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A Framing and Tone Analysis of Donald Trump Comments on Immigration and Jobs in National Newspapers

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A FRAMING AND TONE ANALYSIS OF DONALD TRUMP COMMENTS ON
IMMIGRATION AND JOBS IN NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS

by

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate work, and my graduate career, to those who have helped get me here. To my father, who has always supported and still supports me despite not always understanding where I am going. To my friends and family in Cleveland, Memphis, and Texas. To Dr. Garry Jennings and Dr. Leslie Fadiga-Stewart at Delta State University for leading me and encouraging my development. No one is self-made and I am not the exception. I greatly appreciate everything that has been provided to me throughout my academic career and my life, and I hope that I have forged good things out of all my work.

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Abstract

The unique candidacy of Donald Trump provided an opportunity to study how he talked about issues, specifically the issues of immigration and jobs from a framing and tone perspective. Such a perspective can provide insight as to how audiences perceive these issues. Specifically, this project examined the kind of framing Trump used in his comments on immigration and jobs: episodic or thematic, as well as the kinds of tone used in his comments: positive, negative, or neutral. A sample of 118 news articles from the *Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times*, the *Tampa Bay Times*, and the *Washington Post* found that on immigration, Trump used episodic framing less often than non-episodic framing, and used thematic framing more often than non-thematic framing. His comments on immigration were more often negative than positive or neutral. There is no difference in his usage of episodic frames from non-episodic frames for jobs, but he did use thematic framing more often than non-thematic framing. His comments on jobs were more often negative than positive or neutral. The study concludes that Trump talked about immigration and jobs in grand and lofty terms short of details, and the negative tone dominates all his comments. His bleak view of the two most important issues in American politics might be the most extreme in history.

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The unexpected election of Donald Trump in 2016 is proving to be rife with opportunities for analysis. Trump, a 70-year-old businessman famous for Trump Tower and his television show *The Apprentice,* won the election by defeating Hillary Clinton, a career politician who has spent much of the last thirty years in either elected office or in the executive branch of the government. Trump's campaign was unlike most presidential campaigns in history because it adopted a campaign style that bred controversy week after week. In an opinion column for *The Washington Post*, Dana Milbank (2016, para. 1) called Trump "a bigot and a racist," citing numerous examples of Trump's transgressions. Whether it be about Muslim or Mexican immigration, jobs, or national security, Donald Trump broke with the tradition that politicians must be measured and scripted.

The business that is the world of political campaigns means that much money and effort go into ensuring candidates say the right things. Trump's candidacy bucked conventional wisdom as he said whatever was on his mind, no matter what backlash it may have incurred. His campaign survived and arguably thrived as he maintained competitiveness throughout the primaries, polling just under three points behind his opponent Hillary Clinton up through the final week before the election (RealClearPolitics, 2016).

Two major national issues, immigration and job creation, were ones he focused on heavily in the campaign. The issue of immigration "never remains out of the American political spotlight for long," and numerous laws have been passed and debates have been held on the issue, and such activity will continue (Levy, Wright, & Citrin, 2016, p. 660). Likewise, the issues of the economy, particularly job creation, have been on the minds of voters and campaigns for

decades (Ghayad, Cragg, & Pinter, 2016; Tong, Tong, & Tong, 2012). These two issues are popular and mainstream, and that is why presidential candidates would target them in their campaigns. These are not issues only, they are also two examples that can demonstrate how Trump communicates to his audiences from a framing and tone perspective. For the purposes of this study, the issue of jobs can be defined as jobs lost or gained, or general employment/unemployment, as the unemployment was found to be the most important problem facing the country in 2012 (Ghayad et al., 2016).

Trump is the first businessman after Wendell Willkie in 1940 to be nominated as a major party's candidate; he is also the first one after Dwight Eisenhower in 1952 to be elected even though he has never held elected office. He stated in his acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention, "I will present the facts plainly and honestly. We cannot afford to be so politically correct anymore" (Politico, 2016, para. 8). Criticizing his opponent Hillary Clinton, he stated, "I have joined the political arena so that the powerful can no longer beat up on the people that cannot defend themselves. Nobody knows the system better than me, which is why I alone can fix it" (Politico, 2016, para. 43). Trump, as a representative of wealth and power, offered to change that system, in the same way that Richard Nixon, one of the famous anti-communist crusaders of the mid-twentieth century, changed it by opening the door to China. That offer of change seemed to have worked so well with some voters that Donald Trump obtained victory in the Electoral College.

This thesis studied how media, particularly newspapers, covered two issues of national importance within Trump's campaign—immigration and jobs. Looking at the media's coverage reflects the activities of the campaign through its life cycle. The nature of Trump's campaign was established with its launch on June 16, 2015 when Trump promised to build a wall along the

Mexican border and having Mexico pay for it (Brand, 2015, para. 1). Trump had a personally unique method of running his campaign, but it was still a political campaign, and his goal was to motivate voters to choose him over others (Riddell, 2016).

Therefore, a good way to find out how he motivated voters to vote for him is to examine what Donald Trump talked about and how he talked about the issues in media. This research project adopted a framing and tone analysis and examined how the issues of illegal immigration and job creation were talked about during Trump's presidential campaign in mass media. Specifically, the focus will be on Trump's comments on the issues of immigration and jobs in four newspapers: *The New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Tampa Bay Times*, and the *Los Angeles Times,* over the course of sixteen months. These four papers provided a geographically diverse selection of reporting, and the sixteen-month time frame allowed for the in- depth probe of the coverage. The goals were simple: to find out how, in media, Donald Trump framed the issues of illegal immigration and job creation, and what attitudes he has revealed towards the two issues.

