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**Media Framing and Immigration Reform: An Examination of the
Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration
Modernization Act of 2013**

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**Media Framing and Immigration Reform: An
Examination of the Border Security, Economic
Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of
2013**

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Abstract

As of 2020, there are 11 million undocumented immigrants in the United States? Recently, the topic of immigration in the United States has become more controversial. In 2013, the U.S. Senate passed S.744 the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013. When this bill was introduced many believed that it had a good chance of making it through the legislative process. The bill represented a compromise between Republicans and Democrats and addressed many problems associated with immigration. However, the bill was not passed by the House of Representatives, leaving the issue of immigration reform unresolved. The role of the media is to provide information to the public, to the best of its ability, about what the government is doing. Once information is presented by the media, members of the public can form their own opinions about the issues being addressed by elected officials. The media employs a process referred to as media framing to package information for presentation to its audience. Framing is therefore an important aspect of how information is communicated. What people know about issues, and how much they know, can affect what people think about issues. What kind of information did the public have about immigration reform during the time the bill was being debated by the Senate and how was this information framed? This thesis examines articles from the *New York Times* and *The Hill* during the time that the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013 was being debated by the Senate to determine how these media outlets framed immigration policy and reform. This thesis coded thirty articles to see if the media framed the issue as one of three frames: moral, economic, or national security. The results showed that of the articles studied, a majority of the articles had a moral frame.

Introduction

Millions of citizens in the United States turn to the news media daily for information about politics, their communities, the economy, world crises, and much more. Doris Graber defines news as not just any information or even the most important information, but rather that the news tends to contain information that is timely, often sensitive, and familiar.¹ The role of the media is to provide information to the public, to the best of its ability, on worldwide occurrences. There are three important functions of media in democratic societies: the first is to provide a forum for candidates and political parties to debate their qualification for office before a national audience; the second is to contribute to informed citizens by providing a variety of perspectives on the important issues of the day; and the third is to serve as a watchdog by scrutinizing the actions of the government on behalf of its citizens.² The media, and more specifically, print media serves as a valuable source of information and a powerful mode of communication from the government to the public; it is an important part of the foundation of democracy. The way information is transferred to its recipients comes via various forms of communication.³ One influential way that the media may shape public opinion is by framing events and issues in specific ways.⁴ Framing is defined as choosing a broad

¹ Lance Bennet, *News: The Politics of Illusion*, (Library of Congress, Pearson Education, Inc. 8th edition, 2009), 19.

² Shanto Iyengar, *Media Politics: A Citizen's Guide*, (New York: Norton and Company, Inc., 2011), 20.

³ Margaret Cissel, "Media Framing: A Comparative Content Analysis on Mainstream and Alternative News Coverage of Occupy Wall Street," *The Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications*, Vol. 3, No. 1. 2012), 67.

⁴ Claes H. DeVreese, "News Framing: Theory and Typology," *Information Design Journal* 13 (1): 51–62, 2005, 51.

organizing theme for selecting, emphasizing, and linking the elements of a story and they are thematic categories that integrate and give meaning to the scene, the characters, their actions, and supporting documentation.⁵ How the media frames a policy issue is very important because it is what the public reads and where they get their information. More to the point, the manner of presentation influences how information is interpreted. It is also important because what the media chooses to report about a given issue, or how they report it, can impact the future of policies. The media provides the public with information which is essential for a Democracy because people need information to participate in basic rights, such as voting.

National security, economic development, and effective immigration policies are some of the basic building blocks for a strong nation.⁶ Differing views from Democrats and Republicans have made it difficult to come to any consensus on immigration reform for the United States. Illegal immigration to the United States has increased in the last two decades, to the point that there are currently over eleven million undocumented immigrants living in the United States.⁷ More recently anti-immigration sentiments have made it very difficult for anyone to immigrate due to some insurmountable restrictions, which sparked the path for comprehensive immigration reform. Some of the ways that anti-immigration sentiments occurred were the use of deportation, use of criminal penalties for violation of immigration laws, and the use of methods and personnel of criminal-law enforcement in civil-immigration proceedings where violations of

⁵ Bennet, *News: The Politics of Illusion*, 37-38.

⁶ Nicholas Ferraro, "The U.S. Senate Immigration Reform Bill and the Need for Amendments Before Passing," *University of La Verne Law Review*, Vol. 36 (1): 17, 2014, 18.

⁷ Ferraro, "The U.S. Senate Immigration Reform Bill," 18.

immigration law are made against an individual.⁸ This has made immigration reform one of the central partisan issues in American politics. Comprehensive immigration reform has been discussed since the 1980s during the Reagan administration, but was never passed in Congress. When it was brought up again in 2013 during the Obama administration, there was hope reform could happen. A group of eight senators, who became known as the “Gang of Eight,” drafted S.744 and hoped to have the bill passed in the House. S. 744 had passed in the Senate and was waiting to be picked up by the House; however, this did not happen. The way the media framed this policy issue is important because it could help explain what kind of information the public had to consider during the debate about S.744.

This thesis will not examine the effects of media frames on people. This project only examines how the media frames issues, specifically looking at whether or not the media framed S. 744 using economic, moral and national security frames. Through framing, the media presents information and highlights certain events for the public. Scholars have researched the concept of framing and concluded it does exist. The reason scholars research this topic is to uncover how the media presents information to the public. By covering certain topics, the media can make it seem like some issues are more important than others. This is called priming. Priming is the practice of highlighting particular issues or features in a complex situation to emphasize the considerations around which opinions form.⁹ This thesis examines how the *New York Times* and *The Hill* framed immigration policy during the time that the Border Security, Economic

⁸ Peter Schroth, and Linda Foster, "Perspectives on Migration and Law in the United States," *The American Journal of Comparative Law* 62, (2014): 1.

⁹ Bennet, *News: The Politics of Illusion*, 79.

Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013 (S. 744), was debated in the Senate. Content analysis was used to evaluate how the media framed the issue. This thesis provides background about immigration reform in the United States, discusses why it is an important policy issue, and why it is a controversial topic. The literature review provides the reader with tangible examples of how scholars have studied the media and framing. The role of the media in Democracy, what framing theory is and how framing effects are used to study how the media covers policy issues is examined. The project used content analysis to examine news articles from *the New York Times* and *The Hill* to determine how the media framed immigration policy while the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013 was debated by the U.S. Senate.

Background

History of immigration reform in the United States

The issue of immigration has been debated in the U.S. since its founding and there have been many periods of anti-immigration sentiments. The Alien and Sedition Acts (1798) authorized deportation of aliens who were sought to be a danger to the U.S. and established reporting requirements of passenger vessels.¹⁰ The American (“Know-Nothing”) Party (1850s) was a party which came together over the issues of slavery, state’s rights, anti-immigration, and anti-Catholicism.¹¹ In 1875, in the *Chy Lung v.*

¹⁰ Louis DeSipio and Rodolfo de la Garza, *US Immigration in the Twenty-First Century: Making Americans, Remaking America* (Boulder: Routledge, 2015), 48.

¹¹ Jeff Frederick, “Know-Nothing Party,” University of North Carolina at Pembroke, <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1138>.

Freeman case, the Supreme Court ruled that states had no power to regulate immigration that was not consistent with federal policy. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 prevented Chinese laborers from immigrating to the United States and was the first immigration law that excluded an entire ethnic group.¹² This immigration law made it almost impossible for Chinese nationals to be eligible for citizenship in the United States. This anti-immigrant sentiment focused on who should be allowed to come to the U.S. as well as how many people from specific countries would be allowed, and has become crucial in debates about immigration reform.¹³ The Red Scare at the end of World War I had people in fear of immigrants because immigrants were seen as a danger to American Society. From 1919 to 1920, a series of raids were conducted called the “Palmer Raids” where federal agents broke into the homes of suspected anarchists without warrants and deported nearly 249 Russian immigrants without just cause.¹⁴ These anti-immigration sentiments acts have led to efforts in comprehensive immigration reform to help immigrants come into the U.S. free of such harsh restrictions. In 1921, the first “National Origin Quota” was a law that established a cap of 350,000 immigrants annually. It also allocated immigration visas based on the number of immigrants from the 1910 census. In 1937 there was a mandated deportation of immigrants who were given secured visas from fraudulent marriages to a U.S. citizen and then three years later there was a mandated registration of all immigrants in the United States. In 1943 the “Bracero Program” was

¹² “Chinese Exclusion Act,” The African American Policy Forum, <http://aapf.org/chinese-exclusion-act>.

¹³ DeSipio and de la Garza, *US Immigration*, 45-46.

