

MUNICIPAL IMMIGRATION ORDINANCES: AN ANALYSIS
OF NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF A
CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE

by

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Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
The University of Texas at Arlington in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

May 2009

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I must begin by saying thank you to my advisor and the chair of my thesis committee, Dr. Christie. I greatly appreciate his guidance and patience as I worked to complete my master's. I also want to thank the members of my committee, Dr. Clark and Dr. Hubbard. The spirited discussions that took place throughout the last six months helped to strengthen my thesis, and for that I am very grateful.

I also want to acknowledge my amazing family. Throughout my life my mother and grandparents have pushed me to pursue every opportunity that came my way. They not only supported my academic endeavors, but also filled my shoes when I had to miss my son's Cub Scout meeting or my daughter's soccer game in order to go to class or finish a paper. With that, I must also say how proud I am of my children, Ethan and Kayla. They are so very different, yet they are both such loving and giving children. They have been incredibly understanding of my schedule the last two years, and I look forward to being able to once again give them my undivided attention.

Finally, I want to say a big thank you to my dear friend Nigel Wheeler. Nigel has spent countless hours with me over the last two years discussing my coursework and thesis. At times I think he has more faith in my abilities than I do. What a blessing to have someone like him in my life.

April 13, 2009

ABSTRACT

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In 2006, the cities of Farmers Branch, Texas, and Hazleton, Pennsylvania, attempted to enact municipal immigration ordinances. The Farmers Branch ordinance would have banned apartment owners or managers from renting to undocumented immigrants, while the Hazleton ordinance targeted those who rent to undocumented immigrants and those who employ them. This study looked at the local immigration debate through attribute agenda-setting and framing approaches found in mass communication research. Using content analysis it identified how often the media mentioned attributes important to opponents and proponents of the ordinances, as well as how often reporters used proponents and opponents as sources. Results showed that the *Dallas Morning News* mentioned opponent attributes more frequently than proponent attributes, while the *Hazleton Standard-Speaker* mentioned proponent attributes more frequently than opponent attributes. It also looked at the frequency of the illegal “alien” frame, finding that reporters at the *Hazleton Standard-Speaker* more frequently used this term than did reporters for the *Dallas Morning News*.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In May 2007, Farmers Branch, Texas, a first-ring suburb of Dallas, became the first city in the nation to hold a public vote on an “illegal immigration” issue. Subsequently, Farmers Branch citizens became the first voters in the nation to approve a city ordinance banning landlords from renting to most undocumented immigrants. The election drew the largest voter turn-out in city history, with 3,999 people casting a ballot, 68 percent of them in favor of Ordinance 2903 (Dallas County Elections, 2007).

While Farmers Branch residents were the first to vote on a municipal immigration ordinance, the city itself was not the first to propose such a law. The first “of the contemporary crop of municipal All (anti-illegal immigrant) ordinances was proposed in April 2006, in San Bernardino, California” (Oliveri, 2008, p. 59). That ordinance was voted down by the city council, but just months after it failed, the city council in Hazleton, Pennsylvania, approved a similar ordinance. Hazleton’s Illegal Immigration Relief Act not only made it against the law to rent to illegal immigrants, but also to employ them. Since that ordinance was approved, at least 105 municipalities have considered similar ordinances (Oliveri, 2008). Many focus on restrictions on renting to illegal immigrants, but these ordinances often contain a number of additional provisions: “they make English the official language of the municipality, eliminate gathering places for day laborers, penalize employers for hiring unauthorized immigrants, [and] restrict unauthorized immigrants’ access to public benefits” (Oliveri, 2008, p. 57).

While Hazleton’s ordinance was the inspiration for a number of municipalities, it has yet to actually go into effect. Soon after it was approved in June 2006, lawsuits were filed against the city. In March 2007, the ordinance was debated before a federal judge during a two-week trial. This trial was the first in the nation in which a federal judge was asked to rule on the

constitutionality of a municipal immigration ordinance. In July 2007, the judge announced his decision to strike down the ordinance. Federal Judge Munley (2007) stated:

Even if federal law did not conflict with Hazleton's measures, the City could not enact an ordinance that violates rights the Constitution guarantees to every person in the United States, whether legal resident or not. The genius of our Constitution is that it provides rights even to those who evoke the least sympathy from the general public. In that way, all in this nation can be confident of equal justice under its laws. Hazleton, in its zeal to control the presence of a group deemed undesirable, violated the rights of such people, as well as others within the community. Since the United States Constitution protects even the disfavored, the ordinances cannot be enforced (Munley, 2007, p. 189-190).

