

Framing Immigration and Illegal Immigration in the 2016 Presidential Campaigns: Comparing Donald Trump and Bernie Sander's Position

Introduction

Ethnic diversity and immigration may be the United States' most outstanding, if not the most unique, cultural and social threads of the fabric of the country. However, the public opinion reflected in the 1992-2002 ten-year Poll Trend indicates the public's ongoing negativity and ambivalence towards immigrants, and a strong anti-immigration sentiment after 9/11 (Muste, 2013). The year of 2016 witnessed more polarizing opinions among the U.S. electorate on immigration. As TV was a closely watched media platform by majority of voters, an analysis of how two 2016 presidential front-running candidates talked about immigration on TV would only be revealing.

The most common way for media elites, including politicians, to promote or define issues is through framing (Kim & Wanta, 2018). Research has shown that the framing of issues may have an effect on public perception and interpretation of issues (Chong & Druckman, 2007; Entman, 1993; Grabe & Bucy, 2008). Television, still the top source for election results in 2016 (Anderson, 2016), ranks as the second most popular political news platform after social media, even for millennials (Mitchell, Gottfried & Matsa, 2016). Therefore, the U.S. television is one of the most important platforms to investigate. Second, Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders represent typical positions on immigration among Republican and Democrat voters. Kathleen Parker, the columnist for the *Washington Post*, commented in a Sunday morning NBC news/interview program *Meet the Press* that "I actually see Trump and Sanders as sort of mirror images of each other in that they're representing the extremes of the base," ("Meet the Press Transcript," 2015). Zooming in on their positions on immigration will efficiently uncover the complexity and subtlety of immigration. After all, immigration is not a monolithic issue, but a dividing issue not only along party lines but also among party members (Thompson, 2018). Third, though researchers have studied a diverse group of political issues, including immigration issues, in relation to presidential elections from the framing perspective, few have focused on the framing of immigration issue from the comparative approach.

Therefore, the study intends to adopt the theoretical framework of framing in analyzing and comparing the TV news programs that have reported Trump and Bernie as presidential candidates talking about immigration. The six-common-immigration frames developed by Quinsaat (2014) and the illegal immigration frames developed by Kim, Carvalho, Davis & Mullins (2011) based on Entman's (1993) conceptualization of functionality of framing are to be adopted in the study to provide a comprehensive picture of immigration in news by two front runners.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework of Framing

In general, there are two kinds of frames based on where the frames are: in people's minds or in media texts. The first one, also known as *audience frames* (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997), or *micro-constructs* (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007) refers to the frames in the minds of individuals that help to process information and form their impression or perceptions of the world. The second one, known as *media frames* (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997), or *macro constructs* (Scheufele, 1999; Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007) refers to modes of presentation that journalists and media communicators adopt in media discourses to deliver information (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). While media frames are more relevant in this study, it is impossible not to mention audience frames in defining the frame construct.

The framing theory postulates that an issue can be examined from different perspectives for multiple values and views (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Framing, therefore, assists people in forming a particular idea of an issue or leading people's thinking about an issue (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Goffman (1974) defined "framing" as "schemata of interpretation" that allows users to organize experiences (p.46). Goffman's sociological approach to defining a frame becomes very useful for the study of journalistic messages because media has a great amplitude for producing social frameworks of interpretation and playing a key role in shared social discourse (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015). While Goffman (1974) was usually credited as the first scholar to define the term *framing*, his definition seems to be more about the individuals' capacity to interpret the message.

Many other scholars and researchers defined framing from a media perspective. Entman (1993) noted that "to frame a communicating text or message is to promote certain facets of a 'perceived reality' and make them more salient in such a way that endorses a specific problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or a treatment recommendation" (p. 51). Tuchman (1978) pointed out that a news frame "organizes everyday reality" because news making is not only about reflecting and presenting the reality but also about constructing the reality (Tuchman 1978, p. 193). And that "central organizing idea" not only provides meaning to a series of events but also develops a connection among them (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989, p. 143). Shah, Watts, Domke and Fan (2002), however, emphasized that a frame promotes "particular definitions and interpretations of political issues" (p. 343) which aligns well with Entman's (1993) take on framing: orienting readers.