¹⁴ “The Red Scare,” U.S. History, <https://www.ushistory.org/us/47a.asp>.

established and it provided short-term agricultural labor. It also made Chinese eligible for immigration and the program was terminated in 1964.¹⁵

In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson signed, and Congress passed the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, also known as the Hart-Celler Act. The law put an end to the racially discriminatory national origins quota system, which had been the principal way of admission into the U.S. since the 1920s.¹⁶ The first element of this bill was the creation of the legal basis for large numbers of legal immigrants to migrate to the U.S. each year. Second, this bill states that people who were trying to immigrate to the U.S. from around the world, stating that they would never be allowed to immigrate to the United States because they do not meet its standards for establishing permanent residence.¹⁷ Short term visitors, guest workers, and those who cannot stay permanently fall under the category of an immigrant. Prior to 1965, there was a severe restriction on the number of immigrants allowed each year and roughly 70 percent were earmarked for just three countries: The United Kingdom, Germany, and Ireland. Asian immigrants were excluded. This bill did away with that restriction and allowed for Asian migration.¹⁸

The Refugee Act of 1980, signed by President Carter and unanimously passed by the Senate, focused on separating “refugees” and “immigrants.” The House of Representatives passed their version of the Refugee Act of 1980. The Act was formed at the end of the Vietnam War, when there was a need for a change in American policy

¹⁵ DeSipio and de la Garza, *US Immigration*, 48-49.

¹⁶ Phillip Wolgin, “The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 Turns 50,” <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2015/10/16/123477/the-immigration-and-nationality-act-of-1965-turns-50/>.

¹⁷ DeSipio and de la Garza, *US Immigration*, 10.

¹⁸ Wolgin, “The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965.”

concerning refugees. Between 1975 and 1979, nearly 300,000 refugees from Vietnam and Cambodia fled from political chaos and physical danger in their homelands.¹⁹ In 1981, the Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy (SCIRP) was formed.²⁰ In 1986, Congress and President Ronald Reagan signed the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) into law, and became known as “Reagan Amnesty.”²¹ President Reagan called it “the product of one of the longest and most difficult legislative undertakings in the last three congresses.”²² This Act was meant to reduce unauthorized migration by requiring employers to document the eligibility to work for all new employees in the United States, and ensure tighter security at the Mexican border. The bill also made any immigrant who had entered the country before 1982 eligible for amnesty.²³ This was not as successful as hoped for by the Reagan administration since it did not achieve its primary purpose, which was to stop illegal immigration. The immigration population was at one million in the 1970s and has increased to 11 million today.²⁴

Major immigration reform was passed in 1990 and 1996 which focused on immigration policy that would lead to permanent residence and unauthorized migration. In 1990, Congress examined whether there should be a cap on the total number of legal

¹⁹ “Refugee Act of 1980,” National Archives Foundation,

<https://www.archivesfoundation.org/documents/refugee-act-1980/>.

²⁰ Craig A. Kaplowitz, “The Great Repudiator and Immigration Reform: Ronald Reagan and the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986,” *Journal of Policy History*, Vol. 30 (4): 635–56, 2018, 637.

²¹ DeSipio and de la Garza, *US Immigration*, 11.

²² Kaplowitz, “The Great Repudiator and Immigration Reform,” 635.

²³ “A Reagan Legacy: Amnesty For Illegal Immigrants,” NPR Staff, <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=128303672>.

²⁴ Ingrid Rojas, “The 1986 immigration Reform Explained,” abcNEWS, May 5, 2013, https://abcnews.go.com/ABC_Univision/Politics/1986-amnesty/story?id=18971179.

immigrants admitted to the United States and later concluded that there should not be a cap but instead enacted a “flexible cap.”²⁵ The Diversity Immigrant Visa Program 1990, was enacted by Congress to expand the range of countries of legal immigrants to the United States. Lastly, Congress made it easier to deport non-naturalized immigrants who have committed crimes, like felonies, in the United States. Due to the amount of legal immigration in 1996, there were many concerns among U.S. citizens about the financial burden caused by the immigrants. This concern led to the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act in 1996 which sought to reduce the cost of legal immigrants to the United States. Essentially, reform in 1996 made it more difficult for “poor” migrants to migrate to the United States. There was an expectation that the family who sponsored the immigrant would be financially responsible for any U.S. government or public benefits that were used. Lastly, reform in 1996, prohibited immigrants from being eligible for U.S. welfare programs.²⁶ During George W. Bush’s administration, there were growing national concerns about immigration reform and legislation. There was an expectation from the nation that George W. Bush’s administration would focus its immigration reform on the concerns about the growing numbers of unauthorized migrants to the U.S., the increasing number of migrants in agricultural parts of the state, and the premise that George W. Bush proposed during his candidacy and presidency to focus on better understanding immigrants and the perceived threats surrounding the nation on immigration.²⁷ There was a leak in a *New York Times* article which exposed a plan to legalize almost three million unauthorized Mexicans; however, this idea quickly faded

²⁵ DeSipio and de la Garza, *US Immigration*, 12.

²⁶ DeSipio and de la Garza, *US Immigration*, 12.

²⁷ DeSipio and de la Garza, *US Immigration*, 13.

after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Following the terrorist attacks, the United States government aggressively changed its immigration policies and border security strategies. In 2002, the federal government created the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).²⁸ The establishment of the DHS was to ensure safety within American borders. It was not until 2004 that the George W. Bush administration was able to again focus on immigration reform. In the revised proposal, there was a focus on increased border security and a guest worker program; however, due to the tragic events in 2001, immigration was still on the back burner and still not a paramount policy issue in 2004.

In 2006, as many as five million people marched in more than 150 cities in immigrant rights protests. The protests were sparked by the Border Protection, Anti-terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005 (H.R. 4437) which would have criminalized unauthorized status. This essentially ensured that any unauthorized immigrant convicted of this new crime would never be able to immigrate legally.²⁹ There were high expectations in 2007 that Congress would pass a comprehensive immigration bill due to the election of Democrats in the House and Senate in 2006. However, this bill was not picked up, debated, or voted on in Congress because Democrats could not support what was in the bill. In 2010, because members were preparing for midterm elections, Congress decided to pick up comprehensive immigration reform after the elections. In 2010, Congress debated an immigration bill known as the DREAM Act. This Act was to provide permanent residence to young adults between the ages of 12 and 35 (at the time of the enactment of the law) who had arrived in the United States before

²⁸ Ferraro, “The U.S. Senate Immigration Reform Bill,” 22.

²⁹ DeSipio and de la Garza, *US Immigration*, 16.

the age of 16, and who could provide documentation of residence in the United States for five consecutive years. The House of Representatives passed the Dream Act, but the Senate failed to reach the 60 votes necessary to overcome a Republican-led filibuster. In 2012, through executive action, the Obama administration established a new, short-term immigrant work visa called Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). At the beginning of Obama's second term, the Senate became more active in immigration reform. In 2013, after months of bipartisan negotiations by the senators known as the Gang of Eight, the Senate passed a comprehensive immigration reform modeled after the 2007 Senate Bill entitled The Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013 (S. 744).

Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Scholars have argued that immigration reform needs to address multiple aspects. These scholars refer to the reforms necessary as comprehensive immigration reform. Comprehensive immigration reform addresses multiple aspects of immigration policy in a single bill.³⁰ Comprehensive immigration reform often requires compromise if the bill has a chance to be passed. Comprehensive immigration reform requires Congress to address a redesigning of rules for immigrants who have already been in the U.S. to have permanent residence in order to meet the labor needs of the economy. It may also guarantee the labor rights of immigrants, including their right to organize. Congress must regulate the flow of unauthorized migration in a more rigorous way. Reform is necessary to protect the civil and human rights of immigrants. There must be some pathway to citizenship, or a legalization process, for many or most of the unauthorized immigrants in

³⁰ DeSipio and de la Garza, *US Immigration*, 9.

the United States at the time the law is passed. It also must include a restructuring of fiscal policy so that the cost of immigration is shared by local, state, and federal authorities equally. Lastly, it requires the development of programs to ensure that immigrants have the training needed to speed their entry process.³¹ The Senate bill S.744 took these ideas and drafted a bill that includes all of these components. Further, comprehensive immigration reform ensures that national security needs and global interests are met throughout the United States' immigration policies.

Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013 (S.744)

A bipartisan group of eight senators, commonly known as the “Gang of Eight” introduced the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act (S.744) on April 16, 2013.³² S.744 was proposed and designed to bridge the gap between Democrats and Republicans and also to establish a just and coherent system for integrating immigrants into American society. The legislation proposed by the eight senators sought to increase border security (as incentive for Republicans) and to provide a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants (as incentive for Democrats). More specifically, the Senate Bill addressed five specific areas for immigration reform: (1) border security, (2) immigrant visas, (3) interior immigration status enforcement, (4) nonimmigrant work visa programs, and (5) jobs for youth.³³ Title I: Border Security seeks additional U.S. border patrol and U.S. customs and border protection officers, as stated in the bill, by 2021 the Secretary shall increase the number of U.S. border patrol

³¹ DeSipio and de la Garza, *US Immigration*, 31.

³² Ferraro, “The U.S. Senate Immigration Reform Bill,” 18.

³³ Ferraro, “The U.S. Senate Immigration Reform Bill,” 26.

agents to 38,405 to the Southern Border.³⁴ Title II: Immigrant Visas addresses permanent legal status to immigrants in the United States. A Registered Provisional Immigrant program for undocumented immigrants is implemented along with versions of the DREAM Act for undocumented young people brought to the U.S. as children and for agricultural workers.³⁵ Title III: Interior Enforcement addresses the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) ability to enforce immigration laws while correcting procedural problems with the immigration system. There is a mandatory E-Verify employment eligibility program. This title also addresses refugee and asylum issues, enhances due-process protection in the immigration courts, increased surveillance of detention facilities, and stricter penalties for gang-related convictions or other offenses.³⁶ Title IV: Reforms to Nonimmigrant Visa Programs addresses reforms for visa programs for skilled workers and creates new programs for less-skilled workers. The visa cap on the H-1B skilled worker program is raised and worker protections are increased. A new nonimmigrant visa for less-skilled workers creates a new process for hiring foreign labor. The employment programs aim to ensure that the U.S. economy has access to the labor and investment needed for growth and innovation.³⁷ Title V Jobs for Youth is in place to establish and provide summer and year-round employment for low-income youth from ages 15-25. It will also provide grants to states with approved employment plans that

³⁴ "S.744-Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act," Congress, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/744/text>.

³⁵ "A Guide to S.744: Understanding the 2013 Senate Immigration Bill," American Immigration Council, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/guide-s744-understanding-2013-senate-immigration-bill>.

³⁶ "A Guide to S.744: Understanding the 2013 Senate Immigration Bill," <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/guide-s744-understanding-2013-senate-immigration-bill>.

³⁷ "A Guide to S.744."

comply with labor laws.³⁸ This bill would revamp every aspect of United States immigration law, with a 13-year pathway to citizenship for millions of undocumented immigrants and with regulations and security benchmarks before obtaining a green card.³⁹ The path to citizenship was going to legalize almost 11.5 million unauthorized immigrants in the country.⁴⁰ The plan to increase border enforcement included \$46.3 billion in funding for border security and required the government to double the number of Border Patrol agents and fencing along the border.⁴¹ The Senate approved the bill with a 68-32 vote on June 27, 2013; however, it remained uncertain as to whether the House of Representatives would even consider the bill. In November 2013, Republican House Speaker John Boehner said, with respect to the immigration reform issue, there would be no movement on the matter until 2014.⁴² Among the reasons the House would not support S.744 was because many saw it similar to amnesty and that would leave the U.S. in no better position than it already was. House Republicans argued the Senate bill was more than a breach of law because the House believed it was just allowing for “illegal” immigration even though this would make immigration legalized -- a foundational conservative tenet.⁴³

³⁸ “A Guide to S.744.”

³⁹ Seung Kim, “Senate Passes Immigration Bill.” *Politico*, June 28, 2013.

⁴⁰ Dara Lind, “The Summer 2014 Death of Immigration Reform in Congress,” *Vox*, June 4, 2015.

⁴¹ Lind, “The Summer 2014 Death of Immigration Reform in Congress.”

⁴² Ferraro, “The U.S. Senate Immigration Reform Bill,” 19.

⁴³ Christopher Parker, “The (Real) Reason Why the House Won’t Pass Comprehensive Immigration Reform,” *Brookings*, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2014/08/04/the-real-reason-why-the-house-wont-pass-comprehensive-immigration-reform/>.

The Gang of Eight

Who are the authors of S.744 and what was their role in creating the bill? The gang of eight is comprised of four Republicans and four Democrats. Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO) has been a member of the Senate since 2010 but has a lot of presence on the issue of immigration reform. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL), is a member of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and has had a long passion for immigration reform. As the Senate Majority Whip, his key role was to round up Democratic votes for S.744. Senator Jeff Flake (R-AZ) has always had a pro-immigration stance, although he is a conservative Republican. In 2007, he worked on a guest worker program and path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants. He is also very concerned about border security as Arizona has a large and ever-increasing undocumented and documented immigrant population.⁴⁴ Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC) has pushed for immigration reform and argued that the Republican party could not survive without it. Senator John McCain (R-AZ) had been a long-time advocate for immigration reform since his efforts in 2006 to pass comprehensive reform. Senator Robert Mendez (D-NJ) is also a member of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and has a passion for immigration reform. In 2010, he introduced his own version of comprehensive immigration reform, at a time where he was the only Hispanic member of the Senate. He is a supporter of the DREAM Act and has ties to pro-immigration reform groups that seek a pathway to citizenship.⁴⁵ Senator Mario Rubio (R-FL) is a Cuban-American who ran for president in 2016 and has his own

⁴⁴ Rachel Weiner, "Immigration's Gang of 8: Who are they?" *The Washington Post*, January 28, 2013, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2013/01/28/immigrations-gang-of-8-who-are-they/>.

⁴⁵ Weiner, "Immigration's Gang of 8: Who are they?"

ideas about immigration including his own immigration plan. He initially was not going to be involved until he was promised that some of his own immigration reform plans would be met by S.744. The last member is Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY) chairman of the Refugees and Border Security subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee.⁴⁶ Each Senator had different views and they would all have to work together and use their differences to compromise and develop their version of S.744.

Literature Review

The role of the media in democracy

The media contributes to democracy in many ways and has become the main way the public stays informed about what is happening in the world. News stories take Americans on a journey through all walks of life, such as political and military battlefields of the world or front row seats to the life of a President, and allow the public to share political experiences, such as watching political debates or congressional investigations.⁴⁷ Media in developed democratic societies have multiple channels which political messages of concern to the public can be distributed, such as newspapers, radio, and television.⁴⁸ The stories that are provided by the media are the way for the public to form opinions based on what they read, watch, or listen to. Mass media helps to integrate and unite democratic societies by providing the public with the information they need to form opinions and participate in the democratic process, such as information about the

⁴⁶ Weiner, "Immigration's Gang of 8: Who are they?"

⁴⁷ Doris Graber and Johanna Dunaway, *Mass Media and American Politics* (SAGE Publications, 2015,) 2.

⁴⁸ Doris Graber; Denis McQuail; and Pippa Norris, *The Politics of News: The News of Politics* (Library of Congress, 1998) 1-2.

government's wrongdoings, where the public can form their own opinions on any given issue.

Political scientist Harold Lasswell mentions three functions of mass media: surveillance of the world to report ongoing events, interpretation of the meaning of events, and socialization of individuals into their cultural settings.⁴⁹ A fourth function is also included which is the manipulation of politics. Surveillance has two major tasks, the first being “public” which serves the collective needs of the public, and the second being “private” which serves the needs of private individuals. Interpretation brings the attention of an issue to the public, but also puts the issue into context. Socialization involves learning basic values and orientations that prepare individuals to their cultural setting since the media plays a role in an individual's primary socialization not just friends and family.⁵⁰ Manipulation is more than just providing information in a biased way. Journalists go through an investigation to provide individuals with the correct information. Known commonly in the journalism industry as “muckrakers.” This is a term for journalists who investigate corruption and wrongdoing to stimulate the government to clean up the “dirt” they have exposed.⁵¹ According to Iyengar (2011) the media serves three similarities in a democracy function to those outlined by Lasswell. First, that the media provides a forum for political actors to present their information to the nation. The second is to provide different perspectives to citizens on important issues that are happening. Last, is to serve as a check and balance on the government's actions

⁴⁹ Graber and Dunaway, *Mass Media and American Politics*, 7.

⁵⁰ Graber and Dunaway, *Mass Media and American Politics*, 11.

⁵¹ Graber and Dunaway, *Mass Media and American Politics*, 12.

for the citizens.⁵² The media has an important role in a democracy and is the main way individuals can stay up-to-date and informed about what the government is doing in the United States.

