are good but were scapegoated during the bad times. By blaming illegal immigrants for the economy crisis and social crisis, the media diverted attention from other aspects of the complicated immigration issue, such as the demand of cheap immigrant labor (Williams, 2005).

Media Framing

News media can affect people’s political perceptions by telling people what and how to think about an issue (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). By omitting some aspects of an issue and highlighting others, news is not the reality but only a window of the world (Tuchman, 1978). As Gitlin (1980) pointed out, therefore, when analyzing any mass-mediated content, one must ask, “What is the frame here? Why this frame and not other? What patterns are shared by the frames clamped over this event and the frames clamped
over that one, by frames in different media in different places at different moments” (p. 7)?

Giltin (1980) further defined media frames as “persistent patterns of cognition interpretation and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbolic handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual” (p. 7). Through the different selections and emphases, media unconsciously promote a particular interpretation of events. In other words, framing encourages readers to perceive news events in a certain way. As Entman (1989) noted, “[The media] influence public opinion by providing much of the information people think about and by shaping how they think about it” (p. 83).

Iyengar, Peters, and Kinder (1982) added another interesting perspective. They noted that media has greater influence on issues that people cannot directly experience. More precisely, it is less likely for the audience to challenge the frame media use when the issue is unfamiliar to them. Since previous research showed immigrants were presented in a negative light, it should be not surprising that Americans with minimal personal contact with immigrants have more negative views of immigrants than those with personal contact (National Public Radio, 2004).

When facing a controversial issue, people are always bombarded with arguments and confused about how the issue should be looked at (Chong, 1993). Frames help to resolve the confusion by emphasizing some part of the issue and neglecting other considerations (Nelson & Kinder, 1996). Accordingly, Gamson (1992) also suggested that people need to construct certain frames to view news events because news events
have no intrinsic meaning. Frames shaped individual understanding and opinion, as Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley (1997) pointed out, “by stressing specific elements or features of broader controversy, reducing a usually complex issue down to one or two central aspects” (p. 568).

In terms of the news production process, frames can help journalists consume large amount of information quickly and package the information efficiently (Gitlin, 1980). News organizations create frames by themselves to summarize the gist of news events. As a result, as Nelson et al. (1997) suggested, framing indicates how a news organization “defines and constructs a political issue or public controversy” (p. 567).

Frames may be not only created by reporters but also by those outside news organizations. Sources, for example, could influence the media content by interpreting the news event. Journalists’ reliance on sources for information and quotes means “the media often serve as conduits to promote a certain perspective to a broader public audience” (Nelson et al., 1997, p. 568).

Entman (1991) holds the view that the frames used by media can be “difficult to detect fully and reliably, because many of the framing devices can appear as ‘natural,’ unremarkable choices of words or images” (p. 6). One way to detect the frames is to look at words and graphics used by media. Comparing media frames used in covering the accidental shoot down of Korean Air Lines (KAL) Flight 007 and the accidental downing of Iran Air Flight 655, Entman (1991) found that different words and phrases were consistently chosen in the two cases to depict similar phenomena. He argued that the frames used in KAL case emphasized the moral bankruptcy and the guilt of the
perpetrating nation, while the frames employed in the Iran Air Flight case de-emphasized guilt and focused on the complex problem of operating military high technology (Entman, 1991). The textual choices are “central to the way the news frame helps establish the literally common sense (i.e., widespread) interpretation of events” (Entman, 1991, p.6).

The frames media use have a significant impact on public opinion. One of the examples is the media framing of Ku Klux Klan (KKK). Nelson et al. (1997) conducted an experimental study about the effect of news frames on tolerance for the KKK. They found that participants exposed to stories about free speech expressed more tolerance of the KKK than those consumed stories about disruption of public order. In a similar fashion, Pantoja and Merolla (2008) examined the effects of media framing on attitudes toward undocumented immigrants. Consistent with the findings in the framing literature, they found that media frames influenced people’s feelings toward illegal immigrants and how these feelings were weighted. For instance, respondents who received positive economic frames showed more positive feelings toward illegal immigrants and weighted economic considerations heavier (Pantoja & Merolla, 2008). Nelson et al. (1997) hold the view that frames organized the presentation of facts and “shape individual understanding and opinion concerning an issue by stressing specific elements or features of the broader controversy, reducing a usually complex issue down to one or two central aspects” (p. 568).
Sourcing

In addition to framing, this study also examined the sources used in the coverage of illegal immigrants. Journalists have to rely on sources in the newsgathering process because it is impossible for them to witness every single event and understand everything they would report. This is also why Shoemaker and Reese (1991) pointed out that “sources have a tremendous effect on mass media content” (p.178).

Sources play an influential role in news stories; however, not all sources are equally favored by journalists. One of the newsroom routines is the use of routine sources. Shoemaker and Reese (1991) noted that sources with political or economic power could influence media content easily. Similarly, Sigal (1973) found that official sources were the most favored by reporters because of their political and economic power. In contrast, lower level employees and unaffiliated sources appear in the news much less frequently (Berkowitz & Beach, 1993). Berkowitz and Beach (1993) suggested that official sources were commonly used because they could provide credible information regularly.

As mentioned above, journalists gather news by interviewing sources who often influence the media content by interpreting news events. Earlier research suggested that source selection is related to news frames (Berkowitz & Beach, 1993; Liebler & Bendix, 1996; Molotch & Lester, 1974). For example, in an analysis of 1969 Santa Barbara oil spill news coverage, Molotch and Lester (1974) suggested that news was framed by the sources who were easy for the reporters to reach for interviews. In another journalist-source relationship study of The New York Times’ coverage of the Darfur conflict in the
Sudan, Kothari (2010) also found a correlation between journalists’ reporting goals and the framing of the conflict. Reflecting the heavy reliance on U.S. officials, the most frequently used frame was “United States as a savior of Sudanese people” (Kothari, 2010). This finding also echoes Liebler and Bendix’s 1996 research that showed the dominance of any specific type of source, officials or others, may affect how media personnel frame news events.

Sourcing studies about the illegal immigration issue also confirmed that the official sources were the most favored. For example, Fernandez and Pedroza (1981) examined the sources cited in the news coverage of illegal immigrants during the 1970s and found that political sources were cited most frequently. Specifically, 51% of the articles cited the Border Patrol or the Immigration and Naturalization Service, while only 6% of the articles included illegal immigrants as sources (Fernandez & Pedroza, 1981). Similarly, in a study of news coverage of Proposition 187, Adas (2007) noted that no matter whether the story was for or against the Proposition, the main sources were the political sources and less polarized sources were rarely used. Business sources, such as employers, were seldom cited in spite of their professional contacts with illegal immigrants (Adas, 2007).

Sources may distort the story in the other way. Shoemaker and Reese (1991) noted that ethics, race, gender, ethnicity, political and religious beliefs, and other personal characteristics could influence the journalistic process of news-gathering routines. As mentioned before, although most of the illegal immigrants are Hispanic, studies have demonstrated that reporters rely on sources outside of Hispanic communities to report
Mexican-American community stories (Adas, 2007; Gutierrez, 1980). This is probably because the mainstream media are Caucasian-dominated. One factor contributing to this is the composition of the journalistic workforce. Although 30.9% of Americans are minorities, according to the 2000 U.S. census, only 9.5% of the workforce in news outlets are nonwhite (Weaver, Beam, Brownlee, Voakes, & Wilhoit, 2006). The lack of minority journalists may hinder the understanding of illegal immigrants because of language barriers and the lack of connections. Parenti (1986) also pointed out that media devoted less time researching politically marginal groups, such as Latino immigrants. Given the fact that most illegal immigrants are Hispanic, the absence of Hispanic reporters might have a potential negative effect on representing Latino-Americans (Quiroga, 1997).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Previous research demonstrated that the frames media used could affect people’s attitude. Therefore, it is important to examine what the media frames were in covering a particular news event—illegal immigration stories in this study. In order to find out how the issue of illegal immigration was framed in contemporary news coverage, articles about illegal immigrants in *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *BusinessWeek* were content analyzed. These three magazines were chosen for their large circulations and extensive reports on current issues. The frames in the three magazines were examined because how the media frame an issue may determine how the public perceives the issue (Entman, 1993).

