MEDIA FRAMES AND THE IMMIGRATION DEBATE

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Public opinion is central to the operation of democracy because government activity should, in theory, reflect the preferences of the citizenry. If mass opinion does not influence the direction and contours of public policy, then the ideal of government "by the people" cannot obtain. "According to a central strand of democratic theory," write Page and Shapiro (1992, 1), "the policy preferences of ordinary citizens are supposed to form the foundation for government decision making." From this perspective, there is good news in the United States: According to a number of scholars, public policy often responds to citizen preferences (Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson 2002; Monroe 1998; Page and Shapiro 1983; see Burstein 2003 for a review).

But that view has run headlong into an imposing mountain of research revealing the apparent instability and malleability of citizen attitudes. According to this literature, political elites can significantly affect public opinion by "framing" policy debates in ways favorable to the positions they prefer. The correspondence between mass preferences and public policy, then, does not necessarily reflect democratic responsiveness. Instead, it may merely demonstrate the power of elites to use the mass media to manipulate public opinion (Jacobs and Shapiro 2000). Hence, the bad news: Government policy may rest on the people, but it is not by the people.

But the portrait of an unanchored public opinion, easily blown about by the symbolic and rhetorical manipulation of strategic politicians, is perhaps more impressionism than realism. Recent work (Chong and Druckman 2007b; Sniderman and Theriault 2004) has pointed out that the framing literature has almost universally ignored the importance of competition in political communication. In the typical study, experimental subjects are exposed to a single political argument, and subsequent changes in opinion are taken as evidence of framing effects, revealing the ease with which public opinion be altered. In the

actual practice of politics, however, citizen attitudes are rarely driven by "monolithically one-sided elite discourse" but are almost always "shaped by multiple and typically conflicting information flows" (Zaller 1992, 20). Thus, when conflicting messages are competing with each other to win over public opinion, the influence of any given framing attempt may be considerably limited. Without research grounded in the competitive, conflicting information flows that characterize most policy debates, the framing literature will remain far removed from the "real world" relationship between elite discourse and public opinion.

This paper, preliminary as it is, explores framing in the debate over immigration reform in the United States. The project eventually will include the design and analysis of laboratory and survey experiments designed to test hypotheses about the conditions under which framing effects are likely to occur in competitive communications environments. But my present task is to lay the groundwork for that analysis by examining the framing of immigration reform in the news media, focusing on the frequency with which different frames, or arguments, make their way in the news and the source of those frames.

My findings show that though the frames on different sides of the immigration debate—to oversimplify, those arguing for more "restrictive" immigration policies and those arguing for more "welcoming" policies—were given nearly equal time on television news, the sources of those differing frames were dramatically different. Restrictive frames came largely from government officials and politicians. Welcoming frames were articulated in the news largely by immigrants themselves and demonstrators at rallies. Because source credibility is an important mediator of framing effects (Druckman 2001), these patterns raise important questions about which side is likely to have more success influencing public opinion.

I begin by providing a brief overview of the concept of framing, and highlight the importance of competition and source credibility in mediating the effectiveness of elite communications. I then describe the content analysis of network television news coverage of the immigration debate from May 2005 through June 2007. Finally, I present my findings and conclude with a discussion of the potential implications for the role of the news media in shaping public opinion in the immigration debate.

Communication Frames and Framing Effects

Framing is fundamental to political debate. In the search for a winning strategy, political actors selectively emphasize aspects of an issue to win support for their preferred alternative (Riker 1986, Schattschneider 1960). Every communication involves a selective presentation of reality, and when political actors seek to win support for their policies, they frame arguments in ways most favorable to their position. As a result, political argumentation involves the creation of a "communication frame" (Chong and Druckman 2007c), "a central organizing idea … for making sense of relevant events, suggesting what is at issue" (Gamson and Modigliani 1989, 3). Verbal arguments are central to framing, but the process also often involves complementary visuals and symbols (see Reese, Gandy, and Grant 2003). As an example, the proponent of a large real estate project may argue that the project represents economic development, while an opponent might argue the endeavor represents environmental degradation. When exposure to a communication frame causes an individual to alter her opinion on an issue—for example, a citizen decides to oppose the real estate project after seeing a news story about its potential environmental impact—a "framing effect" is said to occur.

Different scholars suggest different mechanisms by which framing effects occur. On one hand, communication frames may change the ingredients of an attitude by altering the

cognitive accessibility of "considerations" that people use to form opinions (Iyengar 1991; Zaller 1992; Zaller and Feldman 1992). People are ambivalent about many political issues, (Zaller 1992, Chs. 1-5; Zaller and Feldman 1992), and possess a host of competing ideas in their mind that can lead them to different opinions.

For example, people may value both economic development and environmental protection, and the attitude they express on the real estate project will depend on whether one of those considerations is more easily retrieved when asked to offer an opinion. Considerations that have been recently activated are more accessible (Higgins and King 1981; Wyer and Srull 1989), so having recently been exposed to an environmental frame makes it more likely that environmental considerations will influence a person's judgment. If, on the other hand, the individual had more recently been exposed to an economic frame, her opposition could turn to support.

