

The Framing of Immigration in the Media

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Introduction

- It is the purpose of the media to inform. The media has significant influence over what and how the public sees occurrences.
- The news must remain a non-partisan channel, unless otherwise denoted as an opinion piece. Sean Hannity presents his show *Hannity* as news, but it is often laden with his own insights and perspectives.
- A nondescript form of partisanship is the use of framing. In particular the use of word selection to alter the impression of the audience.
- Varying beliefs are to be expected in any topic of national controversy, but when the goal is to depict news coverage neutral words should be used.

Secondary Research

- The use of manipulating words in media has the potential to alter the opinions of those that view it. This was shown by Matthew Levendusky who conducted a study which showed that the political opinions of people that watched bipartisan news were affected for multiple days after viewing.
- Political Behavior, a peer-reviewed journal, published a study entitled *Framing Labels and Immigration Policy Attitudes in the Iowa Caucuses: "Trying to Out-Tancredo Tancredo"*. They tested the impact that wording has in reference to immigration policies. They found that framing matters more to subsets of people with high issue importance on the topic, and that both Republicans and Democrats had more conservative preferences after exposure.

Research Question

- Is framing language used, and if yes, what is the frequency?
- Further research would be required to determine if there is a definite cause and effect relationship with this particular program and the partisan views held by the show's audience.

Frequency of Framing Terms

The frequency of framing immigration term selection in *Hannity* from March 1, 2018 to March 30, 2018.

Date	Illegals	Illegal Immigrant	Illegal Alien	Criminal	Total Framing
March 1	0	11	0	15	24
March 2	11	7	1	1	20
March 5	2	5	0	12	19
March 6	0	1	0	0	1
March 7	2	23	8	14	47
March 8	0	7	0	0	7
March 9	0	0	0	0	0
March 12	1	1	0	1	3
March 13	0	13	0	2	15
March 14	0	5	0	4	9
March 15	0	0	0	0	0
March 16	0	3	0	4	7
March 19	0	0	0	0	0
March 20	0	0	0	0	0
March 21	0	0	0	0	0
March 22	0	1	0	0	1
March 23	0	0	0	0	0
March 26	0	0	0	0	0
March 27	0	7	2	5	14
March 28	0	2	0	0	2
March 29	0	1	0	7	8
March 30	1	0	1	5	7

Methodology

- Transcripts were provided from the Fox News website to compile the data set.
- The search terms were each recorded through a twenty-two day set of *Hannity* episodes.
- The data range began on March 1, 2018 and ceased on March 30, 2018. This start date was randomly chosen by Random.org, a random number generator website.
- Words spoken by both Sean Hannity, the host, and his guests were included toward the total.
- After combing each transcript, an excel spreadsheet was updated with the total count of each word mentioned above.

Frequency of Neutral Terms

The frequency of neutral immigration term selection in *Hannity* from March 1, 2018 to March 30, 2018.

Date	Illegals	Illegal Immigrant	Illegal Alien	Criminal	Total Framing
March 1	0	11	0	15	24
March 2	11	7	1	1	20
March 5	2	5	0	12	19
March 6	0	1	0	0	1
March 7	2	23	8	14	47
March 8	0	7	0	0	7
March 9	0	0	0	0	0
March 12	1	1	0	1	3
March 13	0	13	0	2	15
March 14	0	5	0	4	9
March 15	0	0	0	0	0
March 16	0	3	0	4	7
March 19	0	0	0	0	0
March 20	0	0	0	0	0
March 21	0	0	0	0	0
March 22	0	1	0	0	1
March 23	0	0	0	0	0
March 26	0	0	0	0	0
March 27	0	7	2	5	14
March 28	0	2	0	0	2
March 29	0	1	0	7	8
March 30	1	0	1	5	7

Findings

- In total, framing terms were spoken 184 times and neutral terms were spoken 10 times.
- There seems to be no drastic increase during the data set as to when either set of terms were used.
- On average, framing terms are spoken 9 times per episode, with a maximum of 47.
- Neutral words were spoken on average 0.45 times an episode, with a maximum of 4.
- The fluctuation of immigration as a topic in each episode clearly affects how often these words were used.
- The month of March in 2018 did not have a particularly important moment or discussion in regard to immigration. Due to this, the month long data range can be interpreted as representative of an average news cycle.

Implications

- The discrepancy between the use of framing and neutral terms shows that viewers of *Hannity* are often exposed to words that carry with them biasing connotations.
- It is the job of the news to inform not to impart bias or to mislead.
- The use of framing terms stops the conversation and formation of personal thoughts on the matter of immigration.
- Biased media is bad for democracy. When people are given biased information instead of objective information they are never given the proper opportunity to develop their own beliefs.
- Instead they are subjected to regurgitate the news they have been presented and the opinions presented with it.
- If people cannot cultivate their own opinions, then they cannot voice them or vote on them.
- This leads to a society where people are being unknowingly swayed due to the presentation of information.

References

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- Rosentiel, Tom. "Partisanship and Cable News Audiences." Pew Research Center. N.p., 30 Oct. 2009. Web. 23 Apr. 2018.