**RQ1a.** Which media frames were used to represent illegal immigrants in *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *BusinessWeek* from 2000 through 2009?
RQ1. What frame changes, if any, appeared in the three magazines’ coverage of illegal immigrants from 2000 through 2009?

Previous studies of minority and immigrant coverage have shown that immigrants and minorities tend to be presented in a negative light. Some scholars contended that backlash against immigrants would be triggered in an economic downturn (McCarthy & Vernez, 1997; Omi & Winant, 1994). In a study of media coverage of immigration panics, Williams (2005) claimed that undocumented immigrants were welcomed during the good times of economy and were scapegoated during the bad times. Therefore, H1 for this study was formulated as follow:

**H1.** The use of negative frames increases in relationship with the rise in U.S. unemployment rates.

In addition to the frames, this study will also examine the sources cited in media coverage about illegal immigrant issues. Shoemaker and Reese (1991) defined sources as “external suppliers of raw material, whether speeches, interviews, corporate reports, or government hearings” (p. 105). Journalists rely on sources to recount or interpret news events, and the sources journalists use are important to study because they determine what information is given to the public.

RQ2. What sources were used to present the debate of illegal immigrants in *Time, Newsweek, and BusinessWeek* from 2000 through 2009?

As reviewed earlier, scholars found that government officials were the most favored sources by the press because they were perceived as credible and reachable (Berkowitz & Beach, 1993; Gans, 1979; Sigal, 1973). Adas (2007) also reported that the
main sources cited in immigration debate coverage were political sources, but sources like business or medical were seldom cited in spite of their professional contacts with illegal immigrants. H2 for this study was formulated as follow:

**H2.** U.S. government officials will be cited most frequently in the three magazines’ coverage of illegal immigrants from 2000 through 2009.
CHAPTER 3: METHOD

A content analysis of the stories published in *Time, Newsweek, and BusinessWeek* was conducted to see how the media framed the issue of illegal immigration and if the representation of illegal immigrants correlated with the U.S. unemployment rates. Framing provided the primary theoretical construct that was used to examine the coverage of illegal immigrants. The three magazines were selected for this study because of their large circulations and their wide range of events coverage.

About the Magazines

Launched in 1923, *Time* is now the largest news weekly magazine in the United States (Magazine Publishers of America, 2008). According to Magazine Publishers of America (2008), *Time* magazine had an average total paid and verified circulation of about 3.3 million in 2008. A Fall 2009 MRI report showed *Time’s* total audience was 20.6 million (“Audience,” n.d.). *Time* has been recognized as “America’s most trusted news source” and “America’s most influential magazine” (“Time Press,” n.d.).


*BusinessWeek* was selected for its business perspective on world economics and global businesses. It claims itself “a global source of essential business insight that inspires leaders to turn idea into action” (“About,” n.d.). Focusing on business stories,
BusinessWeek may provide a different point of view on the U.S. immigration issue. In 2008, it was reported that BusinessWeek has a circulation of 0.9 million copies per week (Magazine Publishers of America, 2008). It is important to note that while BusinessWeek devotes most of its space to business, its target audience still represents a general readership. Since this study focused on the framing effect on the general public, it is crucial to choose a business magazine that caters to the general public.

Time Frame

The time frame of this study was from January 1, 2000, through December 31, 2009. This 10-year time span was based on the consideration that both the 2001 economic peak and 2008 economic crisis happened in the decade. According to National Bureau of Economic Research (2003), the year 2001 was an economic peak and a beginning of short recession, ending a record-long expansion that began in 1991. Between 2003 and 2008, an economic expansion occurred. In 2008, recession hit the global economy again. The U.S. unemployment rate surged to 10.2% in October, 2009, the highest since 1893 (Goodman, 2009). The choice of 2009 as the last year of the study was intended to include the latest data available and make the thesis a 10-year longitudinal study.

Databases of Articles

The articles for content analysis were retrieved from two separate databases. The articles from Newsweek and BusinessWeek were pulled from the Business Source Complete database. Articles from Time were retrieved from the online archive at time.com. The reason for using two databases was that Time was not indexed in any other
accessible databases. Key terms like “illegal immigrant,” “undocumented immigrant,” “illegal alien,” and “illegal worker” were used to search for relevant articles. The four terms were used interchangeably because they were all commonly used in the research literature and news articles. In order to glean the appropriate population of articles, a pre-screening was conducted to ensure relevant results for this study. Any story that did not mention the U.S. immigration issue in the headline or its first five paragraphs was excluded from this study. Editorials, commentaries, and readers’ opinions were included, but sidebars, boxes, roundups were excluded. In addition, stories in which only the term “illegal immigrant” was mentioned but that did not provide elaboration on the issue were also excluded. For example, if a story only made a passing mention “illegal immigration” in this way: “… is soft on terrorism and illegal immigration,” it was not included in this study. As a result, this method ended up with a total universe of 173 articles, with 66 from *Time*, 51 from *Newsweek*, and 56 from *BusinessWeek*.

Coding

A content analysis of 173 articles was coded for the following variables: the magazine in which a story was published, the year and date of publication, the type of the article, the frames used in a story, the sources used in a story, and the number of times each source was cited. The unit of analysis was the individual frames within each article, as well as the individual sources who provided direct quotes. The codebook and the coding sheet are referred in the appendix section of this study as Appendix A and Appendix B respectively.
Media Frames

The coding sheet defined six frames which were focused on after a pilot study of the effects of media framing on attitude toward undocumented immigrants by Pantoja and Merolla (2008): 1) Economic benefits, which described the economic contributions of illegal immigrants; 2) Economic costs, which focused on the negative economic impact of illegal immigration; 3) Historical tradition, which mentioned the history of U.S. immigration or American dream; 4) Social instability, which was about the problem of assimilation or the crime conducted by immigrant groups; 5) National security, which mentioned the link between illegal immigrants and terrorism; 6) Cultural diversity, which focused on foreign immigrants enriched American culture. A frame was coded as 1 if presented in an article and 0 if not. More than one frame could exist in one single story.

For purpose of analysis, economic benefits, historical tradition, and cultural diversity frames were categorized as positive frames to illegal immigrants; the economic costs, social instability, and national security frames were categorized as negative frames to illegal immigrants.

Sources

Only named sources who were quoted directly in the articles were coded as sources cited. If a source was paraphrased in the text, it was not coded. In addition, unattributed sources were not within this study’s purview. For each article, each source would be coded as present or absent. Further, the number of times that a source was cited in each article was also coded. The operational definitions of the 15 sources are in Appendix A.
Inter-coder Reliability

To ensure consistency in the coding of variables in this study, inter-coder reliability was checked. First, 10% of the illegal immigration stories from *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *BusinessWeek* were selected at random. Then, two journalism graduate students were trained on how to follow the codebook and perform the coding properly. The two individuals were chosen as coders because of their expertise in journalism and their fluency in English. Finally, inter-coder reliability was checked by using percentage agreement. Inter-coder reliability ranged from a low 85.78% to a high of 100%. The overall percentage of agreement was 91.46%, which was considered as satisfactory (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2005). The author coded all 173 articles (the universe) in this study.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This study was designed to see how the media covered illegal immigrants in the United States. It recorded the number of illegal immigration news articles in *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *BusinessWeek* from 2000 through 2009, as well as the frames and sources each story used.

Overall, 173 stories were identified for the purpose of this study, with 66 from *Time*, 51 from *Newsweek*, and 56 from *BusinessWeek*. The publication of the illegal immigration articles was unevenly distributed over the time period. About half of these articles (50.2%) were found between the years of 2005-2007.

In the 173 stories, a total of 207 frames were coded. Economic benefits (29.5%), social instability (29%), and economic costs (25.1%) were the three most frequently mentioned frames in the three magazines across the 10 years. Overall, 79 positive frames (economic benefits, historical tradition, and cultural diversity frames) and 128 negative frames (economic costs, social instability, and national security frames) were found in the articles.

