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Introduction

IMMIGRATION HAS been a hotly debated and highly contested policy issue in the United States for over a decade. This was perhaps most evident in the summer of 2012, as the country eagerly waited for the Supreme Court to weigh in on the constitutionality of SB1070, an Arizona law that was widely condemned (or praised, depending on one's perspective) for harassing undocumented immigrants and making it easier to detain and deport them. Proponents and opponents of Arizona's law relied on various arguments and frames to make their case to the American public: Democrats and immigrant-serving organizations denounced the law as unconstitutional and racially motivated, while conservatives and Republicans, such as presidential nominee Mitt Romney, praised Arizona's law as a necessary response to policy challenges and called it a model for the rest of the country.¹

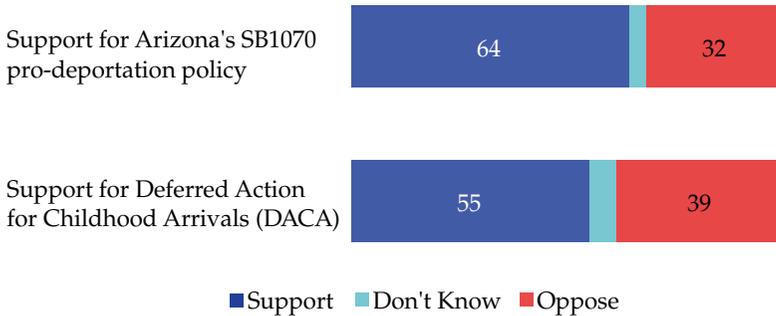
In addition to arguing for the constitutionality of Arizona's law, conservative advocates also framed the issue in terms of immigrant criminality. Indeed, the criminality frame was central to the passage of SB1070 in the first place: in 2010 Republican lawmakers in Arizona complained of a spike in violent crime by unauthorized immigrants, and Governor Jan Brewer even went so far as to claim that Mexican gangs were leaving "headless bodies" in the Arizona desert.² Neither claim proved to be true: subsequent fact-checking by researchers and media watchdogs revealed that violent crime near the Arizona border had gone down, not up, and no one was able to verify any headless body in the Arizona desert.³ And yet these arguments about immigrant criminality and violence remained an integral part of conservative discourse and framing on unauthorized immigration, presenting it as a crisis that demanded state action. The Arizona legislature drew heavily on these justifications when it passed SB1070, a law that challenged more than a century of legal precedent whereby the federal government was given exclusive authority on immigration enforcement.⁴ Based on this challenge to federal authority on enforcement, the Obama administration subsequently sued the state

of Arizona, and by the summer of 2012 the Supreme Court was getting ready to issue a ruling on the law's constitutionality during one of its final sessions.

Just as the country was waiting on the Arizona cliff-hanger, the White House introduced another game-changing policy that shaped the national discourse on immigration, this time in a pro-integration direction. On June 15, President Barack Obama, speaking from the Rose Garden, announced a new program—Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA—that would provide temporary work permits and deportation protection for those undocumented immigrants who had come to the United States as children. In arguing for the importance of his administrative action, President Obama laid out a strong case to prevent the deportation of young undocumented immigrants, noting that “it makes no sense to expel talented young people, who, for all intents and purposes, are Americans—they’ve been raised as Americans; understand themselves to be part of this country—to expel these young people who want to staff our labs, or start new businesses, or defend our country simply because of the actions of their parents—or because of the inaction of politicians.”⁵ Clearly, in the summer of 2012, the president’s actions and rhetoric on deportation relief stood in sharp contrast to Arizona’s law that was awaiting a Supreme Court ruling.

