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**CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PROPOSITION 187 NEWS COVERAGE
IN TWO CALIFORNIA NEWSPAPERS**

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

by

George Luis Adas

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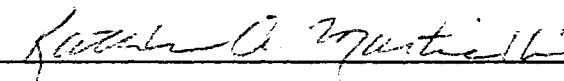
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ABSTRACT

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PROPOSITION 187 NEWS COVERAGE IN TWO CALIFORNIA NEWSPAPERS

by George Luis Adas

The content analysis examined news coverage of the *Orange County Register* and the *San Jose Mercury News* during the 1994 Proposition 187 debate. All articles relating to Proposition 187 or undocumented immigration from the two newspapers were examined. The study showed that the freeloader and foreign invader frames that supported the proposition were significantly higher in the *Register* than articles in the *Mercury News*. In contrast, the employer sanction and witch-hunt frames that opposed Proposition 187 were significantly higher in the *Mercury News*. The analysis also found that the *Mercury News* used significantly more thematic articles than did the *Register*; the *Register* ran significantly more episodic articles. Both newspapers primarily used sources that polarized the debate on Proposition 187 and they used surnames of sources that were overwhelmingly European-American.

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Table of Contents

I. Chapter I – Introduction	1
Latino-Americans	1
1994 Election	3
Newspaper Sources	3
Purpose of Study	4
II. Chapter II – Literature Review	7
The Concept of Media Framing	7
A Framed Reality	8
Episodic and Thematic Framing	10
Episodic framing	11
Thematic framing	12
Organizational Motivations for Framing	13
Media ownership	15
Lawbreaker Frame	15
Freeloader Frame	17
Minorities in the media	17
Foreign Invasion Frame	19
Latino American Immigration	19
Overview of Framing Research	20
Immigration politics	21

Research Questions	22
III. Chapter III – Method	24
Newspaper Information	24
Limitation of study	26
Coding and Measurement	26
Frame coding	26
Source coding	27
Analysis	28
Frame Examples	29
Intercoder Reliability	31
IV. Chapter IV – Results	32
Frame Results	33
Frames Opposing Proposition 187	34
Employer sanction frames	34
Witch-hunt frames	37
California economy frames	37
Frames Supporting Proposition 187	39
Lawbreaker frame	39
Freeloader frame	40
Foreign invader frame	41

Newspaper Sections	42
News service stories	43
Episodic and Thematic Framing	43
Source Affiliation	45
Political source	45
Private individual source	49
Special interest source	50
Education source	51
Miscellaneous sources	52
Source Surnames	53
Other ethnic source	55
Descriptive Analysis of Editorials	55
Arguments supporting Proposition 187	55
Arguments against Proposition 187	57
Editorial sources.....	57
Framing	58
V. Chapter V – Conclusion	59
Discussion	60
Framing	60
Newspaper comparison	61
Episodic and thematic framing	62

Source affiliation	63
Source surname	64
Contributions to Previous Literature	64
Directions for Further Research	64
References	66
Appendix – Codebook For Proposition 187 in the Two Newspapers	72

List of Tables

1. *Six t-test comparisons for news paragraphs frames in the San Jose Mercury News and the Orange County Register* 36

2. *Number of articles from each section of the San Jose Mercury News and the Orange County Register* 42

3. *Percentage of episodic and thematic articles from the San Jose Mercury News and the Orange County Register* 45

4. *Percentage of news articles with source affiliation from the San Jose Mercury News and the Orange County Register* 48

5. *Percentage of source surnames from the San Jose Mercury News and the Orange County Register* 54

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In November of 1994 voters in California debated and eventually passed Proposition 187. During the campaign, California press coverage focused on the overcrowding of schools, the lack of social services, and a growing prison population (Ono & Snoop, 2002). In response to these factors, the political rhetoric of local and state campaigns began targeting the economic burden of undocumented immigration (Ono & Snoop, 2002). The reported costs of undocumented immigration to California was the impetus for special-interest groups, such as *Citizens for Action Now*, to draft a voter initiative that would deter immigrants from coming into California through illegal entry points (Ono & Snoop, 2002). Proposition 187's (the "Save Our State" initiative) main provisions sought to deny undocumented immigrants the opportunity to attend public schools or receive basic social services. Proposition 187 was adopted by a majority vote of 59%, but was denied statewide enforcement by federal and state judges (Christensen, 1994, October 10).

Latino- Americans

The growth projections of the Latino-American immigrant community are higher than any other immigrant population in California. In the decade from 1990-2000, United States Census results indicated that the Latino-American population grew by 58%, from 22.4 million in 1990 to 35.3 million in 2000 (United States Census Bureau, 2001). California has been the migration

destination for many laborers seeking higher wages and opportunities for social advancement. Latino-American populations have inhabited rural and urban communities throughout California, satisfying service sector demands that have assisted the state economy. For example, the enactment of Public Law 78 in 1951 allowed for the legal migration of agricultural workers between Mexico and the United States. Between 1950 and 1960, 3.3 million *braceros* or documented Mexican workers were employed throughout the Western United States. The contributions of *braceros* in California allowed for the harvest of 33 million tons of agricultural goods in 1957, a year in which 100,000 *braceros* legally labored throughout California (Galaraza, 1964).

Although Mexican labor was beneficial after World War II, this was not an accurate reflection of the economic tensions that launched a repatriation campaign of Mexican Americans throughout the Western United States during the Great Depression. From 1929-1937, between 50,000 and 75,000 Mexicans and their American-born children were repatriated to Mexico (Hoffman, p. 137). McWilliams (1971, p. 129) observed that “when the harvest season once again came around, the growers dispatched their emissaries to Mexico, and again recruited thousands of Mexicans. Many Mexicans have been repatriated two or three times, going through this same curious cycle of entry, work, [sic] repatriation.”

1994 Election

A majority of Republican candidates for national, state, and local offices declared their support for Proposition 187; in contrast, most Democratic candidates lambasted Proposition 187 as bad policy. For example, the platform of Governor Pete Wilson's 1994 re-election campaign was crime and illegal immigration. The linkage between these two security issues aided the landslide re-election of Governor Wilson, and voter approval of Proposition 187; Governor Wilson and Proposition 187 won by 14 and 18 percentage points, respectively. The 1994 national election ushered in a Republican majority with an unprecedented 52 seat swing in the House of Representatives; Democrats lost their majority in Congress for the first time since 1954. The Republican sweep in the House of Representatives was aided by the "Contract with America," which sought to address fears of welfare abuse, crime rates, and decreasing family values. Many of the provisions of the "Contract with America" corresponded to the Proposition 187 ambitions of curtailing benefits and assistance for undocumented immigrants.

Newspaper Sources

The *San Jose Mercury News* was selected as a media source, since it is a cosmopolitan newspaper representing established immigrant communities. The *San Jose Mercury News*, which was founded in 1851, was owned and operated by Knight-Ridder. The paper had a 1994 circulation of about 285,375, and is known

as the “Newspaper of Silicon Valley.” This reputation is substantiated by two Pulitzer prizes and the prestige of being the first newspaper to go online in 1993. Additionally, the bustling technology sector of the mid 1990s Silicon Valley attracted entrepreneurs from all over the world to perform jobs that contributed to the eventual “dot-com boom.”

The *Orange County Register*, with a daily circulation of 353,812 in 1994, has been published in Santa Ana, California, since 1906. The *Register* provides coverage of national affairs, state, and primarily local issues, coining their Southern Californian standing as “Orange County’s best source for local information.” The *Register* is owned by the *Freedom News Network*, a Libertarian-affiliated news organization. The *Register* provides a relevant comparison to the *San Jose Mercury News* because the provisions of Proposition 187 were drafted by Orange County residents.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this research is to explore how the media framed the debate on Proposition 187. The content analysis compared the California newspaper coverage of undocumented immigration by the *San Jose Mercury News* and the *Orange County Register* during the Proposition 187 debate. The study will fill a gap in the academic research on Proposition 187 since most of the reported research on the topic has been qualitative. For example, a 2004 dissertation from the University of Oregon described the political aftermath of Proposition 187

(Jacobson, 2004). Ono and Snoop analyzed the newspaper coverage of the *Los Angeles Times* and other news sources during the Proposition 187 debate. Ono and Snoop (2002, p. 158) concluded that discourse surrounding the Proposition 187 media coverage was presented as an “us against them dichotomy.” In addition, to determining how the media framed the Proposition 187 debate, the content analysis was designed to determine whether two California newspapers framed their coverage differently. As Thomas Patterson (1998, p. 29) noted: “Through news messages that are partisan in tone and emphasize party differences, citizens’ partisan tendencies may be activated and reinforced.” The classification of Latino-Americans as illegals and illegal aliens by news and entertainment media have resulted in negative stereotypes accorded to Latino-American immigrants (Wilson & Gutierrez, 1995). These labels, by definition, have contributed to a racial polarization that has exacerbated fears of criminals invading the United States through illegal entry points (Ono & Snoop, 2002). The use and frequency of these stereotypes in the mainstream media is a central focal point of this content analysis. This content analysis is important because there have been very few studies on media coverage of immigration. It contributes to the knowledge about an issue that continues to receive attention from the mainstream news media.