The two approaches are not completely independent from each other. Thus arises social constructionism that speculates such a relation: audience frames are closely related to media frames. Van Gorp (2007) points out that social constructionism is all about developing reality in social interaction. Media audiences are active in the sense of processing and interpreting what is made

available to them (Wicks, 2001). However, mass media only delivers a limited range of persistent frames for audience to process (Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Reese, 2001). Eventually, these persistent frames help establish “interpretation of events” (Goffman, 1974) or thinking of a particular issue (Chong & Druckman, 2007) such as attributing responsibility treatments as concluded by Iyengar (1991) and Scheufele (2000). Thereupon, the functionality of frames in constructing social reality through definition, causal pinpoints and solutions by Entman (1993) is of particular importance in examining the frames of issues presented by the media.

Media Framing of Presidential Campaigns

Media frames matter a lot because they influence public attitudes and behaviors (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Grabe and Bucy (2008) noted that although political campaigns shape the candidate’s public performances to a great extent, it is journalists who have the final say about what aspects of that performance are conveyed to audiences, and hence media retains some influence over the candidate’s public image.

A majority of political science and communication literature is about how elites’ frames (such as the ones of intellectuals, politicians and interest groups) influenced citizens’ frames and attitudes (Chong & Druckman, 2007). While some researchers focused on the media bias or favors given to candidates, others compared how candidates were presented in different media platforms. For instance, D’Allessio and Allen (2000) conducted a meta-analysis of 59 studies that reviewed the media coverage of presidential elections. They concluded that no significant biases or favors were shown for candidates in the newspaper coverage, and the same was almost true of the TV coverage. Miller, Andsager and Riechert (1998) studied and compared how 1996 GOP presidential candidates framed themselves in press releases and how elite newspapers covered them. They concluded that the four GOP candidates’ images were distinct in press releases, but news stories distinguished the candidates even more and placed the candidates in very different positions. Grabe and Bucy (2008) identified very different partisan ways of presenting candidates. While Democrats tended to present their presidential candidates in **a populist frame** in network news, Republicans preferred to present theirs in **an ideal candidate frame** with linkages to patriotic symbols. Lowery and Xie (2007) studied the 2004 presidential campaign coverage by TV news in comparison to the coverage in the years of 1996 and 1992. They concluded that cable news, CNN and Fox News, were more interested in covering poll stories and security issues while the networks displayed more interested in traditional topics of economy and religion. Kim and Wanta (2018) studied the frames used in the four major U.S. newspaper coverage of the immigration debate during election years. They found that conflict frame was the most dominant frame, followed by human interest frame as the second frame and horse-race frame as the third frame. They also found that “illegal” was the most frequently associated characteristic attached to the immigrants.

If issues and policies are the most important attention points in a presidential election, what seems to be needed is the comparison of candidates' positions, especially on pressing issues. How one candidate distinguishes himself/herself from the rest in terms of their stances on issues is not only what holds him/her accountable in the future terms if elected, but also acts as a campaign strategy that may resonate with and appeal to voters. This study attempts to focus on the issue of immigration by comparing the views of the Republican candidate and the Democrat candidate on immigration in general, and illegal immigration in particular. The study wants to gauge how two candidates' positions on immigration were framed on TV. And most important of all, the study is especially interested in finding out how the illegal immigration issue was talked about by the two candidates.

Immigration in the United States

Ashley (2006) points out that America is a "nation of immigrants" but not "a nation of illegal immigrants" emphasizing that "immigration is not the same thing as illegal immigration," (p.344). Unfortunately, these two terms get intertwined and mixed up in political talks and mass communication discourses. Politicians and media tend to associate the general term of immigration with the specific term of illegal immigration, causing legal immigration somehow to fade into the background. However, the 2018 Current Population Survey reveals that 28% of the overall U.S. population (89.4 million) were legal immigrants (Zong, Batalova & Burrows, 2019) while 3.2% of the nation's population (10.5 million) were illegal immigrants in 2017 based on Pew Research Center's results (Radford, 2019). Moreover, the portrayals of immigrants are mostly negative (Farris & Mohamed, 2018).

Foreign-born population inflated from 9.6 million (4.7 % of U.S. population) in 1970 to 28.4 million (10.4% of the U.S. population) in 2000 (Camarota, 2001) due to the 1965 landmark law¹ that rewrote U.S. immigration policy (Pew Research Center, 2015). However, after September 11, 2001, the trend completely changed. President George W. Bush launched border security initiatives in 2003, including measures on terrorist attack, illegal immigration and drug smuggling ("Securing the Homeland and Strengthening the Nation," n.d.). The U.S. government developed the Department of Homeland Security (Chishti & Bergeron, 2011), and legislators focused on tackling immigration from the perspective of homeland security (Quinsaat, 2014).