Media framing theory

In the U.S., the media is responsible for informing the public about current issues. The way the media frames an issue can vary. Scheufele has classified framing research by grouping studies based on their analysis and the specific process of framing they examined.⁵³ The media provides a framework of the issue or event they are covering as a way to provide information to the public. Media discourse is part of a process by which individuals, such as journalists, construct meaning and public opinion is part of the process by which journalists develop and crystalize meaning in the public discourse.⁵⁴ There are many definitions of framing theory. According to the *Encyclopedia of Political Communication*, media framing research evaluates how journalists organize the world, thereby enabling the audience to understand the news and events that are occurring.⁵⁵ Frame-setting refers to the interaction between media frames and the individual's prior knowledge.⁵⁶ Frames can also call attention to some aspects of reality while they may obscure other elements which can lead to the audience having differing interpretations of

⁵² Iyengar, *Media Politics: A Citizen's Guide*, 20.

⁵³ Christima Holtz-Bacha and Lynda Lee Kaid, *Encyclopedia of Political Communication*, (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, Inc, 2008) 254.

⁵⁴ Margaret Cissel, "Media Framing: a comparative content analysis on mainstream and alternative news coverage of Occupy Wall Street," *The Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications*, Vol. 3, No. 1. (Spring 2012): 68.

⁵⁵ Christina Holtz-Bacha and Lynda Lee Kaid, *Encyclopedia of Political Communication* (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2008,) 585.

⁵⁶ Claes H. DeVreese, "News Framing: Theory and Typology," *Information Design Journal* 13 (1) (2005): 52.

the issue.⁵⁷ Framing theory in communication organizes everyday reality by providing meaning to an unfolding series of events and by promoting definitions and interpretations of political issues.⁵⁸ An example from Entman (1993) on how the media frames issues is one given on a pre-war debate over the U.S. policy toward Iraq. There were two ways that the media framed the issue: “war now” or “sanctions now with war later.” Framing at the time of this issue was contested by elites and different facts and evaluations were covered by news outlets differently.⁵⁹ According to Entman (2011), the Iraq example revealed that the news frames can be self-reinforcing. James Barber describes the role of the public in politics by giving an example of campaigns making a difference and how people play a huge role in being a swing vote for presidential elections. He says, “they respond to what they see and hear. They are interested but not obsessed.”⁶⁰ Although this thesis does not examine the way the public views or interprets an issue it is still a factor in media framing.

Framing effects

Frames in the media are important because they can have an impact on the opinions and behavior of the public or audience. Framing effects occur when in the course of describing an issue or event, the emphasis on a subset of potentially relevant considerations causes individuals to focus on these considerations when constructing

⁵⁷ Robert Entman, “Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm,” *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 43(4) (1993): 55.

⁵⁸ Chong and Druckman, “Framing Theory,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 10:103-26 (2007): 106.

⁵⁹ Robert, “Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm,” 55.

⁶⁰ Shirley Biagi, *Media/Impact: An Introduction to Mass Media*, (Cengage Learning, 11th edition, 2015), 274.

their opinions.⁶¹ There are three models of effects in media communication: framing, agenda setting, and priming. According to Scheufele (2007), agenda setting refers to the idea that there is a strong correlation between the emphasis that mass media places on certain issues. Priming refers to changes in the standards that people use to make political evaluations and occurs when news content suggests to audiences that they ought to use specific issues for evaluating the performance of leaders and governments.⁶² Two types of framing effects have been identified by media researchers -- equivalency framing effects and emphasis framing effects. Equivalency framing effects is the use of different, but logically equivalent, words or phrases to describe the same possible event or issue; emphasis framing effects involve highlighting different groups of potentially relevant considerations of an issue.⁶³ Scholars have studied framing effects and have found ways to categorize them. Some scholars examine how different frames cause individuals to base their opinions on different considerations with little attention to overall opinions; other scholars focus on how different frames alter opinions with less explicit attention to the underlying considerations.⁶⁴ An example of framing effects is how the media framed the Watergate story. As long as the story was framed within the confines of an election campaign, the media discounted the story as another partisan quarrel. As soon as the story

⁶¹ James Druckman and Kjersten Nelson, "Framing and Deliberation: How Citizens' Conversations Limit Elite Influence," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (October 2003): 730.

⁶² Dietram Scheufele and David Tewksbury, "Framing, Agenda Setting, and Priming: The Evolution of Three Media Effects Models," *Journal of Communication* 57, (2007): 11.

⁶³ Iyengar, *Media Politics: A Citizen's Guide*, 252-253.

⁶⁴ James Druckman, "On the Limits of Framing Effects: Who Can Frame?" *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 63, No. 4, (November 2001): 1043.

was portrayed as a model of corruption and dishonesty, it brought concern and scandal throughout the nation at the highest levels of government.⁶⁵

A common study done by scholars is how framing effects work. It can be argued that framing effects work by alerting the accessibility of different considerations; however, Nelson (2001) provides evidence that this is not true and that people consciously think about the relative importance of the considerations suggested by the frame.⁶⁶ According to Chong and Druckman (2007), in order for a framing effect to occur, it needs to be stored in memory to be available for retrieval and use.⁶⁷ An example of this is having free speech in the evaluation of a hate group's right to rally, but if the information is not able to be retrieved, or understood, then the individual will not be affected by the free speech frame.⁶⁸ James Druckman and Kjersten Nelson study framing effects by examining opinions about campaign finance reform. They performed a laboratory experiment where they used university students as their subjects. The subjects were given a free-speech framed article or a special interest framed article to see how the participants respond and interpret the issue. The results highlight the conditional and potentially short-lived impact of elite framing and confirms their belief that elite framing effects occur regularly and have important consequences.⁶⁹ They found strong evidence of an elite framing effect.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Iyengar, *Media Politics: A Citizen's Guide*, 254.

⁶⁶ Druckman, "On the Limits of Framing Effects," 1043.

⁶⁷ Druckman, "On the Limits of Framing Effects," 1043.

⁶⁸ Chong and Druckman, "Framing Theory," 110.

⁶⁹ Druckman and Nelson, "Framing and Deliberation," 741.

⁷⁰ Druckman and Nelson, "Framing and Deliberation," 736.

Thematic and episodic framing are two additional ways in which framing effects have been studied by scholars. A thematic frame in the news places a public issue in a general context and usually takes the form of an in-depth background report; an episodic news frame depicts issues in terms of individual instances or specific events.⁷¹ An example of thematic frames would be telling a story about immigration policy by providing historical context of what contributed to the issue, and an example of episodic news frames is one which discusses the destruction from a mass shooting that occurred. According to Iyengar (2011), episodic framing is the most used and predominant mode of presentation in news stories. This is largely a result of market pressures.⁷² There are serious repercussions because it affects viewers' attributions for political issues. Most political issues are viewed as the creation of societal and or governmental forces or as the result of private actions.

Media framing theory and public policy

The media can utilize many different frames when it comes to policy issues. Baumgartner and Rose (2013) looked at how the media framed the issue of poverty in the United States between 1960-2008. This study examined 560 *New York Times* articles and compared it to the *Baltimore Sun*, *The Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Chicago Tribune*. Through their examination of the articles on poverty, the authors found five different frames: misery and neglect, social disorder, economic and physical barriers, laziness and dysfunction, and cheating. Each of the frames has a subframe; an example for the frame “misery and neglect” includes articles about homelessness and slum

⁷¹ Iyengar, *Media Politics: A Citizen's Guide*, 253.

⁷² Iyengar, *Media Politics: A Citizen's Guide*, 253.

living.⁷³ Baumgartner and Rose (2013) found that the poor were discussed in terms of misery and neglect. There was also significant discussion of the threat of violence and social disorder associated with hopelessness and despair; the economic and physical barriers to rising out of poverty were important elements of the debate.⁷⁴ The authors also found that the frames of laziness and dysfunction and of cheating was not common initially, but grew as journalists covered the issue of poverty. Their findings have shown that the discussion of poverty by the media has shifted over time and that there is a gradual movement from a greater focus on the structural causes of poverty, individual barriers to moving out of poverty, and the collective dangers of having too many people in living conditions of despair to the poor exploiting the welfare system for undeserved financial gains and the dysfunctional nature of poverty assistance programs.⁷⁵

Pandey and Kurian (2017) examined how the media covered international climate change policy. Their research analyzed how the media framed climate change from national and elite newspapers from four major countries including the U.S., the United Kingdom, India, and China. The newspapers used were the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, the *Guardian United Kingdom*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Hindustan Times*, *The Hindu*, *China Daily*, and *Xinhua*. The authors used content analysis to analyze articles from 2007-2013 because this period had the most requirements for greenhouse gases to study how climate change was framed. The results from the study showed responsibility, national position, and conflict were the three main frames used in the Indian and Hindu

⁷³ Frank Baumgartner and Max Rose, "Framing the Poor: Media Coverage and U.S. Poverty Policy, 1960-2008," *Policy Studies Journal*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (2013): 29.