The following section will provide a discussion of past research on framing from seminal studies as well as more recent work. The method section will

describe the quantitative methods used to measure the frequency of recurrent frames, sources, and the type of news framing used by the two newspapers during the Proposition 187 debate. In the results section, quantitative results from the comparison of the two newspapers will be presented. Finally, the conclusion section provides an assessment of the findings as well as a discussion of the contributions of the study to the framing literature.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will examine how framing has been used to determine how the media treat social issues. The first section will focus on framing as it pertains to depictions of ethnicity in American media. When economic hardship has affected the nation, immigrant populations have become susceptible targets for negative depictions in the news (Ono & Snoop, 2002). In 1994, the national economy slumped in a recession that affected a great number of Americans. This economic downturn paved the way for Proposition 187, which sought to save taxpayer funds by denying education and social services to undocumented immigrants (Ono & Snoop, 2002).

The Concept of Media Framing

Walter Lippmann's (1922) seminal work *Public Opinion* suggested that individuals look beyond their personal evaluations of time and space, their descriptions of unknown peoples, and occurrences outside the vividness of imagination. Lippmann described a world where framing divulged a segmented notion of reality. As studies of modern media began to evolve, the theory of framing took shape as the second level of agenda setting. Gitlin (1980, p. 7) later asserted that "media frames are persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual." Iyengar (1991) reiterated

the idea of framing as a multi-pronged concept that delineated cause and effect.

Iyengar (1987, 1991) studied the mainstream television network reports of events and issues, which led to a notion of visual and verbal selectivity that could influence decisions made by audience members.

A Framed Reality

The concept of framing draws attention to certain details and perspectives while omitting other variables that are considerably important to societal issues (McCombs, 1997). The concentration on particular frames has contributed to the salience of certain perspectives that slant an issue. Entman (1989) concentrated on the political significance of framing political issues that emphasized an audience reality, thereby communicating a common sense approach to one side of a political proposition. Media frames do not speak for themselves, but the way in which information is ordered and narrated has an effect on how opinions are formed. Goffman (1974) explained that media frames attempted to attach labels to certain groups and individuals that are given negative attention in dominant frames. These primary frameworks allow irrelevant images to become meaningful in the minds of audience members. Goffman (1974) discussed how primary frameworks serve to perpetuate the individual schemata of certain events by framing issues in a way that exploit popular stereotypes. The appeals to individual schemata have incorporated an implied consensus that utilizes terms like “us” and “them,” which are effective as a means of polarizing public debate.

Gitlin (1980) considered media content as packaged information that is easily consumable for the present schemata of audience members. Although media frames are constructed around a central organizing idea that reinforces certain stereotypes, audience frames are mentally stored clusters that essentially guide the processing of information (Gitlin, 1980). This idea presupposed that citizens use stereotypes that enable them to understand complex issues that media reports present in a simplistic manner. Entman (1989, p. 67) explained that “personalization and simplification of stories is not only the journalist, but society.” This referred most directly to the simplicity by which individuals want information to correspond to their particular situations and abbreviated attention spans. Moreover, frames are the primary schemata for political issues in the minds of individual citizens; the methods used by the news media have provided direction for undecided persons who are looking to align with one of the dominant positions (Nelson & Kinder, 1996).

Brewer (2003) analyzed gay-rights framing during a 1996 U.S. Supreme Court case (*Romer v. Evans*, 1996), which sought to guarantee equal rights for homosexuals in Colorado. Brewer (2003) presented considerable analysis on the role that value frames have played in the framing of gay rights issues, which pitted proponents of gay rights against the anti-gay rights platform. Brewer (2003) found a correlation between moral traditionalism and the efficacy of value frames on judgments of the gay-rights issue. Brewer (2003) contended that the

simple-minded dichotomy of issues in the media may endanger the very principles of democracy.

In another context, Iyengar (1991) explained that citizens relying on mediated information follow an elementary rule that promulgates opposing a system of problems and supporting systems that are framed as solutions. This simple rule leaves little room for alternatives outside the dominant polarized solutions that are the primary forms of information on public policy. Although the news media have avoided appearing supportive of individual public policies, commercial alliances have prevented the media from broadening their exposure of events.

Episodic and Thematic Framing

The concept of framing was accentuated by Iyengar's (1991) delineation of episodic and thematic framing. Episodic framing was explained as a version of the news that focused on specific events and repeatedly showed a familiar frame. However, thematic framing presented background context and factual evidence related to the issue at hand. Using homelessness as an example, episodic framing would focus on frames showing homeless people pushing shopping carts, while thematic framing would explore the antecedents of homelessness in the United States. To expand the abbreviated methods of episodic framing, Graber (2002) suggested that the context of the issue provided thought about opinions, while sole events were an impetus for reaction.

Episodic framing. The most widespread effect of episodic framing is that it casts blame upon the individual, instead of casting doubt on the efficacy of social institutions (Pertschuk, 1997). Pertschuk noted that media coverage of gun violence in America has taken a predominantly episodic format. He emphasized that episodic framing has not cast a dark shadow over economic problems or the societal fascination with guns; according to media coverage, these are “just bad people; especially bad young men of color” (Pertschuk, 1997, p. 397). Graber (2002) referred to the Columbine tragedy as an example of an episodic frame that received repeated news coverage and became an authoritative example (thematic frame) of gun violence. The episodic framing of the Columbine tragedy depicted the mourning of middle-class European-Americans, which purportedly motivated Congress to debate new gun control legislation.

Thematic framing has an extreme effect upon stereotypes that are attached to a certain identifiable group of people (Gandy, 1998). In most cases, the use of thematic framing reinforces negative stereotypes by repeatedly showing episodic frames that depict members of a certain group in a scene that includes crime, drugs, or vagrancy. Gandy (1998) also suggested that thematic framing has the effect of perpetuating stereotypes by regularly illustrating members of a group as devoid of common moral and ethical beliefs. For example, the thematic frames of the 1992 Los Angeles race riots depicted African-Americans as the main perpetrators of the chaos that ensued. Although statistics indicated that the race

riots included persons of Anglo, Asian, African, and Latino-American descent, the media frames emphasized the similarities to the 1965 Watts riot, which involved a more homogeneous African-American crowd. A Mexican-American paper, *La Prensa* of San Diego, indicted African-Americans as the sole aggressors. The newspaper claimed that African-Americans were embittered by their lack of group influence in the Los Angeles community and that the riots were an attempt to lash out against Latino and Asian-American groups. However, arrest records indicated that Latino-Americans were the majority of individuals arrested for rioting (Gandy, 1998).

Thematic framing. Without the development of thematic framing, the issue becomes an event, a person becomes the group and a singular conflict becomes the accord of an entire group (Gitlin, 1980). In modern news coverage, only the popular episodic frames survive to become thematic frames. The 1991 Gulf War provided an example of modern thematic framing by showing the American public myriad episodic frames (Iyengar & Simon, 1994). Research on the coverage of the Gulf War suggested that the patterns of episodic framing persuaded citizens to support military action over diplomatic resolution. Iyengar and Simon (1994) simplified the news media's use of episodic framing with reference to the visually stimulating and instantaneous coverage that this practice supplies.

Iorio and Huxman (1996) described how frames have a tendency to link, collapse, and colorize issues. Linking described how issues gained importance when they were connected to other issues. For example, linking crime with rampant unemployment and then correlating unemployment with drug addiction. Collapsing explained how the complexities of several issues are amalgamated into one core problem; collapsing eliminated most details and factual data surrounding public policy. The process of colorizing referred to the emotional or personal effects that are added to episodic frames. Colorized frames focused on individuals who gave a personal assessment of the problem, but excluded a comprehensive evaluation of the issues. Goffman (1974, p. 85) noted that participants' responses have a reflexive view that appeals to emotions rather than reason: "a correct view of a scene must include the viewing of it as part of it."

Organizational Motivations for Framing

Since the majority of news reports come from media outlets that strive to be profitable, the newsroom environment has provided a fertile ground for framing. Shoemaker and Reese (1991) described how media organizations are owned by stockholders. The negative aspect of this type of ownership is that stockholders appear to be more concerned about earning a profit than they are about accurate reporting and public service. The organizational impetus for framing is related to five distinct issues that are supported by the media system: social norms and values, organizational pressures and constraints, pressures of

interest groups, journalistic routines, and ideological or political orientations of individual journalists (Scheufele, 2000; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Iyengar (1997, p. 398) accorded the prevalence of episodic framing with “matters of organizational routine, format [sic] and marketing rather than partisan or ideological grounds.” The organizational issues have turned news coverage into picture stories that do not always require the news reporter (Standish, 1989). The prevalence of these types of stories has produced less costly storylines with increased profit potential. McQuail (1994) explained that the influences outside an organization have a considerable effect on the production of news stories. Politically conservative groups such as the Media Research Center have the responsibility of surveying what is considered liberal content, and then reporting their findings to the public. The use of stereotypes has contributed to what Goffman (1974) referred to as the schemata of interpretation, which is attached to certain news stories. The framed schema that has been accorded to certain issues is used by reporters and the audience in an attempt to easily relay the prominent features of a story.

Nelson and Kinder (1996) expanded on the hegemonic nature of framing by detailing how issues are primarily created by elite interests and promulgated by the mass media. Their research regarding group-centrism exhibited how dominant news stories are fed to concerned groups, which overshadow public policy issues that are of greater importance. Sage (1998) agreed with this

assessment by commenting that the media serve elite interests by adding coherency to their ideological positions, making the dominant ideology appear as a form of common sense. Framing is especially effective because pictures can be exhumed to support this dominant ideology.