Illegal immigration is a controversial and emotional public policy issue. As of this writing, the federal government has been unable to pass comprehensive immigration reform, which has resulted in cities and states attempting to pass their own laws or ordinances that deter immigrants from calling certain cities homes. There are many sides to the immigration debate. Some opponents of municipal immigration ordinances believe these ordinances are divisive and discriminatory, while some proponents of the ordinances argue that municipalities are being negatively impacted, both economically and socially, by illegal immigrants and must take a stand.

But what messages about immigrants and immigration are reporters presenting to the public in their coverage of municipal immigration ordinances? Do they present a balanced portrait of the debate or focus more on the issues addressed by one side? This thesis will answer those questions in relation to newspaper coverage in Farmers Branch and Hazleton. But first it is important to understand the history of these cities and their efforts to curb illegal immigration.

1.1 Farmers Branch

Immigration became a hot topic in the city of Farmers Branch in 2006, when city councilors first began discussing and later approved an ordinance that would make it harder for illegal immigrants to settle in their city. The issue came to the forefront at a time when the number of Hispanics living in the city was on the rise, as Census Bureau statistics show.

1.1.1 City Demographics

As a suburb of Dallas, Farmers Branch has seen a dramatic shift in its demographics in the past 20 years. The 1990 census found that 20.2 percent of the nearly 25,000 people in Farmers Branch were of Hispanic origin (Census, 2001). By 2000, the percentage of Hispanics living in the community had jumped to 37.2 percent (2001). The same census found that statewide, Hispanics represented 32 percent of the Texas population, while Hispanics represented only 12.5 percent of the US population (Census 2000 Brief, 2001). But the most recent studies show that the number of Hispanics in Farmers Branch has jumped considerably. The city is now considered to be “majority minority,” with the 2005-2007 American Community Survey finding that 46.7 percent of the Farmers Branch population is Hispanic, while 46.1 percent is white (ACS, 2008).

No one can say exactly how many of those who live in Farmers Branch may be undocumented immigrants, but a Brookings Institute study (Puentes & Warren, 2006) did look at first ring suburbs, such as Farmers Branch. The study defines a “first suburb” as “those places that developed first after their center city, before or during the rapid suburban expansion right after World War II” (p.1). It found that “29 percent of America’s foreign born live in first suburbs – up from 26 percent in 1970” (p. 14). In fact the “share of racial and ethnic minorities living in first suburbs more than doubled between 1980 and 2000 and now makes up fully one-third of the first suburban population” (p. 7). The study states that first suburbs face a number of challenges thanks to their new residents, including “issues such as language barriers, education and health

care challenges, and work force supports” (p.14). Many of those issues would be addressed by Farmers Branch city councilors during the immigration debate.

1.1.2 Farmers Branch Ordinances

On August 21, 2006, the city council discussed in open session the need for regulations that would make it difficult for illegal immigrants to live in Farmers Branch. Possible regulations included those that would penalize business owners who employ immigrants or apartment owners who rent to them (Sandoval, 2006, August 21). They also discussed the possibility of making English the official language and eliminating subsidies for illegal immigrants in the city's youth programs. Mayor Bob Phelps stated to the press that he felt immigration reform was a federal issue and feared that if the city pursued these options that it would be sued. Meanwhile, City Councilor Tim O'Hare was pushing the idea, stating,

The reason I got on the city council was because I saw our property values declining or increasing at a level that was below the rate of inflation. When that happens, people move out of our neighborhoods, and what I would call less desirable people move into the neighborhoods, people who don't value education, people who don't value taking care of their properties (Sandoval, 2006, August 21, p.1).

The reporter went on to quote O'Hare as saying that illegal immigrants were “large cause” of Farmers Branch's problems (Sandoval, 2006, August 21). The discussion was met with approval by many, but also cries of racism and threats of lawsuits (Sandoval, 2006, August 22, p.1). The following day civil rights and several Hispanic organizations called for both a boycott of Farmers Branch businesses and the recall of Councilor Tim O'Hare (Sandoval, August 23, 2006).

In November 2006, Farmers Branch city councilors approved, in a 6-0 vote, Ordinance 2892. It required “apartment renters to provide proof of citizenship or residency” (Sandoval, 2006, November 14, p. 1). Apartment owners and managers who rented to those without such

proof would be fined (2006). In addition to passing Ordinance 2892, the council also adopted an ordinance making English the official language, and one that allowed local police officers to check the immigration status of anyone who was arrested (Garay, 2006, November 14).

Just days later several city councilors appeared on the show "Insights," hosted by KDFW-TV Reporter Shaun Rabb (2006). During the show, supporters of the ordinance, such as O'Hare and Farmers Branch resident David Koch (who would run for, and win, a city council seat in May 2007) stated that the ordinance was necessary, not just because of property values, but also because of an increase in crime, including a drive-by shooting in which the "two alleged perpetrators were illegal immigrants" (Rabb, 2006, p. 2).