⁷⁴ Baumgartner and Rose, "Framing the Poor," 30.

⁷⁵ Baumgartner and Rose, "Framing the Poor," 32.

newspapers. In the China newspapers, the results showed that responsibility, national position, and economic consequences were the main frames. For the United Kingdom, the dominant frames were responsibility, national position, and conflict, and in the United States economic consequences, conflict, and responsibility were the dominant frames.⁷⁶ The authors evaluated and discussed their findings in three key points. The first being that the news media in developed countries frame climate change issues differently; the second being the use of multiple and conflicting frames in media coverage of climate change may reinforce public confusion about climate change related issues, and the third point, that climate change news is often pegged to national positions and national interests.⁷⁷ Pandey and Kurian (2017) also found some differences in frames between news media outlets within developed countries which were different from those in developing countries.

Watson and Riffe (2013), examined how the media coverage framed immigration policy. They do this by examining anti- or pro-immigration beliefs about immigration. They hypothesized that the extent to which the public view immigrants as a threat will predict attitudes toward immigration policies.⁷⁸ They collected data through phone surveys and interviews. The six perceptions of immigration that were found through this study were crime, strained social services and school systems, loss of jobs, and threats to

⁷⁶ Chandra Lal Pandey and Priya A. Kurian, "The Media and the Major Emitters: Media Coverage of International Climate Change Policy," *Global Environmental Politics*, 17:4, (2017) 76.

⁷⁷ Pandey and Kurian, "The Media and the Major Emitters," 79.

⁷⁸ Brendan Watson and Daniel Riffe, "Perceived Threat, Immigration Policy Support, and Media Coverage: Hostile Media ad Presumed Influence," *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, Vol. 25, No. 4, (2013) 464.

traditional customs and values.⁷⁹ The scholars found that their respondents expressed support for more disciplinary policies and strongly endorsed greater government effort to prevent illegal immigration. In terms of the effects of media coverage, respondents generally believed that news media coverage treated immigrants more favorably and believed that exposure to news coverage of immigrants would influence others' perceptions of immigrants in a negative way.⁸⁰ They found that the strong hostile media has an impact on the public's opinion. Those who viewed immigrants as threatening also perceived media coverage as hostile.⁸¹

Gulati (2011), examined how the news coverage of U.S. anti-human trafficking policy has been framed by studying two significant news sources: the *New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. Gulati used content analysis to examine how the media framed the issue of human trafficking. Three main frames were found. The frames were story triggers, sources used, and the representation of specific ideas and details about causes and solutions.⁸² This study found that the coverage on human trafficking in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* was modest initially and did not provide a lot of information or coverage on the issue of when human trafficking to the public, and then later became very prominent and were discussing in detail with a lot of information on

⁷⁹ Watson and Riffe, "Perceived Threat, Immigration Policy Support, and Media Coverage," 465.

⁸⁰ Watson and Riffe, "Perceived Threat, Immigration Policy Support, and Media Coverage," 468.

⁸¹ Watson and Riffe, "Perceived Threat, Immigration Policy Support, and Media Coverage," 473.

⁸² Girish Gulati, "News Framed and Story Triggers in the Media's Coverage of Human Trafficking," *Human Rights Review*, 12 (3) (2011): 369.

the issue and articles on human trafficking appeared on the front page or on the op-ed pages.

Brewer and Gross (2005), examined how policy issue frames impact how people think about or form an opinion of the policy issue that is being discussed. They test for the content and quantity of the citizens' thoughts on an issue. They also wanted to see if the public's opinion about an issue which was framed by the media has later consequences, or impact, on the policy issue as it is being discussed in governmental settings. This study examines two frames on the content and the quantity of people's thoughts about the school voucher controversy.⁸³ They did not find any substantial significance between the opinion toward school vouchers. However, Brewer and Gross (2005) did find that the frames altered the relationship between support for equality and support for school vouchers. The study provided evidence that value frames can produce two different types of effects on citizens' thoughts about issues.⁸⁴

As it is the role of the media to provide information to the public, it also plays a huge role in democracy by providing information to the public about world issues and government actions. The public looks to the media to understand and find out what is happening in the world and their own country. Media framing theory evaluates how journalists organize issues, thereby enabling the audience to understand the news and events that are occurring. The frames that the media uses can be framed in the same way such as a social, economic, or political frame can be used for health care, gun control. But

⁸³ Paul Brewer and Kimberly Gross, "Values, Framing, and Citizens' Thoughts about Policy Issues: Effects on Content and Quality," *Political Psychology*, Vol. 26, No. 6, (2005): 933.

⁸⁴ Brewer and Gross, "Values, Framing, and Citizens' Thoughts about Policy Issues, 943.

also, one policy could itself be framed differently, such as immigration could be framed by one media outlet as a national security issue and another media source could frame it as a moral issue. There are different framing effects such as priming, agenda setting, and framing. This thesis examines framing, which emphasizes specific elements of a story and draws away from other elements of a story. Scholars have studied framing effects in many different ways, such as how the public bases their opinion off a story. The example given was Watergate and how the media framed the issue as a campaign election versus corruption can change the public's opinion on the issue. Thematic and episodic framing were also discussed as a tactic that the media will use in the news articles on a particular issue. Scholars have put all of these to the test and have examined how the media framed specific policy issues such as poverty, climate change, immigration, and human trafficking. Each scholar's conclusions offered different results because each issue was different. Each issue had different frames which lead to different findings. However, each scholar did come to a similar conclusion which was that depending on their news source, there were different frames. The shortcoming is that this thesis does not examine the public's perceptions of a frame that is provided by the media. The gap in this thesis is that literature has not examined the S.744 bill and they have not examined how the media framed this bill. This thesis examines how the *New York Times* and *The Hill* framed immigration policy during the time that the S. 744, was debated in the Senate.

Theoretical Framework

This thesis examines articles from the *New York Times* and *The Hill* during the time that the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization

Act of 2013 (S.744) was being debated by the Senate to determine how these media outlets framed immigration policy and reform. The bill, S. 744, is important because this is another attempt at comprehensive immigration reform for the country and these types of bills tend not to pass. It is also important to understand how the media covers an issue such as the immigration bill S.744 because this is how the public gets their information. How people develop an understanding of an issue or reevaluate their thinking about an issue can result from how a story is framed. A major premise of framing theory is that an issue can be viewed from a variety of perspectives.⁸⁵ This thesis uses Iyengar's definition of framing theory. Iyengar defines framing theory as the way in which the media, by highlighting some aspects of an event or issue and ignoring others, can influence how people think about that event or issue. Framing is referred to the way in which opinions on an issue can emphasize or deemphasize particular facets of that issue.⁸⁶ By following the definition of framing, if the manner of the presentation is changed then the news story in which it is presented can result in a very different audience perception of that story.⁸⁷ Lance Bennet also defined framing as choosing a broad organizing theme for selecting, emphasizing, and linking elements of a story which also draw attention away from other elements of a story.⁸⁸ This thesis argues that the coverage by the *New York Times* and *The Hill* will be different. The bill was covered and highlights particular and important parts of S.744 while it was debated in the Senate. Certain aspects of the bill are emphasized while others are de-emphasized.

⁸⁵ Chong and Druckman, "Framing Theory," 104.

⁸⁶ Iyengar, *Media Politics: A Citizen's Guide*, 252.

⁸⁷ Iyengar, *Media Politics: A Citizen's Guide*, 253.

⁸⁸ Lance Bennet, *News: The Politics of Illusion*, (Pearson Education, Inc, 8th edition, 2009), 37.

DeVreese discusses how frames can be identified in the news by giving two approaches described as inductive and deductive. An inductive approach refrains from analyzing news stories with a predefined or any prior knowledge to the news frame. This can be a difficult approach because it tends to have small sample sizes and is difficult to replicate. Scholars avoid using this approach because their research needs to be replicated and not be opinion based. This relates to this thesis and the research conducted because one needs to be able to have knowledge about news frames in order to analyze news stories when using content analysis for their research, knowing basic frames such as political, economic, national security, or moral. Before analyzing the news, stories there should be a predetermined frame so that one can analyze and find those specific predetermined frames in the news stories. The deductive approach investigates frames that are defined and operationalized prior to the investigation, usually by content analysis.⁸⁹ A deductive approach asks what components in a news story constitutes a frame? There are four criteria a frame must meet. First, a frame must be identifiable; second, it should be observed in journalism; third, it must be distinguishable from other frames; fourth, a frame must have validity and must be recognized by other scholars not just of the imagination of the researcher.⁹⁰ This relates to this thesis because the four criteria are necessary when finding and analyzing frames from news stories. Entman suggested that frames in the news can be examined and identified by the presence or absence of specific keywords or phrases, stereotypes images, stock phrases, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgements.⁹¹ This is

⁸⁹ DeVreese, "News Framing: Theory and Typology," 53.