Media ownership. Picard (1998, p. 208) contended that “privately owned media nearly universally and continually convey pro-business, anti-regulatory biases . . . Self interests come into play when they face issues of employment and [sic] benefit costs and union activity.” Gitlin (1980) illustrated how the news media elite are compliant with the political-economic system that they serve. Gitlin (1980) emphasized how the news media will change their frames if they provoke political opposition from individuals that might affect a news network’s political position. Like any other corporation, the news media do not want to produce any news frames or stories that may adversely affect their political positioning. According to Iyengar (1997), the main purpose of episodic framing is to place the blame upon defenseless individuals, instead of political institutions. Moreover, when problems are attributed to a group of people, such as immigrants, newspapers usually evade any critical accusations.

Lawbreaker Frame

The framing of a particular group as a threat to the established order is another facet of bias that is a common practice of news reports. Kinder and Sanders (1996) suggested that a perceived threat has played the role of

influencing the direction of news stories. Kinder and Sanders (1996) noted that a racial divide has separated African and European-American perspectives.

Although these groups have used many of the same sources of information, the paradigm for each group is widely divergent. One of the most threatening issues for average citizens is perceived to be crime, which is a common ingredient of local news stories (Gilliam, et al., 1997).

Although national crime statistics have shown a decline in the number of violent crimes committed during the past two decades, more Americans cite crime as the most important problem facing the nation (Gilliam, et al., 1997). Gilliam (1997) analyzed how news frames have depicted crimes committed by African-Americans, European-Americans, and Latino-Americans. The quantitative research indicated that non-European-Americans made up 55% of violent crime depictions. Conversely, news stories about nonviolent crimes used European-Americans in 75% of the depictions. This research showed that crime frames about African and Latino-Americans are significantly more violent than media frames of European-Americans. Gandy's (1998) content analysis of various newspaper markets found that discriminatory news framing was more prevalent in markets with a large proportion of African-Americans. He attributed this finding to the methods used by the local press to convince European-Americans that there was a discernible threat in their area. Entman (1997) discussed how European-American victimization by African-Americans took precedent over other violent

depictions. He added that frames involving crimes committed against European-Americans and perpetrated by African-Americans stimulated racial discrimination and proved an effective marketing tool for commercial organizations.

Freeloader Frame

Gamson and Lasch (1983) identified what they referred to as the freeloader frame, which typified the perspective that welfare recipients are indolent beings. They add that several Presidential administrations used this frame to portray welfare recipients as burdens upon the state. Nelson and Kinder (1996) labeled the freeloader frame as an example of group-centrism perpetuated by one group feeling that another group is the principal benefactor of a particular social policy such as welfare benefits. The group-centric platform has been framed as European-American workers giving monetary support to African-American individuals “who don’t really need the help” (Nelson & Kinder, 1996, p. 1063). Iyengar (1997) contended that frames involving social welfare have concentrated on cases of fraud and abuse, rather than cases where welfare recipients were able to achieve financial independence.

Minorities in the media. Another framed issue that has received group-centric attention is affirmative action. Nelson and Kinder (1996) noticed that group-centric frames have been propagated among European-Americans who feel that preferential treatment based on skin color is reverse discrimination. Nelson and Kinder (1996) found that group-centric opposition to affirmative action was

mainly promulgated by European-Americans, who feared that their economic well being was at stake. In their study, they framed various pictures depicting African-Americans; some frames were positive images of an African-American graduating from college, but others featured negative portrayals, such as an African-American crack addict. They found that the European-American respondents answered favorably to affirmative action questions after watching the positive frames. However, European-American respondents who viewed the negative depictions of African-Americans were vehemently opposed to affirmative action.

Iyengar's (1991) research described how media consumers have a tendency to attribute individual, rather than societal responsibility to ethnic minorities. Media coverage that involved ethnic minorities was extracted from an abbreviated range of social issues such as unemployment, single motherhood, and drug use. In one instance, two frames were randomly shown to European-American respondents. One frame showed a single mother who was apparently European-American and another frame of a single mother of African-American descent; both women were projected as economically disadvantaged. As was the case in several other similar frames, the European-American respondents felt that the African-American woman was individually responsible, while the European-American woman was a victim of societal factors.

Foreign Invasion Frame

The issue of immigration has been portrayed as an issue viewed negatively by European-American respondents. The framing of immigrants has been cast in an especially negative light during economic uncertainty. This has been the case for Latino-American immigrants who have been used as scapegoats periods of economic downturns in Western states (Fernandez & Pedroza, 1978). The disavowal of immigrants during economic hardship was also evident in France, a country where immigration has served to balance out labor shortages caused by negative population growth. Ubbiali (1995) detailed how politicians related to the extremist National Front, exploited the economic crises of the early 1990s by equating economic problems with foreign immigration. The xenophobia in France was spread by propaganda that used media frames encouraging citizens to believe that Arabs, North Africans, and Asians were responsible for economic ills (Ubbiali, 1995). Similarly, the frames of ethnic minorities in the United States have frequently been accorded with homelessness and allusions to suspect moral character (Kinder & Nelson, 1996).

Latino American Immigration

Although Mexicans have been moving freely across the Mexico-U.S. border since the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, the issues surrounding undocumented immigration have been especially contentious during slow economic times (Fernandez & Perdoza, 1981). The most salient examples of the backlash

against Mexican immigrants came during the Great Depression of the 1930s. The dire economic situation of the 1930s culminated in repatriation campaigns that deported undocumented Mexicans and American citizens (Hoffman, 1974).

The content analysis of Proposition 187 is an important piece of academic literature that documents a contemporary period of immigration debate in the United States. This study measures the occurrence of prominent frames that were used to present the case for and against the passage of Proposition 187 and the sources that were consulted to provide information during news coverage. Much of the research will investigate the relationship between media and politics, furthering knowledge of what social issues are considered important in the news media. The frames used for this study are related to the effect of immigration on the economy, public services and cultural traditions in California.

Overview of Framing Research

The theoretical research presented in this literature review has shown that the news media rely heavily upon framing. The news format presented in daily publications is comprised of an ever increasing reliance on stereotypes. The literature review has shown that there are instances in which the American media have given favorable coverage to solutions favored by elite interests. The use of framing by profit-based media in the United States has focused on more emotional details, rather than contextual information surrounding an issue. The media use of episodic framing has planted stereotypes in the schemata of audience members,

polarizing issues into for and against platforms. The narrow focus of the news media has allowed frames to serve as the prime considerations for audience decision outcomes on issues involving public policy.

Research has shown that the framing of ethnic minorities has resulted in three negative frames: The lawbreaker frame has shown ethnic minorities as perpetrators of crime in the United States; the foreign invasion frame has promoted the fear that immigrants are endangering the established culture and opportunities afforded to European-American populations; and the freeloader frame has conveyed the idea that ethnic minorities are responsible for wasting taxpayer funds.

Immigration politics. Latino-Americans now represent 13.5% of the U.S. population, with an estimated 38.8 million people, of which Mexican-Americans are the majority (Pipino, 2003, September 30). The major provisions of Proposition 187 were the suspension of non-emergency public health services and educational services to undocumented immigrants living in California. Proposition 187 passed with the approval of 59% of the California electorate in November 1994. The proposition was overturned by the courts, but the legislation motivated the Latino-American community to become more politically united and visible (Maciel & Herrera-Sobek, 1998). Since 1994, undocumented immigration has remained a divisive issue at the state and national level. The state of Arizona passed Proposition 200 with 56% of the electorate in 2004. The new law established penalties for public officials who failed to report undocumented immigrants and

required proof of citizenship prior to applying for social benefits or registering to vote. In 2005, the nation focused on immigration with the debate surrounding U.S. House of Representatives approval of the “Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act” (H.R. 4437). The legislation sought to prosecute undocumented immigrants as aggravated felons and sought to deny them due process of the law. Another provision of the bill would have punished public officials, groups, and individuals who assisted undocumented immigrants. Although Bill 4437 did not become law, the subsequent “Secure Fence Act” (H.R. 6061) resulted in the construction of a 700-mile wall on the approximately 2,100-mile U.S.-Mexico border.

The Latino-American community has become the most populous ethnic minority in the United States; this research provides an analysis of how immigration was depicted in the *Orange County Register* and the *San Jose Mercury News* during the Proposition 187 debate.

Research Questions

The overall research question is: How did the *Orange County Register* and the *San Jose Mercury News* frame the Proposition 187 debate? Additional research questions are as follows:

1. Did the two newspapers use frames that support or oppose the passage of Proposition 187?

- A. What sections of each newspaper relied more heavily upon pro/anti-Proposition 187 frames?
 - B. How did news service stories (Associated Press, Reuters, etc.) affect the coverage of Proposition 187 in each of the newspapers?
2. To what extent, if any, did the newspapers use episodic or thematic framing?
 3. What type of sources were used by each newspaper to present the debate on Proposition 187?
 4. To what extent, if any, did the newspapers rely on sources with Latino-American or other ethnic surnames?

CHAPTER III

METHOD

The content analysis was conducted on two California newspapers that serve two geo-political regions of the Golden State. Framing provided the primary theoretical construct used to examine the reporting of daily newspaper coverage. Newspaper coverage of Proposition 187 was analyzed using downloaded copies of the *San Jose Mercury News* and the *Orange County Register* from *America's Newspapers: California Retrieval Service*.