In terms of sources cited, 729 sources were directly quoted in the three magazines. *Time* used a total of 293 sources, or 4.4 sources per story; *Newsweek* used 243 sources, or 4.7 sources per story; *BusinessWeek* used 193 sources, or 3.4 sources per story. Political figure (24%), illegal immigrant (17%), and law enforcement (13%) were the three most frequently quoted source categories.
After comparing the U.S. unemployment rates from 2000 to 2009 with frequency of the negative frames, no obvious relationship between the economic climate and media framing was discovered.

Total Coverage

Table 1 shows the frequency of articles about illegal immigration across all the three magazines. The percentages show what portion of the total number of articles about illegal immigration appeared each year in all three magazines. As shown in Table 1, a total of 173 valid illegal immigration stories were indentified for the purpose of this study. The publication of the articles discussing illegal immigrants was unevenly distributed across the time period. In the 10-year time frame, 2002 and 2009 were the years in which there were fewer illegal immigration articles printed compared to other years. In 2002, only two illegal immigration stories were found in the three magazines—the smallest number in the time period under study. The number of articles in the three magazines increased significantly in 2005 and reached a peak in 2006.

Across the three magazines, Time published the most illegal immigration articles, and it is noteworthy that Time was the only magazine that published such stories every year. Newsweek ran fewer illegal immigration articles than Time and BusinessWeek did, but it exhibited a trend of growth in its illegal immigration coverage. Of the 51 stories published in Newsweek, 33 (65%) were published from 2006 to 2009. The peak year for illegal immigration stories in BusinessWeek was 2005, during which 14 articles were found (see Table 1).
Table 1

*Frequency of Articles about Illegal Immigration by Magazine, 2000-2009*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th><em>Time</em></th>
<th><em>Newsweek</em></th>
<th><em>BusinessWeek</em></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>5 (7.6%)</td>
<td>3 (5.9%)</td>
<td>8 (14.3%)</td>
<td>16 (9.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>9 (13.6%)</td>
<td>3 (5.9%)</td>
<td>7 (12.5%)</td>
<td>19 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>1 (1.5%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (1.8%)</td>
<td>2 (1.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>4 (6.0%)</td>
<td>5 (9.8%)</td>
<td>3 (5.4%)</td>
<td>12 (6.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>5 (7.6%)</td>
<td>2 (3.9%)</td>
<td>7 (12.5%)</td>
<td>14 (8.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>7 (10.5%)</td>
<td>5 (9.8%)</td>
<td>14 (25%)</td>
<td>26 (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>19 (28.8%)</td>
<td>14 (27.5%)</td>
<td>7 (12.5%)</td>
<td>40 (23.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>9 (13.6%)</td>
<td>7 (13.7%)</td>
<td>5 (8.9%)</td>
<td>21 (12.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>5 (7.6%)</td>
<td>9 (17.6%)</td>
<td>4 (7.1%)</td>
<td>18 (10.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>3 (5.9%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>5 (2.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>66 (100%)</td>
<td>51 (100%)</td>
<td>56 (100%)</td>
<td>173 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Type of Articles across Magazines*

Table 2 shows the frequency of each article type about illegal immigrants in each of the three magazines. As shown in Table 2, 77% of the illegal immigration articles were news reporting. Thirteen percent of the articles were readers’ opinion, and the remaining 10% were editorial/commentary.
Readers’ opinion articles were published in about equal numbers in *Time* and *Newsweek*, but *BusinessWeek* published fewer such articles. However, *BusinessWeek* published the highest number of editorial/commentary articles during the time period.

Table 2

*Type of Articles about Illegal Immigration by Magazine, 2000-2009*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Newsweek</th>
<th>BusinessWeek</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reporting</td>
<td>56 (84.9%)</td>
<td>40 (78.4%)</td>
<td>37 (66.1%)</td>
<td>133 (76.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commentary</td>
<td>1 (1.5%)</td>
<td>3 (5.9%)</td>
<td>14 (25%)</td>
<td>18 (10.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion</td>
<td>9 (13.6%)</td>
<td>8 (15.7%)</td>
<td>5 (8.9%)</td>
<td>22 (12.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>66 (100%)</td>
<td>51 (100%)</td>
<td>56 (100%)</td>
<td>173(100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RQ1a.** Which media frames were used to represent illegal immigrants in *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *BusinessWeek* from 2000 through 2009?

To answer this question, the following were examined separately: the presence of all the frames in the articles over the time period, the presence of all the frames in the articles across all magazines, and the frequency of positive and negative frames used across the three magazines.
Presence of Frames over Time

Table 3 shows the presence of all frames in the articles about illegal immigrants in the three magazines from 2000 to 2009. A total of 207 frames were found in the three magazines during the 10 years. The economic costs frame was the only frame that was used every year under study. It is also important to note that the national security frame was presented only between 2001 and 2006. In terms of years, 2001 is the only one year that all six frames were present.

Table 3

Presence of Frames in Articles about Illegal Immigrants Published from 2000 to 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>6 (2.9%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>5 (2.4%)</td>
<td>6 (2.9%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>7 (3.4%)</td>
<td>2 (1%)</td>
<td>1 (0.5%)</td>
<td>5 (2.4%)</td>
<td>7 (3.4%)</td>
<td>5 (2.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (0.5%)</td>
<td>1 (0.5%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (0.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>3 (1.4%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (0.5%)</td>
<td>2 (1%)</td>
<td>3 (1.4%)</td>
<td>4 (1.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>6 (2.9%)</td>
<td>1 (0.5%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>4 (1.9%)</td>
<td>3 (1.4%)</td>
<td>2 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>8 (3.9%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (0.5%)</td>
<td>11 (5.3%)</td>
<td>9 (4.3%)</td>
<td>2 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>16 (7.7%)</td>
<td>5 (2.4%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>10 (4.9%)</td>
<td>14 (6.8%)</td>
<td>2 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>8 (3.9%)</td>
<td>1 (0.5%)</td>
<td>1 (0.5%)</td>
<td>5 (2.4%)</td>
<td>8 (3.9%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>6 (2.9%)</td>
<td>3 (1.4%)</td>
<td>1 (0.5%)</td>
<td>6 (2.9%)</td>
<td>8 (3.9%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 (Continued)

Presence of Frames in Articles about Illegal Immigrants Published from 2000 to 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1 (0.5%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (1.4%)</td>
<td>2 (1.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>61 (29.5%)</td>
<td>12 (5.8%)</td>
<td>6 (2.9%)</td>
<td>52 (25.1%)</td>
<td>60 (29%)</td>
<td>16 (7.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Presence of Frames across All Magazines

Overall, this study identified 207 frames presented in the valid articles. There were 81 frames used in *Time*, 56 frames used in *Newsweek*, and 60 frames used in *BusinessWeek* (see Table 4).

The social instability frame was cited in the highest number of articles in both *Time* and *Newsweek*, but was the third most common frame in *BusinessWeek*. Instead, the economic benefits frame was the most employed frame, followed by economic costs frame in *BusinessWeek*. Only a small portion of frames dealt with cultural diversity and historical tradition. *Time* and *Newsweek* both used the cultural diversity frame only three times, while no *BusinessWeek* articles included this frame. The historical tradition frame was evenly distributed in *Time*, *Newsweek* and *BusinessWeek* (See Table 4).

As noted earlier, the economic benefits, historical tradition, and cultural diversity frames were categorized as positive frames. The economic costs, social instability and national security frames were categorized as negative frames. Table 4 shows that of the 207 total frames found in the three magazines, 79 (38.2%) were positive frames, and 128
(61.9%) were negative frames. This finding echoes previous studies that found immigrants tended to be negatively presented.

More than half of the frames employed by the three magazines were economic related (economic benefits and economic costs) frames. In other words, the economic impact of illegal immigrants was at the center of heated debate.