An alternative perspective views individuals as active receivers and interpreters of political arguments. Instead of passively responding to framing attempts, individuals "consciously and deliberately think about the relative importance of different considerations suggested by a frame" (Druckman 2001, 1043; Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley 1997). As a result, people evaluate both the content and source of a frame in determining whether to "accept" its argument. Thus, a person exposed to an economic or environmental frame would not reflexively respond based on alterations in the accessibility of considerations, but would also consider the "strength" of the argument and its source (Druckman 2001; Chong and Druckman 2007b). Their opinions would then reflect both their assessment of the merits of the message, and their own predispositions—the extent to which they generally care more about economic development or environmental protection.

Chong and Druckman (2007b; see also Druckman 2001) have provided support for the latter interpretation, showing that variation in the strength of frames, the frequency of exposure, the presence of competing frames, and source credibility moderate framing effects. If one frame receives more attention in the news than a competing frame (of equal strength), the more frequently aired frame is likely to have larger effects on public opinion. And if the frames on one side of a debate are deployed by sources with differing levels of perceived credibility, the more credible side is likely to have more success in shaping public opinion.[1]

The findings recommend that framing research on any given topic begin with the nature of political debate in the mass media, the public's primary source of political information (Graber 2005). If framing effects vary with the intensity of different messages, then it bears exploration whether frames on one side of an issue receive more attention in the news than the opposing side. Moreover, it is important to determine whether the frames that get attention vary in their strength and the perceived credibility of their source. If there is substantial variation in the effectiveness of the frames political actors use to argue for their preferred alternatives, or if one side's proponents are perceived as less credible than the other, then the possibility for "lopsided" framing effects to occur.

To explore these possibilities, it is necessary to analyze the appearance in the mass media of different sources of political arguments, laying the groundwork for the testing of

[1] Chong and Druckman (2007b) and Druckman (2001) have found source credibility effects in their experiments. But these studies carry important limitations. Source credibility has been manipulated by attributing arguments to, on one hand, sources with substantial credibility (Colin Powell, the *New York Times*, or the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*), and, on the other, those with none whatsoever (Jerry Springer, the *National Enquirer*, or a Minneapolis high school newspaper). The fact that individuals are more accepting of a statement about aid to the poor from Colin Powell than Jerry Springer is not surprising (Druckman 2001). But since political discourse more regularly pits sources of more similar stature—not decorated generals against talk show hosts—it is important to investigate whether there is a difference in framing effects when the difference in credibility is less stark between competing sides of a political debate.

hypotheses about their effects. That is where this project begins: With a content analysis of television news coverage of the immigration debate.

Content Analysis of Immigration News

This paper reports the results of a content analysis of media coverage of the immigration debate, focusing on the appearance of different frames in the news. I follow Chong and Druckman (2007b) by operationalizing a frame as an argument articulating a way of thinking about potential immigration reform. The vast majority of frames thus consist of a reason or motivation for changes to immigration law. For example, among the most common arguments for the bolstering of border security, an example of more restrictive immigration policy, is that illegal immigration represents a threat to national security. Among the most common frames arguing for a policy more welcoming to immigrants—for example, a guest worker program—were those that argued stricter immigration laws would harm the U.S. economy by reducing its workforce. Both of these entail a selective focus on particular aspects of the issue (security or economic health) in service of a particular outcome (more restrictive or more welcoming policy). To be clear, I am analyzing the frames used by political actors—politicians, government officials, interest groups, demonstrators, and so forth—that are reported by the news media. I am not analyzing the media's thematic presentation of policy debates, such as whether the "issue" or "game" aspects of political conflict receive more attention (Lawrence 2000).[2]

[2] This is a different approach than some research that has focused on the news media's more general framing of political debates. The best example is Iyengar's (1991) demonstration that news stories that frame political news episodically (focusing on personal stories or individuals) rather than thematically (focusing on broad trends and statistics) encourage citizens to attribute responsibility for political problems to different sources. Similarly, Lawrence (2000) has focused on journalists' framing of news stories about policy debates as "issue"- or "game"-focused. These represent overarching themes or portrayals of political debates, a phenomenon separate from what I am interested in, which is the appearance of frames from competing political actors. To be sure, journalists play a role in deciding which frames to report, and how to do so, so their role is not passive.

Coding

I coded every television news story about immigration and immigration reform on the ABC, CBS, and NBC nightly news programs from May 1, 2005 through June 27, 2007.[3] The first major immigration reform bill of recent years was introduced on May 12, 2005, and the most recent bill failed to pass the Congress on June 28, 2007. In addition to the introduction (and failure) of a number of pieces of congressional legislation, the period included several immigration speeches by President Bush, dozens of immigration rallies and protests, the first widely reported activities of the Minutemen, and the deployment of U.S. National Guard troops to the border. I focus on television coverage because the nightly news programs represent the single largest source of political information for Americans (Graber 2005).