Newspaper Information

The two newspapers examined in the content analysis on immigration coverage during the 1994 Proposition 187 debate were the *San Jose Mercury News* and the *Orange County Register*. The *Register* was selected because of its extensive coverage of Orange County and because two Orange County residents, Ronald Prince and Howard Ezell, drafted Proposition 187. The *Mercury News* was chosen because, in 1994, the newspaper was recognized for its reporting and commitment to covering the Bay Area and California. The *Mercury News* provides news and information to one of the most ethnically diverse populations in the United States.

In 1990, Santa Clara County area had a population that was 3% African American, 24 % Latino American, 26% Asian American, and 54% European American; the population of Orange County was 2% African American, 31%

Latino American, 14% Asian American, and 79% European American; (United States Census Bureau, 2001).

The two newspapers also differed in political party affiliation. In 1994, Santa Clara County had a plurality of registered Democrats (49%); 37% registered as Republicans, 4% as independents, and 10% as declined to state party affiliation (University of California Regents, 1994). Conversely, Orange County had a formidable Republican Party base (56%); 33% registered as Democrats, 2% as independent, and 9% as declined to state party affiliation (University of Irvine, 1994).

Sixty-seven percent of Orange County residents voted for Proposition 187 and 33% of residents were opposed (California Opinion Index, 1995, January). Santa Clara County opposed Proposition 187 with a majority (52%) compared with 48% of the electorate who opposed its passage (California Secretary of State, 1994, November). The correlation between party affiliation and the support or opposition received in Santa Clara and Orange County is reason for this research.

The content analysis focused on frames that defined the Proposition 187 debate on illegal immigration. This time period began on October 1, 1994, and continued until one week after the election on November 15, 1994. October 1 was selected because of the mounting polarization over the provisions detailed in Proposition 187. The week following the November 8, 1994, General Election was included so that coverage of the legal battles and the public reaction that

immediately ensued after voters approved Proposition 187 could be included in the analysis. In the post-election time period, court action prevented Proposition 187 from taking effect, despite a clear margin of victory (59%). The *Orange County Register* ran 95 news articles during the same six-week period and the *San Jose Mercury News* ran 87 news articles. The 1994 circulation of the *Mercury News* was 285,735; the *Register* had a similar daily circulation of 353,812 in 1994.

Limitation of study. The *America's Newspapers* database is less reliable than examining each individual newspaper article. It cannot be assumed that all the articles on the database with coverage on Proposition 187 were included in the database. There is more opportunity for error by using the *America's Newspapers* database.

Coding and Measurement

Previous research identified stereotypical frames used by the media to depict ethnic minorities. These frames as well as new frames that emerged from a careful reading of the sample of content from the two newspapers were used as the basis of the study's frame analysis.

Frame coding. Frames that supported the passage of Proposition 187 were coded as three distinct categories: The freeloader frame reinforced the notion that ethnic minorities are a drain on public services; the lawbreaker frame presented minorities as violators of federal, state, or local laws; and the foreign invader

frame reinforced the belief that ethnic minorities would endanger the well-being of American citizens. In a content analysis of Mexican-Americans in the media, Gutierrez (1980, p. 203) found that “coverage is concentrated in times when Hispanics are judged to be a threat,” and “is focused on negative or unfavorable community issues.” Frames in opposition to Proposition 187 are as follows: The witch-hunt frame corresponded to frames about citizens reporting cases of undocumented immigration to the proper authorities; the employer sanction frame described penalizing employers who hired undocumented immigrants; and the California state economy frame focused on the economic importance of undocumented immigrant workers.

Source coding. Each article was identified for sources that were used; there are 13 categories that provided a comprehensive glossary for institutional and individual sources. The affiliation of each source provided a way to determine which organizations and persons were used as sources by each newspaper. The literature review delineated many of the classifications that are given to minority groups in the United States. Gutierrez (1980, p. 203) revealed that, “reporters rely on sources outside the Mexican-American community for information about Mexican-Americans.” Surnames were inserted into four separate groupings: European American, Latino American, and other ethnic. A list of the 639 most common Spanish surnames was taken from the *United States Census Bureau* (1996). Since there were no lists available for all European

surnames or for other ethnic surnames, the researcher relied on tests of intercoder reliability. The fact that the intercoder reliability coefficient for European surnames was .90 and for other ethnic surnames was .99 provides evidence that the surname coding is reliable.

Analysis

Independent *t*-tests were used to examine content frames that supported and opposed Proposition 187. Dependent variables supporting Proposition 187 were the freeloader, foreign invader, and lawbreaker frames; dependent variables opposing Proposition 187 were the employer sanction, witch-hunt, and California economy frames. Frequency tables were used to analyze the attribution of sources which included political, special interest, private individual, educational, and medical sources. The surnames of sources were analyzed using a frequency table; this allowed for a comparison of ethnic source representation between the two newspapers. The three dependent variables for this category were European American, Latino American, and other ethnic. Each article was coded according to the thematic or episodic framing of the entire piece. Commentary that focused on events, rather than contextual background, was coded as an episodic frame. The episodic and thematic framing of undocumented immigration used a chi-square analysis to measure if either newspaper had a more significant number of thematic or episodic articles. One article was coded as episodic when it reported an anti-Proposition 187 rally organized by Evangelical Christians: “But this

condemnation of Proposition 187 wasn't made at a rally of angry minority-rights activists. Most of the 40 participants in the Sunday debate over the November 8 ballot measure were white, middle-class Episcopalians with deep roots in Orange County" (Legon, 1994, October 17). The independent variables for the content analysis were the *San Jose Mercury News* and the *Orange County Register*.

The quantitative analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The measurement of news stories is divided into national, state, and local sections. News editorials, opinion commentaries, and letters to the editor are measured separately using the same criteria used for articles, however, the editorials will not be tested for statistical significance. See Appendix for more information.

Frame Examples

To further clarify the instances of framing in each of the daily newspaper sources, examples from coded material are explained. A foreign invasion frame was coded when coverage of Proposition 187 focused on the fears of cultural changes affecting American society such as, "shouting, laughing and carrying Mexican Flags and signs protesting Prop. 187 . . ." (Buzbee, 1994, October 29). These frames of ethnic display communicated that protesters had allegiances to the Mexican government. The freeloader frame was coded for paragraphs that inferred that undocumented immigrants were responsible for depleting state and local funds through medical, social, and educational costs. The lawbreaker frame

was used to explain the unequivocal legal parameters of Proposition 187. House Republican candidate Sonny Bono expressed the sentiment of many Proposition 187 supporters when asked about illegal immigration, by responding: “What’s to talk about? It’s illegal” (Buzbee, 1994, October 30).

Frames that decried the mandates of Proposition 187 were placed into an alternate category. The witch-hunt frame was based on fears that teachers, doctors and social workers would be responsible for reporting undocumented immigrants to the proper authorities. Many of the witch-hunt frames referred to the prospect of a police state where persons of obvious ethnic origin would fall under suspicion. Another recurrent frame opposing Proposition 187 was a call for tougher sanctions against businesses and individuals hiring undocumented immigrants. For example, one article reported the ambition of Labor Secretary Robert Reich as “getting tough on growers and sweatshop operators who violate labor laws” (Kalfus, 1994, November 3). The California state economy frame argued that the contributions of undocumented immigrants are a benefit to the California economy. These frames suggested: “Their labor on the farms and in factories generates corporate profits and taxes. Add it all up, and illegal immigrants increase the wealth of California” (Black, 1994, October 2). The sampling of news articles incorporated coverage of demonstrations, feature stories, and political debates connected to undocumented immigration and the provisions of Proposition 187.

Intercoder Reliability

To establish intercoder reliability, one coder tested a random sample of 10% of coded articles that were already coded by the researcher. Nathan Shaw, a Master of Science student in Mass Communications at San Jose State University was appointed as the second coder. With a sample of 273 articles, every 10th article (27 of 273) was recorded by the second coder. Intercoder reliability was established for frames, sources, surnames, and episodic/thematic theory articles that were previously discussed in this section. Scott's Pi was used to establish intercoder reliability for each of the coding categories. An intercoder reliability rating of .80 and above was attained for the collection of variables. The data coding for the second set of coded information was compared with the original coding set to reach a percentage of agreement that was computed using Scott's pi formula: Meyer (2002, p. 194).

$$\pi = \frac{\% \text{ observed agreement} - \% \text{ expected agreement}}{1 - \% \text{ expected agreement}}$$

The overall reliability of coded information was 93%. The reliability of 25 variables is listed in the Appendix.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The content analysis was designed to answer specific questions as to whether there is a difference in the coverage of undocumented immigration by the *Orange County Register* and the *San Jose Mercury News*. The six-week period for the content analysis encompassed the Proposition 187 coverage that occurred between October 2, 1994 and November 14, 1994. The framing analysis was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference in how the two newspapers framed specific frames related to the Proposition 187 debate. For each newspaper, the number of paragraphs in each article that referred to frames supporting and opposing Proposition 187 were analyzed.

The witch-hunt, California economy, and employer sanction frames were categorized as opposing Proposition 187; the lawbreaker, freeloader, and the foreign invader frames were categorized as supporting Proposition 187. The source affiliation category positioned sources based on their affiliation as detailed in newspaper reports. Sources were also coded according to their ethnicity; Hispanic surname lists were downloaded from the United States Census Bureau and European American and other ethnic surnames were substantiated by intercoder reliability. In addition, the analysis compared the number of articles delineated as thematic, episodic, or both. Each article was examined to confirm whether the entire article covered singular events (episodic), rather than focusing on antecedent factors

(thematic). The coding of frames, sources, surnames, and episodic/thematic framing was applied to all news articles. Editorial articles were coded separately, but lacked the adequate data necessary to execute a complete statistical analysis. However, there will be a descriptive analysis of editorial articles to determine correlations with news articles and general trends that were apparent during coding.