It was in this context of a highly contentious national debate over immigration that the Quinnipiac University Poll asked respondents to weigh in on two very different approaches to addressing the issue of illegal immigration. One question in the survey gauged public support for “an Arizona-type law in their state, requiring police to check the immigration status of someone they have already stopped or arrested if they suspect he or she is in the country illegally.” Meanwhile, another question gauged voter support for President Obama’s policy “in which young illegal immigrants who came to the country as children will be able to obtain work permits and will not face deportation.”⁶ The results of this survey were remarkable: by a 64–32 margin, respondents supported Arizona’s pro-deportation law, while at the same time supporting President Obama’s deportation relief program by a 55–39 margin (see figure 1.1). A majority of Americans were seemingly holding contradictory opinions on immigration policy—favoring protective policies like DACA, on the one hand, while also favoring pro-deportation policies like Arizona’s SB1070.

Although these contradictory attitudes may seem puzzling at first, they make more sense when we take a closer look at how each question is framed. The question on Arizona’s policy refers to people who are “stopped” or “arrested,” inviting the respondent to think of immigration in a particular law enforcement context. On the other hand, the question on President Obama’s policy mentions “children” who “will be able to

Figure 1.1 Public Opinion on Deportation and Deportation Relief, 2012

Source: Quinnipiac University Poll, 2012, Q40 and Q38.

obtain work permits,” invoking a very different image and context for the survey respondent. Of course, these questions also vary in other ways—they make references to different levels of government (state versus federal), and while one makes no mention of elected officials, the other mentions Obama. In other words, there are too many variations in the frames to assess which ones might be most important in shaping people’s attitudes on deportation. Nevertheless, the survey evidence shown in figure 1.1 strongly suggests that the framing of immigration policy is consequential for public opinion.

The key argument we advance in this book is that the different frames that individuals are exposed to on immigration have important effects on shaping opinions on particular policies that affect the undocumented population. Given that public opinions on specific policies are not very well developed, the door is open for political elites to play an important role by strategically deploying certain frames. Furthermore, in our contemporary media environment, where people have an array of choices on what type of news to consume, their exposure to immigration policy frames is likely to vary depending on the ideological slant of the news outlet. Given the combination of underdeveloped opinions on immigration and the modern media environment, it is imperative for us to begin understanding public opinion on immigration through the lens of framing.

In this book, we study both the supply of media frames and their effects on public opinion as they relate to the undocumented or illegal immigrant population in the United States. As we discuss later in this chapter, the “immigration debate” in the United States over the last decade has focused significant attention on policies affecting the undocumented population, ranging from deportations to comprehensive immigration

reform, the DREAM (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) Act, and DACA. Despite prominent and multifaceted policy debates, scholarship on media framing and public opinion on immigration remains relatively constrained: media studies tend to focus on the racialization of the immigration debate and the characteristics and qualities of immigrants in particular, while most scholarly treatments of public opinion still focus on the general question of whether immigration to the United States should be increased, decreased, or kept the same. The nuances and particularities of policy are often missing from these accounts, something we seek to rectify in this book as we provide an in-depth look at framing and opinion on three types of policies: mass deportations, comprehensive immigration reform, and piecemeal measures targeting immigrant children, such as the DREAM Act. For our news framing analysis, we conduct in-depth content analysis of both print and cable media outlets that vary by ideological slant from 2007 to 2013. We then assess the impact of some of these media frames on public opinion through a variety of survey experiments that were conducted from 2007 to 2014.

Framing the Fight over Immigration Policy

The United States is a nation of immigrants. It is also a country that fights about immigration. This is perhaps the simplest way to characterize long-standing debates on immigration policy in the United States, discussions that reflect both the centrality of immigration to the country's development and its very divisiveness. Indeed, as scholars such as Rogers Smith remind us, the long-running fight over immigration reflects a more basic, underlying tension in America's civic ideals, with traditions of liberal egalitarianism existing alongside, and often doing battle with, traditions of "ascriptive hierarchy," including racism, sexism, and nativism.⁷ Contentious frames on immigration are thus reflective of a larger pattern of heated debates in the United States over immigration, race, and inequality.