Literature Review

To frame is to get an audience to think in a certain way. It is like a picture frame, where a framed picture only allows viewers of the picture to see what is inside the frame, even though what is excluded from the frame, and thus unseen, may be more important. As Entman (1993) stated, "to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient…in such a way as to promote a problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" (p. 53). In the same manner, Dimitrova states, "framing of events is achieved by choosing what to present and what not to present in media coverage" (Dimitrova, 2006, p. 79). Frames are designed to transmit a message, and what information is included and

excluded defines the message. Thus, framing "refers to the effects of presentation on judgment and choice" (Iyengar, 1996, p. 61). Therefore, "individuals are able to identify, organize, see and explain information through frames" (Ghafour, 2015, p. 1). In other words, "frames will…guide audience members' thoughts about that event or issue in predictable ways, to predictable conclusions" (Gross, 2008, p. 170).

With the definition of frames clarified, the next question becomes what frames can do. Druckman (2001a) noted that "frames in communication often play a role in shaping frames in thought" (p. 228). Frames in communication, or media frames, the kind of frames that will be discussed in this research, involve how the "presentation of events and news in mass media can thus systematically affect how recipients of the news come to understand these effects" (Scheufele, 1999, p. 107). The second kind, frames in thought, or individual frames, are "how audiences make sense of political news;" the way a person files and uses information they receive (Scheufele, 1999, p. 107). The result or consequence of a media frame is called a framing effect. Druckman states that framing effects, "are remarkably complex. Sometimes they work and other times they do not" (Druckman, 2001a, p. 246). A framing effect "occurs when…a speaker's emphasis on a subset of potentially relevant considerations causes individuals to focus on these considerations when constructing their opinions" (Druckman & Nelson, 2003, p. 730). The metaphor of the picture frame suggests that the audience forms their opinion based on what is included in the picture. That is the framing effect. But there is a difference between framing effect and persuasion. Framing deals with the content of a story while persuasion convinces the audience to change their belief (Druckman, 2001b, p. 1043-1044). Framing effects have also shown to be strong among those who are familiar with an issue beforehand (Nelson, Oxley, & Clawson, 1997).

One framing effect that Druckman (2001a) identifies is an equivalency framing effect, "the use of different, but logically equivalent, words or phrases…causes individuals to alter their preferences" (p. 228). One scenario would be a tax program that is framed differently with one that says the tax program will take 25 cents of every dollar and another that says tax payers will receive 75 percent of each dollar back after taxes. Both describe the same tax program that takes one-fourth of every dollar while returning three-fourths of every dollar; the way the tax program is described, one as the taking of money and the other as the return of money, is an example of equivalency framing in use. The former can be perceived as a negative outcome, a loss, while the latter can be perceived as a positive outcome, a gain. The second framing effect identified by Druckman (2001a) is the emphasis framing effect, which involves the speaker emphasizing parts of a story that can lead the audience to focus on the emphasized parts. Druckman (2001a) illustrated this effect using the example of a presidential candidate emphasizing his economic background on the campaign trail to focus audiences on that aspect, which signals to the audience that economic issues are important. Iyengar (1996) refers to framing effects as "effects of presentation on judgment and choice," stating that "individuals' choices vary dramatically depending upon whether the options are presented as potential gains or losses" (p. 61).

Druckman and Nelson (2003) studied framing effects on campaign finance reform. They created two articles for participants that framed the McCain-Feingold reform bill as one that either suppresses free speech or limits special interests (p. 733). The participants were then sorted into three groups: one group that had no discussion over the bill, one group where each participant read the same article, and one group where participants read different versions of the article. They found a difference of opinion on the bill when comparing those who read the free speech frame article and those who read the special interest frame article (p. 735), even though

three independent variables of interpersonal conversation, individual heterogeneity, and change over time may also impact the resulting framing effect (p. 741).

Druckman (2001c) also sought to find out if credible advice could interfere with framing effects, because "people also receive some advice on how they should decide" along with the frame being studied; his concern is that "If citizens' preferences reflect nothing more than arbitrary changes in frames, then public officials should put little stock in public opinion" (p. 63,). In his first experiment, party endorsement of an anti-disease program was found to have "significantly altered the preferences of Independents" (p. 73). The second experiment featured credible advice from people said to be experts on surgery options, and those who received credible advice altered their preferences and overcame the framing effect (p. 77). Druckman (2001c) concluded that, "the availability of credible advice dramatically decreases, and sometimes eliminates, framing effects" (p. 77).

With an understanding of framing and its effects established, it is important to note why framing is important to political communication research. "Whatever its specific use, the concept of framing consistently offers a way to describe the power of a communicating text" (Entman, 1993, p. 51). Frames define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies (p. 52). Politics relies on public opinion to support passage of bills, but how the media reports issues and events in politics can sway public opinion to go for or against. And because elites such as high-ranking politicians and corporate representatives dominate political discourse and have special access to media, eventually it is these elites in media who guide audiences.

Framing has been studied as a larger theoretical framework, but there are several different kinds of framing that can be studied individually and comparatively. Zooming in on examining

social problems, Iyengar (1996) pointed out there were two kinds of framing that outline media's coverage of social problems: episodic framing and thematic framing.

Episodic Framing

Episodic framing is about how causes of societal problems or how responsibilities for these societal issues are presented. Iyengar (1996) states, "episodic reports tend to provide good pictures; they do not require reporters with subject-matter expertise; and being devoid of interpretive analysis, they are less likely to be labeled as biased by media critics" (p. 62). Episodic frames "impact societal issues and opinions about responsibility concerning those issues," (Eargle, Esmail, & Sullivan, 2008, p. 11) and affect the public's understanding of those issues (Iyengar, 1996). Episodic framing is contextual as it takes specific examples of an issue as a representation of that issue. They are "references to isolated events, focusing on discrete cases or episodes" (Dimitrova, 2006, p. 80). One commonly cited example of understanding an episodic frame is the issue of poverty. In an episodic frame, poverty is presented as an individual problem rather than as a greater societal problem.