By December, several lawsuits had been filed against the city. One lawsuit filed in state court claimed the councilors violated the Texas Open Meetings Act by voting on the ordinance without publicly discussing it first, and by discussing the issue exclusively in closed door executive sessions (Sandoval, 2006, December 6). Other federal lawsuits were filed claiming the ordinance was unconstitutional (Aasen, 2006, December 27). In addition, a community group called "Let the Voters Decide" formed and began a petition drive, requesting that the city put the ordinance to a public vote (Sandoval, 2006, December 14).

In January 2007, the council decided to rescind Ordinance 2892, and instead adopted Ordinance 2903, a similar, but revised ordinance (McGee, 2007, January 23). The councilors stated that the new ordinance would not go into effect until after a public vote in May (2007). That left five months for two opposing sides to battle in the community and in the press for support and votes.

Discussions in the media, and in the town, revolved around such things as crime, property values, the quality of schools and the need to stand up for the rule of law (McGee, Feb. 5, 2007). The two opposing sides, "Let the Voters Decide" (an opposition group) and "Support Farmers Branch" (a proponent group), sent out letters, made phone calls, held voter registration drives and created yard signs in hopes of swaying voters (Payne, 2007, March 27). On May 12,

2007, Ordinance 2903 was approved by voters. Three thousand, nine-hundred and ninety-nine people cast a ballot, 68 percent in favor of the ordinance (Dallas County Elections, 2007). The vote marked the largest voter turnout in Farmers Branch history (Yonder, 2007, May 12), as well as the first time in the nation that a municipality had passed an immigration ordinance by public vote.

Within two weeks of the vote, lawyers with the Bickel & Brewer Storefront and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) filed separate lawsuits against the city, claiming the ordinance was unconstitutional. In the summer of 2007, a federal judge issued a preliminary, and then a permanent injunction. These injunctions blocked the city from enforcing the ordinance until the case could be heard in a federal court (Sandoval, 2007, June 20).

With 2903 temporarily blocked, Farmers Branch city councilors opted to adopt a new ordinance, Ordinance 2952. This ordinance would take effect only after a court ruling on Ordinance 2903 (Ordinance 2952, 2007). That ruling came on August 28, 2008. U.S. District Judge Sam A. Lindsay issued a final injunction, permanently blocking the city from enforcing Ordinance 2903 (Villas at Parkside Partners v. The City of Farmers Branch, 2008). As Farmers Branch began plans to implement 2952, several lawsuits were once again filed against the city. In September 2007, the city of Farmers Branch stated publicly that it had decided not to appeal the decision on Ordinance 2903 (Trejo & Sandoval, 2008, September 30). Instead, the city decided to focus on preparing for the federal court trial on the constitutionality of Ordinance 2952, which is temporarily blocked by a permanent injunction.

To date, the city of Farmers Branch has spent more than 1.7 million dollars for legal expenses related to Ordinance 2903 and 2952 (Garay, 2009, April 8). But the expenses do not end there. Because the city lost its case related to Ordinance 2903, a judge has ruled that the city must pay a combined 470-thousand dollars to those that sued the city - the Bickel & Brewer

Storefront and advocacy organizations, such as MALDEF and the American Civil Liberties Union of Texas (ACLU).

1.2 Hazleton

While Farmers Branch has already spent more than two million dollars attempting to enact ordinances that target those who rent to illegal immigrants, Hazleton, Pennsylvania, took things one step further – targeting not just those who rent to illegal immigrants, but those who employ them. To understand why this became an issue at the forefront of the city council's agenda though, one must look at the changing demographics in Hazleton.

1.2.1 City Demographics

Hazleton is located in the Pocono Mountains in northeastern Pennsylvania. Until the 1930's, Hazleton was a coal mining town, populated by thousands of immigrants from such places as Ireland, Italy and Poland (Powell & Garcia, 2006). But when the mines closed, many of Hazleton's citizens left, and the city spent decades trying to revive its lackluster economy. As Powell and Garcia (2006, August 22) noted:

...the big change came half a decade back when Latinos -- Puerto Ricans, who are citizens of the United States, and Dominicans -- began driving west on Interstate 80, fleeing the high housing prices and cacophony of inner-city New York, Philadelphia and Providence. They found in Hazleton a city with an industrial base and cheap housing (an old Victorian could be had for \$40,000 five years ago).

Latino-owned markets, restaurants and clothing stores sprang up along Wyoming Street, and property values tripled. Hazleton's population has jumped from 23,000 to 31,000 in the past six years (p. 3).