To identify the relevant television news stories, I searched Lexis-Nexis transcripts of each network's nightly news program for the word "immigration" or "immigrant." I then read each story returned by the search protocol. I selected for inclusion in the content analysis only stories that dealt with the debate over immigration or immigration reform. Stories that included the search terms in a different context were excluded.[4]

For each story included in the content analysis, I coded for several variables. The first was the primary focus of the story, or what the story was mainly about. Stories focused on a variety of topics, including legislative debates over immigration reform, President Bush's speeches, immigration protests and rallies, the role of immigrants in the U.S.

But my approach sets aside for the moment the question of why certain frames make their way in to the news in order to focus on the question of which ones do.

[3] These are ABC's World News Tonight, World News Saturday, and World News Sunday; CBS' Evening News; and NBC's Nightly News.

[4] For example, I excluded stories that quoted officials from the Immigration and Naturalization Service in stories about unrelated topics, such as the bureaucratic organization of the Department of Homeland Security, or cases that referred to immigration controversies in foreign countries (unless they were discussed in the context of the American debate).

economy, and border security. A full list of the story topics is available from the author upon request.

My central task was to code for the occurrence of an immigration "frame." I defined a frame as any argument for or against some type of immigration reform. To create a comprehensive list of frames, I used an inductive approach.[5] I read through each story and made a determination about the content of the argument, or frame, being used. For each specific frame, I identified its direction—arguing for a more "restrictive" or a more "welcoming" immigration policy—and the source of the frame.[6]

For example, a common "restrictive" frame focused on the fact that immigrants in the U.S. unlawfully should be treated no different than other criminals. A Senate bill that would have created a guest worker program "rewards folks for breaking the law," said Louisiana Republican Sen. David Vitter on the CBS Evening News on May 21, 2007. On the NBC Nightly News on March 26, 2006, Republican Rep. Tom Tancredo of Arizona, arguing against George W. Bush's immigration proposal, which would have created a guest worker program and provided a path to citizenship for some immigrants, said: "Let's try enforcing the law."

A common "welcoming" frame focused on the role immigrants play in the U.S. economy. New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg in July 5, 2006 story on CBS, said the

[5] Though other research has identified some common frames in immigration debates (e.g., Bauder 2008), I am not aware of any that have done this systematically in the current iteration of the debate.

[6] This is clearly a simplification of what is a more complicated policy debate and may strike knowledgeable observers of immigration politics as an indefensible error. My reason for this simplification is partly practical—it makes more manageable the analytical task—but also grounded in the actual nature of political debate. To be sure, most proponents of more "welcoming" proposals—a guest worker program, for example—would probably also agree that border security is a valuable goal. Many proponents of more restrictive policies—the building of border fences, or stricter enforcement of immigration laws—would probably concede that deporting the illegal immigrants currently living in the United States is impractical. So by creating two broad frame categories, I do not mean to say that all proponents take one or the other position and see no merit in the other. But in practice, most proponents tended to use frames that were easily categorized into one of the two categories. President Bush, who regularly followed his calls for greater border security with arguments for a guest worker program, is an exception. But when people did indeed use a welcoming and restrictive frame at the same time, I included both in my coding.

city's economy "would collapse if they were deported." Proponents of the provision of a path to citizenship for immigrants also regularly argued that immigrants "are the one that makes the American dream," as did radio personality Pedro Biaggi on ABC's World News Tonight on April 9, 2006.

In 80% of the cases, frames were direct quotes from people interviewed in a story. But I also included in the coding the 20% of frames that were articulated by reporters stating a particular person or group's position on the immigration debate. For example, in a story on ABC News on May 12, 2006, reporter Martha Raddatz reported that "conservatives" were arguing that border security was the paramount issue in the immigration fight. Even though no one was directly quoted, I coded the source of that frame as "conservatives."

Of the 284 stories included in the coding, 192 of them contained at least one identifiable frame. The remaining 98 contained no frame. Each story with at least one frame contained, on average, 2.5 frames.[7] In all, I identified 498 instances of frames.

The data set allows me to analyze the content of immigration frames, the frequency with which different frames made their way into the news, and the sources of different frames. I turn now to the results of the analysis.

Results

Table 1 presents the distribution of "restrictive" and "welcoming" frames in news coverage on each network. The unit of analysis is the individual frame, rather than the news story. Two findings are notable. First, the distribution of welcoming and restrictive frames was relatively even. As indicated in the final column, restrictive frames appeared slightly more often, but the difference is negligible. A difference of proportions test between restrictive and welcoming frames is not statistically significant (52% to 48%, p=0.25).

[7] Including the stories without a frame, the mean is 1.75 frames.

Consistent with the dominant norm of journalistic objectivity (e.g., Bennett 2007; Graber 2005), the framing attempts of proponents of restrictive and welcoming policies were according roughly equal air time on television news.