Spence (2010) performed a study on episodic frames of HIV/AIDS perception in African American communities, hypothesizing that the use of an episodic frames "that connect systemic issues to individual behavior tend to blame individuals for their own condition" (p. 258). Exposing participants to a story of a black man that contracted HIV/AIDS through sexual activity, Spence (2010) argued that those exposed to episodic frames would express negative attitudes toward those with the disease (p. 260). He found that those exposed to the episodic frame were more likely to believe people who contracted HIV/AIDS were irresponsible and did not care about infecting others (p. 260). His conclusion is that episodic frames in this instance made black respondents more likely to blame the spread of the disease on those infected and that

it "increases support for punitive policy options about HIV/AIDS that violate privacy rights rather than treat the disease" (p. 266).

Additionally, Gross (2008) argued in her study that episodic frames were associated with stronger emotional responses. Her experiment involved presenting audiences with a story of mandatory minimum sentencing for drug offenses in which a woman with no prior criminal history was presented as having been given too harsh a sentence for conspiring with her drug-dealing boyfriend (p. 175). Her findings show the episodic portrayal of the woman increased feelings of sympathy and pity and were consistent regardless if the woman was black or white (p. 178). Episodic frames allow the human factor, because the story focusing more on the person than on the issue allowed people to empathize and relate to the fictional woman's predicament.

Springer and Harwood (2014) argue exemplars, or excellent examples, may impact framing effects. They argued that younger people exposed to an episodic frame of Social Security cuts will hold those benefiting from Social Security more responsible for their own livelihoods, increasing a desire to abolish Social Security rather than having the program continue to support them (Springer & Harwood, 2014, p, 229). Their mediating exemplar is "articulate and independent older people" to interact with the younger people on the issue, with the idea that exposure to these exemplars will increase positive attitudes toward older adults and thus increase support for Social Security (p. 231). Their results were that the counter-stereotypical exemplar (an older adult with wealth and knowledge) led to higher support for Social Security but a stereotypical exemplar (an older adult declining due to age and more dependent on Social Security) led to lower support and attitudes (p. 239).

Tamir and Davidson (2011) studied the coverage of educational policy in New Jersey in the 1980s, arguing that episodic framing made a difference in attributing responsibility for the

issue. Tamir and Davidson (2011) state, "episodic frames serve to insulate powerful political actors from the public and thus help cement the dominant position of these actors;" resulting in a difference of who these problems are attributed (p. 237). Studying all education-related news items in the *Star-Ledger* in 1985 for coverage of three educational policies, Tamir and Davidson (2011) found the coverage was mostly episodic, and that "there is evidence that dominant episodic framing leads the public by and large to blame individuals…for their predicaments, while shying away from holding government responsible" (p. 254). In this instance, the use of episodic framing serves to the detriment of educational policy as the focus on individuals ignored systemic problems in New Jersey government which led to an inadequate coverage of the issue.

Episodic framing has been explored by researchers to explain why it works and why it is very effective to influence public perception of issues. The explored aspects include emotion, exemplars, and credible advice. Spence (2010) noted that episodic framing can provide critical guidance to understanding perception on an issue.

Thematic Framing

Where episodic framing targets specific individual cases, thematic framing is more about a broader generalized scheme. Thematic framing is about putting the issue in a greater context or backdrop in general terms (Iyengar, 1996; Smith, McCarthy, McPhail, & Augustyn, 2001). For the same example of poverty, a thematic frame would include general information such as statistics, impact on society, geography, or another larger-scale context.

Smith et al. (2001) studied the coverage of social movements and protest events by arguing that, "social movements often seek thematic media attention" on issues like injustice, inequality, or oppression (p. 1404). They found that reports of protest events on electronic media tended to be more thematic in their framing than reports on print sources, but in general,

"controversy-related media coverage was more episodic" (p. 1415). The authors reasoned that thematic framing would work to the benefit of making the public aware of the systemic issues, but it can be detrimental to protest movements by lacking information and understanding of the issues at hand because of time constraints, centralization, and smaller staffs to cover stories have prevented protest movements from being reported in-depth (p. 1417).

Most studies that examined episodic framing would also evaluate thematic framing at the same time. Gross's (2008) research on the influence of emotion on framing included a thematic frame of mandatory minimum sentencing as well. The thematic frames are described as having "sentencing guidelines, the exploding prison population, and the high costs of incarceration" (p. 175). In two experiments, levels of pity and sympathy were controlled to be lower in the thematic frame than in the episodic frame. In contrast to expectations, the researcher found that emotions did not influence those exposed to the episodic frame to oppose mandatory minimum sentencing more than those exposed to the thematic frame (p. 180). One reason Gross (2008) offers is the depth of the thematic frame allows for more persuasiveness than episodic frames (p. 183) or thematic frames may be more persuasive in the short-term but episodic frames would be more memorable due to the individual emotional appeal; the issues of immigration and jobs specifically can have having high emotional appeals.

Iyengar (1996) did an experiment comparing episodic and thematic framing with the issues of crime, terrorism, unemployment, poverty, and racial inequality. For example, poverty was framed episodically as "the financial woes of an unemployed autoworker in Ohio" (Iyengar, 1996, pp. 62-63) while the thematic frame used economic indicators. Iyengar found that "thematic coverage elicited a greater preponderance of societal attributions" (Iyengar, 1990, p. 65). In other words, he found participants usually held society responsible when the issue was

framed thematically (Iyengar, 1990, p. 26). He explicitly states that, "what people take to be the causes and cures of poverty depends significantly on the way television news presentations frame the issue" (Iyengar, 1990, p. 28). In general, thematic frames avoid specific levels of detail that would be found in an episodic frame. If episodic frames tend to lead an audience to attribute responsibility of poverty to individuals, thematic frames tend to lead them to attribute responsibility to society.