The demographics of this small town have changed dramatically. In 2000, Hispanics accounted for just three percent of the population (Buffer, 2006, June 14). By 2005, there were an estimated 6,000 Hispanic immigrants living in Hazleton, equating to 23 to 29 percent of the

city's population (Buffer, June 14, 2006). Media reports cited one major reason for the influx of immigrants: the opening of Cargill Solutions, a meat distribution plant (Podsada, 2005, November 15). Other reasons included tax breaks that the state of Pennsylvania began offering in the mid-1990s. These tax breaks attracted new businesses, including factories, distribution centers and office parks - many of which employed unskilled labor (Kroft, 2006). Immigrants from the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Puerto Rico and Mexico all came to Hazelton, many to take low-paying jobs that people within the community were unwilling to do (Podsada, 2005).

1.2.2 Illegal Immigration Relief Act

While no one can say how many of those Hispanic residents were illegal immigrants, by 2005, the city was facing a number of problems – problems discussed in a CBS *60 Minutes* segment in 2006 (Kroft, 2006). As the program noted:

At the hospitals, un-reimbursed medical expenses for things like emergency room visits are up by 60 percent. Public school enrollments are up 25 percent. And the budget for teaching English as a second language has gone from \$500 a year to more than \$875,000. There are no statistics to corroborate that any of these increases are directly related to illegal immigrants because they have been almost invisible here, and indistinguishable from legal members of the immigrant community (Kroft, 2006, p.1).

By 2005, Hazelton Mayor Lou Barletta was openly discussing the need to identify illegal immigrants working in his community. One article in December 2005 noted a trip Barletta took to Washington, D.C., where he “inquired about the possibility of locating a sub-office of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Bureau of Immigration and Custom’s Enforcement in Northeastern Pennsylvania” (Mocarsky, 2005, December 12). The article stated that Barletta had “expressed concerns that illegal aliens living and working in the city are straining local government services” (p. 1). But the tipping point, the event that Barletta says pushed him to

pass the Illegal Immigration Reform Act, was the May 11, 2006, murder of a Hazelton resident. Twenty-nine year old Derek Kichline was shot in the head at point-blank range while standing in front of his home (Davidson, 2006, May 13). Two illegal immigrants were arrested for the murder.

One month later, on June 14, 2006, the media announced that Barletta was proposing an ordinance to deal with the possible influx of illegal immigrants. Barletta was quoted by the media as saying, "I don't want them here in Hazelton. They're not wanted. ...The jobs most work are selling drugs. Many I am dealing with are not law-abiding citizens" (Buffer, 2006, June 14, p.1). He went on to say that he knew many of the city's new residents were a productive part of the community, but that "a group of people are here illegally, not paying taxes, using city resources, and I have just had enough of it" (Buffer, 2006, June 14, p. 1).

Under the Illegal Immigration Relief Act Ordinance "the city would reject a business permit, the renewal of a business permit and city contracts or grants for a period of not less than five years from a business's last offense – hiring or attempting to hire an illegal alien, renting or leasing to illegal aliens, or funding or aiding in the establishment of a day laborer center that does not verify legal work status" (Buffer, June 14, 2006, p. 1). It should be noted that reporter's description of the ordinance most likely included the term "illegal alien" because the ordinance referred to these undocumented or illegal immigrants as "aliens," as opposed to the Farmers Branch ordinance which referred to them as "illegal immigrants."

On July 14, 2006, the Illegal Immigration Relief Act Ordinance was officially discussed and voted on by the city council. Prior to the vote, several speakers came forward, including Anna Arias, a Dominican working for Catholic Social Services, who stated, "If you pass this, you will go down in history as the council that made this city the first Nazi city in the country" (Sheehan, 2006, July 15, p.1). Her statement led to "catcalls," as reporters noted that most in attendance supported the ordinance (p.1). After a 4-1 vote, Barletta, wearing a bulletproof vest,

officially signed the Relief Act. The media noted that the ordinance was thought to be “the toughest of its kind in the country” (p.1).

On August 15, 2006, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and an Hispanic advocacy group filed suit against the city of Hazleton, stating in a press release that the ordinance “is bad for the community, is unconstitutional and will foster rampant discrimination” (ACLU, 2006, August 15, p.1). The suit was filed on behalf of nearly a dozen Hazleton residents and business owners, as well as three non-profits. It stated that the ordinance “violates the U.S. Constitution’s Supremacy Clause because it seeks to override federal law and the exclusive federal power over immigration” (p.1).

On October 31, 2006, a federal judge issued a temporary order blocking the city from enforcing the ordinance until the issue could be addressed in court (Hurdle, 2006, October 31). In the court of public opinion though, survey results indicated Pennsylvanians supported these new measures. That same month Susquehannah Polling found that 65 percent of Pennsylvanians supported the ordinance, and 63 percent would support similar ordinances in their own cities (Susquehannah Polling, October 2006).