[Insert Table 1 here]

The second point is that news coverage across the networks is largely the same. The split between the proportion of welcoming and restrictive frames on each network's news program is very similar. ABC and CBS included more restrictive frames than welcoming ones, while NBC had more welcoming than restrictive frames, but the differences are not large. The largest difference within a single network is on CBS where restrictive frames received 55% of the coverage, but it would be hard to describe that distribution as "monolithically one-sided." A chi-square test reveals that the differences among the networks are not statistically significant. Regardless of which network(s) a person may regularly have watched, they were likely to be exposed to fairly evenly balanced, two-sided, competitive information flow, validating the call for research that incorporates the fact that people are typically exposed to multiple frames in policy debates. Because of the similarity in the nature of coverage across the three networks, the results in the remainder of the paper will report coverage overall, rather than by network. This will simplify and ease the interpretation of the data.

Though Table 1 suggests the flow of competing arguments about immigration in the news was similarly intense, the amount of media attention to immigration across the two-year period was not. Figure 1 shows that most of the coverage of the immigration debate was concentrated in March, April, and May of 2006. (The data points represent the number of frames that appeared on the news within a single month.)

The spike in coverage resulted from protests and rallies organized across the country by immigrant advocacy groups. The rallies were sparked by opposition to a piece of legislation that would have tightened border security, sought to deport immigrants living in the U.S. illegally, and would not have provided a path to citizenship for undocumented residents. For example, during the month of May, 106 frames appeared in the news (58 restrictive, 48 welcoming). In other months, such as December 2006, there were no immigration frames in the news at all. The patterns are consistent with an "issue-attention cycle" (Bosso 1989; Downs 1972), in which media coverage of a policy debate spikes in response to dramatic events before just as swiftly receding. In the results that follow, it is important to keep in mind that 52% of the frames over the two-year period came in this three-month "protest" period. In the remaining 23 months, the distribution of frames tilts slightly more restrictive (57% to 43%, $p<.01$), compared to the overall patterns in Table 1.

[Insert Figure 1 here]

The directional thrust of a frame (restrictive vs. welcoming) is only one element of its content. As recent work has pointed out, the strength or weakness of a frame—defined as its ability to tap into accessible, available, or applicable considerations—is central to its effectiveness (Chong and Druckman 2007b). Some frames are likely to be perceived as stronger than others, so it is imperative to determine whether there is variation in the strength and weakness of different frames on each side of the debate.[8] The determination of each frame's effectiveness is beyond the scope of this paper, but by examining the distribution of specific frames, I can (perhaps irresponsibly) speculate about whether one side's most frequently reported frames appear stronger than the other's.

[8] The strength of any given frame of course varies from person to person.

Figure 2 presents the frames that appeared with the most frequency in the news. The distribution contains both restrictive (designated by "R" and the lighter gray bar) and welcoming (designated by "W" and the darker shade of gray) frames. The numbers represent the percentage of all frames made up of frames from each specific category. The exhaustive distribution of frames is shown in Appendix Table A-1, but the top 10 in Figure 2 comprise 82% of all frames.

[Insert Figure 2 here]

The figure reveals several substantively important results. The most frequently reported frame was a law enforcement frame, in which proponents of more restrictive immigration policy cast illegal immigrants as "criminals who need to be sent home" or who noted that "these people are law breakers, and don't deserve to be here." Combined with the 3% of arguments I coded as "crime" frames—in which specific criminal activity was invoked—the "law talk" frames constituted more than one in five of every frame in the immigration debate.

The second most common restrictive frame, and the third most common overall, was a security/terrorism frame. It is not surprising that proponents of increased border security not only focused on the importance of stopping illegal immigration itself, but on the possibility that a porous border would ease the entrance of terrorists into the U.S. Though it is only conjecture, I assume this frame was far less prevalent in immigration debates before Sept. 11, 2001. This is a clear example of the way political actors seek political advantage by using salient events to their advantage in framing policy debates.

Less frequently reported restrictive frames focused on the burden illegal immigrants placed on taxpayers through their use of health care facilities, education, and other social services. Perhaps surprisingly, the argument that illegal immigrants were taking away

American jobs received relatively little attention, less than 5%. Overall, the reported frames arguing for more restrictive policy were dominated by law enforcement and security concerns.

The frames on the side of a more welcoming immigration policy focused on two primary themes. The first was the fact that immigrants constitute an important part of the American economy, and that imposing new regulations that would either deport large numbers of immigrants or reduce immigration levels would damage the U.S. economy by leaving many jobs unfilled. The "economy dependent" frame constituted the most common argument on the welcoming side of the debate, and made up 15% of all frames.