The literature review on episodic and thematic framing has illustrated various framing effect on the level of responsibility attribution. In an episodic frame, poverty is cast as an individual who is struggling to get along; an individual who is unable to pay bills, and the responsibility for the situation is the individual's. In a thematic frame, poverty is attributed to high unemployment, inflation, or any other larger societal issues. The responsibility is society's. If a politician such as Trump wants votes, he must make voters feel a personal efficacy in his cause. A voter is probably unlikely to perceive a personal effect on a poverty statistic, but helping a neighbor or family member get their job back is a more attainable goal.

Media Bias and Politics

The media is used to communicate issues of politics to the public, and since politics is a competition of views, the media can become a battleground. Accusation of bias in media is common; indeed, one analysis of media bias suggests that the news industry has a systematic tendency to present a liberal slant to news (Groseclose & Milyo, 2005, p. 1226). Other studies have suggested the presence of bias is inconsistent (Eveland, Jr. & Shah, 2003). Bias may refer to presentation only, but not an indictment of dishonesty or deliberate inaccuracy (Eveland, Jr. and Shah, 2003, p. 1204). "News media are constantly under close scrutiny for bias because of concern that it might have implications for public policy decisions" (Diddi, Fico, & Zeldes,

2014, p. 163). The effect of news coverage on candidate preferences and public opinion polls has been studied (Diddi et al, 2014, p. 164; Lin, Haridakis, & Hanson, 2016, p. 164), but not to the extent in which episodic and thematic framing have been incorporated. Media and journalism professionals are concerned about the accusations of bias, as it is an attack on the journalistic norm of objectivity, defined as "the appearance of fairness by providing a balance in news stories" (Dunaway, Davis, Padgett, & Scholl, 2015, p. 772). Meanwhile, there is a different concern as well because, as Dunaway et al. suggest, such a pursuit for objectivity conflicts with audience interests, as balance can temper emphasis on facts and truth (Dunaway et al., 2015, p. 773). In other words, the attempt to achieve balance in reporting may bring in the untrue side to meet the objectivity requirement, which may weaken the presentation of the truth

Dunaway et al. (2015) studied objectivity and bias in campaign news. The authors intended to test if objective news was less informative than news that was slanted. In a test of several dependent variables, Dunaway et al. (2015) included the variable of tone to decide whether a story was positive, neutral, or negative for Democratic candidates versus Republican candidates. This variable is combined with other independent variables to create a model that will determine a joint effect or non-effect on dependent variables of substantive article focus, sources used, and issues mentioned. The analysis found that when there is a moderate tone differential, the likelihood of a story containing substantive information is higher (p. 781).

The proliferation of new media sources has allowed those who feel a bias against their political preferences to seek out sources that they identify with. Morris identifies Fox News for study, a cable news channel that overtook CNN as most popular in 2001 (Morris, 2007, p. 710). He hypothesizes that "partisan identification is associated with perceived media bias" and that those who see a bias in mainstream news and with low opinions of news media in general were

more likely to use Fox News as their primary source of news (p. 713). Using Pew Research Center data, Morris (2007) finds support for his hypotheses and determines that Fox News Channel has most benefited from the increased distrust and fragmentation in news media (p. 725).

Lin et al. (2016) use uses and gratifications theory along with social identity theory to suggest that group-based factors have an influence on perception of hostile media bias. Hostile media bias is the theory that "the stronger one's opinions or identification with a group, the more likely that he/she will see the media as biased against those opinions or groups" (p. 427). The authors found through a questionnaire given to their sample that low group status and intergroup bias (favoring your own group with positive traits while viewing out-groups negatively) was associated with hostile media bias perceptions, confirming their hypotheses (p. 434). Both Linet al. (2016) and Eveland, Jr. and Shah (2003) have found that group orientation and involvement can have effects the perception of a hostile media bias.

Media bias has been shown to exist through several studies. The literature shows that while media bias has no inherent negative connotations, its implications on politics and the impact on voters can be identified. Media fragmentation, mistrust, and cynicism may color the biased perception of stories people read. Lin et al. (2016) state, "during a presidential political campaign, media are major platforms where group competition is made salient. Political party members desire to protect their group identity, and hence, may demand fair treatment" (p. 438). And the tone preference for candidates may be one of the most identifiable bias of the media.

Candidacy of Donald Trump

An examination of how issues are framed by a political candidate in media or what slant or tone is associated with the issues is very important because a candidate wants his supporters to think in a certain way. The candidate may run a campaign in a way to highlight his strengths and hide his weaknesses; the candidate's statements on issues could serve as a framed message for audiences to pay attention to in the way that the candidate wants.

Framing and media coverage are the focus of many branches of research in political science studies. This study is to examine the media coverage of Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential campaign. Trump ran a controversial campaign, confronting issues like immigration by announcing his desire to temporarily ban Muslim immigration into the United States (Diamond, 2015) and forcing Mexico to pay for a border wall to curb immigration to the United States (Brand 2015, para. 6). His stance on employment or jobs is also revealing. Trump said on September 16, 2016 that "politicians have heaped scorn and disdain" (Berenson, 2016, para. 22) on Americans struggling for work, promising to be a president for "the forgotten men and women of America" (Berenson, 2016, para.24). As a billionaire, Trump has leveraged his experience as a businessman and realtor into convincing voters that he is the man to shore up weaknesses in the economy for the country.