Over the next few months the city of Hazleton revised the Illegal Immigration Relief Act (Munley, 2007), even while lawsuits continued to be filed against the city. Ultimately none of those suits were as successful as the one filed by the ACLU, which went before a judge in a federal trial on March 12, 2007. The federal trial was a first – the very first case that would determine if municipalities had the right to pass their own immigration reform measures (Rubinkam, 2007, March 11). Much of the trial focused on the crime rate within the city (Worden, 2007, March 22). The city attempted to link the crime rate with the rise in the “number of illegal immigrants and the arrival of Hispanic gangs,” while the prosecution worked to prove that there was no such link (p. 1). The prosecution also argued that the “very threat of the ordinance has created a climate of fear that has harmed members of the law abiding immigrant

community” (Worden, 2007, March 23, p. 1). The trial lasted two weeks, but it would take several months before a ruling was announced.

On July 26, 2007, the federal court declared that the ordinance was unconstitutional. In his ruling, Judge James M. Munley wrote,

We cannot say clearly enough that persons who enter this country without legal authorization are not stripped immediately of all their rights because of this single act... The United States Supreme Court has consistently interpreted [the 14th Amendment] to apply to all people present in the United States, whether they were born here, immigrated here through legal means, or violated federal law to enter the country (ACLU, 2007, July 26, p.1).

In response to the court’s decision, Barletta told the media that the ruling was “bizarre” and stated, “This was a case where a federal judge protected the rights of anonymous illegal aliens. This fight’s far from over” (North Jersey Media Group, 2007, July 27, p.1). Currently, the case is on appeal. The city has paid for most of the legal fight with funds from its Legal Defense Fund, but is also being asked to pay the prosecutions two million dollar legal bill, if approved by a judge (Jackson, 2008, October 31).

1.3 Thesis Overview

Farmers Branch and Hazleton made history for different, yet similar reasons. Farmers Branch was the first city in which voters were asked to, and subsequently approved, a municipal immigration ordinance. Hazleton was the first city in which city councilors approved a municipal immigration ordinance, and it was later the first to have its ordinance tried in federal court to determine whether it was constitutional. Ordinances in both cities have thus far been rejected by the courts, but unless the federal government takes action, it is likely that similar ordinances will continue to be considered.

On this important issue of public policy, communications research is needed that looks into newspaper coverage of this issue. This thesis will determine which attributes of the immigration issue were being delivered to the public by opponents and proponents of municipal immigration ordinances in Farmers Branch and Hazleton. In turn, it investigates which of these attributes local newspaper reporters focused on in their reporting on both of these cities' immigration battles. It also looks at who these reporters chose to quote in stories about the immigration ordinances. Finally, it uses framing analysis to determine how many of the immigration articles used the term illegal "alien." But before discussing the methodology used in this thesis and the results, we review previous literature on several theories and issues that are pertinent to this thesis.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In 1963, political scientist Bernard Cohen wrote, “The press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about” (p. 120). McCombs and Shaw (1972) expanded upon that statement with the creation of the agenda-setting theory, sparking decades of research into the effect the media has on its readers or viewers. This thesis looks at municipal immigration ordinances through the lens of not only agenda-setting, but also attribute agenda-setting and framing. In addition, it reviews literature on small versus large newspapers, media bias, and immigration.

2.1 Agenda-Setting

Researchers have spent nearly four decades looking at agenda-setting, or the idea that “those aspects of public affairs that are prominent in the news, become prominent among the public” (McCombs, 2005, p.543). The research on this topic first began with McCombs and Shaw (1972), who investigated if Chapel Hill, North Carolina, voters would say that the key issues of the 1968 presidential campaign mirrored the key issues addressed in the media. They found that “voters tend to share the media’s composite definition of what is important,” which “strongly suggests an agenda-setting function of the mass media” (p. 184). They wrote that, “In choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff, and broadcasters play an important part in shaping political reality” (p. 176).

Since the Chapel Hill study was published more than 400 studies on agenda-setting have been conducted (McCombs, 2005). A large number of those have focused on political issues such as who is setting the agenda – politicians or the media (Wanta and Foote, 1994).

Winter and Eyal (1981) looked at agenda-setting and the civil rights issue, finding strong support for the agenda-setting theory. In addition to supporting McCombs and Shaw's (1972) research, Winter and Eyal (1981) found that for the civil rights issue, "the optimal effect span is the four- to six-week period immediately prior to fieldwork" (p. 381).