The other prominent theme focused on the behavior and motivations of immigrants themselves and the tradition of the United States as a "nation of immigrants." About 7% of frames focused on the fact that immigrants, like other residents of the U.S., were hard-working people who were simply trying to provide a good life for themselves and their families. Another 6% invoked the concept of the "American dream," focusing on the national importance of the idea that people can work their way up in society. A combined 7% of frames focused on the harm done by restrictions that keep family members of immigrants from migrating to the United States and the ethical imperative of treating immigrants humanely (which usually implied providing them a path to citizenship). Appendix Table A-1 shows that several other infrequently used frames were consonant with this theme (e.g., "the United States should be welcoming").

Without independent measures of the actual persuasiveness of these frames (Chong and Druckman 2007b; Eagly and Chaiken 1993), it is impossible to conclude with certainty that one side or the other has the "upper hand" in terms of the power of the frames reported in the media. One commonality is that the most prominent frames on both sides—

law enforcement and security on the restrictive side, the economic importance of immigrations on the welcoming side—focus on the potential threat (security or economic) that could accompany different types of policies. One divergence, however, is that many of welcoming frames made appeals about the nature of immigrants' goals and the cultural heritage of the United States. It is likely that individuals with different predispositions—people, who on one hand, see security as the paramount concern, compared with those who view egalitarianism as a more important ideal—are likely to respond to these arguments in different ways. It is also likely that the acceptance of these arguments among non-Hispanics will rest in part on perceptions of national identity and attitudes toward out-groups (Citrin et al. 1997; Sides and Citrin 2007).

The source of a persuasive communication is an important mediator of its effects, something that has occasionally been lost in the framing research (Druckman 2001). For example, work that focuses on the mass media framing of policy debates rarely include measures of individual's attitudes toward the media as potential influences on whether those frames have effects or not. But more importantly, given that most frames are not simply created by journalists, but instead emanate from other political actors who are being quoted or referenced in news stories, the credibility of the quoted sources may influence whether different frames have effects or not. That means that the likelihood of a communication frame affecting a person's attitude will depend not only on the content of the message but who's sending it.

Figure 3 presents the distribution of sources of all restrictive frames. (The entire list of specific sources quoted or referenced is shown in the Appendix Table A-2.) As shown in the top five bars in the figure, official government sources comprised the largest group of sources of restrictive frames. Members of Congress were the single largest entity, with 22%,

while local government officials and George W. Bush comprising 15% and 10% of the frames, respectively. The tendency for government or "official" sources to be the source of restrictive frames increases slightly by including the 6% of frames attributed to "conservatives" or "Republicans" who were not directly quoted. In isolation, those results are not remarkable; government officials and prominent political actors are the single most common source of news for the mass media (Bennett 2007; Cook 2005; Sigal 1973). But they take on more meaning when compared to the sources of welcoming frames.

[Insert Figure 3 here]

In stark contrast, as shown in Figure 4, immigrants were the single most common source of welcoming frames, at 21%. Viewers of television news, instead of hearing the argument for more welcoming policies from government officials, they instead heard it from immigrants themselves. An additional 10% of welcoming frames came from demonstrators at one of the numerous immigration rallies, meaning that close to one-third of all welcoming frames came from immigrants or protestors. George W. Bush was the second most frequently quoted proponent of a welcoming immigration policy (15%). His appearance as a prominent source of both frames reflects Bush's positions that comprehensive immigration reform required strong border security (restrictive) and a guest worker program that would allow immigrants to continue working in the United States (welcoming). Business owners and employers were the source of about 11% of the welcoming frame, which fits with the findings in Figure 2, which showed that the economic dependency argument was the most common among all welcoming frames. In contrast to restrictive frames, members of Congress were the source of just 8% of all welcoming frames.

[Insert Figure 4 here]

As with the distribution of different frames, it is impossible to draw firm conclusions about the implications of the difference in sources of restrictive and welcoming frames. Opinion data are needed to make those determinations. But it does not seem controversial to posit that the public is likely to process messages from elected officials differently from those of demonstrators at protests and rallies. Despite the fact that many people view politicians and government officials with great skepticism (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002), it is incontrovertible that people respond to cues from political elites about policy issues (Zaller 1992). The dynamics of this process depends on the nature of the information environment and attributes of individual citizens, but elites play an important role in determining the shape of public opinion. It seems less likely that citizens would take cues from immigrants or protestors. To the extent that official sources other than George W. Bush are rarely the source of frames supporting a more welcoming immigration policy, proponents may have a hard time winning over public opinion.

Conclusion

In June of 2007, a Zogby International/UPI poll asked a representative sample of Americans whether "illegal immigrants are a benefit or burden." Roughly one-fifth of the country—22%—answered "benefit," while nearly one-half—46%—said "burden." Among those who offered a clear opinion—30% said neither or both—the tilt was clearly in the direction of more restrictive policies. In the same survey, respondents were asked which element of immigration reform was most important: enforcing current immigration laws, increasing border security, or creating a guest worker program/reforms that would provide a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants. More than 70% of respondents chose one of the first two options (42% law enforcement, 29% border security), while just 23% chose the welcoming option.