The issues of immigration and jobs are arguably the most prominent in the 2016 campaign, and how Trump approached the issue with his messages can provide insight into how people were made to think about these issues when reading or listening to his messages. The examination of the tone of coverage of these issues may provide more empirical evidence about media bias. The four research questions this study attempts to address are:

Research Questions

1. How does the U.S. national media cover the candidate Donald Trump in regards to framing the issue of immigration?

2. How does U.S. national media cover the candidate Donald Trump's tone on the issue of immigration?

3. How does the U.S. national media cover the candidate Donald Trump in regards to framing of the issue of jobs?

4. How does U.S. national media cover the candidate Donald Trump's tone on the issue of jobs?

Method

Sampling

Sampling of articles began in January 2017. The database LexisNexis Academic was used as the primary search engine for this research project. Searches for relevant articles included the key words combination of "Trump," "speech," and "jobs," and the key words combination of "Trump," "speech," and "immigration." Articles were screened for those containing Donald Trump comments; articles that were about Trump but did not contain any comments by him were excluded from the sample. The interest of this study was to capture Donald Trump's words in full, without paraphrasing from the reporter, so as to capture Trump's meaning rather than the reporter's interpretation. It is understood that the reporter is interpreting comments in part by including and excluding what the candidate says for the purposes of the article. The time frame for the sample was from June 16, 2015 (the day Donald Trump announced his candidacy) to November 1, 2016. *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Tampa Bay Times* are sampled from June 16, 2015 to September 12, 2016. For the *Los Angeles*

Times, a sampling period of August 1, 2016 to November 1, 2016 was used as the LexisNexis database only has an archive for that paper for the previous six months. Articles were present for July 2016, but there were not enough to sample from, so the starting month was moved to August.

A sample of newspapers were selected to reflect a national perspective as well as geographic variation across the nation. *The New York Times* (655,343 daily audience and 1,119,112 Sunday audience) (Ember, 2016), *The Washington Post* (2.1 million readers per week) (The Washington Post, 2016), the *Tampa Bay Times* (1.6 million readers per week) (Times Total Media, 2016), and the *Los Angeles Times* (1.5 million daily audience and 2.4 million Sunday audience) (Los Angeles Times, 2016) are well-respected publications and represent the geographic scope of the United States. Using the LexisNexis database, a key word search for the combination of "Trump," "speech," and "immigration," 741 articles were found from *The New York Times*; 196 articles from the *Tampa Bay Times*; 177 articles from *The Washington Post*; and 124 articles from the *Los Angeles Times*. For the combination of "Trump," "speech," and "jobs," 935 articles were found from *The New York Times*; 305 articles from the *Tampa Bay Times*; 179 articles from *The Washington Post*; and 143 articles from the *Los Angeles Times*. After sampling, 30 articles of *The New York Times*, 33 articles of the *Tampa Bay Times*, and 37 articles of *The Washington Post* were chosen, while 18 articles of the *Los Angeles Times* were chosen, for a total sample size of 118. To ensure an adequate distribution over time, a constructed month sampling technique was used to allow for each month over the 16-month span to be well represented in the sample. This approach was modelled after the common practice of the constructed week sampling in content analysis (Hester & Dougall, 2007). For *The New York Times*, the *Tampa Bay Times*, and the *Washington Post*, articles were picked in an alternating

method of two articles from the first month, then three articles from the second month, then back to two articles from the third month, and three articles from the fourth month until all 16 months were covered which yielded a target of 40 articles in total from the three papers. The *Los Angeles Times* was only archived to July in the LexisNexis academic database. As previously noted, there were not enough articles in July 2016 to sample from, so sampling started from August. The targeted sample size of this periodical was reduced to 20, with seven articles taken from August, six from September, and seven from October, with a cutoff date of November 1 used. In the case that articles could not be collected to fill each month's target sample, articles were collected to fill the overall sample instead. The plan was to have 140 articles.

Measurements

Episodic frames are defined as frames that use individual instances of an issue to represent the issue wholly while thematic frames are defined as frames that use broader, generalized concepts to represent the issue (Lee, Kim, & Love 2014, p. 178-179). The episodic and thematic framing measurements were borrowed from Lee et al. with some modifications. In this study, episodic frame is measured at two levels: yes and no. If Trump referenced immigration or jobs with individual instances or examples, it was coded as yes. If no individual instances or examples were found, it was coded as no. In the same manner, thematic frame is measured at two levels: yes and no. If Trump referenced immigration or jobs using general themes such as social or political ramifications, it was coded as thematic. If no social or systematic general terms were used, it was coded as no.

Tones are defined as how an issue is spoken of or covered, in a positive, neutral, or negative manner. The measurement of tone was borrowed from Rosenson (2015). In this study, tones were measured at three levels: positive, negative and neutral. Positive tone is defined as

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describing something as good or favorable. Negative tone is defined as describing something in a bad, incompetent, or failing manner. Neutral tone is defined as describing something in neither positive nor negative tones. Comments by Trump that reflected on immigration or jobs in a positive manner were coded as "1." Comments by Trump that reflected on immigration in a neutral manner were coded as "2." Finally, comments by Trump that reflected on immigration or jobs in a negative manner were coded as "3." A score of "0" was used to indicate "Not Applicable" for those articles that had a tone score for immigration and no score for jobs, and vice versa, to make up for missing values in the dataset.

Intercoder reliability was used to determine the reliability and validity of the following variables: immigration topic, immigration episodic, immigration jobs, immigration tone, job topic, job episodic, job thematic, and job tone. Fifteen articles were selected to do the test, using the same sampling method as with the main sample. The Krippendorf's alpha coefficient, a statistical measure of the extent of agreement among coders, was used to calculate the inter-coder reliability. Two graduate students were trained in the coding procedure.