Even the academic world began to hear a different voice about immigrants. Political scientist and historian Samuel Huntington (2004) suggested that the biggest problem of Latin American immigration, and especially Mexican

¹The 1965 *Immigration and Nationality Act* wiped out the national origins quota system that had favored immigrants from Europe and replaced it with one that values family reunification and skilled immigrants (Pew Research Center, 2015). As a result, more than half (51%) of the new immigrants are from Latin America and one-quarter from Asia (Pew Research Center, 2015).

1 immigration, to the U.S. is the so-called “Hispanization”, which may lead the
2 country toward a demographic “Reconquista” of the U.S. regions (p. 221).

3 On the public front, some activist organizations, such as *The Minuteman*
4 *Project* whose mission is to monitor the flow of undocumented immigrants by
5 setting up watch posts and even armed forces along the Arizona-Mexico
6 border, have attracted far more media attention and public debate on illegal
7 immigration (Chavez, 2008).

8 All these forces led to several national and state-level legislative measures.
9 In 2005, the U.S. house of representatives introduced a bill named *Border*
10 *Protection, Anti-Terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act* (H.R. 4437)
11 and passed it by a vote of 239 to 182, though the bill failed in the Senate
12 (Archibold, 2010). In 2009, the state of Arizona passed a bill on law
13 enforcement support and neighborhood safety, which was probably the
14 harshest anti-illegal immigration act in history (Archibold, 2010).

15 The most recent significant development in immigration concerns the
16 termination of *Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals* or DACA² by the
17 Trump administration (Schallhorn, 2018). The DACA program, developed in
18 the Obama era, allowed minors who arrived at the U.S. illegally to be free from
19 deportation. Trump’s termination was invalidated by a federal judge in
20 California, thus the Trump administration has to resume accepting DACA
21 renewals (Chavez, 2018). USCIS has resumed accepting requests to renew a
22 grant of deferred action under DACA, however, the future of DACA remains
23 to be decided.

24 The public opinion on DACA reveals a striking 42-point partisan
25 difference. While only 50% of the Republicans say it is all right to grant
26 permanent legal status to immigrants who entered the U.S. illegally when they
27 were children, it is an overwhelming majority of 92% of the Democrats who
28 say so (Tyson, 2018).

29 Immigration may be the No. 1 issue in the 2016 presidential campaign due
30 to its conflicting nature and complication (Jones, 2015). Therefore, in a close
31 primary or general election contest, even if immigration is less important than
32 economy and other issues, the election outcome could be totally dictated by the
33 immigration stand (Jones, 2015).

34 Therefore, the study intends to investigate how immigration in general was
35 framed by presidential candidates via the U.S. television, and then it zooms in
36 on how illegal immigration was framed by presidential candidates in the U.S.
37 television. Here are two research questions to be addressed in this study.

38
39 Q1. How was the immigration issue framed by the 2016 presidential
40 candidates Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders in the U.S. television?

² Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) is a kind of administrative relief from deportation. The purpose of DACA is to protect eligible immigrant youth who came to the United States when they were children from deportation. DACA gives young undocumented immigrants: 1) protection from deportation, and 2) a work permit. The program expires after two years, subject to renewal. Excerpt from <https://undocu.berkeley.edu/legal-support-overview/what-is-daca/>

Q2. How was the illegal immigration issue framed by the 2016 presidential candidates Trump and Bernie Sanders in the U.S. television?

Method

Sampling

The sample of the six U.S. TV news transcripts (i.e. CNN, MSNBC, Fox News, ABC, CBS, NBC) was obtained from the Lexis-Nexis database. The time frame for the sample starts from the two candidates' formal announcement dates to enter the race. Trump's time frame starts from June 16, 2015 and Sanders' from May 26, 2015. The end date of the time frame for both candidates is June 16, 2016, when Sanders announced that he would exit the race and work with Clinton to defeat Trump in the presidential election ("United States Presidential Election," 2016). In collecting samples for both candidates, the author found that there were more news transcripts on Trump than on Sanders, therefore, to create comparable samples for both candidates, June 16 was also set as the end date for the Trump sample. The study used all the news transcripts available for the Sanders' sample because the TV news coverage on Sanders' position turned out to be much fewer than expected. For Trump's sample, a constructed month sampling technique was taken. The Trump sample ended up with 101 news transcripts, and the Sanders sample with 52 news transcripts.