Public opinion toward immigration has its roots in many factors beyond the framing attempts of political elites (e.g., Citrin et al. 1997). But given the importance of information in shaping citizen attitudes (e.g., Page and Shapiro 1992; Zaller 1992), the nature of the immigration debate as portrayed in the mass media may help explain the restrictive tilt in public opinion. While the distribution of restrictive and welcoming frames was fairly competitive on television news, the strength of the most prominent arguments on either side was perhaps less equal: Concerns about law enforcement and security may tap into more salient considerations than concerns over the economy and the value of remaining loyal to America's status as a "nation of immigrants." At the very least, the individuals who respond to each type of frame will likely have different predispositions.

In addition, the sources of these differing frames were quite divergent. Sources of restrictive frames tended to be government officials and politicians, while the sources of restrictive frames tended to be immigrants and protestors. To the extent that American are more comfortable taking cues from (like-minded) elites than (like-minded) demonstrators, the flow of information in the mass media seems more advantageous for proponents of restrictive policies than welcoming ones.

This is of course speculation. Research is needed to determine whether, and how, these frames "matter" for citizen attitudes. But the patterns found in the content analysis underscore two important points: Policy debates are rarely one-sided; for every frame, there is a counter frame, and the public typically has access to competing political arguments. The second is that even if the amount of coverage devoted to frames on different sides of the issue is equal, the strength of the particular arguments may not be. And in particular, at least in the case of immigration, the sources of different frames may diverge in ways that might moderate the public's willingness to accept their arguments. This is a complicated process

that the existing literature has not adequately grappled with. More work that combines the study of communication frames as they occur in the mass media with nuanced research designs that can capture the circumstances under which certain frames can—and cannot—influence opinion are imperative.

Appendix

Table A-1. Distribution of Reported Immigration Frames in Network Television News Coverage, May 2005-June 2007

Frame	% of All Frames (N of Frames)	Type
Law enforcement	18.7 (93)	Restrictive
Economy dependent on immigrants	15.3 (76)	Welcoming
Security/terrorism	14.5 (72)	Restrictive
Immigrants are burden on taxpayers/society	7.2 (36)	Restrictive
Immigrants work hard/trying to make a good life	7.0 (35)	Welcoming
American dream	5.8 (29)	Welcoming
Immigrants take away jobs/harm economy	4.2 (21)	Restrictive
Immigrant families hurt by restrictions	4.2 (21)	Welcoming
Crime	3.0 (15)	Restrictive
Immigrants deserve humane treatment	2.4 (12)	Welcoming
Immigrants aren't criminals	2.4 (12)	Welcoming
Border fence would hurt U.S. image	2.0 (10)	Welcoming
Need to bring immigrants "out of shadows"	2.0 (10)	Welcoming
Mass deportation is impractical	1.6 (8)	Welcoming
Immigrants are ruining the country/are a nuisance	1.2 (6)	Restrictive
Deportation/strict enforcement is racist	1.2 (6)	Welcoming
Other welcoming frame	1.2 (6)	Welcoming
The United State should be welcoming	1.0 (5)	Welcoming
General threat	0.8 (4)	Restrictive
Immigrants' debt to society can be repaid	0.8 (4)	Welcoming
Guest worker plan would reduce illegal immigration	0.8 (4)	Welcoming
Immigrants have no right to be here	0.6 (3)	Restrictive
Immigration is hurting black community	0.6 (3)	Restrictive
Americans should decide who comes in	0.4 (2)	Restrictive
We are "all the same people"	0.4 (2)	Welcoming
Other restrictive	0.4 (2)	Restrictive
Loss of American identity	0.2 (1)	Restrictive
Total	100 (498)	

Table A-2. Specific Sources of Immigration Frames in Network Television News Coverage, May 2005-June 2007

1=local govt. official	33=retired border patrol agent
2=local law enforcement official	34=American Friends Service Committee
3=minutemen	35=White House
4=George W. Bush	36=lawyer
5=religiously affiliated	37=Democrats
6=supporters/backers of legislation	38=U.S. officials
7=employer/businessperson/"employers and contractors"/farmer	39=reporter/anchor
8=ordinary citizen (not an immigrant)/"residents"/radio caller	40=political advertisement
9=media personality	41=The American Resistance
10=protestors/demonstrators	42=Compete America
11=many people/some/some viewers/many businesses/groups/others/constituents	43=opponents/critics
	44=Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center
12=immigrant	45=university official
13=illegal immigrant	46=Karl Rove
14=Federation for American Immigration Reform official	47=unions
15=conservatives	48=liberals
16=poll of Americans	49=Mexican-American Legal and Educational Defense Fund
17=U.S. senator	
18=U.S. representative	50=U.S. Chamber of Commerce
19=Mexican official	51=Manhattan Institute
20=independent expert/"experts"/independent study	52=Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers
21=Center for Immigration Studies/CIS official	53=Texas Vegetable Association
22=presidential candidate	54=La Raza
23=Republicans (Senate, House, voters)	55=congressional candidate
24=Border Patrol union official	56=Latino Movement USA
25=Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation	57=Numbers USA
26=Federation for American Immigration Reform	58=National Immigration Forum
27=immigrants rights advocate/immigration advocates	59=Canadian Business Council
28=Michael Chertoff	60=blacks
29=doctor/hospital officials	61=Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law
30=Janice Kephart, 9/11 Commission	
31="officials"	62=Rand Corporation
32=immigration enforcement advocate	