Results

The final sample of articles for this research project gathered from the LexisNexis database was 118 articles but not the planned 140 articles. The *Los Angeles Times* had 18 articles, *The New York Times* had 30 articles, the *Tampa Bay Times* had 35 articles, and the *Washington Post* had 37 articles. Please see Table 1 for details. The best attempt was made to keep to the constructed month sampling method detailed in the method section, but there were months that did not have enough qualified articles, creating a gap. To achieve the target sample size, articles were then taken from other months. There are more articles included from June 2016 on, the reasoning being that the general presidential campaign had begun during that time

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with both major party candidates decided. Still, the planned sample size of 140 was not reached. Table 1 provides the frequency distribution for each newspaper in the sample, and it displays the article count and percentage.

Table 1

Sample Distribution of Four Newspapers

Newspaper	Frequency Distribution
The New York Times	30 (25%)
Los Angeles Times	18 (15%)
Tampa Bay Times	33 (27%)
Washington Post	37 (31%)
Total	118

Two coders, including the researcher, were trained in the coding procedure for this project. Fifteen articles (12.5% of the sample) were used, independent from the original sample. Episodic frames are operationalized as frames that use individual instances of an issue to represent the issue while thematic frames are operationalized as frames that use broader, generalized concepts to represent the issue (Leeet al., 2014, p. 178-179). Tones are operationalized as how an issue is spoken of or covered, in a positive, neutral, or negative manner, borrowed from Rosenson (2015). ReCal, an online calculator used for conducting various intercoder reliability coefficients including Scott's pi, Cohen's kappa, and Krippendorf's alpha, were used to obtain the intercoder reliability coefficients. Because Krippendorf's alpha is considered as the standard intercoder reliabilities in content analysis regardless of the number of observers, levels of measurement, sample sizes, and presence or absence of missing data (Hayes

& Krippendorf, 2007), this study adopted Krippendorf's alpha and its results are presented in

Table 2. A Krippendorf's alpha coefficient above 0.7 is recognized as representing a valid level

of agreement between the two coders.

Table 2

Intercoder Reliability Coefficients for All Variables

Variable	Krippendorf's Alpha Coefficients (inter-coder agreement)
Immigration Topic	0.741
Immigration Episodic	100%*
Immigration Thematic	0.741
Immigration Tone	0.801
Job Topic	1
Job Episodic	1
Job Thematic	0.82
Job Tone	1

* Krippendorff's Alpha can't be calculated for this variable due to <u>invariant values.</u>

  Please note that the Krippendorf's alpha calculation for the episodic frame on

immigration could not be produced on ReCal due to invariant values in the data; in other words,

both coders coded the variable of episodic frame on immigration with the same value over 15

articles. The lack of variation in this variable, even though it came to one hundred percent

agreement, disabled ReCal's ability to produce an intercoder reliability coefficient.

  Before any tests were run, the sample was divided into two datasets: one for immigration

topics and one for jobs because some articles only contain immigration comments and some only

contain job comments. After sorting and re-organizing, 79 articles were sorted into the

immigration dataset (with 41 being excluded) and 52 articles were sorted into the jobs dataset

(with 68 being excluded). Please note that thirteen articles were included in both datasets meaning the 79 articles in the immigration dataset included 13 articles that were also about the job topic, and the 52 articles in the job dataset included 13 articles that were also about the immigration topic. Table 3 displays the cross tabulation of the articles on the two topics. Table 4 displays the article distribution for immigration and job topics across the four newspapers.

Table 3

Cross Tabulation of Immigration and Job Topics

	Job Topic		Total
	Yes	No	
Immigration Topic			
Yes	13	66	79
No	39	0	39
Total	52	66	118

Table 4

Article Distribution for Immigration and Job Topics

Newspaper	Topic	
	Immigration	Jobs
The New York Times	12 (15%)	4 (7%)
Los Angeles Times	18 (23%)	15 (29%)
Tampa Bay Times	23 (29%)	17 (33%)
Washington Post	26 (33%)	16 (31%)
Total	79	52

The first research question asked whether Donald Trump framed the issue of immigration using an episodic or thematic frame. For the immigration episodic frame, there were 22 articles

(28%) labeled 'Yes" and 57 articles (72%) labeled "No." The Chi-square test was run on the variable of episodic frame and it was found to be a significant test [Chi-square (df = 1, N = 79) = 15.51, $p<0.001$]. Thus, on the issue of immigration commented by Trump, there were significantly fewer stories using episodic frames. For the immigration thematic frame, there were 64 articles (81%) labeled "Yes" and 15 articles (19%) labeled "No". A Chi-square test was run providing a significant test [Chi-square (df = 1, N = 79) = 30.39, $p<0.001$). Thus, on the issue of immigration commented by Trump, there were significantly more stories (i.e., 81%) using thematic frames. Please see Table 5.

The second research question asked how Donald Trump characterized the issue of immigration in terms of tone, i.e., positive, negative, or neutral. With a total sample size of 79, 3 articles (4%) were labeled as having a positive tone, 49 articles (62%) were labeled as having a negative tone, and 27 articles (34%) were labeled as having a neutral tone. A Chi-square test was run and turned out to be a significant test as well [Chi-square (df = 1, N = 79) = 40.20, $p<0.001$). Hence, on the issue of immigration tones, the negative tone by Trump is significantly higher than neutral tone and much higher than positive tone. Please see Table 5.

The third research question asked whether Donald Trump framed the issue of jobs using an episodic or thematic frame. For the jobs episodic frame, there were 19 articles (37%) labeled as "Yes" and 33 articles (63%) labeled as "No." A Chi-square test was run and turned out to be insignificant [Chi-square (df = 1, N = 52) = 3.77, $p>0.05$]. This indicates there is no significant difference between episodic frames and non-episodic frames. On the job thematic frame, 34 articles (65%) were labeled as using a thematic frame and 18 articles (35%) were labeled as a non-thematic frame. A Chi-square test was conducted resulting in a significant result [Chi-square (df = 1, N = 52) = 4.92, $p<0.001$]. This indicates that on the issue of jobs, there were

significantly more stories framed thematically than those stories not framed thematically. Please see Table 5.