Table 4

*Frequency of Frames Present in Articles about Illegal Immigrants by Magazine, 2000-2009*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frames</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Newsweek</th>
<th>BusinessWeek</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive Frames</strong></td>
<td>19 (23.5%)</td>
<td>12 (21.4%)</td>
<td>30 (42.9%)</td>
<td>61 (29.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Benefits</td>
<td>5 (6.2%)</td>
<td>4 (7.1%)</td>
<td>3 (4.3%)</td>
<td>12 (5.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Tradition</td>
<td>3 (3.7%)</td>
<td>3 (5.3%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>6 (2.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Positive Frames</td>
<td>27 (33.3%)</td>
<td>19 (33.9%)</td>
<td>33 (47.1%)</td>
<td>79 (38.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negative Frames</strong></td>
<td>16 (19.8%)</td>
<td>17 (30.4%)</td>
<td>19 (27.1%)</td>
<td>52 (25.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Costs</td>
<td>28 (34.6%)</td>
<td>19 (33.9%)</td>
<td>13 (18.6%)</td>
<td>60 (29.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Instability</td>
<td>10 (12.3%)</td>
<td>1 (1.8%)</td>
<td>5 (7.1%)</td>
<td>16 (7.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Security</td>
<td>54 (66.7%)</td>
<td>37 (66.1%)</td>
<td>37 (52.9%)</td>
<td>128 (61.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Negative Frames</td>
<td>81 (100%)</td>
<td>56 (100%)</td>
<td>70 (100%)</td>
<td>207 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Frequency of Positive and Negative Frames Used across the Three Magazines

As Table 5 shows, *Time* used the highest number of negative frames while covering illegal immigration issues. Across all magazines, 54 (66.7%) out of 81 frames *Time* used were negative; 37 (66.1%) out of 56 frames *Newsweek* used were negative; 37 (52.9%) out of 70 frames *BusinessWeek* used were negative.

This study also found *BusinessWeek* had a more balanced tone in representing illegal immigrants. The number of positive and negative frames is close, with 33 and 37 respectively. On the contrary, *Time* and *Newsweek* portrayed illegal immigrants in a more negative way since the number of negative frames was twice that of the number of positive frames (See Table 5).

Table 5

Frequency of Positive and Negative Frames Used in Articles about Illegal Immigrants by Magazine, 2000-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Newsweek</th>
<th>BusinessWeek</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Positive Frames</td>
<td>27 (33.3%)</td>
<td>19 (33.9%)</td>
<td>33 (47.1%)</td>
<td>79 (38.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Negative Frames</td>
<td>54 (66.7%)</td>
<td>37 (66.1%)</td>
<td>37 (52.9%)</td>
<td>128 (61.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Frames</td>
<td>81 (100%)</td>
<td>56 (100%)</td>
<td>70 (100%)</td>
<td>207 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RQ1b.** What frame changes, if any, were shown in the three magazines’ coverage of illegal immigrants from 2000 through 2009?
The frequency of the six frames examined in this study fluctuated from year to year in the three magazines, and no clear pattern was found. However, some noticeable features in the use of frames were indentified in this study.

The cultural diversity frame was scarcely used among the three magazines. Only 2.9% of the frames used were coded as the cultural diversity frame (See Table 3). Particularly, *BusinessWeek* never used the cultural diversity frame to depict illegal immigration issue.

Similarly, national security frame was found as a less mentioned frame in illegal immigration coverage. It is also worth to note that this frame was not found in illegal immigration news since 2007 in the three magazines.

**H1. Negative frames were used more frequently in the years when the unemployment rates in the United States were relatively higher.**

H1 was not supported. Figure 1 shows the U.S. unemployment rate was the lowest in the year of 2000 and the highest in the year of 2009. A Spearman rho correlation was calculated for the relationship between U.S. unemployment rates and negative media frames. A moderate correlation that was not significant was found (r (8) = .549, p > .05). Unemployment rates were not significantly related to negative media frames (see Table 6).

Table 6

U.S. Unemployment Rates and Frequency Changes of Negative Frames in Time, Newsweek and BusinessWeek, 2000-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Unemployment Rates</th>
<th>Negative Frames Freq.</th>
<th>Negative Frames %</th>
<th>Total Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>64.70%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>4.70%</td>
<td>63.00%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>5.80%</td>
<td>66.70%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>69.20%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>5.50%</td>
<td>56.30%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>5.10%</td>
<td>71.00%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6 (Continued)

**U.S. Unemployment Rates and Frequency Changes of Negative Frames in Time, Newsweek and BusinessWeek, 2000-2009**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Unemployment Rates</th>
<th>Negative Frames Freq.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total Negative Frames</th>
<th>Total Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>4.60%</td>
<td>55.30%</td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>4.60%</td>
<td>56.50%</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>5.80%</td>
<td>58.30%</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>9.30%</td>
<td>83.30%</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( \rho = .549, n=10, p > .05 \)

**RQ2. What sources were used to present the debate of illegal immigrants in *Time*, *Newsweek* and *BusinessWeek* from 2000 through 2009?**

To answer this question, the following were examined separately: the presence of the sources quoted throughout the entire 10 years of the study, the presence of sources quoted across all the three magazines, and the number of times the sources were cited in every article throughout the entire 10 years of the study.

*Presence of Sources Quoted Over Time*

Overall, political figure, research, and illegal immigrant sources were the three most prevalent in the years under study (see Table 7). The frequency of source category quoted in this study varied year to year. Political figure sources were quoted every year from 2000 to 2009. Special interest group, illegal immigrant, and research sources were
also quoted every year except the year of 2002. Likewise, business sources were cited every year except for the year of 2009.

Interestingly, although public schools, especially K-12 schools, were very much affected by illegal immigrants, there was only one article published in the year of 2000 that quoted education sources. Articles with medical sources were also scarcely presented, despite the fact that illegal immigrants were blamed for straining health care resources.

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>'00</th>
<th>'01</th>
<th>'02</th>
<th>'03</th>
<th>'04</th>
<th>'05</th>
<th>'06</th>
<th>'07</th>
<th>'08</th>
<th>'09</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pol. Figure</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>72 (41.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Int. Group</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33 (19.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pvt. Ind.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23 (13.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal Imm.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>34 (19.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>43 (24.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (0.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law Enf.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26 (15.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>31 (17.9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 7 (Continued)

**Frequency of Articles about Illegal Immigration in which Sources were Present, 2000-2009**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>‘00</th>
<th>’01</th>
<th>’02</th>
<th>’03</th>
<th>’04</th>
<th>’05</th>
<th>’06</th>
<th>’07</th>
<th>’08</th>
<th>’09</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 (2.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smuggler</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Imm.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pol. Anly.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 (2.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12 (6.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (1.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Presence of Sources Quoted across Magazines**

Table 8 shows the number of articles in which each source was present by each magazine from 2000 to 2009. Sources that were the top three most prevalent across the three magazines of this study varied among the individual magazines. Political figure sources were quoted in the highest number of stories across the three magazines. Law enforcement sources were quoted in about the same number of stories in *Time* and *Newsweek* but were present in fewer of the articles in *BusinessWeek*.

Another large difference was seen in the numbers of articles with business sources across the three magazines. *Time* and *Newsweek* both printed 7 articles with business-affiliated sources while *BusinessWeek* articles were found quoting business sources (see Table 8).
It is also worth noting the absence of sources in the three magazines. *Time* did not publish any stories with education or author sources, and *Newsweek* did not publish any stories with education, medical, or clergy sources. Overall, *BusinessWeek* used the most varied sources in its illegal immigration coverage.