⁹⁰ DeVreese, "News Framing: Theory and Typology," 54.

⁹¹ DeVreese, "News Framing: Theory and Typology," 53

used in this thesis by using what Entman has suggested for finding and analyzing the frames in the articles from the *New York Times* and *The Hill*.

Scholars study framing theory in the media to identify issues and see if there are trends or commonalities in how they are framed. Scholars compare coverage of the media across many different outlets such as print media, radio or television news, and they examine the differences in the way the information is presented in the media. The approach to study framing theory is first to identify an issue or event such as immigration reform, health care reform, and gun control. For example, there are different frames such as political, economic, and social. Second is to understand how frames in the media affect public opinion; a variety of frames may establish a difference in attitudes from the public.⁹² However, this thesis does not study the public's attitude about the issue of immigration. Using framing theory this project attempts to understand how the media covered S.744 during the time it was being debated by the Senate. It is argued that different news outlets will cover the bill differently and will focus on different frames.

Methodology/Data Collection

Content analysis was used to examine how the media framed the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, Immigration Modernization Act of 2013 between February 2013-June 2013. Content analysis as a method of research is defined as the systematic assignment of communication content to categorize according to rules and the analysis of

⁹² Chong and Druckman, "Framing Theory," 107.

relationships involving those categories using statistical methods.⁹³ Using content analysis, researchers are able to measure a grouping of messages, which are better known as “frames,” to see how they are incorporated into a story and presented to an audience. Content analysis is used to examine different forms of communications.⁹⁴ Content analysis is useful for finding patterns based on which scholars and researchers can methodically evaluate news media and its use of framing.⁹⁵

This thesis examined how the media framed S.744 while it was debated in the Senate during February 2013 to June 2013. Content analysis was useful for this project because this thesis examined the text of 30 news articles.

This thesis examined 15 articles from the *New York Times* and 15 articles from *The Hill* during the period of February 2013 to June 2013. The reason for examining these two media outlets was to observe the difference between how the immigration bill of 2013 was covered by a world news outlet and a news outlet that is more specialized for Washington insiders. It is vital to see the difference in coverage since the media's role is to inform the public about current events. A Google search, a NexisUni search and a search on the news websites was used to search for the articles. The search terms used included: immigration reform, 2013 immigration reform, Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013, The Gang of Eight, names of the Senators involved in creating the bill, and immigration policy and reform 2013. There were more results with the search term immigration reform (18), than with The Border

⁹³ Margaret Cissel, “Media Framing: a comparative content analysis on mainstream and alternative news coverage of Occupy Wall Street,” *The Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications*, Vol. 3, No. 1, (Spring 2012): 70.

⁹⁴ Kimberly Neuendorf, *The Content Analysis Guidebook* (Sage Publications, 2002), 1.

⁹⁵ Cissel, “Media Framing,” 70.

Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013 (12) when searching on google, NexisUni, and the websites of the *New York Times* articles and *The Hill* articles. This seems to be because the articles rarely mention the full name of the bill and mainly refer to it as “immigration reform.”

The unit of analysis was the sentence for this study. The author was the sole coder and there is no intercoder reliability. This thesis coded for type of frame (economic, national security, moral), episodic or thematic coverage, the name of Senators if mentioned or quoted, and the process/timing/logistics of the policy process. The reason the three frames, economic, moral and national security were chosen was because these tend to be types of frames surrounding any immigration policy. Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) identified moral and economic frames in their study about typology and news frames. They define a morality frame as interpreting an event or issue in the context of religious tenets or moral prescriptions. Economic frames were defined as presenting an event, problem, or issue in terms of the economic consequence it will have on an individual, group, constitution, or country. The episodic or thematic frames were chosen to be coded because it is important to analyze how the author of each article is providing the information to the reader. Are they giving a history of immigration reform or just stating what is happening that day with the S.744 bill?. If Senators were mentioned or quoted in any of the articles, this was coded because it could mean the Senators are important contributors to the bill in a positive way or may have some negative contribution. The process/timing/logistics of the policy process was coded for to learn whether the media covers the substance of policy issues or if there is more emphasis on the process of the bill moving through the Senate. Some things that fall under this

category could be whether the article discusses what Congress has done for the bill, the dates of which the bill was debated or if there is any information about what the bill does or covers. Information is an important aspect of the media and that is why the process/timing/logistics of the policy process was coded for. The date range for the articles begins in early February 2013, when the bill was still just an idea being discussed by the Gang of Eight, to June 2013 when the bill was passed in the Senate.

According to Klaus and Bock (2009), researchers have debated “qualitative” and “quantitative” approaches to content analysis since most authors will use the quantitative component to content analysis. Content analysis can be conducted both quantitatively and qualitatively. This thesis does both. For example, determining the type of frame was done qualitatively, but the thesis also examines how many sentences were devoted to each frame and thus also has a quantitative approach. If there were multiple frames in the article the frame was determined based on the number of sentences that were devoted to each frame. If one frame had more sentences devoted to it, the article was coded as that frame.

Findings and Analysis

This thesis examined how the media framed the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013, using coverage from *The Hill* and the *New York Times*. There were 30 articles that were examined (15 articles from *The Hill* and 15 articles from the *New York Times*). *The Hill* is a publication that is based in Washington D.C., and covers the news for policymakers, or what can be described as a “Washington insider;” someone who follows the daily news about what is happening and

when it happens in the policy making process in Washington, DC. The typical *Hill* reader has more knowledge than the average reader about what is happening during the policy making process. It was assumed that the articles from *The Hill* were going to consist of jargon about the bill and details about the policy process that it takes for legislation to pass. Also, that the full title of the bill would only come up occasionally, and that most references would be to the bill number S. 744, because most readers would know what bill is being discussed in the articles. So, it would not be mentioned in the articles as often since it can be assumed the reader has knowledge about what is being discussed in Congress.

It was expected that *The Hill* would have more economic and national security frames in the articles and very few moral frames. This is because national security and economic aspects were main components of the bill. It was also expected that *The Hill* would be more likely to cover and report the issue using an “episodic” frame. Since *The Hill* primarily writes for the Washington “insider” it does not need to “tell a story” or provide extensive background about the issue. This is because most of its readers are expected to know about past immigration reform and the history of the issue. It was also assumed that *The Hill* would mention the eight Senators, (The Gang of 8), who worked on the bill. This is because they have played a huge role in writing the bill and must work diligently and well with one another to compromise and get the bill to pass.

The *New York Times* is a national news publication that reaches a broad audience. This is a news source for the public and policymakers, and therefore it is possible that many people who read the paper are both knowledgeable and not knowledgeable about what is happening in Washington D.C. and with policy makers on a daily basis. It was

assumed that the articles from the *New York Times* would have mainly moral frames and national security frames with fewer economic frames. In many articles, the *New York Times* provides their readers with a story and moral frames can help with telling a story because they tend to grab the attention of the reader and make them feel as if they are a part of the decision making process or that the policy matters to their lives. This leads to this thesis assuming the *New York Times* would have more thematic frames rather than episodic frames. This is because the publication and the readers it reaches to may need more information about the history of past immigration legislation.

It was also expected that the title of the bill may also be brought up in almost every article to inform readers who may not be following the bill closely. The articles in the *New York Times* may only reference prominent Senators and not necessarily all members of the Gang of Eight. The prominent Senators are those who come up in the title of an article or have the main focus of the article. There may also be less discussion of the details about the congressional process and the policy making process because of the type of publication and who the readers of the *New York Times* are. It was expected that important key components of the bill such as Title I: border security and Title II: immigrant visas would be mentioned throughout the articles because the *New York Times* may want to inform the public about key provisions in the bill. Details about key provisions in the bill should be covered more by the *New York Times* than *The Hill* because the *New York Times* should be informing the reader about the key provisions since they may not already know what is in the bill.

This thesis coded for three different frames, moral, economic and national security. (See Appendix A). A moral frame for this thesis was defined as some type of

system of values or principle that is sought to be wrong or right for a society or an individual. Morality comes up in regard to immigration, citizenship, partisanship, or other policy issues. A National security frame includes discussion of any aspect of security for the nation, whether it be the border patrol, enforcement of border patrol, and the safety of citizens in the nation from criminals from another country. An economic frame was defined as whether immigration reform would cause an economic boost or detriment to the nation, the impact on worker programs, and any amount that an immigrant would have to pay to the country to become a citizen. Six out of thirty articles were editorials rather than news articles. The reasons editorial pieces were included was to increase the sample size.