The fourth research question asked how Donald Trump characterized the issue of jobs in terms of tone, i.e. positive, negative, or neutral. With a total sample size of 52 articles, 14 (27%) were labeled as having a positive tone, 35 (67%) were labeled as having a negative tone, and 3 (6%) were labeled as having a neutral tone. A Chi-square test was run and resulted in a significant result [Chi-square (df = 2, N = 52) = 30.50, $p<0.001$]. This means that there were more stories with negative tones regarding jobs than ones with positive tones, with the least stories being neutral tones. Please see Table 5.

Table 5: Chi-Square Tests for All Research Questions

Variable	Chi-Square	Degree of Freedom	P-Value	N
Immigration Episodic	15.51	1	.00**	79
Immigration Thematic	30.39	1	.00**	79
Immigration Tone	40.20	2	.00**	79
Job Episodic	3.77	1	0.052	52
Job Thematic	4.92	1	.03*	52
Job Tone	30.50	2	.00**	52

* = Results are significant at the 0.05 level. **= Results are significant at the 0.01 level. All decimals are rounded up to the nearest hundredth.

Discussion

As discussed in the literature review, thematic frames tend to avoid specific levels of detail that would be found in episodic frames. If episodic frames tend to lead an audience to attribute responsibility of social problems to individuals, thematic frames tend to lead them to attribute responsibility to society.

On the issue of immigration, Donald Trump used thematic framing more often than he used episodic framing. This means that Trump commented on the issue of immigration in a general and non-specific manner. The tone used by Trump on immigration was significantly more negative than neutral or positive. It suggests that immigration was a big and serious problem for Trump, and he cast the issue in broad, general, lofty terms while at the same time maintaining a more negative attitude towards immigration. In his initial campaign announcement, Trump said that Mexico was not sending its "best" people, contending that those who were coming over the border were "bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people" (Time Staff 2015, para. 9). Trump mostly kept to this theme throughout his campaign. Immigration was not only spoken of negatively by Trump, but almost cast as a threat to American safety with his use of aggressive and negative language.

On the issue of jobs, the study did not find a significant difference in using episodic frames versus non-episodic frames, indicating Trump did not take advantage of the appeal of individual examples or personal cases to talk about jobs. Instead, Trump used thematic framing much more often, similarly to the issue of immigration, and he held a more negative view of jobs as a topic. Thematic framing is the use of general words and terms in illustrating issues. In his campaign announcement speech, he made several statements that the outlook on jobs was bleak, including a statement that the then-unemployment rate of 5.6% should not be believed; it was Trump's insistence that the actual unemployment rate was much higher (Time Staff, 2015, para. 20). Trump would go on to say that the "real unemployment rate is 42 percent," a number many times more than what was reported (Kessler, 2015, para. 1). Trump also insisted that the state of the economy meant that 93 million people "aren't working," calling the government's unemployment statistic, "the biggest joke there is in this country" (Guo, 2015, para. 2-3).

Trump conducted a highly negative campaign, one that spoke of the issues of immigration and jobs primarily in negative terms. The use of thematic framing by Trump may lead to a lack of understanding of the issues, as suggested by Smith et al (2001). A reasonable person reading the comments by Trump in newspapers could find it very hard to think that immigration results in positive outcomes for the United States, or that the state of the job market is in good shape for those seeking employment. A framing effect "occurs when…a speaker's emphasis on a subset of potentially relevant considerations causes individuals to focus on these considerations when constructing their opinions" (Druckman & Nelson, 2003, p. 730). Druckman (2001) introduces emphasis framing effects that rely on emphasis from the speaker to get audiences to pay attention to chosen points. By emphasizing thematic frames in immigration and jobs, Trump provided no details in the issues he brought up. With no detail, only a general idea is kept constant: bad things are happening and that things can get worse. Trump's adoption of thematic framing both in immigration and in jobs was simply to attribute the problems of immigration and jobs to society at large so that he can present the society's or the government's responsibilities in front of the public and motivate votes to vote for him to fix them.

Conversely, the lack of usage of episodic frames by Trump in comparison is interesting because there is research that shows both the pros and cons of episodic and thematic frames and their ramifications on campaigns (Iyengar, 1990, 1996, Spence, 2010). Framing theory has been shown to be very effective in analyzing political campaigns. The findings on a favored use of thematic framing and a disfavored use of episodic framing in a presidential election campaign need confirmation to see whether the findings are generalizable to other candidates. On the other hand, more research should be done to discover why thematic framing is so favored. However, if

it is a unique phenomenon for Trump, then questions could be asked about why his supporters seemed to have bought into the thematic frames.

Trump entered the race with a well-known media profile, and Trump may prove to be a more unique candidate than has been currently understood. As this project only examined a single campaign, it is unknown if Trump's campaign was significantly more negative than those of his opponents. But the negativity doesn't come from the media but from his own comments on issues of immigration and jobs. Previous studies on media bias does suggest that in the pursuit of objectivity and fairness, news organizations favor balance of coverage to avoid criticism of bias (Dunaway et al., 2015, p. 772). Campaigns throughout history have some tinge of negativity, so it may be the case that the 2016 cycle was nothing more than the norm for American politics. However, there does raise a concern in regards to whether the media covered Trump more extensively to provide him "fairness" as he was an "outsider" that has never held any political office like his opponents. There is certainly no indication in this project that there was a perceived "liberal bias" in coverage of Trump, as his comments on immigration and jobs were primarily negative on their own. However, questions on media bias need addressing in future studies. Did Trump use more thematic frames than episodic frames by design, or by coincidence? Were Trump's positive comments on the issues of immigration and jobs totally ignored by media? Finding a diversified spectrum of mass media may address the questions better. Additionally, a future study can take a comparative approach to the coverage of all major candidates in the 2016 presidential election in regards to media bias and thematic and episodic framing. Other studies on how the public thinks of immigration and jobs, as covered by candidates, will tell us more about the impact of framing effects.