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Table 1. Distribution of Restrictive and Welcoming Immigration Frames on Television, by Network, May 2005-June 2007

	ABC	CBS	NBC	**Total**
Restrictive	52.6% (135)	54.9% (89)	48.8% (98)	**51.8%** **(258)**
Welcoming	47.4% (64)	45.1% (73)	51.2% (103)	**48.2%** **(240)**
Total	100% (135)	100% (162)	100% (201)	**100%** **(498)**

Pearson chi2(2) = 1.4188, Pr = 0.492

Figure 1. The Number of Restrictive and Welcoming Immigration Frames on Network Television, by Month, May 2005-June 2007

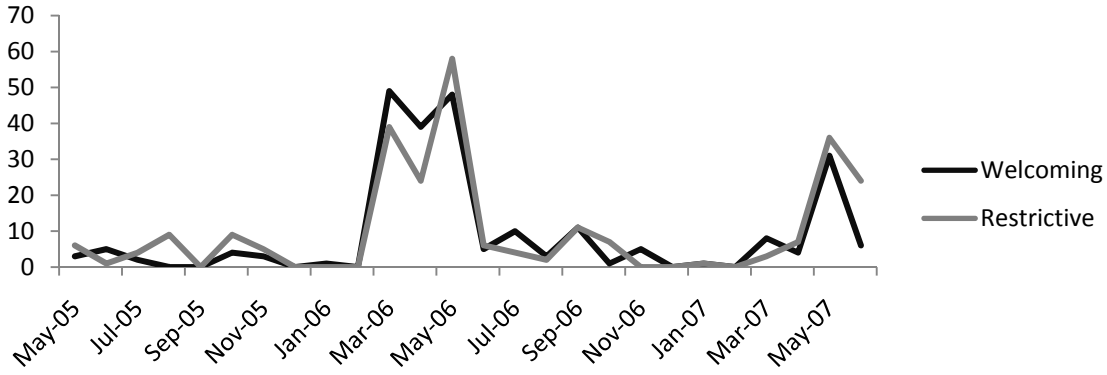
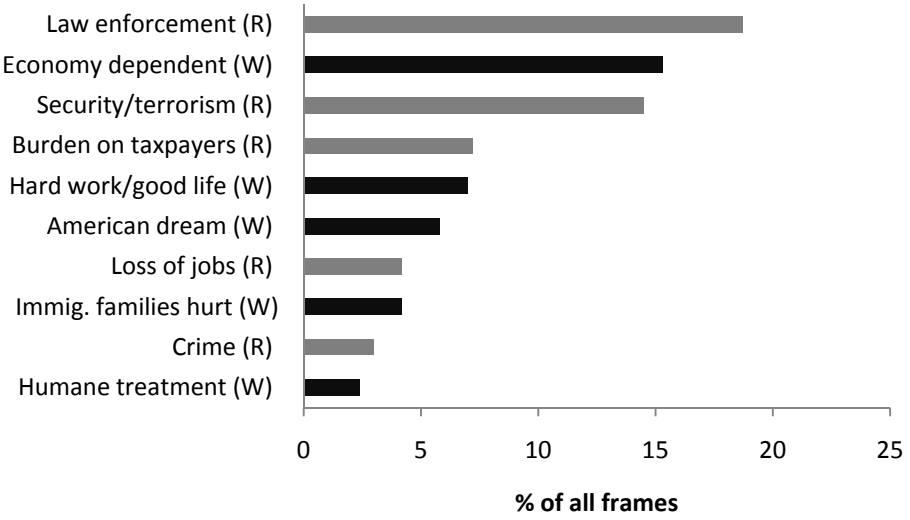


Figure 2. The Distribution of Specific Immigration Frames on Network Television, May 2005-June 2007