Overall articles in both *The Hill* and the *New York Times* had twenty moral frames, five national security frames, and five economic frames. Some articles had multiple frames and the number of sentences dedicated to each frame was the deciding factor for which frame was the most dominant in the article. As stated in the methodology section, there is no intercoder reliability for this project as the author is the sole coder, and this limits the reliability of the findings. Twenty-eight articles from both *The Hill* and the *New York Times*, had episodic frames and only two had thematic frames (See Table 2). This result was not expected because it was thought that *The Hill* would have more episodic frames and the *New York Times* would have more thematic coverage given their respective primary audiences. However, according to the scholarship about framing, episodic framing is the most used and predominant mode of presentation in news stories.⁹⁶ Twenty-three articles mentioned the Gang of 8 Senators who worked on

⁹⁶ Iyengar, *Media Politics: A Citizen's Guide*, 253.

creating and writing the bill. But only prominent and essential members from the Gang of 8 were quoted in the articles. A quote from Rubio “I just personally, ultimately concluded that to permanently say that you’re going to have millions of people that can never apply for citizenship hasn’t really worked well for other countries that have tried it.”⁹⁷ The discussion of the congressional process and the policy making process for a piece of legislation, was discussed more in *The Hill* than in *the New York Times*. This supported the expectations that *The Hill* had nine articles covering the congressional process and the policy making process because the type of publication it is and how it covers information for the “Washington insider.”

Of the 15 articles in *The Hill* that were coded, there was one economic frame, four national security frames and ten moral frames (See Table 1). There were more moral frames than expected and less than half of the articles focused on economic and national security aspects. As far as moral frames in *The Hill*, the path to citizenship being the morally right thing to do was found to be the dominant frame. A path to citizenship is considered a moral frame because this is considered the right thing to do for those who have come to the U.S. seeking asylum or to have a new life in the country of opportunity. It is important to have immigrants become legal so that they can be involved and provide for the country just as the citizens do who were born in the United States. For example, “Jeb Bush argues that people who are in the United States illegally should be given permanent legal status as part of a major immigration overhaul. But he argues the integrity of the country’s immigration system would be undermined if illegal immigrants

⁹⁷ Cameron Joseph, “Bush Puts Rubio on the Spot, Rejects Citizenship Path for Illegal Immigrants,” *The Hill*, March 5, 2013

are placed on the citizenship path.”⁹⁸ Although he is not a part of the Gang of 8 in writing the bill, this was an important quote because Jeb Bush was the Governor of Florida. Florida, like many states, has a high number of immigrants who migrated from their home country to Florida. Jeb Bush was going to run for president in 2016 just like Marco Rubio who was a member of the Gang of 8 and a Senator from Florida. This could have hurt Marco Rubio in his presidential campaign or even with immigration reform since he is a Senator from Florida. Another quote from the same article shows how Rubio thinks differently about this issue. For example, “Rubio believes that people in the country illegally should be allowed to stay in the U.S. while applying for citizenship, provided they’ve completed the process of applying for legal status, that they pay penalties and fines for unpaid taxes and that they wait a required number of years before applying.”⁹⁹ Both of the quotes discuss the beliefs that Jeb Bush and Marco Rubio feel are morally right, or wrong, when it comes to whether or not a path to citizenship should be given to immigrants. The main focus throughout the article was about having a path to citizenship and whether immigrants should be given the opportunity if they already live in the U.S. versus not being in the United States. This was also a major point of debate for the bill. This is the language from the bill itself about a path to citizenship; In General— Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Homeland Security (referred to in this section and in sections 245C through 245F as the ‘Secretary’), after conducting the national security and law enforcement clearances required under

⁹⁸ Cameron Joseph, “Bush Puts Rubio on the Spot, Rejects Citizenship Path for Illegal Immigrants.”

⁹⁹ Cameron Joseph, “Bush Puts Rubio on the Spot, Rejects Citizenship Path for Illegal Immigrants.”

subsection (c)(8), may grant registered provisional immigrant status to an alien who—
“(1) meets the eligibility requirements set forth in subsection (b); “(2) submits a
completed application before the end of the period set forth in subsection (c)(3); and “(3)
has paid the fee required under subsection (c)(10)(A) and the penalty required under
subsection (c)(10)(C), if applicable.”¹⁰⁰

Moral frames also came up when partisan values were expressed. Many times, the authors of the articles used quotes from political ads that were made about Senators from the Gang of 8. This is important because Senator McCain was going to be up for re-election in (provide the year). The articles covered the political ads that were airing that tied the Senators to the legislation. For example, one ad was “This is an S.O.S. from the people of California to our neighbors in Arizona: Save our state. Your senator John McCain wants to bring in millions of workers to take our jobs,” and “But any immigration reform plan will face an uphill struggle to win the support of conservative lawmakers who oppose measures to grant citizenship to illegal immigrants.”¹⁰¹ Both of these quotes discuss partisan values. The article covers the political ad that focused on instilling fear into the natural born citizens who may lose their jobs because Senator McCain believes immigration reform is morally right. The plan for immigration reform faced struggles to win conservative support. For example, “The length of the path to citizenship for illegal immigrants has become a highly delicate issue in the fast-moving debate over the overhaul. Republicans who are part of the bipartisan group of senators

¹⁰⁰ S.744-Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act,” Congress, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/744/text>.

¹⁰¹ Daniel Strauss, “Anti-Immigration-Reform Group Targets McCain in New Ad,” *The Hill*, March 19, 2013.

drafting legislation have said they are looking for a longer path for illegal immigrants, to make it clear they are not jumping the line or being rewarded for violating the law to come to the United States.”¹⁰² This quote explained that the Republican Senators who helped write S. 744, are not trying to cut corners; they want to do the right thing, the morally right thing in making the path to citizenship fair and equal. Although the bill is supposed to be bipartisan (made up of four Democrats and four Republicans) and the result of a compromise between Democrats and Republicans there were still Republicans who were not convinced that the provisions in the bill were the right approach to address immigration reform.

In addition to the question of the path to citizenship another aspect that was framed as a moral issue involved the LGBT community. One article was interesting in how the author discussed loved ones in the LGBT community who needed to be considered and included in immigration reform. For example, “Congress has the opportunity to affirm the principle that they cannot leave any family behind. However, right now, the immigration reform bill fails to affirm that principle: the current proposal is not truly “comprehensive” because it leaves LGBT families behind.”¹⁰³ This was coded as a moral frame because the issue of LGBT rights concerns equality and discrimination and this community being excluded. When S.744 was being debated LGBT, rights were still in question and many from the LGBT community were not allowed to marry within their community. So, if there was an immigrant who was part of the LGBT community

¹⁰² Michael Shaer and Julia Preston, “Obama’s Plan Sees 8-Year Wait for Illegal Immigrants,” *The New York Times*, February 17, 2013.

¹⁰³ Sharon Stapel, “The Right Side of History: Making Immigration Reform Truly Comprehensive,” *The Hill*, May 28, 2013.

there may have been extra hurdles for them to be with their loved ones. The article was explaining that if the rights of the LGBT community were left out of the bill it would make the bill not truly comprehensive immigration reform. One article in *The New York Times* also had a quote about the morality of dealing with the issue of the LGBT community. “In the most moving and wrenching moment in three weeks of committee markup, the committee’s chairman, Patrick Leahy of Vermont, on Tuesday evening sought to amend the bill to allow gay Americans to sponsor their wives and husbands for green cards.”¹⁰⁴ Articles that had a moral frame were more common than expected from both the *New York Times* and *The Hill*. The national security frame was not as prominent in the articles coded for this project. When national security was referenced it was mostly about tighter border security. For example, one article from the *New York Times* explained that for increased border security the bill would require a plan to establish an increase to the number of full trained border patrol agents; increase the number of CBP officers; and increase and maintain the office of air and marine flight hours.¹⁰⁵ A quote from the *New York Times* “those ideas include a plan to establish visa exit tracking at land ports of entry, not just air and sea ports, as the pending bill requires; and to build 700 miles of double-layered fencing along the southern border.”¹⁰⁶ Another article explains that, “In another border security measure, and a concession to the Republican members of the group, employers would be required to use an enhanced electronic verification system

¹⁰⁴ The Editorial Board, “An Imperfect Immigration Bill Survives,” *The New York Times*, May 21, 2013.

¹⁰⁵ “S.744-Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act,” Congress, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/744/text>.