Measurements

To examine immigration in general, the study borrowed Quinsaat's (2014) approach to frames that were derived from his inductive analysis of news story data and theoretical constructs speculated from literature review. Quinsaat's (2014) findings yielded six common frames on immigration: Nation of Immigrants, Failed Immigration Policy, Dangerous Immigrants, Cheap Labor, Immigrant Takeover, Immigrant-as-Other. These six frames, developed in the examination of immigration coverage on news media, can serve as generic frames for the immigration issue. The frame of "Nation of Immigrants" (NOI) features the immigrant history of the United States, honors the process of becoming a citizen, supports undocumented immigrants' protests, promotes their human rights and promises not deporting them (Quinsaat, 2014, p. 583). The frame of "Failed Immigration Policy" (FIP) criticizes the failure of the country to address the immigration problem, or the inability of the government to perform its role resolving the conflicts between local and the federal governments, and wordings such as border control, rules of laws and similar words often appear in such a frame (Quinsaat, 2014, p. 584). The frame of "Dangerous Immigrants" (DI) concerns national security, and wordings such as terrorists, terrorism, professional agitators, criminals, bad people are associated with immigrants (Quinsaat, 2014, p. 585). The frame of "Cheap

1 Labor'' (CL) stresses the economic factors that drive immigration, as this
 2 frame is more about poverty, jobs, and unequal incomes and resources
 3 (Quinsaat, 2014, p. 586-587). The frame of ''Immigrant Takeover'' (IT)
 4 applies a demographic perspective on the issue, voicing the concern that the
 5 minority of population becomes the majority, and the U.S. population
 6 composition shifts and changes (Quinsaat, 2014, p. 588-589). The frame of
 7 ''Immigrant-as-Other'' (IAO) offers a pessimistic view on the assimilation of
 8 immigrants in that immigrants' faith, values, beliefs, and cultural inheritance
 9 are difficult to integrate in the mainstream U.S. system (Quinsaat, 2014, p.
 10 590-591). The study measured the six common frames at the ratio level by
 11 counting the frequency, or the number of times, a particular common frame
 12 appeared in the TV news transcripts.

13 The study examined the illegal immigration issue coverage using
 14 Entman's (1993) idea about the key functions of framing from a social
 15 constructionism approach. Basically, illegal immigration is investigated from
 16 three aspects: how it is defined, how its causes, or root, are explained and what
 17 solutions are offered. Kim et al (2011) adopted such an approach in examining
 18 six regional and national newspapers' coverage of illegal immigration. Their
 19 *definitions of illegal immigration* reside in whether illegal immigrants were
 20 reported in the context of crimes, social costs, national security, safety, job
 21 loss, basic human rights requirement, and others, all of which were measured at
 22 the nominal level with dichotomous categories of yes and no in this study.
 23 *Likely causes* for illegal immigrants were operationalized by Kim et al. (2011)
 24 as Latin America's economic problems, U.S. immigration system's failure,
 25 U.S. weak border control, lack of strong law enforcement, and others, all of
 26 which were measured as the binary code of yes or no in this study. Lastly,
 27 *solutions* for the illegal immigration problem were defined by Kim et al. (2011)
 28 as consisting in six categories: helping Latin America economy, immigration
 29 reform, tougher border control, stricter law enforcement, deportation of
 30 immigrants and others. Again, the measurement was taken as the binary code
 31 of yes or no for each category in this study.

32 One graduate student and the researcher worked on the sample coding.
 33 Three rounds of trainings were taken until the inter-coder reliabilities, i.e.
 34 Scott's pi (p), for all variables reached at least .80.

Results

The study analyzed a total of 153 TV news transcripts with 66% on Trump and 34% on Sanders. Six TV networks or cable services were included: CNN (36%), Fox News (23%), MSNBC (13%), ABC (9%), NBC (6%) and CBS (13%). In regards to news transcript types, 61% are talk show programs, followed by video clips (34%), the rest 5% are interviews, combined news packages and others. The entire TV news transcripts totaled 741096 words ranging from 366 words per story to 15822 words per story, with an average of 4844 words per story. For the Trump sample, the story's average length is 5051 words, and for Sanders', it is 4440 words. The sampling frame covers 354 days, almost one year. There are two coverage peaks: Aug 17-18, 2015, when Trump released his plan to combat illegal immigration, and March 10, 2016, when Sanders and Clinton debated for the eighth time the previous day and Republican candidates debated for the last time.

Q1. How was the immigration issue framed by the 2016 presidential candidates Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders in the U.S. television?