Table 8

*Frequency of Articles about Illegal Immigration in which the Sources were Present by Magazines, 2000-2009*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th><em>Time</em></th>
<th><em>Newsweek</em></th>
<th><em>BusinessWeek</em></th>
<th>Source Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pol. Figure</td>
<td>29 (43.9%)</td>
<td>22 (43.1%)</td>
<td>21 (37.5%)</td>
<td>72 (41.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Int. Group</td>
<td>11 (16.7%)</td>
<td>9 (17.6%)</td>
<td>13 (23.2%)</td>
<td>33 (19.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pvt. Ind.</td>
<td>9 (13.6%)</td>
<td>9 (17.6%)</td>
<td>5 (8.9%)</td>
<td>23 (13.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal Imm.</td>
<td>17 (25.8%)</td>
<td>11 (21.6%)</td>
<td>6 (10.7%)</td>
<td>34 (19.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>15 (22.7%)</td>
<td>10 (19.6%)</td>
<td>18 (32.1%)</td>
<td>43 (24.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (1.8%)</td>
<td>1 (0.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law Enf.</td>
<td>10 (15.1%)</td>
<td>9 (17.6%)</td>
<td>7 (12.5%)</td>
<td>26 (15.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (3.6%)</td>
<td>4 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>7 (10.6%)</td>
<td>7 (13.7%)</td>
<td>17 (30.4%)</td>
<td>31 (17.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (5.9%)</td>
<td>1 (1.8%)</td>
<td>4 (2.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smuggler</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>2 (3.9%)</td>
<td>1 (1.8%)</td>
<td>5 (2.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Imm.</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>1 (2.0%)</td>
<td>2 (3.6%)</td>
<td>5 (2.9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8 (Continued)

*Frequency of Articles about Illegal Immigration in which the Sources were Present by Magazines, 2000-2009*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Newsweek</th>
<th>BusinessWeek</th>
<th>Source Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pol. Anly.</td>
<td>1 (1.5%)</td>
<td>2 (3.9%)</td>
<td>1 (1.8%)</td>
<td>4 (2.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>3 (4.5%)</td>
<td>1 (2.0%)</td>
<td>8 (14.3%)</td>
<td>12 (6.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergy</td>
<td>1 (1.5%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (3.6%)</td>
<td>3 (1.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Frequency of Sources cited in Every Article from 2000 to 2009*

Overall, the study found sources with an affiliation were quoted a total of 729 times in the 173 articles. *Time* quoted affiliated sources 293 times, or 4.4 times per story; *Newsweek* quoted sources 243 times, or 4.7 times per story; *BusinessWeek* quoted sources for 193 times, or 3.4 times per story (see Table 9).

Political figures were quoted a total of 177 times in all illegal immigration coverage across the three magazines. Among the 15 source categories, the study found that political figures were quoted most frequently. For example, in 2006, one *Time* article quoted political figures 15 times. Similarly, in 2006, *Newsweek* published an article that quoted political figure sources 10 times.

The second most quoted source were illegal immigrants, which were quoted a total of 123 times in all the articles in which the sources were present. The highest number of times the sources quoted in one single article was a 2006 *Time* article, which quoted 17 times from illegal immigrant source.
The third most quoted sources were those affiliated with law enforcement. Law enforcement sources were quoted a total of 93 times in all the articles in which the sources were present. The highest number of times the law enforcement sources were quoted in one article was in 2009, and they were quoted 17 times.

When examining the source usage across all three magazines, the results were different. The most frequently quoted source was political figure in both *Time* and *Newsweek*, with 79 times and 66 times respectively. *BusinessWeek*, however, had business sources as its most quoted sources. Over the 10 years, business-affiliated sources were quoted a total of 41 times in all the articles in which the sources were present (see Table 9).

It is also interesting to note that *BusinessWeek* cited research-affiliated sources far more than *Time* and *Newsweek* did. About 20% of the sources quoted in *BusinessWeek* were affiliated with research sources, while only 8% of the sources quoted in *Time* and *Newsweek* were research sources.

Table 9

*Source Frequency in the Illegal Immigrants Coverage by Magazine, 2000-2009*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th><em>Time</em></th>
<th><em>Newsweek</em></th>
<th><em>BusinessWeek</em></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pol. Figure</td>
<td>79 (10.8%)</td>
<td>66 (9.1%)</td>
<td>32 (4.4%)</td>
<td>177 (24.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Int. Group</td>
<td>24 (3.3%)</td>
<td>11 (1.5%)</td>
<td>24 (3.3%)</td>
<td>59 (8.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pvt. Ind.</td>
<td>29 (4.0%)</td>
<td>25 (3.4%)</td>
<td>6 (0.8%)</td>
<td>60 (8.2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9 (Continued)

Source Frequency in the Illegal Immigrants Coverage by Magazine, 2000-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Newsweek</th>
<th>BusinessWeek</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illegal Imm.</td>
<td>62 (8.5%)</td>
<td>50 (6.9%)</td>
<td>11 (1.5%)</td>
<td>123 (16.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>23 (3.2%)</td>
<td>20 (2.7%)</td>
<td>36 (4.9%)</td>
<td>79 (10.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (0.3%)</td>
<td>2 (0.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law Enf.</td>
<td>39 (5.3%)</td>
<td>40 (5.5%)</td>
<td>14 (1.9%)</td>
<td>93 (12.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>6 (0.8%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (0.3%)</td>
<td>8 (1.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>10 (1.3%)</td>
<td>12 (1.6%)</td>
<td>41 (5.6%)</td>
<td>63 (8.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (0.4%)</td>
<td>1 (0.1%)</td>
<td>4 (0.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smuggler</td>
<td>6 (0.8%)</td>
<td>6 (0.8%)</td>
<td>1 (0.1%)</td>
<td>13 (1.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Imm.</td>
<td>3 (0.4%)</td>
<td>2 (0.3%)</td>
<td>2 (0.3%)</td>
<td>7 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pol. Anly.</td>
<td>1 (0.1%)</td>
<td>2 (0.3%)</td>
<td>1 (0.1%)</td>
<td>4 (0.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>7 (1.0%)</td>
<td>6 (1.0%)</td>
<td>16 (2.2%)</td>
<td>29 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergy</td>
<td>4 (0.5%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>4 (0.5%)</td>
<td>8 (1.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>293 (40.2%)</td>
<td>243 (33.3%)</td>
<td>193 (26.5%)</td>
<td>729 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Political figure sources were the most frequently cited sources across the three magazines both in terms of their appearance in number of articles and the number times quoted. However, it is important to note that the top three most prevalent sources quoted were not the same as the three most quoted sources (see Table 10). For example, research affiliated sources were the second most prevalent sources over the time period across all
the three magazines, but it ranked after illegal immigrant sources and law enforcement sources in terms of the number of times quoted. Political figures source and illegal immigrant source ranked as the top three sources in both number of article and source frequency.

Table 10

*Rank of Article and Source Frequency in the Illegal Immigrants Coverage by Magazine, 2000-2009*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Newsweek</th>
<th><em>BusinessWeek</em></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Articles by Rank</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Pol. Figure</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Research</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Illegal Imm.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Int. Group</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Business</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source Quoted by Rank</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Pol. Figure</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Illegal Imm.</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Law Enf.</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Research</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Business</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
H2. U.S. government officials will be cited most frequently in the three magazines’ coverage of illegal immigrants from 2000 through 2009.

H2 was supported. From 2000 through 2009, U.S. government officials, including both political figures and law enforcement, appeared as the most frequently cited sources across the three magazines. Table 11 specifically shows the presence of political figure and law enforcement sources and is taken from Table 10, which shows the presence of all the sources. As shown in Table 11, government officials accounted for a combination of 37.1% of all the sources that appeared in the illegal immigration news (see Table 11).

Table 11

Frequency of Government Officials Quoted by Magazine, 2000-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Newsweek</th>
<th>BusinessWeek</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pol. Figure</td>
<td>79 (10.8%)</td>
<td>66 (9.1%)</td>
<td>32 (4.4%)</td>
<td>177 (24.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law Enf.</td>
<td>39 (5.3%)</td>
<td>40 (5.5%)</td>
<td>14 (1.9%)</td>
<td>93 (12.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>118 (16.9%)</td>
<td>106 (14.5%)</td>
<td>46 (6%)</td>
<td>270 (37.1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

In this thesis, illegal immigration coverage in *Time, Newsweek*, and *BusinessWeek* was content analyzed in order to determine how the issue was covered and if there was a correlation between the economic climate and media framing. This study had three major findings:

First, the coverage in all the three magazines increased significantly between 2005 and 2007 and shared some similarities in frame used. Overall, consistent with findings of previous studies, the depiction of illegal immigrants was negative. While each magazine used more negative frames than positive frames, *BusinessWeek*, with its audience representing the business perspective, presented relatively more positive frames in its coverage.

Second, the number of negative frames examined in this study fluctuated from year to year in the three magazines, and no clear pattern was found. This study attempted to establish a relationship between U.S. unemployment rates and the frequency of negative framing but failed to find statistical significance.