Traditional media sources, such as newspapers, are quickly being supplemented or replaced by online news coverage. This shift has resulted in studies on the agenda-setting influence within this new medium. Coleman and McCombs (2007) looked at three generations, finding that despite their reliance on non-traditional media, younger generations were still impacted by the same media agenda as those who use traditional media sources. As Coleman and McCombs (2007) noted, part of the reason for this may be that a majority of news Web sites are run by traditional news outlets. Lee (2007) though, found that even blogs that are not owned by the traditional news media follow the agenda of the mainstream press. His study looked at eight popular political blogs during the 2004 U.S. presidential election.

In general, agenda-setting studies all look at the "basic relationship between the media agenda and the public agenda" (McCombs, 2004, p. 67), or the transmission of issue salience. As Kim, Scheufele and Shanahan (2002) explained, "by emphasizing or frequently mentioning particular issues, the media increase the salience of these issues among the public" (p. 11). But McCombs (2004) emphasizes that "although the frequency of media coverage is usually the best single predictor of salience on the public agenda, the accuracy of this prediction is significantly honed by knowledge about what degree of need for orientation exists among the public" (p. 60). For instance, some issues impact our day to day lives, giving us a personal point of reference when considering an issue. These issues are considered obtrusive issues. Issues that we may encounter only in the news though are unobtrusive issues. We may rely more heavily on the media to provide a basis for understanding the significance of these issues. This idea was supported by Salwen (1987) who found that those "who depended on the media for

information about the environment showed a stronger relationship with the media's agenda than the nondependent respondents" (p. 26).

Immigration is one of those issues that may not be salient to a significant portion of the public (Dunaway, Abrajano, and Branton, 2007), but research shows that through agenda-setting, the media can in fact influence issue and attribute salience. In their research, Branton and Dunaway (2006) found that news organizations close to the US-Mexico border wrote a higher volume of articles about Latino immigration, than did media organizations in states that did not sit on the border. A follow-up to that study determined that after a high-profile pro-immigration protest there was a dramatic increase in media coverage on the topic of immigration nationwide (Dunaway et al., 2007). In turn people across the nation, not just in border states, suddenly viewed immigration as a major problem facing the country. The researchers viewed this as evidence that "the power of agenda-setting holds across issues that may not be nationally salient to the entire American public" (2007, p.1).

But how does this emphasis on immigration, through agenda-setting, impact peoples' pre-existing feelings about immigrants or minorities? Oliver and Wong (2003) found that "with the exception of Asian Americans, people who live among more people of their own race or ethnicity tend to harbor greater negative stereotypes about minority out-groups" (p. 573). Branton and Dunaway (2006) to state that, in relation to people living in border states, existing perceptions of threat may be "exacerbated by a heightened salience of these issues, and a disproportionate focus on the negative aspects of these issues" (p. 23). Thus, increased media coverage can lead people who may already feel threatened by minorities to feel that immigration-related problems are an even bigger concern than they may have considered them previously. This discussion of negative or positive coverage leads us to the second level of agenda-setting, or the "transmission of attribute salience" (McCombs, 2004, p. 70).

2.2 Attribute Agenda-Setting

This second level explores the qualitative aspects of a news story, or the “characteristics and properties that fill out the picture of each object” that we create in our own mind” (McCombs, 2004, p. 70). As McCombs explained, “it is the agenda of attributes that define an issue and in some instances tilt public opinion towards a particular perspective or preferred solution” (p. 82). McCombs believes that the ability to set the “agenda of attributes for an issue is the epitome of political power” (p. 82).

The issue of attribute agenda-setting has been studied since the 1970s. One landmark study by Cohen (1975) looked at a local environmental issue – the creation of a man-made lake. Cohen found that newspaper coverage significantly influenced the citizen’s perception of the lake. Rill and Davis (2008) found a similar result by conducting an experiment in a controlled laboratory setting, asking respondents to read a story about the 2006 war in Lebanon and then describe their perception of Israel and Hezbollah. Open-ended data indicated that “research participants attributed qualities, ideas, and actions to Hezbollah and Israel consistent with the qualities, ideas, and actions attributed to Hezbollah and Israel in the news stories they had read” (p. 620).

In 2002, Kim et. al looked at media coverage of a controversial commercial development area in Ithaca, New York. Although the city approved of the development of the property, which would be filled with big-box retail stores, opposition groups quickly spoke out about potentially “negative consequences of the development” (p. 12). The authors noted that:

These findings may support the idea that issue attributes salient in the media will become significant determinants of issue evaluations among the audience. Mass media, by placing varying degrees of emphasis, may influence the importance of particular issue attributes as dimensions of issue evaluation” (p. 20).

Kim, et al. (2002) identified six major attributes of the issue based on the “pro” and “anti” development opinions of the development (p. 12). For instance:

...Opponents of the plan were concerned about its negative impacts on local economy: (1) Damage to Small/Local Businesses. They argued that large chain-stores in Southwest Park would be putting local establishments out of business, swallowing up a significant amount of local capital (p. 12).