¹⁰⁶ Alexander Bolton, “Immigration Reform Hinges on Rubio Proposals for Border Security,” *The New York Times*, June 9, 2013.

to make sure they are not employing anyone in the country illegally.”¹⁰⁷ More security for immigration to the U.S. was also discussed in regards to protecting workers who were currently employed but who were not legal citizens. It was thought that national security would be the dominant frame because this was a major part of the bill. It is interesting that the two publications did not discuss this more or make this more of a focus throughout the coverage of their articles. Overall, tighter border security was found to be the focus of the articles with a national security frame.

There were very few economic frames in the articles where only four from the thirty articles that were examined had an economic frame. It was thought that the articles would inform the readers about the potential economic implications that could come from immigration reform because there were economic provisions in the bill. These provisions included establishing a \$1,500 visa fee stated in Title II of the bill. Title III: Interior enforcement states that employers would be prohibited from hiring, recruiting or referring for a fee of a non-authorized worker. Another economic provision in the bill was Title V: Jobs for youth where the Treasury was going to fund youth jobs. They appropriated \$1.5 billion to fund the youth for jobs.¹⁰⁸ One of the articles from *The Hill* stated, “Our economy is continuing to struggle under the policies of the Obama Administration, but Congress has the ability to make a positive difference by passing immigration reform which would give our economy a badly needed shot in the arm to create jobs and turn

¹⁰⁷ Ashley Parker, “Immigration Overhaul Proposal Is Likely to Ignite Fierce Debate,” *The New York Times*, April 16, 2013.

¹⁰⁸ “S.744-Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act,” Congress, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/744/text>.

things around.”¹⁰⁹ Immigration reform was discussed as being necessary for increasing jobs and that passing the reforms would have an economic benefit for the nation.

Scholars that have researched public policy issues and media framing, have mostly examined the public's perception of a policy based on how the media framed the policy issues. This thesis does not examine the public's opinion about immigration reform and whether it changes or not based on the frame the media provides. Watson and Riffe (2013), examined how the media framed immigration policy by examining anti-or pro-immigration beliefs. There were six perceptions or frames that were discussed in this study; crime, strained social services and school systems, loss of jobs, threats to traditional customs and values.¹¹⁰ An economic frame that was found in this thesis was, “Their children can attend public schools at government expense — putting a burden on state and local budgets. But they are barred from receiving federal benefits like the earned-income tax credit, food stamps and Medicaid. Only their American-born children can get those.” This relates to the strained social services and school programs discussed in Watson and Riffe's research. In an article from the *New York Times*, the author discussed how immigrants were using public funded programs that American citizens pay for which can lead to an economic burden. For example, “Their children can attend public schools at government expense — putting a burden on state and local budgets. But they are barred from receiving federal benefits like the earned-income tax credit, food

¹⁰⁹Javier Ortiz, “Immigration Reform: Good for America and Our Economy,” *The Hill*, June 20, 2013.

¹¹⁰ Watson and Riffe, “Perceived Threat, Immigration Policy Support, and Media Coverage,” 465.

stamps and Medicaid. Only their American-born children can get those.”¹¹¹ The *New York Times* is informing the public about the cost of immigrants who are living in the United States. There was also mention of how an immigrant would pay back the nation which is stated as a provision in the bill under Title II: immigrant visas.¹¹² The *New York Times* gave the example, “As part of that plan, which was still being completed on Sunday, these immigrants would have to pay \$500 when they apply for a temporary work permit, and would have the next 10 years to pay the remaining \$1,500 or so, a person familiar with the negotiations said.”¹¹³ It was expected that the NYT would cover more details about what was in the bill because the publication is informing the general public about the issue and this is what they chose to focus on.

Conclusion

This thesis has looked at three different types of media frames; economic, moral and national security from 30 different articles from *The Hill* and *the New York Times*. Moral frames were dominant throughout the articles where twenty of the thirty articles had moral frames. This thesis used framing theory to develop and determine the types of frames used throughout the articles. This is one of the first studies to examine how the media framed the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013, during the time when it was debated in the Senate. This

¹¹¹ Eduardo Porter, “Immigration Reform Issue: The Effect on the Budget,” *The New York Times*, February 5, 2013.

¹¹² “S.744-Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act,” Congress, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/744/text>.

¹¹³ Ashley Parker and Brian Knowlton, “Rubio Offers Full-Throated Support for Immigration Bill,” *The New York Times*, April 14, 2013.

thesis did not examine the effects of framing on people's attitudes or beliefs. This thesis could be used in future research as a steppingstone to further examine how people viewed the issue of immigration based on how the media framed the issue during the time S 744 was being debated in the Senate.

Immigration has become a partisan issue, which may not have been the case during the Reagan Administration in the 1980s, the last time that comprehensive immigration reform was addressed. There are many different values and morals among the Senators who made up the Gang of 8. This makes it difficult to come to an agreement on immigration reform when other factors such as future elections or compromise get in the way of passing comprehensive immigration reform. The articles that were analyzed covered a variety of information about the Senators from the Gang of 8 providing evidence of partisanship surrounding immigration reform. Many articles covered the main provisions in the bill including: a path to citizenship, border security, and work visas. For example, a path to citizenship, border security, and work visas were mentioned throughout the articles and all of these were all a part of the bill. However, most of the articles used for this project were not highly informative for a reader who did not know a lot about past immigration reform or about S.744. Most readers would have to have been keeping up with all the aspects of immigration reform to get a true understanding of what was happening with S.744. This thesis did not examine how informative the articles were for the public, but the findings from this study could be used for future research about how informed the public was during the debate about S. 744. Using the findings about how the media framed the issue, researchers could compare public opinion polls to see how informed the public was during this time and maybe even find out if the public

thought about the issue of immigration reform as being a moral, economic, or national security issue. This study did confirm Iyengar's findings that episodic frames are more common than thematic frames in print media. Not one article that was analyzed in this thesis discussed all five aspects of the bill S.744 in one single article. Each article only discussed one to two aspects or provisions in the bill. The articles emphasized or deemphasized the important aspects of the bill. By doing this, readers would have to make sure to keep up with the news throughout the time that the bill was moving through the Senate. Otherwise, they might think that the bill only addressed one issue and not all of the provisions covered by the bill. Comprehensive immigration reform involved many aspects and addressed many areas including: a path to citizenship, border security, and work visas, yet the articles studied for this project only focused on one aspect of the bill at a time.

Future studies should ask how well the public can be informed about a policy issue or how the public would perceive a policy issue based on media framing by examining articles. This would help to better understand how well the media informs the public about policy issues since that is a vital role for the media. There could also be research done on how well the public understood the bill or the topic of immigration reform. Did the media provide enough information for the public? Or would the public have to go and read the bill to get a better understanding on what was going to be done for immigration reform? This thesis did not examine if the public was well informed, but future research could look at how well the media informed the public on the issue at hand. Additional limitations and flaws in this research were that the author was the sole coder of the articles and there was no intercoder reliability. The sample size of 30 articles

was small and could have been larger. Sometimes it was hard to determine the dominant frame for an article that had multiple frames. This is where having additional coders would be useful. Additional coders would improve the reliability of the study's findings. The three frames were limiting as well because there were other frames used in the articles. For example, many of the articles focused on the passage of the bill and used "horse-race coverage" like what is used by the media to report elections. There was quite a bit of "who is ahead, who is behind" raised in the articles that did not have anything to do with the substance of the bill. This could have been coded for, but prior to reading the articles it was not considered to be something of importance.

The study should be expanded to include more news articles, a broader date range, and additional search terms. The time period that was used for this project, February 2013- June 2013, was brief and was limiting for the analysis. Immigration reform may have been discussed during a different time period and there could have been more information about this issue during a different time period. It was also difficult to search for articles and it is possible that not all the articles from the time period understudy were found. Finally, only one bill that was examined for this project and this limits the study when discussing how immigration reform was framed. There could have been a comparison of different immigration reform legislation and an examination of how the media framed each. Overall, it is important for the public to have information about policy issues so that they know what is changing with the laws and how this is going to impact their lives and the nation.

Appendix A

Code Sheet:

Publication:

Title:

Author:

Date:

#of paragraphs:

Type of article: News or Editorial

Names of Senators in article:

Is a gang of 8 senator quoted: Yes or No

Type of Frame:

Economic or National Security or Moral

Episodic or Thematic

Congressional process/timing/logistics/policy process:

Notes:

Table 1

Type of Frame

| Publication | Economic | National Security | Moral |
|---------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| <i>The Hill</i> | 1 | 4 | 10 |
| <i>The New York Times</i> | 3 | 2 | 10 |

Table 2

Episodic or Thematic

| Publication | Episodic | Thematic |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <i>The Hill</i> | 14 | 1 |
| <i>The New York Times</i> | 14 | 1 |

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