The third finding of this study related to the sources the three magazines quoted in their illegal immigration news. In line with previous studies, there was a tendency to use official sources in the coverage of illegal immigration. Across the magazines, *BusinessWeek* included more varied sources, while *Time* and *Newsweek* relied heavily on political figures and law enforcement. Overall, the three magazines ran very few comments from education and medical sources in spite of the fact that they are affected by the influx of illegal immigrants.
Across All Magazines

Shoemaker and Reese (1991) suggested that almost all media outlets have target audiences. Different publications, therefore, often use different media frames. This study found that although the overall depiction of illegal aliens by the three magazines was negative, differences in the degree of negative framing were found among magazines. While two-thirds of the frames *Time* and *Newsweek* used were negative, only half of the frames *BusinessWeek* printed were negative.

It was not unexpected that *BusinessWeek* published the highest number of economic benefits frame stories, but it was also interesting to note that *BusinessWeek* included varied sources in its coverage. Another noteworthy feature was that the national security frame was employed several times in both *Time* and *BusinessWeek*, but it appeared only once in an article published by *Newsweek*.

Many of the articles about illegal immigration were based on editorials or commentaries. One-fourth of the articles printed by *BusinessWeek* were commentaries, which was the highest percentage among the three magazines. The considerable presence of editorials might be the other reason that *BusinessWeek* had a more positive tone toward illegal immigrants since *BusinessWeek*’s editorials were more likely to present business people's perspectives. For example, Jack Welch, the former CEO of General Electric, remarked in a commentary: “It’s economic. All immigrants are here for is work. If we don’t find a simple, fair way to keep them in this country, it will kill thousands of businesses” (Welch & Welch, 2008, para. 1)
Although the negative frames dominated the illegal immigration coverage overall, it should be noted that the economic benefits frame, one of the positive frames examined in this study, was used almost the same number of times as the social instability frame, the most frequently used negative frame. One possible explanation was that magazines, compared with newspapers that previously had been studied, were more likely to present arguments from several different perspectives. Unlike newspapers, which have tight deadlines, magazines have more time to review news events thoroughly and more pages to add details that newspapers may have ignored (Gans, 1979).

**Political Debate and Legislation**

More than half of the articles were published between the years of 2005 and 2007. One possible reason for the increase in illegal immigration coverage during the peak years could have been the legislation and political debate over the immigration issue. During the three years, the guest-worker program, the Secure Fence Act, and other immigration reform discussions received much media attention. In other years, when no major immigration legislation was discussed, the numbers of illegal immigration articles were fewer.

President George W. Bush proposed the guest-worker program, a program allowing more low-skilled immigrants to work in the United States, many times. Immigration was a centerpiece of Bush’s 2000 election campaign, and he proposed a guest-worker program the first time soon after the election. The program, however, was eclipsed by the September 11, 2001, attack when national security became top priority (Bailey & Briscoe, 2005). In 2005, Bush proposed a new version that would allow illegal
immigrants to work legally for about three years and then be deported if they had not yet obtained a green card (Fletcher & Fears, 2005).

A total of 40 illegal immigration articles were found in 2006, with 19 articles from *Time*, 14 from *Newsweek*, and 7 from *BusinessWeek*. Another event that may explain the significant increase in the number of articles about illegal immigration in 2005 and 2006 was the Secure Fence Act. Duncan Hunter, a Republican U.S. representative, proposed a plan to building a reinforced fence along the Southern border in 2005 (Chaddock, 2006). In October 26, 2006, the Secure Fence Act was signed into law. The law authorized the construction of a 700-mile fence along the U.S.-Mexican border, in the states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. The Act also authorized the installation of more cameras, lighting, roads, and sensors to prevent illegal crossing (Seper, 2006). As James Sensenbrenner, House Judiciary Committee chairman, remarked, “If we didn’t invite you, get out” (as cited in Cose, 2006, para, 1).

In addition to the debate on illegal immigration, many stories brought legal immigration reform into debate. Several articles during the years of 2005 to 2007 were found discussing reductions in the total number of legal immigrants and non-immigrant temporary work visas. One hot topic on legal immigration reform was the annual quota of H-1B visas, a non-immigrant visa allowing U.S. employers to temporarily hire foreign workers in highly skilled occupations. In 2006, the entire quota of H-1B visas for the 2007 fiscal year was exhausted less than two months in which applications were accepted; in 2007, the quota was exhausted before the end of the first filing day (Kathy, 2007). This quota shortage had a significant impact on the high-tech industry. Speaking
on behalf of Microsoft and the tech industry in Capitol Hill, Bill Gates advocated for lifting the cap and remarked, “Unless there is a reform, American competitiveness will suffer as other countries benefit from the international talent that U.S. employers cannot hire or retain” (as cited in Dunham, 2006, para. 1).

Negative Framing and Scape Goating

Giltin (1980) pointed out that “media frames, largely unspoken and unacknowledged, organize the world both for journalists who report it, and, in some important degree, for us who rely on their reports” (p.7). Previous studies on news coverage of immigrants showed that immigrants tended to be framed negatively. The findings of news frames in this study supported previous literature.

As mentioned before, economic costs, social instability, and national security were categorized as negative frames in this study. Overall, the majority of frames used in the articles portrayed illegal immigrants in a negative fashion. Among the 207 frames examined, 62% focused on negative aspects of illegal immigration. Only 38% of the frames used on the issue of illegal immigrants were positive.

An important mission of this study was to seek the correlation of U.S. unemployment rates and the frequency of negative frames, but no such correlation was found. This finding challenges Williams’ (2005) assertion that illegal immigrants would be scape goated when the times were bad. One possible explanation is that the three magazines’ coverage was devoted to political debate. When the guest-worker program and Secure Fence Act were proposed, the magazines began to pay more attention to the illegal immigration problems. Although no correlation between economic climate and
negative media frames was found, it is still noteworthy that economic impact of illegal immigration was the center of the debate.

*Economic costs frame.* The economic costs frame was largely connected to the negative economic impact of illegal immigration. Across the three magazines, the economic costs frame appeared evenly. Many of the economic cost frames focused on the impact of below-market wage earners who tend to drive down the wages of unskilled American workers. George Borjas, a professor at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, remarked, “[Illegal immigrants] reduced the average annual earnings of native-born men by an estimated $1,700, or roughly 4%” (as cited in Barlett et al., 2006, “How Corporate America Thrives on Illegals,” para. 20).

Since illegal immigration places an economic burden on the health care system, particularly in the area of emergency care, another recurring theme of economic costs was the high cost of medical care for illegal immigrants. In the border cities between U.S. and Mexico, illegal immigrants were often sent to emergency care because of dehydration in the desert or car crashes during high-speed chases. Jim Dickson, a hospital administrator in Texas, complained, “We used to have 250 emergency-room visits a month. Now it is 500 “(as cited in Barlett et al., 2006, “Living in the War Zone,” para. 9).

*Social instability frame.* Social instability frames appeared more frequently than other negative frames across all three magazines. One possible explanation is that illegal immigration is a criminal activity by nature. Many human trafficking stories were found in *Time* and *Newsweek* across the 10 years under study. One example of this was the *Time* article titled “Coming to America” that was printed in May 1, 2000. In that story,
the illegal immigrants were portrayed as typical illegal aliens who speak little English and do low-end jobs like washing dishes (McCarthy, 2000).

Identity theft was another issue that drew media’s attention. Using fake IDs or social security cards often enables illegal immigrants to score a job. The fake ID business is at least a $1 billion annual business and produces over 10 million driver’s licenses, social security cards, and passports (Grow, 2003). James Dorcy, a former Immigration and Naturalization Service criminal investigator, remarked, “The counterfeit document industry is far bigger than the counterfeit money business” (as cited in Grow, 2003, para. 4).

Some other stories of the social instability frames focused on the assimilation problem. Stories questioning illegal immigrants not speaking English were frequently found across the magazines. Among all ethnic groups, Latinos are the least likely to assimilate. Mexican kids keep their native language at four times the rate of Filipino, Vietnamese or Chinese children of immigrants (Grow et al., 2004). In the similar fashion, many articles blamed illegal immigrants for their unwillingness to assimilate to American culture. Time, for example, printed an article in 2006 criticized illegal immigrants “display the daredevil driving style of rural Latin America” (Thornburgh, 2006, “The New Comers,” para. 3).