Frame Results

This section of the content analysis focused on the use of frames by *the Orange County Register* and the *San Jose Mercury News*. The first research question sought to answer whether the frames in each newspaper opposed or supported Proposition 187. The frame analysis calculated the number of paragraphs per article containing specific frames in each of the newspapers. To thoroughly analyze the use of frames by the two newspapers, two sub-questions were asked: which newspaper sections had the highest frequency of frames supporting or opposing Proposition 187, and how did news service stories affect the coverage of Proposition 187?

The frame results showed that the witch-hunt and the employer sanction frames were more prevalent in news articles from the *San Jose Mercury News*. However, the freeloader and foreign invader frames were more common in news articles from the *Orange County Register*. The lawbreaker and California economy frames were not significantly different between the two newspapers. The *t*-test of all frames supporting Proposition 187 did not reveal a significant difference; likewise, a *t*-test of

all frames opposing Proposition 187 showed no significant difference between the two newspapers.

Frames Opposing Proposition 187

Employer sanction frame. The employer sanction frame was found more frequently in the *San Jose Mercury News* than in the *Orange County Register*. The majority of employer sanction articles were used after it was revealed that Republican U.S. Senate candidate Rep. Michael Huffington illegally employed an undocumented immigrant as a nanny for his children. After Huffington declared his unequivocal support for Proposition 187, it was reported that he had employed an undocumented immigrant for the past two years. The *Register* reported that Huffington compared the offense to running a stop sign or speeding. However, the *Register* countered Huffington's comparison with the fact that "hiring illegal immigrants is a violation of federal law punishable by up to a \$10,000 fine and six months in prison" (Grimaldi, 1994, October 27). The *Register* made a comparable number of references to Huffington's quandary, although there were few references to stiffening the fines for employers hiring undocumented immigrants.

Many of the employer sanction frames from the *San Jose Mercury News* focused on solutions proposed by national political figures. Labor Secretary Robert Reich called Proposition 187 "a blunt instrument which will not resolve the problem" (Kalfus, 1994, November 3). He suggested enforcing wage and work-condition laws that would target employers trying to hire undocumented immigrant workers.

As shown in Table 1, the average number of employer sanction paragraphs in the *San Jose Mercury News* (.64) was more than double the average for all news stories in the *Orange County Register* (.26), a difference that was highly significant ($p = .001$).

Table 1

Six t-test comparisons for news paragraph frames in the San Jose Mercury News and the Orange County Register

Frames	San Jose Mercury News		Orange County Register		<i>p</i>
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	
<u>Oppose Proposition 187</u>					
Employer sanction	87	.64	95	.26	.001**
Witch hunt	87	1.26	95	.74	.027*
California economy	87	.33	95	.19	.152
All Oppose Frames	87	.74	95	.40	.060
<u>Support Proposition 187</u>					
Lawbreaker	87	.56	95	.81	.139
Freeloader	87	.46	95	.75	.027*
Foreign invader	87	.40	95	.72	.025*
All Support Frames	87	.66	95	.76	.064

Note. *n* represents the number of news articles; the mean represents the average number of paragraphs per article that contain the particular frame.

p* < .05. *p* < .01

Witch-hunt frame. The witch-hunt frame appeared more frequently than the other frames opposing Proposition 187. Many of the articles from the *San Jose Mercury News* focused on the fear that Proposition 187 would have an adverse effect on legal citizens. Hugo Hernandez, a Desert Storm, veteran remarked: “They don’t realize that it’ll turn me into a second-class citizen, that I’ll have to carry an INS card all the time to prove that I’m legal” (McLaughlin, 1994, October 2).

Several of the articles and editorials from the *Orange County Register* decried the threat of big-government that would spawn from the provisions of Proposition 187. An educator from Orange County was critical of “commanding public employees to ‘snitch’ to INS enforcers on possible illegals . . .” (Christensen, 1994, November 10). The use of the phrase “INS enforcers” is a condemnation against federal law enforcement that *Register* staff editors felt would transpire with the passage of Proposition 187.

The statistical analysis of the witch-hunt frame revealed a significant difference ($p = .027$) between the two newspapers. Table 1 shows that the *Orange County Register* had a mean of three quarters (.74) of a paragraph as compared with the *San Jose Mercury News*, which averaged more than one paragraph (1.24) with a witch-hunt frame.

California economy frame. The California economy frame appeared less frequently in both newspapers than did any other news frame. The California economy frame included quotes and commentary that forecasted the consequences of

losing the contributions of undocumented immigrant workers. The California economy frame received more attention from the *San Jose Mercury News*, which generally gave more coverage to the viewpoints of sources sympathetic to undocumented immigrant laborers. President Bill Clinton frequently campaigned against Proposition 187, and he validated the claim that undocumented immigrants contributed to the California economy through “the taxes that are going to the state from the wages of undocumented aliens who are actually working and paying taxes and paying money to the state” (Trounstein, 1994, November 6).

Overall, the *San Jose Mercury News* devoted more coverage to California economy frames that focused on the pragmatist demand for undocumented immigrant labor. Victor A. Wagner, a Libertarian candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives, commented: “America has become provincial and has jobs that we simply don’t want to do and those are the jobs that the illegal aliens are doing” (Bock, 1994, October 2). Many of the California economy frames focused on the current contributions of undocumented immigrants; however, there were few articles from either newspaper that focused on the economic contributions of undocumented immigrants throughout the 20th Century.

Although the California economy frame had more paragraphs for all stories in the *San Jose Mercury News* (.33), there was not a statistically significant difference ($p = .152$) with the mean number of paragraphs in the *Orange County Register* (.19).

Frames Supporting Proposition 187

Lawbreaker frame. The lawbreaker frame was a frequently used frame that described immigrants as breaking national, state, and local laws. Many lawbreaker frames were observations from private individuals with negative viewpoints of immigrant populations. Phil Byrnes, 52, was canvassing the Orange County area in support of Proposition 187 when he commented: “I’m going to vote for (Prop.) 187 . . . One of the reasons I’ve got a button (support for Proposition 187) about this is that I had to remove both my sons from school because of Mexican gangs. I think (illegal immigrants) are a large part of the problem” (Hernandez, 1994, November 6). This is one example of the lawbreaker frame, which typically accorded undocumented immigrants with gang affiliation and illegal activity.

Many of the lawbreaker frames from the two newspapers used language that suggested undocumented immigrants were violators of the law. Several articles from each newspaper described Operation Gatekeeper, a federal law that sent more border patrol officials to San Diego County. In one article, Carol Masciola (1994, October 15), a writer for the *Orange County Register*, described the new tactics employed by law enforcement to combat undocumented immigration: “New operations have begun that crack down on immigrant smuggling and document counterfeiting, both of which are expected to increase as illegal crossers search for new ways to enter the United States.”

The lawbreaker frame had a higher average number of paragraphs than any other coded news frame in the *Orange County Register* (.81). Among frames supporting Proposition 187 in the *San Jose Mercury News*, the lawbreaker frame (.56) appeared more frequently than the freeloader or foreign invader frames. There was no statistical significance ($p = .139$) between the two newspapers.

Freeloader frame. The freeloader frames were largely connected to the negative economic impact of undocumented immigration. Some of these examples included the overcrowding of schools, the absence of jobs for American citizens, and rampant abuse of social services. James Bieber, 28, a candidate for the Huntington Beach School Board, commented: “According to the state Finance Department, California spends \$1.5 billion per year educating illegal aliens in our public schools. The cost of educating illegal aliens is 50 percent higher than legal English-speaking students” (Huntington Beach City, 1994, November 3). Freeloader frames routinely used taxpayer costs to reinforce the need for Proposition 187 and the negative economic effects of undocumented immigrants.

Analysis of the freeloader frame in the two newspapers showed a significant difference ($p = .027$). As shown in Table 1, the *San Jose Mercury News* averaged about half a paragraph (.46) of the freeloader frame in all news stories as compared with the *Orange County Register* that averaged about three quarters of a paragraph (.75) in its news stories.

Foreign invader frame. The foreign invader frame results were statistically similar to the freeloader frame. Several foreign invader frames appeared as a result of demonstrators “chanting, carrying Mexican flags and waving placards urging people to vote against Proposition 187, which would deny benefits to illegal immigrants” (Metivier, 1994, November 4). The foreign invader frame was more pronounced after the use of Mexican flags in demonstrations against Proposition 187. Much of the debate focused on whether the use of the Mexican flag was a symbol of disloyalty to the United States or a statement of Mexican-American cultural heritage. Harold Ezell, co-author of Proposition 187, predicted that the use of the Mexican flag would encourage more people to vote for Proposition 187 and added: “These clowns get out with their green and red flags with the snake on them, I think the flag of America’s still red, white and blue” (Miller, 1994, November 11).

Many of the foreign invader frames also suggested that the military be utilized to decrease the number of undocumented immigrants crossing the border. Support for Proposition 187 was not limited to European-American respondents, as Michael Almaguer, a retired postal manager from East Los Angeles, explained: “We’d build a big door on the Mexican border and ship out everyone who doesn’t belong here. Then I’d put the Army and the National Guard down there to make sure that no one else came in” (McLaughlin, 1994, October 2).