Six common frames were examined in every transcript at the ratio level. That means every frame was measured as an independent variable. Then independent sample t-test was run for the comparison between Trump and Sanders. The SPSS output revealed that **Nation of Immigrants** frame was significantly ($t=6.89$, $df=151$, $p<.001$) more associated with Sanders ($M=1.40$, $SD=1.33$) than with Trump ($M=.11$, $SD=.34$). And Trump was much more associated with the frame of **Dangerous Immigrants** ($M=1.07$, $SD=1.38$) than Sanders ($M=0$; $SD=0$). The analysis was significant ($t=5.58$, $df=151$, $p<.001$). The frame of **Failed Immigration Policy** was more associated with Trump ($M=1.86$, $SD=1.70$) than with Sanders ($M=.92$, $SD=1.56$). The t-test was significant ($t=3.33$, $df=151$, $p>.01$).

Only 16 stories, or 10% of the 153 stories, carried the other three common frames of **Cheap Labor**, **Immigration Takeover** and **Immigrant-as-Other** in the U.S. TV news. Therefore, no statistical analysis can be run for these three common frames in the sample.

Q2. How was the illegal immigration issue framed by the 2016 presidential candidates Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders in the U.S. television?

Illegal immigration was analyzed from three different aspects: its definition, its causes and its solutions. In comparing the candidates' **definitions of illegal immigration**, the chi-square test was run to identify the differences between the two candidates in seven categories of crimes, social costs, national security, safety, job loss, basic human rights requirement, and others. The overall finding produced by the chi-square was significant ($\chi^2=33.06$, $p<.001$), therefore, z-test was run on the individual definition to check whether the

specific definition differed significantly. It found that the candidates differed in defining illegal immigration as *crime* (z-test $p<.05$), in defining illegal immigration as a concern for their *safety* (z-test $p<.05$), and in defining illegal immigration as a *basic human rights* issue (z-test $p<.05$). In other words, Trump was more likely to define illegal immigration as crime (13.1% vs. 0), but Sanders was more likely to define it as a safety concern (0 vs. 5.9%) and as a basic human rights concern (0.7% vs. 2.6%). See Table 1 for details.

Table 1. Relationships between Candidates and Illegal Immigration Definition

Illegal Immigration Definition (how candidates present it as a problem)	Candidates		z-test
	Trump	Sanders	
No mention	51.6%	25.5%	
Crime	13.1%	0	p<.05
Social cost	0	0	
National security	0	0	
Safety of illegal immigrants	0	5.9%	p<.05
Jobs taking away	0.7%	0	
Basic human rights	0.7%	2.6%	p<.05
Total	66%	34%	
$\chi^2=33.06$, $df=4$, $p<.001$			

In terms of **causes for illegal immigration**, 96.7% of the stories didn't mention any causes. Among the rare 3.3% of the stories that did talk about causes, only one cause of weaker control was mentioned. Therefore, there wasn't enough data to run the analysis.

In analyzing candidates' frames of **solutions of illegal immigration**, the chi-square test produced a significant finding ($\chi^2=64.47$, $df=3$, $p<.001$) which suggests there was a big difference between the two candidates in six categories: helping Latin America economy, immigration reform, tougher border control, stricter law enforcement, deportation of immigrants and others. The following z-tests were run to identify the specific solution differences. The study found that Trump and Sanders differed in the following solutions: *immigration reform* (z-test $<.05$), *border control* (z-test $<.05$) and *deportation* (z-test $<.05$). In other words, Sanders (16.3%) was more likely than Trump (0.7%) to support the immigration reform as a solution. Trump (4.6%) was more likely to support the solution of tougher border control than Sanders (0), and support the solution of deportation (19.6%) than Sanders (0). See Table 2 for details.

1 *Table 2. Relationships between Candidates and Illegal Immigration Solutions*

Illegal Immigration Solutions	Candidates		z-test
	Trump	Sanders	
No mention	62.4%	51.9%	
Helping Latin American Economy	0	0	
Immigration Reform	0.7%	16.3%	p<.05
Tougher Border Control	4.6%	0	p<.05
Stricter Law Enforcement	0	0	
Deportation	19.6%	0	p<.05
Others			
Total	66%	34%	
$\chi^2=64.47$, df=3, p<.001			