National security frame. A less frequent negative frame was the national security frame. It was reported that 6 of the 19 hijackers in the September 11 entered the country illegally (Morse et al., 2006). Therefore, the link between illegal immigrants and terrorism is a source of debate. Across the three magazines, a total of 16 national security
frames were found in the articles, with more than half of them appeared between 2001 through 2003. Much of the debate focused on the laxness toward immigration fraud. In an article printed in December 31, 2001, *Time* criticized, “Foreign nationals have long been slipping across the border with bogus papers, and visitors who arrive in the U.S. legitimately often overstay their legal welcomes with impunity” (Cohen, 2001, para. 2).

Positive Framing

The economic benefits, historical tradition, and cultural diversity frames were categorized as positive frames to illegal immigrants. Overall, 79 of the 207 frames were identified as positive frames.

*Economic benefits frame.* The economic benefits frame was a frequently used frame that mentioned the economic contributions of illegal immigrants. Supporters, such as former President George W. Bush, believed the illegal immigrants take jobs that Americans do not fill. The economic benefits frame received more attention from *BusinessWeek*, which generally devoted more coverage to the viewpoints of business sources. Some business owners admitted that they rely on cheap labor from illegal immigrants. For example, one business source remarked, “Where we live, the Mexicans are a blessing. If they were to all go away, it would be a disaster” (as cited in Grow, 2006, para. 5).

Many of the economic benefits frames focused on comments from political figures. One *Newsweek* article, for example, mentioned that former President Reagan once observed that apples were rotting on trees in New England, and he noted, “No
regulation or law should be allowed if it results in crops rotting in the fields for lack
harvesters” (as cited in Zakaria, 2007, para. 2).

Other economic benefits frames were observations from companies catering to the
illegal immigrants’ market. The growing numbers of illegal immigrants put downward
pressure on wages, education and health care costs. However, this fast-growing
population was seen as potential customers by some U.S consumer companies. More than
84% of illegal aliens are in their prime spending years, 18-to-44-year-olds, while only
60% of legal Americans falls into this category. Banks, insures, mortgage lenders,
wireless providers, have decided to embrace this huge market in the past few years (Grow
et al., 2005). For instance, in an issue’s cover story of BusinessWeek, one Wells Fargo
branch manager appreciated illegal immigrants’ business and described the illegal
immigrants who “bring us all the money that has been under the mattress” (as cited in
Grow et al., 2005, para. 3).

*Historical tradition frame.* Frames that mentioned the history of U.S. immigration
or American dream were categorized as historical tradition frame. Overall, 12 historical
tradition frames were found in the articles examined, with 5 from *Time*, 4 from
*Newsweek*, and 3 from *BusinessWeek*.

Some of the historical tradition frames were comments from political figures. In a
*Newsweek* article, former President Bush remarked, “We must honor the great American
tradition of the melting pot” (as cited in Wolfe et al., 2006, para. 6).

A number of historical tradition frame articles were based on readers’ opinions or
responses to stories on illegal immigration. Two examples of this were articles printed in
April 2 and April 23, 2006 from *Time*. In the first article, a *Time* reader’s commented, “People forget less than 170 years ago, the whole West was part of Mexico. Who do you think named Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Antonio? ...We didn’t cross any borders. The borders crossed us” (Velasquez, 2006, para. 1). In the second article, *Time* printed the other reader’s comment: “Most Americans have immigrant ancestors, so why are we preventing future Mexican-American children from being able to do the same” (McLoughlin, 2006, para. 5).

*Cultural diversity frame.* The United States has always been a multicultural country. Former President George W. Bush once said, “Immigration helps renew our soul. It helps redefine our spirit in a positive way” (as cited in “America’s fear of outsiders,” 2007, para. 1). A frame that focused on how foreign immigrants enrich American culture was coded as cultural diversity frame. The cultural diversity frame was a less frequently used frame in this study. Only 6 out of 207 frames used were categorized as cultural diversity, with 3 from *Time*, 3 from *Newsweek*. No cultural diversity frame was found in *BusinessWeek*, perhaps because it is more information-laden and more likely to report business news.

A few cultural diversity frames were based on commentaries or reader’s opinions. For example, Michael Elliot, the editor of *Time* International, remarked, “Everyone knows New York is a great international city, but few, I think, understand just how international it has become. Around 40% of New York’s population is now foreign born; it was less than 18% in 1960” (Elliot, 2002, para. 3).
Source Affiliation

The sources used in the articles about illegal immigrants were crucial in shaping how the media framed the issue. Sources provided viewpoints and information on this controversial subject. In addition, sources selection provided a glimpse into which types of people were consulted more frequently by the three magazines.

The hypothesis that political figures and government officials were quoted the most frequently was supported, meaning that government viewpoints still set the parameters of the immigration discussion. Overall, the top three most quoted sources were political figures, illegal immigrants, and law enforcements. *Time* and *Newsweek* had similar source preferences of political figures, but *BusinessWeek* focused more on business and legal sources.

This study also found that there was a significant increase in the number of political sources, private individual sources, and illegal immigrant sources in 2006, the peak year of illegal immigration coverage. As mentioned earlier, the increase in those sources might be caused by the political debate on immigration reform. Many of the 2006 stories talked about President Bush’s new immigration plan and the impact of the new laws. After 2006, the number of illegal immigration articles declined; however, it was still much higher than what it had been before 2006.

Overall, 729 sources were directly quoted in the three magazines studied. *Time* used a total of 293 sources; *Newsweek* used 243 sources; *BusinessWeek* used 193 sources. *Time* used the most numbers of sources in representing the illegal immigration debate, probably because articles in *Time* were usually longer compared to articles in
*BusinessWeek* and *Newsweek*. Across the three magazines, the most three frequently quoted sources were political figure (24%), illegal immigrant (17%), and law enforcement (13%).

Surprisingly, *BusinessWeek* used the most varied sources in its articles about illegal immigration. Although business-affiliated sources were the most quoted source, which was understandable, *BusinessWeek* also cited education and medical sources several times in its stories. The other unexpected finding was that *BusinessWeek* quoted the most research-affiliated source in its articles. In fact, the number of research sources *BusinessWeek* quoted even exceeded political sources. One possible explanation is that *BusinessWeek* readers are concerned more about the economic impact of illegal immigration and many of the research sources the magazine quoted were economists or scholars who are affiliated with higher education.

Another observation gleaned from this study was the dearth of education sources in the articles. Education sources accounted only one percent of the quoted sources in illegal immigration coverage. However, the spending for public education of illegal immigrant children is tremendous. The total K-12 school expenditure for illegal immigrants and their U.S.-born children cost more than $28.6 billion annually, according to The Federation for American Immigration (“Breaking the Piggy Bank,” 2010). A *Time* poll conducted in 2006 suggested that 51% of Americans believed children who are illegally in this country should not be allowed to attend public schools (Bacon, 2006). Nevertheless, *BusinessWeek* was the only magazine that published a story that had
education sources. That story was about California elementary schools that were barely surviving because of too many kids of illegal aliens.

*Political figure source.* Congruent with earlier research, the study found that political figures and government employees were most favored by journalists. Scholars suggested that the reason officials were quoted frequently in news was that they provided regular and credible information (Berkowitz & Beach, 1993; Hansen, 1991). Another possible explanation, as previously discussed, is that the coverage in the three magazines was mainly about political debate and legislation of the illegal immigration issue. Many of political affiliated sources were quoted in 2006, when the Secure Fence Act was signed into law.

*Illegal immigrant source.* The illegal immigrant sources provided opinions and comments from the viewpoint of illegal aliens. Illegal immigrants were found to be the second most frequently quoted sources in the coverage under this study. This is different from the results of previous studies that illegal immigrants were seldom quoted in illegal immigration coverage (Adas, 2007; Fernandez & Pedroza, 1981). Overall, 20% of the stories quoted illegal immigrants at least once. Across the three magazines, *Time* provided the most perspectives from illegal immigrants, quoting a total of 62 times of illegal immigrant sources. *BusinessWeek*, in contrast, quoted only 11 times of illegal immigrant sources.