As Table 1 shows, there is a statistical difference ($p = 0.25$) between the two newspapers; the foreign invader frame had a higher average of paragraphs (.72) in the

Orange County Register than in the *San Jose Mercury News* (.40).

Newspaper Sections

Articles were coded for six different sections in the *Orange County Register* and the *San Jose Mercury News*. Each article was coded as national, state, local, newspaper staff editorial, opinion column, and letters to the editor. As shown in Table 2, the *Mercury News* ran more Proposition 187 stories in its national and state sections than it did in its local section. In contrast, the *Register* ran more local Proposition 187 stories than it did state and national stories.

Table 2

Number of articles from each section of the San Jose Mercury News and the Orange County Register

Section	San Jose Mercury News (<i>n</i> = 124)	Orange County Register (<i>n</i> = 149)
National	17	7
State	52	37
Local	18	51
Newspaper editorials	12	5
Opinion column	8	2
Letters to the editor	17	22

News service stories. The *San Jose Mercury News* ran 20 stories from news services, and the *Orange County Register* ran only staff written stories. There were 15 news service articles in the state section, five articles in the national news, and one local news article from a news service source in the *Mercury News*. News service stories minimally affected the analysis of the two newspapers. The *Mercury News* had a greater number of Proposition 187 articles in the national and state sections, but the news service articles did not deviate from frames or sources used by the *Mercury News*.

Episodic and Thematic Framing

The *San Jose Mercury News* had a greater number of thematically-framed articles that analyzed antecedent factors affecting undocumented immigration than the *Orange County Register*, which had a higher number of episodic stories. One article from the *San Jose Mercury News* dissected the terminology used during the Proposition 187 debate: “The very term ‘illegal aliens,’ for example, recalls the term ‘enemy aliens,’ which was used to describe Japanese-Americans imprisoned during World War II. Policy-making is problematic when vocabulary dredges up such memories” (Balmain, 1994, November 14). The *Mercury News* ran many articles that provided in-depth coverage of immigration issues. In contrast, the *Register* had a greater number of local news stories that provided less contextual information.

The *Orange County Register* had a high number of articles that focused on episodic or singular events. For example, the *Register* had several quotes citing large

numbers; Mike Allen, 21, a political science student at Fullerton College, spoke in favor of Proposition 187 when he said: “I think we’re very fair on our immigration policy that allows 320,000 Mexicans a year into this country” (Kalfus, 1994, November 9). Grandiose immigration numbers, instead of analyzed statistics were frequent among sources cited as proponents of Proposition 187 in the *Register*. The research question for this portion of the content analysis concentrated on the frequency of episodic and thematic articles in each of the newspapers.

As shown in Table 3, of the 95 articles from the *Orange County Register*, 10 (11%) were thematic, 39 (41%) were episodic. The 87 articles from the *San Jose Mercury News* presented a contrary representation of framing; thematic framing made up 34 (39%) articles, episodic framing was present in 14 (16%) articles. This section of the content analysis demonstrated that news articles from the *Mercury News* presented more contextual information related to Proposition 187 than the *Register*.

Table 3

Percentage of episodic and thematic articles from the San Jose Mercury News and the Orange County Register

	San Jose Mercury News	Orange County Register	Overall
Article Framing	(n = 87)	(n = 95)	(n = 182)
Episodic	16%	41%	29%
Thematic	39	11	24
Both	45	48	47

$X^2(2, N = 187) = 25.157, p < .001$

Source Affiliation

The sources used to present the debate on Proposition 187 were essential to the issues framed by the two newspapers. Source affiliation was used to examine commonly referenced sources in the *Orange County Register* and the *San Jose Mercury News*. Sources provided perspective on the divisive debate that was reported by the two newspapers. The sources also provide a glimpse of the organizational procedures for source gathering by the *Register* and the *Mercury News*. The research question for this section of the content analysis asked what sources were consulted most frequently by each of the newspapers.

Political source. The most frequently cited sources were political campaign candidates and ancillary spokespeople. The spokespeople for several large

campaigns were couriers for strategic quotes that commonly provided campaign press. President Bill Clinton came to California to stump for Treasurer Kathleen Brown, Senator Diane Feinstein, and against Proposition 187; Dan Schnur, Gov. Pete Wilson's campaign spokesperson who opposed President Clinton getting involved said: "Tensions and emotions are running very high in this state right now, and for the president to fly in here and intentionally inflame those tensions and emotions is unforgivable" (Lifsher, 1994, November 7). Many articles described federal politicians clashing with state and local politicians who felt that federal government officials should not interfere with state matters. The tensions between the federal government and California state sovereignty were a major theme among political sources cited in the *Orange County Register*.

The *Orange County Register* devoted a greater quantity of coverage to local politicians; however, the *San Jose Mercury News* presented a greater number of political opinions from outside California. Many of the political source opinions expressed in the content analysis of the *Mercury News* were consultants from national campaigns. Tony Coelho, a key advisor to the Clinton Administration, suggested: "As 187 gets closer, that helps Kathleen's race considerably. You always have to pick an issue at the end of a campaign that gets things moving and 187 is doing that" (Trounstine, 1994, November 6). Although Proposition 187 was a politically charged issue for California voters, the momentum of the last weeks before the election appeared to favor supporters of Proposition 187 and the re-election campaign of

Republican Governor Pete Wilson.

The quantitative analysis showed that both newspapers relied heavily on political sources. Of the 87 news articles from the *San Jose Mercury News*, 58 (66%) articles cited at least one political source; the *Orange County Register* had a total of 52 (55%) articles that cited at least one political source. As shown in Table 4, it is apparent that political sources directed much of the dialogue on immigration during the Proposition 187 debate.

Table 4

Percentage of news articles with source affiliation from the San Jose Mercury News and the Orange County Register

	San Jose Mercury News	Orange County Register	Overall
Source	(<i>n</i> = 87)	(<i>n</i> = 95)	(<i>n</i> = 182)
Political	66%	55%	60%
Special interest	23	41	32
Education	29	26	27
Private citizen	21	23	22
Attorney	9	14	12
Law enforcement	9	11	10
Researcher	13	4	8
Author	9	4	7
Labor union	8	2	5
Business	1	8	5
Medical	3	5	4

Private individual source. The private individual source provided comments and opinions from the vicinities served by the *Orange County Register* and the *San Jose Mercury News*. Private individuals were not described as having any official allegiances to other source types used in this analysis.

The *San Jose Mercury News* provided more perspectives from individuals who would have been adversely affected by the provisions of Proposition 187, namely undocumented immigrants. In one such news article, coverage included the perspective of Jose Sanchez, an undocumented immigrant residing in the San Fernando Valley, who commented: “Pete Wilson is like Hitler to us, like Genghis Khan. . . .The Mexican people are being crucified” (Kramer, 1994, November 5). Sanchez’s complaint was endemic among opponents of Proposition 187, who feared that ethnic prejudice based on skin color and verbal accent would be an outgrowth of Proposition 187. Other private individuals of Latino-American descent expressed ambivalence about voting for Proposition 187. Dan Alvarez, a third-generation Mexican-American voiced resistance to a witch hunt society, but explained: “I’m going to vote for it because it’ll send a strong message to Washington that something needs to be done about immigration” (Kramer, 1994, November 5). There were several rationales mentioned by supporters of Proposition 187, though sending a message to the federal government about undocumented immigration was frequently mentioned.

The *Orange County Register* provided many individual views that advocated Proposition 187 as a message to the federal government. Other private individuals promoted the financial burden caused by undocumented immigration; Olga Slanina, 72, of Tustin, California remarked: “We have a lot of American people here who need help . . . Let the Mexicans take care of their own people. If you want to live in the United States, you better become a citizen” (Kalfus, 1994, November 10). Much of the news coverage from supporters of Proposition 187 stressed putting the needs of American citizens before those of undocumented immigrants.

The analysis of private individual sources showed that the *Orange County Register* and the *San Jose Mercury News* were virtually equivalent. The *Register* had 22 (23%) news articles that included at least one private individual source; the *Mercury News* had 18 (21%) news articles that included a private individual source.

Special interest source. Special interest sources were usually the most divisive sources in each of the newspapers; there were very few special interest sources that took a neutral stance on Proposition 187. The *Orange County Register* had a higher proportion of news articles with special interest sources. Many episodically framed articles had special interest sources from one side of the debate. For example, an article about the media coverage of undocumented immigration almost exclusively solicited the opinions of Proposition 187 proponents; Ron Prince, the leader of Proposition 187, said, “We are getting attacked from every angle. We are getting it in every way you can imagine” (Kalfus, 1994, November 2). Along

with the quote from Prince, many other special interest sources in this article provided opinions that backed up Prince's claim.

The special interest sources from the *San Jose Mercury News* were usually referenced in combination with different types of sources. In one article about Mountain View residents having simultaneous demonstrations for and against Proposition 187, both leaders of the separate groups were interviewed. Reynaldo Herrera, director of Mountain View Latinos Unidos, commented: "We are only here to say that 187 promotes racism and punishes children without solving the immigration problem" (Hutchison, 1994, November 6). Kenneth Record, the leader of Proposition 187 supporters alleged that the Latinos Unidos group used "Banana Republic practices," and wanted to simply disrupt the Proposition 187 protest (Hutchinson, 1994, November 6). This article went against the trend observed in *Orange County Register* news articles by including two different special interest opinions in one article.