For much of American history, arguments over immigration policy have focused on the desirability or undesirability of letting in particular groups of people: Benjamin Franklin raised the alarm in 1760 on German immigration to Pennsylvania when it was a British colony, the Know-Nothing Party railed against Catholic immigration in the 1840s, and the United States built its national immigration policy with a series of restrictions on Asian migration that started in 1875, expanded through the next fifty years, and remained largely in place until 1965.⁸ It was only with the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act—which abolished national-origin quotas and established family unification and employment qualification as the primary means for people to legally migrate to the United States—that U.S. policies on immigration moved away from national-origin re-

strictions toward a more general framework on who is allowed to enter the country, who is allowed to remain here, and who can become a U.S. citizen.

While the 1965 reforms to immigration law made significant headway in addressing long-standing problems of racial and national-origin exclusion in U.S. immigration policy, it also created a new set of problems, notably the growth of the unauthorized, or “illegal,” immigrant population in the United States, who now number nearly 12 million.⁹ As other scholars have noted, the 1965 immigration law created, for the first time, numerical limits on migration from the Western Hemisphere. Around the same time, Congress also abolished the Bracero Program, which had provided a way for millions of agricultural workers from Mexico to work in the United States as migrant laborers from the 1940s through the early 1960s.¹⁰ Soon thereafter, the population of undocumented immigrants in the United States soared dramatically, as large numbers of employers had grown reliant on immigrant labor, primarily from Mexico, and immigrants themselves had established fairly strong networks of migration connecting home regions to particular places in the United States. As we elaborate later in this book, the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act sought to address this growing problem by providing legalization to over 1 million immigrants and introducing federal employer sanctions. These reforms brought only a temporary reprieve, however, to the problem of unauthorized migration: the number declined from 4 million in 1986 to about 2.5 million in 1989, but subsequently rose to 8 million by 2000 and exceeded 11 million by 2005.¹¹

Since the 1960s, then, illegal immigration has become one of the most salient and pressing problems of immigration policy in the United States. In this book, we focus on the last decade of federal efforts to address the problem, including attempts not only at legalization and regularization but also at greater border enforcement and deportation.

In the summer of 2001, President George W. Bush proposed a comprehensive fix to the nation’s immigration policies, including a path to legalization on par with the 1986 amnesty law signed by President Ronald Reagan. The September 11, 2001, attacks effectively postponed such efforts as the national debate focused centrally on the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and domestic security measures such as the PATRIOT Act. In 2005 the Bush administration flagged comprehensive immigration reform as an important policy priority for the president’s second term, lending public support for bipartisan efforts under way in Congress in 2006 and 2007. Those efforts failed, however, as the issue became polarized along partisan lines and support for immigrant legalization plummeted among Republican legislators. Many conservative media outlets and party activists branded any legalization effort as an amnesty, evoking memories of the prior round of immigrant legalization under the

1986 Immigration Reform Control Act. While the 1986 act had garnered bipartisan support in Congress and won the signature of Ronald Reagan, conservative activists had managed to make “amnesty” a pariah twenty years later, and they pushed Republican leaders to introduce bills that were entirely focused on enforcement. Thus, federal legislation on immigration ground to a halt in Congress, either because of opposition in the Republican-controlled House of Representatives or because of filibusters by Republicans in the Senate.

By 2010, even the most popular aspect of immigration reform—the DREAM Act, which would have granted a path to citizenship to those who came to the United States illegally as young children—failed to pass Congress.¹² There was a glimmer of hope for immigration reform after the 2012 elections, as Mitt Romney lost the presidential race owing in significant part to his dismal standing among Latino and Asian American voters. Many Republican leaders pushed for immigration reform as a way to repair the party’s national fortunes, and about a dozen Republican senators voted in favor of a comprehensive reform package in 2013. However, these efforts met stiff resistance in the U.S. House, and immigration policy became stalemated in Congress once again.¹³

Importantly, the framing of immigration policy figured heavily in congressional debates on legalization and in related media coverage. Thus, for example, pro-immigrant activists tended to portray legalization as an opportunity or pathway to citizenship that would be earned after immigrants paid their taxes, learned English, and stayed clear of legal trouble during an extended period of temporary legal status. On the other hand, conservative activists denounced any legalization effort as an “amnesty” that would reward those who broke the country’s laws and encourage more to do the same. The casting of amnesty in a negative light was perhaps surprising, as many Republican legislators had voted in favor of the 1986 amnesty and Ronald Reagan, a Republican president and conservative hero, had signed the bill into law. As we show in this book, however, anti-immigration activists have since succeeded in portraying the prior amnesty as a legislative mistake and policy failure, encouraging even more illegal immigration to the United States since its passage. In addition to “pathways” and “amnesties,” immigration reform provided many other framing opportunities to proponents and opponents alike.