By conducting a content analysis, it was found that the media focused most on three attributes of the story – two of which came from opponents of the development. The study then went on to discuss the results of a telephone survey, which asked residents about their opinion of the attributes and the development in general. Ultimately, the issue attributes that the media focused on, were the issue attributes that were significant for readers.

This thesis takes a similar approach to the study by Kim et al. (2002), looking at key attributes of the immigration issue in both Hazleton and Farmers Branch. Just as that study investigated attributes from proponents and opponents of the development, this study will look at attributes from proponents and opponents of the municipal immigration ordinances, in order to determine how often these messages appeared in media coverage.

While no studies have looked at attribute agenda-setting and municipal immigration ordinances, several have looked at attribute agenda-setting and immigration. Tied into the single-issue of immigration, Branton and Dunaway (2006) state that attribute agenda-setting “suggests that by highlighting the negative aspects associated with immigration and Latino immigration, local media outlets increase the salience of these negative aspects in the minds of citizens, and by doing so influence their evaluation of the issue of immigration as a whole” (p. 3). This finding makes it all the more important to look at whether the media focuses on negative or positive attributes of municipal immigration ordinances.

2.3 Framing

It is not enough to look solely at agenda-setting and attribute agenda-setting though. In regards to this study, one must look at framing. This thesis hypothesizes that the word “alien,” in reference to “illegal aliens,” will be found far more often in coverage of the Hazleton ordinance, than in coverage of the Farmers Branch ordinance. The reason for this assertion is that the city of Hazleton specifically used the term “illegal alien” in its ordinance, whereas the city of Farmers Branch used the term “illegal immigrant.” As will be discussed in this section, researchers like Lakoff and Ferguson (Rockridge Institute, 2006) believe the word “alien” makes people look at these immigrants in a specific way, framing these immigrants as people who are much different than the average citizen.

Framing can be traced back to Goffman’s 1974 book, *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*, which has been referenced in follow-up studies – including one by Entman (1993), in which he explained that “to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation” (p. 52). Whereas agenda-setting and attribute agenda-setting look at the “correlation between the emphasis that mass media place on certain issues and the importance attributed to these issues by mass audiences” (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p. 11), framing is based on the idea that “how an issues is characterized in news reports can have an influence on how it is understood by audiences” (p. 11). Tewksbury, Jones, Peske Raymond and Vig (2000) created an experiment to test this idea, subjecting respondents to several frames about large-scale hog farms. Results showed that “three weeks after subjects’ exposure to a single news article about a potentially obscure political issue, the relative weight of frames in the story still mattered” (p. 819).

Framing is based on the “assumption that subtle changes in the wording of the description of a situation might affect how audience members interpret this situation”

(Scheufele, 2000, p. 309). One study that looked at stories from four major U.S. newspapers “showed that the ‘illegal’ attribute was the most frequently used to identify immigrants” (Kim, 2007, p 1). The use of the word “illegal” was looked at extensively by Lakoff and Ferguson (Rockridge Institute, 2006). Their Rockridge Institute (2006) paper stated that the phrase “‘illegal alien’ not only stresses criminality, but stresses otherness” (p. 4). They believe that linguistic expressions are not neutral and that “each framing defines the problem in its own way, and hence constrains the solutions needed to address that problem” (p. 1).

Craig (2008) conducted a qualitative study of national newspaper coverage of immigration reform issues during August 2005, April 2006, and October 2006. Craig (2008) found in her research that during this time journalists were rarely referring to immigrants as “aliens, yet coverage continues to present immigrants as an other and as a result may perpetuate racist stereotypes or xenophobia *qua* nationalism” (p. 29). That coverage consistently referred to them instead as “illegal,” and by doing so Craig (2008) stated these immigrants were being represented as a distinct group clearly “distanced from Americans by virtue of the fact that they are ‘illegal’” (p. 29). Craig (2008) took issue with the idea that while immigrants were referred to as illegal, the employers who gave them work were not.

Use of the term “illegal alien” has been phased out by a number of newspapers and is no longer endorsed by the *AP Stylebook* (2008), which in 2008 announced it supported the use of the term “illegal immigrant.” But even the use of the term “illegal immigrant” has come under fire from the National Association of Hispanic Journalists. In 2006, the association released its guidelines for covering immigration, which stated that using the word “illegal” is “grammatically incorrect and crosses the line by criminalizing the person, not the action they are purported to have committed” (NAHJ, 2007, p. 1). It instead recommended use of the terms “undocumented immigrant or undocumented worker, both of which are terms that convey the same descriptive information without carrying the psychological baggage” (p. 1).