Note: (W)=Welcoming frame; (R)=Restrictive frame

Figure 3. The Sources of Restrictive Frames on Network Television, May 2005-2007

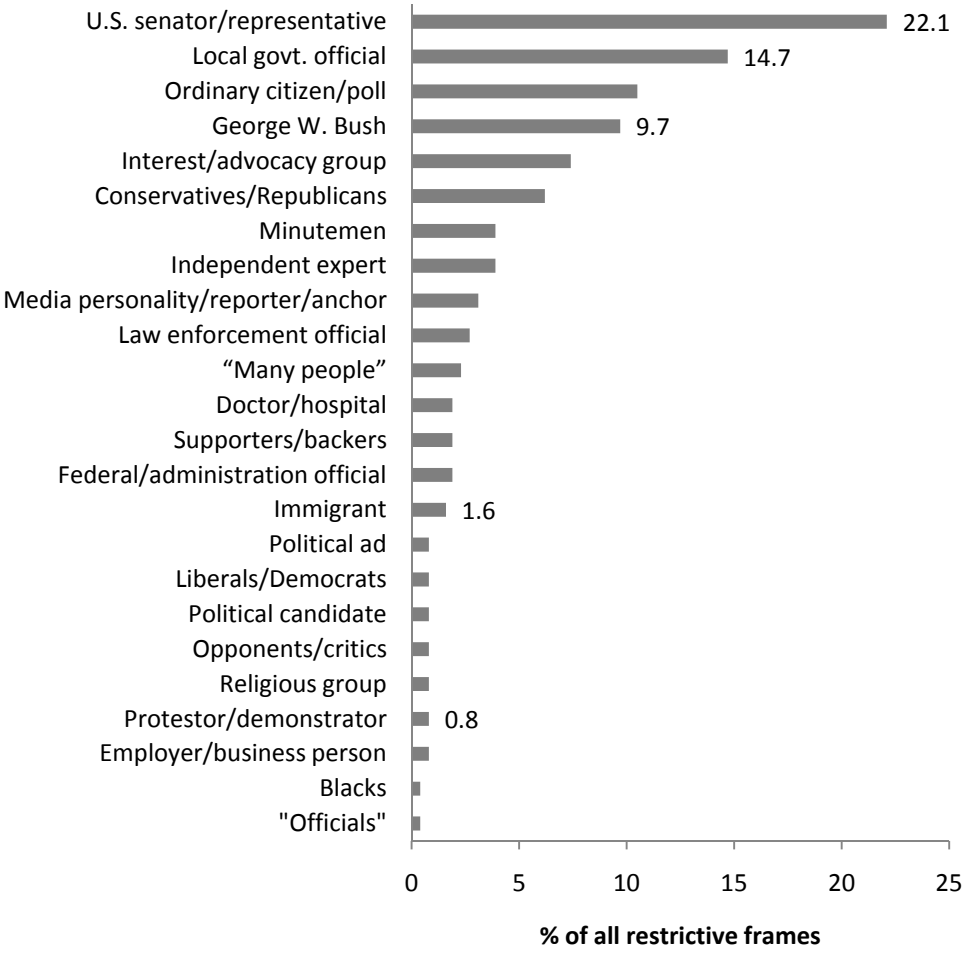
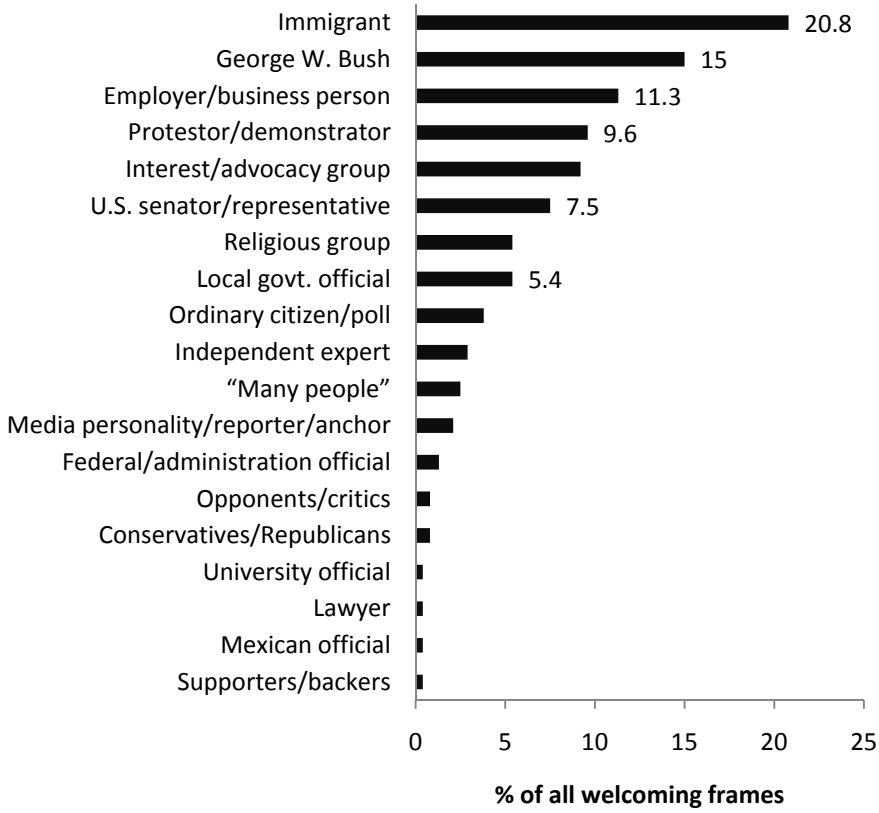



Figure 4. The Sources of Welcoming Frames on Network Television, May 2005-2007