Importantly, framing efforts on immigration were not confined to congressional legislation or the activities of interest groups—they often played out in extensive news coverage on immigration. A major part of this book is devoted to examining these immigration policy frames as they play out in news and editorial coverage, in both newspapers and news television networks. We examine variation in the use of such frames over time and across news outlets, particularly between mainstream sources and those that are more clearly conservative or liberal. Finally,

we rely on survey experiments to examine the potential causal effects of these frames on American public opinion.

Of course, frames in communication may serve important purposes even if they do not have strong effects on public opinion. First, news media may adopt certain frames to make themselves understood to their readers and viewers. Representatives may choose certain words or phrases to send important signals to interest groups and issue constituencies (for example, using terms like “illegal alien” and “amnesty” to appeal to particular groups or to differentiate themselves more clearly from each other). Other elites, such as issue experts, may use particular frames (such as “unauthorized immigrants”) that are more reflective of dominant usage in scholarly communities. Finally, elected officials and advocates may adopt particular frames in the belief that they could be consequential for opinion, as was clearly evident in the case of President Obama’s Rose Garden speech, in which he justified his decision to defer the deportation of thousands of young “undocumented” immigrants.¹⁴

Looking ahead, our book is motivated by two sets of key questions:

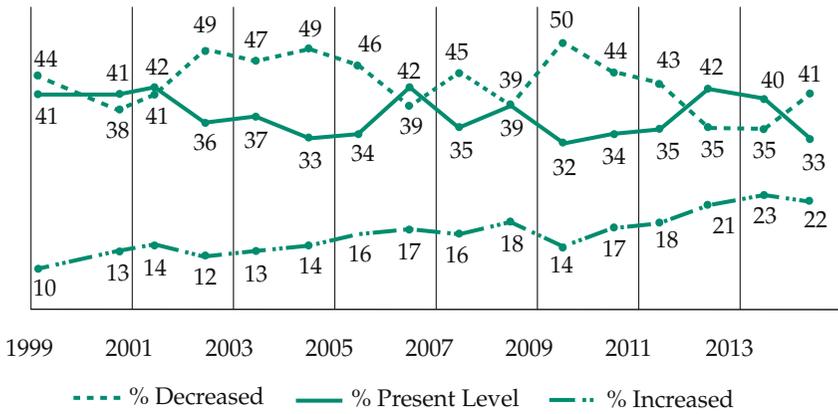
1. How are policies toward undocumented immigrants framed in news media, and how does this framing vary across outlets?
2. Are the frames consequential for public opinion, and do these effects vary among different types of respondents?

To answer these questions, we analyze a set of original survey experiments between 2007 and 2014 and conduct content analyses of news coverage during the same time period. Our content analysis uses both quantitative and qualitative coding strategies in analyzing news coverage from liberal, mainstream, and more conservative media outlets. For print media, we use the *New York Times*, *New York Post*, *Washington Post*, and *Washington Times*. For cable media, we use CNN, MSNBC, and Fox News. To connect frames to public opinion, we rely on a host of survey experiments conducted between 2007 and 2014, which we describe in more detail in chapter 2. We rely on survey experiments because they provide a much cleaner test of causality than trying to link changes in media coverage of immigration to aggregate polling data.