Part of the reason for such a difference in source preferences between *Time* and *BusinessWeek* may be because *Time* published more stories about human trafficking. For example, on May 1, 2001, *Time* printed a story about a group of Chinese young men
crossing the Pacific Ocean in a rusty old freighter to chase their American dreams. Just in that single article, illegal immigrants were quoted a total of 10 times.

*Law enforcement source.* Law enforcement sources were quoted in 15% of the articles from the three magazines. Most of the law enforcement sources were quoted in relation to border patrol, Homeland Security officer, or local police departments. Same as illegal immigrant sources, law enforcement sources were largely quoted in human trafficking stories. *Time* and *Newsweek* heavily relied on law enforcement sources, while *BusinessWeek* consulted law enforcement sources less frequently. As mentioned earlier, the *BusinessWeek* published less human trafficking and illegal crossing stories so that the law enforcement sources were less interviewed.

*Special interest group source.* Almost 20% of the articles quoted special interest group sources at least once. Across the three magazines, *Time* and *BusinessWeek* both quoted special interest groups 24 times, while *Newsweek* only quoted 11 times.

It is important to note that very few special interest group sources took a neutral stand on illegal immigration. Many stories with special interest group sources in this study had only anti-immigration group voices. For example, the Center of Immigration Studies, a think tank that favors tighter immigration rules, was quoted in several articles; Mark Krikorian, the executive director of the Center of Immigration Studies, remarked on the idea of granting illegal immigrants in-state tuition, “Extending in-state tuition is way of legitimizing their presence. It is a back-door amnesty” (as cited in Chu, 2005, para. 3).

*Business affiliated sources.* Overall, 18% articles quoted business-affiliated sources at least once. *BusinessWeek* quoted business sources the most frequently. Thirty
percent of the illegal immigration stories from BusinessWeek quoted business sources. In contrast, only 11% of Time articles and 24% of Newsweek articles quoted business sources.

As discussed above, a large portion of business sources represented companies aiming at the illegal immigrant market. Another large portion of business sources was employers hiring illegal workers. Those employers, not surprisingly, held a more positive perspective toward illegal immigrants because they see the economic benefit brought by those workers.

What’s Missing from the Coverage

While it is important to investigate the most dominant sources in the coverage of illegal immigrant, it is also important to see the dearth of some important voices in the coverage. Previous studies suggested that the most dominant sources in the coverage of illegal immigration were political affiliated sources. Medical and education sources that had professional contact with illegal aliens were seldom quoted in the illegal immigration coverage (Adas, 2007; Fernandez & Pedroza, 1981). This study further supported those findings. For example, only 1.1% of the sources quoted were medical; Time cited a total number of 6 medical sources, BusinessWeek cited a total number of 2 medical sources, and Newsweek did not publish any articles with medical sources at all.

Moreover, education sources, as noted above, had a low representation in the articles. The magazines did not publish enough in-depth stories concerning the spending on education of illegal immigrant children. Also, the magazines ignored the problem that most illegal immigrant students have low educational attainment. Only 55% of Latinos
finished high school, compared with almost 90% of nonimmigrant Americans. In higher education, the problem is more severe: 26% of Caucasians in the U.S. have college degrees, while only 8% of Latinos do (Crockett, 2004). The magazines did not present many stories about the educational challenge that illegal immigrants are facing.

In addition, low skilled American workers who would have been adversely affected by illegal immigrants have a low representation in the three magazines. Although the economic costs frame was the third most mentioned frame in this study, few articles provided perspectives from legal workers who were affected by illegal immigrants.

Limitations

While this research yielded interesting results in the area of illegal immigration coverage, this study was limited in a few ways. First, this study only examined the preferred news frames used in illegal immigrant news, but did not examine the prominence of these news frames. Entman (1991) pointed out that the essence of framing study is the size of the news event. According to Entman (1991), sizing, no matter whether it is to magnify or shrink, can affect public awareness. That is, the duration of coverage, the highlight and/or lowlight of news events, and the frame of a news portrait are all determinants of a news event’s importance. Since the coding method of this study only examined the presence or absence of news frames in all articles, the measurement in prominence of news frames is limited. Future study is suggested to look into the flow of news, the magnifying or miniaturizing elements of news frames, such as page count and
story length, in order to get a more insightful understanding of the prominence of news frames in illegal immigrant coverage.

What is more, this study only looked at sources directly quoted. More studies should be done to further analyze the indirect sources of stories on illegal immigration. Examining all the sources cited may be able to obtain a more complete picture of the source usage in media.

Future Studies

To further investigate how the media frame the issue of illegal immigration, more quantitative studies on how media cover this issue should be done. A search of previous studies showed that there were only few quantitative studies on the framing of immigration.

In this study, only magazine stories were analyzed. In future research, newspaper and television news coverage of illegal immigration can also be content analyzed to better examine how media framed this issue and to see if there is a difference in frame preference in different media platform.

In the meantime, since more and more people read news stories on news website, it may be interesting to analyze the discussion boards on the websites to see if those news frames media used are reflected in the public discourse.

Moreover, since Latinos represents 85% of the illegal immigrants, studies on Spanish-language media—media that produced news purposefully for U.S. residents of Latin American descent—coverage of the issue of illegal immigration should be examined in future studies.
REFERENCES


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APPENDIX A: CODEBOOK

ARTICLE NUMBER
Each article was numbered by the researcher prior to coding, which must be copied down on the coding sheet.

DATE
The date is visible on each article and the year, month, and year published is recorded.

MAGAZINE
The magazine is visible on each article and the corresponding magazine is recorded on the coding sheet.

FRAMES
Economic benefits frame depicts that the U.S. business needs immigrant workers, who take jobs that Americans do not want to do.

Historical tradition frame depicts that United States is a nation of immigrants historically.

Cultural diversity frame depicts that immigrants enriched the United States.

Economic costs frame depicts that illegal immigrants are driving down the wages of U.S. workers and causing Americans to lose their jobs. Portrayal of illegal immigrants as poor and dependent on social service is also categorized in this frame.

Social instability frame depicts that illegal immigrants often fail to assimilate into mainstream American culture. A frame that depicts illegal immigrants as criminals or fugitives is also categorized in this frame.

National security frame depicts that illegal immigrants cause problems with border security. A frame that depicts illegal immigrants as terrorists is also categorized in this frame.

SOURCE IDENTIFICATION
Affiliation
Political figure or campaign staff
Political figures or campaign staff for any level in government.

Special interest group
Source affiliated with an organization supporting or opposing illegal immigration.
Private individual
Private individual depicted without affiliation to any group. (Immigrant excluded)

Illegal immigrant
Private individual identified as illegal immigrant.

Research
Non-partisan individual who provided research information.

Education
Education institutions at any level. (Higher education excluded)

Law enforcement
Any level of law enforcement sources.

Medical
Health professionals employed by a hospital, clinic or any medical institutions.

Business
Sources representing business interests.

Author
Person identified as a contributor to a book, magazine, newspaper, or other publication.

Smuggler
Coyotes, snakeheads, or individuals in smuggling business.

Legal immigrant
Private individual identified as immigrant.

Political analyst
Person indentified as a political analyst or pundit.

Law
Legal professionals who provide an opinion of illegal immigration.

Clergy
Priests, ministers, or other clergy.
APPENDIX B: CODING SHEET

ARTICLE NUMBER __ __ __

DATE __ __ __ __/ __ __/ __ __ (Year/ Month/ Date)

MAGAZINE  
1 = Time  2 = Newsweek  3 = BusinessWeek __

FRAME (Present=1/ Not Present=0)  
Economic Benefits__  Historical Tradition__
Cultural Diversity__  Economic Costs__
Social Instability __  National Security __

SOURCE IDENTIFICATION (Number of times cited in a story)

AFFILIATION

Political figure and campaign staff __
Special interest group __
Private individual __
Illegal immigrant __
Research __
Education __
Law enforcement __
Medical __
Business __
Author __
Smuggler __
Legal immigrant __
Political Analyst __
Law __
Clergy __