The analysis of individuals speaking on behalf of special interest groups yielded the largest disparity of source affiliation percentages between the two newspapers. As shown in Table 4, the *San Jose Mercury News* had 20 (23%) articles with at least one special interest source, while the *Orange County Register* had 39 (41%) articles with at least one special interest source.

Education source. The education source included a wide array of teachers and administrators from primary, secondary, and university level educational

institutions. The majority of education sources in both newspapers were opposed to the provisions of Proposition 187. Many education sources disagreed with the proposed edict of reporting children suspected to be undocumented immigrants. Arlene Pavey, a teacher with the Sequoia Union High School District in San Mateo commented on Proposition 187 by saying: "I think they were thinking politically rather than in terms of what's good for children" (Farr, 1994, October 15). As shown in Table 4, there was very little difference between the percentages of education sources in the two newspapers. Both newspapers used education sources in about one-quarter of news articles.

Miscellaneous sources. The political, special interest, private individual, and educational sources were the most frequently consulted sources by the two newspapers. As shown in Table 4, other sources received less attention from each of the newspapers.

Medical sources were cited in 4% of news articles from the two newspapers; the *San Jose Mercury News* used medical references in 3% of news articles and the *Orange County Register* had medical sources in 5% of news articles. There were few medical sources questioned in response to treating undocumented immigrants, many of the medical sources were concerned with the infections that might spread without immunizations for undocumented immigrants. Dr. Hugh Stallworth, Orange County's public-health director commented: "Think of TB. If were unable to immunize a segment of our kids, not only are they at risk, but the kids who come in

contact with them are at risk” (Bock, 1994, October 2).

Law enforcement sources were in 10% of news articles from the two newspapers. Many of the law enforcement sources were quoted in relation to protocol for demonstrations rather than opinions on the passage of Proposition 187. It is unclear if law enforcement officials were allowed to take any stand for or against Proposition 187, but most law enforcement sources had responses similar to Chief Manuel Ortega of the Placentia Police Department, “ If that is our edict, that is what we have to do. We will go by the law” (Christensen, 1994, November 10).

Other less frequently cited sources revealed some significant differences between the two newspapers. Business sources were cited in 5% of news articles from the two newspapers, the *Orange County Register* had 8% of news articles with a business source, and the *San Jose Mercury News* had 1% of news articles with a business source. The *Mercury News* consulted labor union sources in 8% of news articles, and the *Register* had labor union sources in 2% of the articles. The apparent discrepancy between the use of these sources in the two newspapers may reveal organizational routines that influence source choices by the two newspapers.

Source Surnames

The analysis of source surnames showed very similar results between the newspapers concerning their usage of European and Latino surnames during the immigration coverage of Proposition 187. As shown in Table 5, the two newspapers used at least one source with a European surname in 154 (85%) of the 182 news

articles. On the other hand, sources with Latino surnames were used in 70 (38%) of the 182 news articles from the two newspapers. While this analysis is not an absolute indicator of ethnic affiliation among sources, the disparity between Latino and European surnames does represent a large disparity for an issue that could have adversely affected persons with Latino surnames.

Table 5

Percentage of source surnames from the San Jose Mercury News and the Orange County Register

Overall	San Jose Mercury News	Orange County Register	
Surname	(n = 87)	(n = 95)	(n = 182)
European	86%	83%	85%
Latino	37	40	38
Other	24	13	18

Sources with Latino surnames were usually arranged by two different categories. Many sources with Latino surnames expressed support for Proposition 187 in the two newspapers; these sources were described as legal residents. On the other hand, many private individual sources with Latino surnames that disagreed with

Proposition 187 were recent immigrants. Rodolfo de la Garza, a researcher with the National Political Survey explained, “As a whole, Mexican-Americans are extraordinarily law-abiding. Many feel they got the blame for the people who come here illegally” (McLaughlin, 1994, October 2).

Other ethnic source. The use of other ethnic sources showed an 11% disparity between the two newspapers; sources with Asian surnames were frequent other ethnic sources in the two newspapers. The majority of Asian surname sources were identified as permanent residents that supported Proposition 187; though, there were no Asian surname sources that were identified as undocumented immigrants. Speaking at a Little Saigon shopping mall, Governor Pete Wilson cited, “This nation was built on the sweat, courage, energy [sic] and pride of legal immigration” (Pasco, 1994, October 18).

Descriptive Analysis of Editorials

The editorial pieces from the two newspapers included many of the same frames and sources that were found in the news content analysis of the two newspapers. However, there were arguments that were exclusive to editorial pieces in the two newspapers. The *San Jose Mercury News* had 12 news editorials, eight opinion columns, and 17 letters to the editor; the *Orange County Register* had five news editorials, 27 opinion columns, and 22 letters to the editor.

Arguments supporting Proposition 187. A recurrent frame amongst respondents supporting Proposition 187 was the allegation that they were not racist or

xenophobic. Several editorials cited persons of Latino, Asian and African descent who supported Proposition 187, substantiating the argument that the racial overtones of the campaign against Proposition 187 were unfounded. As Steve Waechter of Fullerton exclaimed: "If there were millions of blond-haired, blue-eyed, Caucasian Swedes sneaking in here filling up our schools, our clinics [sic] and our hospitals, we would all feel exactly the same way. It doesn't have anything to do with race" (Wilde, 1994, October 26). In an editorial written by the conservative columnist, Patrick Buchanan, he blamed "media demagoguery," for ignoring any political response to the immigration problem. Buchanan echoed the sentiment that opponents of Proposition 187 were using the fear of being considered "racist" as an instrument to deter people from voting for Proposition 187 (Buchanan, 1994, October 18).

Another frequent argument for proponents of Proposition 187 in the editorial sections concerned the welfare of persons already living in this country. In response to the allegations that Proposition 187 was part of a racist agenda, Jan Black of Palo Alto responded: "This is an economic issue involving money spent on people who should not be here in the first place, which needs to be spent to help our own disadvantaged citizens, irrespective of ethnic backgrounds" (Black, 1994, October 16). Editorial respondents supporting Proposition 187 believed that other countries, namely Mexico, were negligently exporting their economic problems to the United States. Furthermore, editorial support for Proposition 187 was opposed to the racial

overtone of the campaign, rather they believed that Proposition 187 was a mandate for government to secure borders and protect the welfare of legal residents.

Arguments against Proposition 187. The arguments against Proposition 187 cited many of the same arguments that were used in the news content analysis. The witch-hunt style argument was used in a majority of attacks on Proposition 187, which likened the passage of Proposition 187 to a “neo-Nazi type Hitler vs. the Jews” (Arevalo, 1994, October 26).

Republican Governor Pete Wilson voiced his support for Proposition throughout his campaign; however, prominent figures in his party wrote editorials that questioned the purpose of Proposition 187. Ron Unz, a Silicon Valley entrepreneur and Republican gubernatorial candidate during the June primary wrote: “Proposition 187 is extremely bad law” (Unz, 1994, October 7). His editorial noted that undocumented immigrants are already ineligible for public assistance and their use of medical services was a dismal budget percentage. Unz also questioned the rationale for supporting a law that would imprison people employed as gardeners, maids and construction laborers when the prison population is already overflowing (Unz, 1994, October 7).

Editorial sources. The sources used in editorial stories were dependent on the type of editorial. The letters to the editor sources were mostly cited as private individuals; opinion editorials had a variety of sources that included politicians,

authors, private individuals, and educators. There were no significant differences between the source affiliations used by the two newspapers.

The source surnames also failed to show any significant differences between the two newspapers. While there were more sources with European surnames, the disparity between the sources surnames was less pronounced than with the news article analysis.

Framing. The framing of editorial articles was highly dependent on type. The letters to the editor and some opinion editorials were much more likely to be episodic, while newspaper editorials were generally more thematic. While *the San Jose Mercury News* had a higher proportion of thematic editorials, much of that difference could be attributed to their frequent use of news editorials. The *Orange County Register* did have more episodic articles, but that could also be correlated to their use of opinion columns. The episodic/thematic framing of editorials did not prove statistically significant.

Chapter V

Conclusion

The overall research question focused on how Proposition 187 was reported by the *Orange County Register* and the *San Jose Mercury News*. A major finding of this study is that the coverage of Proposition 187 in the *Register* was significantly more supportive of Proposition 187 than the coverage in the *Mercury News* because the *Register* had a higher number of stories containing foreign invader and freeloader frames, which supported the passage of Proposition 187. Additionally, the *Register* had more episodically-framed articles that focused on singular events rather than on antecedent factors that would have provided a context for the immigration debate.

The analysis of the *San Jose Mercury News* showed that its coverage was significantly more critical of Proposition 187 than the *Orange County Register*. The number of employer sanction and witch-hunt frames, which were in opposition to Proposition 187, was much higher in the *Mercury News*. The data also showed that the *Mercury News* used more thematically framed articles that focused attention on contextual issues relating to Proposition 187 than did the *Register*. Both the *Mercury News* and the *Register* relied primarily on sources with European-American surnames, most of whom were political, special interest, private individual, or educational sources.