Our Contribution

While immigration policy has taken on several new and interesting dimensions in the last decade, much public opinion research on immigration still analyzes American views on immigration policy in a fairly blunt manner: the extent to which immigration is an important issue to voters; whether immigration is generally a good thing or bad thing for the coun-

Figure 1.2 Views Among American Voters on Whether Immigration Should Be Kept at Its Present Level, Increased, or Decreased, 1999–2013

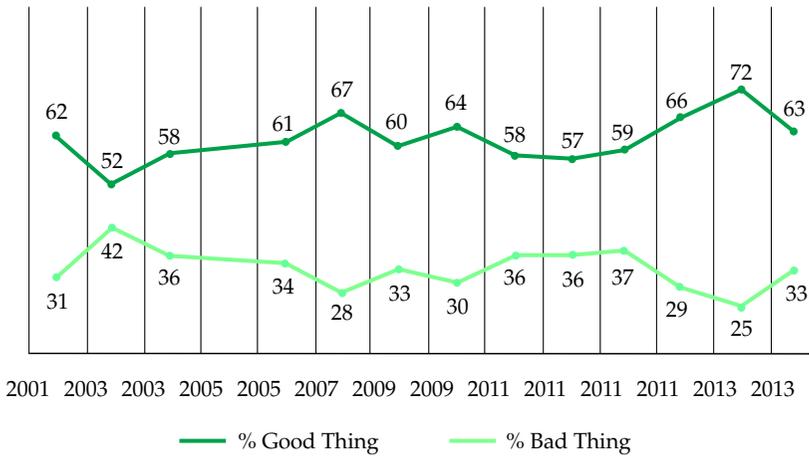


Source: Gallup surveys (Saad 2014).

try; and whether Americans want to increase, decrease, or maintain the current levels of immigration into the country. Certainly, these are important questions to help get a general sense of where Americans stand on immigration: survey evidence from the last two decades shows a steady increase in the proportion of Americans who wish to have more immigrants coming into the United States (figure 1.2) and a strong, steady sense that immigration is generally good for the United States (figure 1.3). Surveys have also shown immigration policy to be a relatively low-salience issue, but one in which the public's attention does respond to political developments, such as the legislative push for comprehensive immigration reform in 2007 and Arizona's passage of its immigration enforcement law in 2010.¹⁵

In addition, much research has explored the factors that may influence public opinion along these dimensions, including the influence of such factors as perceptions of economic threat, beliefs about Americanism, and the framing of racial and ethnic cues.¹⁶ There is also now a fairly extensive literature on public perception toward immigrants, including group stereotypes and beliefs about their effects on American society.¹⁷ However, opinion studies of immigration policy still primarily use either fairly standard, blunt measures—such as whether immigration generally or immigration by a particular group should be increased or decreased—or more tangential measures to immigration policy, such as stereotypes about immigrants and whether English should be declared the official language of the United States.¹⁸ As we show in this book, these measures

Figure 1.3 Views Among American Voters on Whether Immigration Is a Good Thing or a Bad Thing for the United States, 2001–2014



Source: Gallup surveys (Saad 2014).

do not fully capture the policy debate and media discourse on immigration policy in the past decade.

There are some newer studies that look at media framing on particular immigration policies, such as legalization and the DREAM Act, as we discuss in subsequent chapters. However, these studies typically look only at a handful of frames on one or two issues.¹⁹ Furthermore, there are few efforts to link public opinion on immigration to actual media coverage, with work by Marisa Abrajano, Johanna Dunaway, and their colleagues as notable exceptions.²⁰ In this book, we not only look at the content of media coverage across many different dimensions of immigration policy but also explore how different frames present in the media influence public opinion.

The crux of our argument is that while many forces shape opinion on immigration, the framing of policy information plays an integral role. One key element in the new media environment is the diversity of voices present in the media. We argue that the ways in which immigrants and immigration policy are described will vary across liberal, mainstream, and conservative media outlets. More specifically, conservative outlets should be more likely to use terms like “illegal” to describe those without legal status. We consider these frames akin to “equivalency frames,” as initially introduced by Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman and later typologized by Jamie Druckman.²¹ Druckman contrasts these frames, in which different phrases are used to describe logically equivalent condi-

tions, to “issue frames,” in which different aspects of a condition or policy are emphasized or deemphasized. For example, advocates on the right were quick to brand comprehensive immigration reform as “amnesty,” while those on the left attempted to use language reflecting an opportunity of citizenship for those who have already been contributing to U.S. society. We expect conservative, liberal, and mainstream media outlets to also vary in their use of issue frames.