2 3 4 Discussion and Conclusion

5
6 The two front-running candidates for the Republican and Democrat
7 parties, Trump and Sanders, diverged from each other on the immigration issue
8 in the 2016 primary election. Trump's primary talking points were that *U.S.*
9 *has a failed immigration policy and immigrants are dangerous because they*
10 *bring crimes to this country, and they have to be deported and borders have to*
11 *be secured.* And Sanders' talking points were that *this is a nation of*
12 *immigrants, even illegal immigrants should enjoy basic human rights and*
13 *deserve humane treatment, and the immigration reform is a much better*
14 *solution.*

15 What should be noted is the general immigration issue, framed as the
16 issues of dangerous immigrants and failed immigration policy by Trump,
17 indicates his tendency to intermingle the general immigration issue with the
18 illegal immigration. His defining illegal immigration as a crime reinforces the
19 already negative portrayals of immigrants in this country, and his solutions of
20 deportation can only intensify the general perception of negativity towards
21 immigrants.

22 Interestingly, the study identified two opposite outstanding solutions for
23 illegal immigration: tougher border control and deportation by Trump, and
24 immigration reform by Sanders, which are in line with the findings by Kim et
25 al (2011). The two very different solutions to reducing illegal immigration
26 reflects the partisan differences in tackling illegal immigration and are very
27 reflective of the American public's fundamental differences in visioning illegal
28 immigration.

29 Surprisingly, the discussion of the causes of illegal immigration was
30 marginalized in this general election coverage. The causes of illegal
31 immigration deserve more news space for speculating, elaborating and

1 discussing because a comprehensive knowledge of the problem of illegal
2 immigration must start with causes. The marginalization of causes may miss
3 the most critical piece of the complicated picture.

4 TV news plays a significant role in informing the public about issues,
5 especially in the time of presidential elections. The candidates' positions on
6 immigration are made quite salient via the framing devices. Social
7 constructionism notes that framing contributes to the creation and
8 institutionalization of reality in social interaction, where an active audience
9 interprets and evaluates media texts based on the available persistent frames.
10 Therefore, in constructing the immigration reality, audiences would either have
11 quite a negative picture of immigrants, and thus support the deportation, or
12 have a sympathetic perception of immigrants and support the initiative of
13 reform. This either-or institutionalization of immigration may only reinforce
14 the already polarizing views of immigration and exclude the middle-ground
15 views or the possible third view or fourth view of immigration. As such, a
16 complicated issue, such as immigration, is reduced to a simple battling issue
17 between parties.

18 Theoretically and empirically, framing is very useful in exploring and
19 investigating a controversial issue from a comparative perspective: either
20 across media platforms or across points of views. Generic frames identified
21 from prior studies may be adopted repeatedly to synthesize conclusions on
22 issues. Entman's functionality of frame taking up definitions, causes and
23 solutions of issues provides a multi-angle view of what is under discussion.
24 Functioning as a telescope lens and as a microscope lens on issues, this framing
25 device may be universally applicable to any complicated social, political,
26 economic and scientific issues.

27 28 29 **Limitations and Suggestions** 30

31 While framing is useful, we have to admit the classification of immigration
32 into categories, such as Nation of Immigrants or Dangerous Immigrants, resorts
33 to the stereotypical depiction of immigrants by simplifying their human
34 conditions and circumstances. The full stories of immigrants, especially illegal
35 immigrants, seem impossible to tell with this framing analysis. Through
36 framing, the social construction of an immigrant as a citizen (in Nation of
37 Immigrants), a criminal (Dangerous Immigrant), a dispensable worker (in
38 Cheap Labor), an invader (in Immigrant Takeover) or a forever foreigner (in
39 Immigrant-as-Other) (Quinsaat, 2014) is constrained by the singular value
40 judgement of good versus bad, and trapped in the traditional monolithic
41 reasoning of right versus wrong. Moreover, defining illegal immigration as
42 crime is even more value laden. While Democrat candidate Sanders did define
43 illegal immigration as a safety and human rights issue, his voice may have
44 gotten lost in the more dominant coverage of Trump.

45 This study only analyzed 153 news transcripts, with 66% dedicated to
46 Trump and 34% to Bernie, and the sample size could have been much larger by

including regional TV stations with a large TV audience market. The manual coding of the variables could not fully address the reliability and validity problems, and the use of a computer-assisted textual analysis may confirm and complement the findings.

Future analysis may consider the integration of surveying public perception of immigration so that a direct relationship between media coverage and public perception can be identified and inquired. After all, the effect of media message on the public would be more meaningful because that is what counts most. Lastly, a comparative study between TV news coverage and print news coverage would be more interesting, as print news generally provides in-depth analysis of current events in which the causation aspect of illegal immigration may not be marginalized and excluded.

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