The differing frames that the *San Jose Mercury News* and the *Orange County Register* used can be partially attributed to the focus of the stories on Proposition 187,

where they were run in their papers, and whether they were staff written or stories from news services. The *Mercury News* had a much higher proportion of state and national news stories on Proposition 187—stories that tended to discuss immigration with a statewide or national focus. Twenty-three percent of the Proposition 187 stories in the *Mercury News* were from news services. In contrast, the *Register's* coverage was primarily local news articles that focused on local events concerning immigration and Proposition 187. Since both newspapers relied heavily on partisan political sources, the immigration debate coverage was polarized. The *Mercury News* and the *Register* ran very few comments from business, medical, and law enforcement sources, which would be very much affected by the passage of Proposition 187. The surnames of Proposition 187 sources in the two newspapers were primarily European-American sources who were cited in more than twice as many articles as Latino-American sources.

Discussion

Framing. Goffman (1974) referred to the schemata of interpretation as framed stereotypes that are attached to certain issues that easily relay the familiar features of a story. The frames used most frequently by the two newspapers were issues that involved an infringement of personal liberties or economic costs. California economy frames appeared less frequently than any of the other frames in the two newspapers, perhaps because of the complexity of the issue.

Newspaper comparison. In his study, Iyengar (1997) noted that the freeloader frame focused on cases of fraud and abuse. Similarly, in this study, newspaper coverage containing the freeloader frame focused on the negative impact of undocumented immigration upon education and social services. Many of the freeloader frames discussed the estimated cost of undocumented immigrants within California, equating undocumented immigration with persons taking advantage of the system. Nelson and Kinder (1996) said that group-centrism was the main motivation for the freeloader frame, conveyed by one group feeling as though another group is the main beneficiary. The cost of educating and medically treating undocumented immigrants was a common freeloader frame that was used more frequently in the *Orange County Register*.

Gitlin (1980) observed that media is compliant with the political-economic system they serve. Iyengar (1997) wrote that media depictions routinely place blame on defenseless individuals, rather than political institutions, a conclusion that was supported in this study. Coverage in the *Orange County Register* that included the freeloader and foreign invader frames placed blame on undocumented immigrants. However, this was not the case in *the San Jose Mercury News*. Instead, in the employer sanction and the witch-hunt frames, *Mercury News* sources attributed blame to the political-economic system that supported cheap labor for agricultural businesses in California.

Iyengar (1997) wrote that the media concentrates on cases of fraud and abuse, neglecting to cover stories in which recipients of government assistance are able to achieve financial independence. Neither of the newspapers reported many, if any, stories of undocumented immigrant success stories; the *Orange County Register* had a much higher proportion of freeloader frames that reported cases where undocumented immigrants were responsible for societal problems such as failing schools and healthcare costs.

Fernandez and Pedroza (1978) wrote that Latino immigrants are cast in a negative light during poor economic times. The preponderance of the freeloader frames in the *Orange County Register* supports this research. Ubbiali (1995) added that times of economic crisis in France were usually accorded with foreign immigration during the 1990s. As was the case with this analysis, the foreign invader frames communicated that immigrants were the impetus for economic problems that occurred during a time of national recession.

Nelson and Kinder (1996) wrote that ethnic minorities are connected with suspect moral character and homelessness in the media. Few articles from the *Orange County Register* attached individual stories to undocumented immigrants, leading to many impersonal depictions that only reinforced negative media depictions.

Episodic and thematic framing. Graber (2002) suggested that providing context for an issue promotes opinion but that singular events were an impetus for

reactive thinking. Many of the episodic articles from the *Orange County Register* can be attributed to the high frequency of local news stories that concentrated on personal experiences and sole events. The *San Jose Mercury News* had more stories with national and state headlines that focused upon antecedent factors related to undocumented immigration. The data indicates that the coverage in the *Register* was likely to encourage a negative reaction from the audience but that the *Mercury News* may have encouraged more thoughtful discussion about undocumented immigration.

Source affiliation. The main sources in each newspaper were the political, private individual, and special interest sources. There was no significant difference in the number of political sources used by each newspaper, but it was apparent that political sources took a stance for or against Proposition 187.

Nelson & Kinder (1996) noted that news media frames create the schemata for persons attempting to align themselves with one of the dominant positions. Special interest sources followed the same for or against paradigm as political sources; however, they were more likely to take a position that was wholeheartedly for or against Proposition 187. Entman (1989) noted that news stories emphasize a common sense approach to one side of a political proposition. Less polarized sources were rarely used during the Proposition 187 debate. Medical and business sources who had more professional contact with undocumented immigrants were cited much less frequently. The political sources who were cited to provide context on the complicated issue of immigration made statements that tended to polarize the

discussion on Proposition 187.

Source surname. Both newspapers had more articles with European surnames than articles with Latino surnames. This finding supports research by Gutierrez (1980) who noted that reporters tend to use sources outside the Mexican-American community to report on the Mexican-American community. Since Proposition 187 would have had a potentially adverse effect on Latino-Americans, the fact that the sources were primarily European American is problematic. Ben Bagdikian, former dean of the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California, Berkeley, noted: "I can imagine that a reporter who is reporting on that controversy (Prop. 187) who has a Hispanic name and is very fair might be seen as being biased simply because of the name, even when there isn't a problem" (Kalfus, 1994, November 2).

Contributions to Previous Literature

This study supports and extends the research on framing, especially the work done by Iyengar (1997) that researched poverty and social class as portrayed in American media. Additionally, the development of three new framing categories for this study can be used to study the framing of immigration and other social issues. A search of the literature indicates that this may be the first quantitative study done on the framing of immigration.

Directions for Further Research

Since 1994 when Californians voted on Proposition 187, immigration has become a very contentious national topic of debate. Framing studies of news

coverage of this debate need to be done. The immigration frames developed in this study could be used as the basis of a study of the Congressional debate on proposed immigration reform legislation.

A study on the Spanish-language media coverage of federal immigration reform would provide an excellent point of comparison. Since the Spanish-language media provide coverage of immigration, it would be interesting to compare their coverage of federal immigration reform with that of English-language media.

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Appendix

Codebook For Proposition 187 in the Two Newspapers

1. Article number (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)

Each article is numbered as follows:

- (1) Articles from the *San Jose Mercury News* are numbered from 1 to 124
- (2) Articles from the *Orange County Register* are numbered from 125 to 273

2. Newswire stories (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)

Stories that were taken from a news service source are as follows:

- (1) Articles from non-news service sources
- (2) Articles from news service sources

3. Story type (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 96%)

The section of each news article and editorial are as follows:

- (1) National
- (2) State
- (3) Local
- (4) Newspaper staff editorials
- (5) Opinion columns/commentaries
- (6) Letters to the editor

4. Article frame type (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 85%)

- (1) Episodic
- (2) Thematic
- (3) Both

Note: Episodic framing is coverage of singular events, such as demonstrations, campaign fundraisers, or specific crimes. Thematic framing is coverage of contextual information that analyzes and thoroughly explains issues.

5. Law breaker (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 97%)

A frame that depicts Latino-American immigrants as committing crimes or as fugitives of the law as measured by the number of paragraphs in the article that depict the frame.

6. Freeloader (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 93%)
A frame that portrays Latino-American immigrants as poor and dependent on government social services as depicted by the number of paragraphs in the article that depict the frame.

7. Foreign invader (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 93%)
A frame that depicts Latino-American immigrants as a force of cultural change as depicted by the number of paragraphs in the article that depict the frame.

8. Witch hunt (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 83%)
A frame that depicts the passage of Proposition 187 as endangering the individual liberties of immigrants as depicted by the number of paragraphs in the article that depict the frame.

9. Employer sanctions (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 92%)
A frame that advocates penalizing businesses and individuals that employ undocumented immigrants as depicted by the number of paragraphs in the article that depict the frame.

10. California state economy (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 99%)
A frame that predicts a downturn in the state economy if Proposition 187 is adopted and immigrant labor is no longer available as depicted by the number of paragraphs in the article that depict the frame.

11. Latino-American source (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 84%)
Source with Latino-American surname as determined by the 639 most common Spanish surnames listed by the U.S. Census Bureau.

12. European-American source (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 90%)
Source with European-American surname as validated by intercoder reliability.

13. Other ethnic (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 99%)
Source with surname not identified as being of European or Latino American origin as validated by intercoder reliability.

14. Political figures and campaign staff (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 93%)
Political figures and campaign staff for a federal, state or local election.

15. Special interest groups (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 87%)
Source affiliated with an organization supporting or opposing Proposition 187.

16. Private individual (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 99%)
Private individual depicted without affiliation to any group.

17. Education (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 89%)
Educators at primary, secondary, or college institutions.

18. Law enforcement (Scott's pi reliability coefficient – insufficient data to calculate)
Federal, state, or local law enforcement sources.

19. Medical (Scott's pi reliability coefficient – insufficient data to calculate)
Health professional employed by a hospital, clinic, or outpatient care center.

20. Clergy (Scott's pi reliability coefficient – insufficient data to calculate)
Ministers, priests, or other clergy.

21. Labor (Scott's pi reliability coefficient – insufficient data to calculate)
Representative of a labor union who provided an opinion on Proposition 187.

22. Business (Scott's pi reliability coefficient – insufficient data to calculate)
Source representing business interests.

23. Legal (Scott's pi reliability coefficient – insufficient data to calculate)
Source cited as a legal professional who provided an opinion of Proposition 187.

24. Research (Scott's pi reliability coefficient – insufficient data to calculate)
Non-partisan individual who provided statistical or contextual information.

25. Author (Scott's pi reliability coefficient – insufficient data to calculate)
Person identified as a contributor to a book, magazine, newspaper, or other
publication.