Drawing from the literature on framing in public opinion, we argue that these different frames in communication are consequential for public opinion on different dimensions of immigration policy. For example, framing people as “illegal immigrants” should lead to less support for progressive immigration policy compared to frames that use terms such as “undocumented” or “unauthorized.” Similarly, on issue framing, the amnesty frame should lead to less support for comprehensive immigration reform compared to the opportunity frame. Throughout the book, we explore the effects of a variety of frames that are relevant across many different dimensions of immigration policy, including comprehensive immigration reform, the DREAM Act, and enforcement policies. We elaborate on our expectations as we introduce the frames that are prevalent (and not so prevalent) across these dimensions. We also explore whether the effects of these frames vary depending on one’s partisanship (and media viewership), ethnicity and family immigration history, and level of education. That is, we look at whether certain groups of individuals may be more accepting of or more resistant to certain frames.

Looking Ahead

In the chapters that follow, we provide a detailed look at media framing on immigration policy and the effects of many of those frames on American public opinion. In chapter 2, we provide a deeper look at framing, starting with a general overview of framing in the social science literature before proceeding closer to our enterprise—an examination of framing immigrants and immigration policy in news coverage and public opinion. We present a more focused discussion of how frames work to influence opinion, different types of frames, and the factors that may cause some individuals or groups to react differently to media framing on immigration. Importantly, we also discuss the ways in which we analyze the framing of immigration in news coverage and how we propose to test the potential effects of many of these frames using a wide variety of survey experiments.

Next, in chapter 3, we focus on immigrant legalization, which has been a critical component of various immigration reform attempts in the past decade. We begin this chapter by discussing the historical precedent for immigrant legalization (then labeled an “amnesty”) in 1986, the leg-

islative and policy developments that led to the proposal of comprehensive immigration reform in 2006 and 2007, and the rhetorical attempts by moderate Republicans and Democrats to use terms that avoided mentions of “amnesty.” After discussing the historical and institutional contexts, we present a content analysis of media coverage of comprehensive immigration reform across print and cable news. As expected, the tone of the legalization coverage mirrored the ideological leanings of the news source, but we also have some unexpected findings: economic frames and family frames received the most frequent coverage, while the legality frame received considerably less coverage. Next, we focus attention on how the term “amnesty” is invoked in news coverage of comprehensive immigration reform; we find that mentions of amnesty have declined over time, although they remain fairly high in conservative news sources such as Fox News. Finally, we examine the potential ways in which these different frames affect public opinion on legalization policy. We find, through analysis of various survey experiments conducted between 2007 and 2014, that the amnesty frame has the strongest and most consistent effect on reducing support for immigrant legalization. We also find significant differences in support for legalization, based on how long undocumented immigrants have lived in the United States. Interestingly, however, news coverage does not draw much attention to length of stay in the United States, and our survey experiment findings suggest that pro-immigration advocates may be able to shift public opinion by focusing their messaging efforts on the long-term resident population of undocumented immigrants. Finally, we also find significant effects for the law-abiding versus law-breaking frame, and again, the comparative paucity of these mentions in news coverage suggests opportunities for immigration conservatives to tilt public opinion in their favor by consistently relying on the law-breaking frame.

After comprehensive immigration reform failed in 2007, proponents of reform turned to piecemeal strategies by taking more popular aspects of reform and trying to pass them separately. The DREAM Act was one such piece of legislation in that it sought to provide citizenship to children who came to the United States in an undocumented status and had served in the military or graduated from college. In chapter 4, we first provide a historical overview of the DREAM Act, from its promising start as the most popular component of immigration reform in 2006 to its failure to pass Congress in 2010 despite having Democrats in control of Congress and the presidency. Next, we provide a content analysis of how the DREAM Act was covered in the news. In particular, we pay attention to the relative prominence in news stories of frames that emphasized the consideration of the act’s beneficiaries as those who came to the United States as young children or as those who had no choice in the matter of having a legal way to enter and stay in the United States. We also con-