Limitations

  This study provided no reasoning or motivation as to the usage of Trump and his choice of framing; as such, a framing content analysis of what frames he used can't tell why he chose one method over the other, or if there was even intention behind his usage of frames. The sampled newspapers are national newspapers, and while they represent the national-level perspectives, they limit the inclusion of local considerations on immigration or jobs. These four newspapers follow Trump and national trends but it is unclear whether state- and local-level media follow the same trend. Furthermore, as this project was focused on quotes or comments made by Trump in four national newspapers, it is possible that there were comments made by Trump that were ignored by the newspapers as media tend to focus on more controversial and attention-getting comments; therefore, the findings were only about the selected quotes of Trump by the four newspapers. Lastly, the sample size was small, and a larger sample size may provide a more complete picture of Trump's comments on immigration and jobs.

Conclusion

  The use of framing by Trump is apparent. By using episodic frames less often than non-episodic frames, he avoided details and bypassed the human interest individual stories. His use of thematic frames on both the issues of immigration and jobs force researchers to figure out what his motivations were. Was it an accidental lack of attention to details or a more calculated decision to guide audiences away from details? Thematic framing has been shown to lead audiences to attribute problems to society rather than the individual (Iyengar, 1990.) The issues of immigration and jobs, therefore, were framed to be problems the society should be responsible for. In other words, it was the fault of the society or the system that thematic frames are mostly correlated to. In fact, Trump's campaign kept hitting the point that the society or the system was

to blame, and he could fix it. Whether the claim was true or not didn't seem to matter, what mattered most was his supporters dived into it.

Trump's dominant use of negative tone on both issues clearly revealed his bleak and dreary view of the problems facing America. Politicians have been negative before, but perhaps not to the explicit extent that Trump has been. His controversial comments on immigrants and on unemployment mixed in with open antagonizing feelings of rivals and opponents, are a concerning snapshot of current American politics. The next debate may be whether Trump's political style is an outlier or the new normal.

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Codebook for

A FRAMING AND TONE ANALYSIS OF DONALD TRUMP COMMENTS ON THE
ISSUES OF IMMIGRATION AND JOBS USING COVERAGE IN
NATIONALNEWSPAPERS

The unit of analysis: every news story or every article

V1: Newspaper ID: please enter the ID number from 001 to 140 as marked on the news stories.

V2. Newspaper Name
    1. The New York Times (NYT)
    2. The Washington Post (WP)
    3. Tampa Bay Times (TBT)
    4. Los Angeles Times (LAT)

V3: Page Number of Story

V4: Date of Story (DD/MM/YY)

V5: Word Count: please look for the total number of words found at the beginning of the news story.

V6. Immigration: please read the story and decide whether Donald Trump talked about the immigration issue in this story. Please assign 1 if yes, please assign 2 if no.
    1. Yes
    2. No

V7: Episodic Frame on immigration

    Definition: An episodic frame uses individual examples or instances of an issue in their comments describing that issue. The example given is thus episodic in nature, a single event. If an episodic frame is used, please mark the article with 1 which is equivalent to yes. If there is no episodic frame, please mark the article with 2 which is equivalent to no.

    1. Yes
    2. No

V8: Thematic Frame on immigration

     Definition: A thematic frame uses broad, general descriptors of an issue. A thematic frame tends to put an issue in a greater context, using methods that describe lots of

instances together, such as a grouping or statistic focusing on trends. If a thematic frame is used please mark the article with 1 which is equivalent to yes. If there is no thematic frame, please mark the article with 2 which is equivalent to no.

1. Yes
2. No

V9: Tone on immigration

Definition: Tone is the way an attitude is expressed through words. In general, the positive tone is a compliment and negative tone is an insult. Positive tone uses language that talks up the issue with highlights of how good it is; negative tone uses language that points out bad aspects and talks down the issue. If positive tone is used in Donald Trump's comments, designate it with 1. If negative tone is used, designate it as 2. If the comments are neither positive nor negative, use 3.

0=not applicable
1=positive
2=negative
3=neutral

V10. Job. Please read the story and decide whether Donald Trump talked about the job issue in this story. Please assign 1 if yes, please assign 2 if no.

V11: Episodic Frame on Job Issue

Definition: An episodic frame uses individual examples or instances of an issue in their comments describing that issue. The example given is thus episodic in nature, a single event. If an episodic frame is used, please mark the article with 1 which is equivalent to yes. If there is no episodic frame, please mark the article with 2 which is equivalent to no.

1. Yes
2. No

V12: Thematic frame on job issue

 Definition: A thematic frame uses broad, general descriptors of an issue. A thematic frame tends to put an issue in a greater context, using methods that describe lots of instances together, such as a grouping or statistic focusing on trends. If a thematic frame is used please mark the article with 1 which is equivalent to yes. If there is no thematic frame, please mark the article with 2 which is equivalent to no.

1. Yes
2. No

V13: Tone on job issue

Definition: Tone is the way an attitude is expressed through words. In general, the positive tone is a compliment and negative tone is an insult. Positive tone uses language that talks up the issue with highlights of how good it is; negative tone uses language that points out bad aspects and talks down the issue. If positive tone is used in Donald Trump's comments, designate it with 1. If negative tone is used, designate it as 2. If the comments are neither positive nor negative, use 3.

0=not applicable
1=positive
2=negative
3=neutral