sider the extent to which the term “amnesty” was invoked in news coverage of the DREAM Act, and whether this varied by the ideology of the news source. Overall, we find consistent differences between conservative and mainstream sources: Fox News and conservative print sources were more likely to mention “amnesty” in their coverage of the DREAM Act, and mainstream sources were more likely to provide empathetic news coverage, with more episodic (human interest) framing. Finally, we examine whether these various issue frames made any difference for voter opinion. We find that the amnesty frame reduced support for the DREAM Act, particularly among independents and Republicans. We also find that the child frame was especially effective in moving Republican opinion on the DREAM Act in the early years, when the issue was less well known among the general public. By 2012, however, and with the president’s DACA program gaining national attention and prominent Republican opposition, the child frame was much less effective in swaying Republican opinion on the DREAM Act.

After devoting chapters 3 and 4 to permissive solutions to the problem of illegal immigration, we turn our attention in chapter 5 to deportations as a proposed solution. First, we provide a historical overview of deportations and other enforcement-heavy solutions. Next, we provide a content analysis of how these issues have been covered in print and cable news. For border security and deportations, we pay close attention to whether the issue of terrorism is raised in conjunction with immigration. Finally, we examine variations in the use of counterframes in news coverage of immigration enforcement, ranging from the deep roots put down by many illegal immigrants in the United States to the disruptive harm of deportations to families and, potentially, to the economy. In contrast to findings in our other chapters, we find that pro-deportation coverage is more common than con-deportation coverage, regardless of the ideological leaning of the news outlet. We also find that the rule of law is the most common frame in news coverage of deportations, followed by public safety. By contrast, con-deportation frames, such as family disruption and economic costs, receive much less news coverage.

Interestingly, we find in our analysis of the survey experiment data that public support for mass deportations is significantly lower among those who are exposed to the economic costs frame. We also find that support for deportation is lower when respondents are cued to think about long-term residents as opposed to more recent arrivals. Given the relative dearth of news coverage on both these dimensions (the economic costs of deportation and length of stay), our findings indicate potential opportunities for pro-immigrant advocates to shift public opinion against mass deportations. Our findings also indicate that much existing news coverage, with its tendency to focus on legality and public safety, tends to favor more restrictive opinion on immigrant deportation.

Finally, while most of our book is focused on policy frames, we also draw attention to the ways in which news media describe immigrants without legal status. Thus, in chapter 6, we ask: How are these immigrants labeled in news media coverage? Does the use of these terms vary over time and across ideology of news source? And what effects might the use of these terms have on voter support for public policies on immigration?

This chapter examines the sharp lines drawn between conservative advocates on immigration reform who insist on using the term “illegal,” liberal advocates who argue that the term “illegal” should be dropped in favor of more neutral terms such as “undocumented,” and still other experts insisting that the term “unauthorized” more accurately captures the population that would benefit from a legalization program. Next, we analyze the prevalence of these terms across print, network television, and cable news and find that the term “illegal” is used most of the time, regardless of news source. However, we do find that the frequency of the term receded among avowedly liberal news outlets after 2008 and among mainstream outlets after 2012. By contrast, we find much stronger differences in the use of the terms “undocumented” and “illegal” by elected officials, with Democrats much more likely to use the former and Republicans much more likely to rely on the latter. We end this chapter by analyzing a series of survey experiments on whether variations in these equivalency frames have any effect on voter support for public policies such as legalization, the DREAM Act, and deportation. Finally, in our concluding chapter, we highlight the key findings across the chapters, discuss their implications, and indicate potential avenues for future research on this topic.

Overall, our findings support the contention that there is a wide degree of variation in media frames on immigration across liberal, mainstream, and conservative media outlets. However, this variation is much more noticeable in how news media describe policy issues than in how they describe the immigrants themselves. The vast majority of media coverage uses the term “illegal” to describe those without legal status. We found very little use of terms such as “undocumented” or “unauthorized” in our content analysis. However, we do find more variation in the use of different issue frames. For example, conservative outlets are more likely to use the term “amnesty” for any program that provides some measure of deportation. We also find that coverage of the legal and economic facets of immigration varies considerably by the ideological orientation of the news outlet.

Our analysis of frames in both news coverage and public opinion reveals important findings that may not be apparent in separate analyses of each. For example, we find in our survey analysis that duration of immigrant stay in the United States has a strong and consistent effect on

public opinion, increasing support for legalization and decreasing support for deportation. And yet our content analysis reveals that news and opinion coverage of immigration makes little mention of how long undocumented immigrants have been in the United States. This suggests that, akin to Frank Luntz's recommendation to legalization opponents that they consistently invoke amnesty when they discuss immigration, pro-legalization advocates might have better luck in moving public opinion if they consistently emphasize that their policies would benefit long-term immigrant residents.²²

Another major finding in our book is that the amnesty frame has a strong and fairly consistent effect in reducing support for immigrant legalization, even when it involves policies that benefit immigrants who arrived in the United States as children, like the DREAM Act. Indeed, we find that mentioning amnesty dramatically reduces support for the DREAM Act even when the child frame is included. Not only does amnesty wipe out any boost associated with describing policies as benefiting young children, but people exposed to these dueling frames are much less likely to support the DREAM Act than those in the control condition, who are exposed to neither frame. Furthermore, on legalization, the DREAM Act, and deportations, we find that negative frames are generally more effective than positive frames; this finding is consistent with work in public opinion on negativity bias.²³

Finally, contrary to the beliefs of many proponents and opponents of immigration reform, we find that the difference between using "illegal" and using "undocumented" makes little difference with respect to opinion on policy: those who are asked about "illegal immigrants" are just as supportive of legalization measures as those asked about "undocumented immigrants." Importantly, however, we do find that those with immigrant family backgrounds sometimes react against the use of the term "illegal," expressing even greater support for legalization and greater opposition to deportation when they are exposed to the term. Finally, we find much greater effects that are based on how policies are framed. In some cases, such as opinion on legalization, our policy frames make the difference between adopting a restrictive stance or a neutral stance. In other cases—namely, support for the DREAM Act—the effects are even stronger, accounting for the difference between a restrictive stance and a progressive stance.

As this book goes to press, immigration policy is once again on the national agenda, with candidates from both parties making immigration a frequently discussed topic in the 2016 presidential campaign. If this book had been written three years ago, many would have considered our detailed attention to restrictive policy proposals and negative rhetoric on immigration to be outdated. The Republican Party's massive electoral losses in 2012 were blamed largely on the party's restrictive policy

stances and harsh rhetoric on immigration. Many Republican officials and conservative opinion leaders in 2013 called for the party to moderate its rhetoric on immigration and to back comprehensive immigration reform. The Republican National Committee even went so far as to generate an extensive study, *The Growth and Opportunity Project*, which laid out a road map for Republicans to win the presidency by ramping up outreach to Latinos and immigrant voters.²⁴

Within a year of the report's publication, however, it was apparent to many House Republicans that immigration restriction would continue to be a powerful impulse among primary voters. As we discuss more fully in chapters 3 and 4, the electoral logic of winning House primaries led to the defeat of "pro-amnesty" leaders like Eric Cantor and killed any hopes of immigration reform. This political dynamic carried through to the 2016 presidential primaries, with restrictionist candidates like Donald Trump vaulting to the top of the Republican pack after a series of incendiary comments on immigration, while pro-legalization candidates like Marco Rubio and Jeb Bush struggled to gain traction among primary voters.

Thus, as we have seen many times over the past decade, the problem of unauthorized immigration has returned as a salient issue for American voters, with proposed solutions ranging from permissive measures that provide a pathway to citizenship to more punitive measures that focus on border enforcement and deportation. As our study indicates, these proposed solutions will continue to offer significant framing opportunities on immigration policy—for proponents as well as opponents—with significant consequences for public opinion and electoral politics.