Not all frames are as transparent as the “illegal alien” or “illegal immigrant” frame. Santa Ana (1999) found, through a data-driven metaphor analysis, that in 1994 in the *Los Angeles Times* a dominant immigration metaphor was that “immigrants are animals” (p. 200). Articles referring to immigrants used phrases such as “lured, pitted or baited” (p. 200). At the time, California voters were preparing to vote on Proposition 187, which is considered an anti-immigrant proposition, one that would have denied benefits such as education and non-emergency health care to undocumented immigrants.

While there is currently no known research in the communications field on municipal immigration laws and framing, there are several studies on Proposition 187 and framing (Santa Anna, 1999; Adas, 2007). In 2007, Adas looked at this statewide initiative, which was adopted by a majority of California voters, yet ultimately rejected by federal and state judges – much like the ordinance in Farmers Branch. Adas conducted a content analysis of two California newspapers, finding that each paper stuck to specific frames – with the *Orange County Register* focusing on “freeloader” and “foreign invader” frames, which supported the proposition, while the *San Jose Mercury News* focused on “employer sanction” and “witch-hunt” frames, which opposed the proposition. It should be noted that Adas pointed out that the two papers had numerous reasons for consciously or unconsciously catering to one side of the debate versus the other. For example, the *Orange County Register* served a primarily Republic, conservative reader. It was also the hometown of the two people who helped draft the proposition. On the other hand, *The Mercury News* served “one of the most ethnically diverse populations in the United States,” and this population also consisted primarily of registered Democrats (p. 24).

In their book on Proposition 187, Ono and Sloop (2002) wrote, “[immigration] rhetoric shifts borders, changing what they mean publicly, influencing public policy, altering the ways borders affect people, and circumscribing political responses” (p. 5). The media play a role in influencing how we define immigrants, but also how we view the economic, social and security issues surrounding immigration. These issues can all impact our feelings about immigration

reform policy. In support of this notion, Merolla and Pantoja (2008) found that all “frames, to varying degrees, matter when it comes to shaping feelings toward legal and illegal immigrants; shaping specific beliefs about the economic, social and border consequences of immigration; and with respect to how these feelings and beliefs are weighted in overall support for differing policy proposals” (p. 26). Thus, “should the dominant civic discourse on immigration highlight the adverse economic, social or symbolic consequences of legal and illegal immigration, then general attitudes toward immigrants are likely to harden among the American public” (Merolla and Pantoja, 2008, p. 29). This gives credence to the idea that the frames used by the media in Farmers Branch and Hazleton may have affected support for or opposition to these local immigration policy matters.

DeFrancesco Soto and Perez (2006) offer one example of how framing influences attitudes and possible core beliefs. Using a framing-effects approach, they looked at whether Americans could be encouraged to culturally accept foreigners, by presenting research subjects with a cultural-maintenance frame and a cultural-change frame. One asked whether it was important for Latinos to “maintain their distinct cultures,” while the other asked if it was important for Latinos to “change so that they blend into the larger society” (DeFrancesco Soto & Perez, 2006, p. 12). The assumption was that frames would not impact people’s opinions, but ultimately they found that “attitudes are not as hard-cast as previously thought. Instead, they are sensitive to the type and availability of information one has about the actors involved in the issue at hand” (2006, p. 18). The idea that Americans could be influenced by the frames cut “against previous research suggesting Americans’ disdain for groups perceived as actively preserving their language and customs (2006, p. 18).

2.4 Small v. Large Newspapers

Different papers do adopt different standards for covering certain stories, such as those regarding immigration. These standards may reflect community values or a paper’s journalistic ethics. Editor and Publisher’s 2008 report found there were a total of 1,456 daily newspapers in

America. Of those, the majority had a circulation of 50,000 or less. In fact, just 36 of the papers had a circulation of 250,000 or more. Given these numbers, *The Dallas Morning News*, which will be looked at in order to review coverage of immigration ordinances in Farmers Branch, would easily qualify as a “large” paper, as it has a daily circulation of just over 335,000. With a circulation of just 20,000, the *Hazleton Standard-Speaker*, which we will look at when reviewing newspaper coverage in Hazleton, Pennsylvania, would fall in the “small” newspaper category. In fact, the *Hazleton Standard-Speaker’s* circulation is below the national circulation average of 36,739 (Editor and Publisher, 2008).

Small-town papers, such as the *Hazleton Standard-Speaker*, serve a vital role within the communities they serve. As Mohl (2003) noted, these community papers are often the only place citizens can turn for local news, which is not the case for people who live in larger communities such as New York City, Chicago, or Dallas. In addition, “rural communities are not usually as diverse as large cities, and that means that each paper has a very specific – and unique – readership” (p. 3). The journalists who report in these cities often value community involvement more than personal detachment, “depending on the role each paper has identified for itself” (p. 3). Reader (2006) came to a similar conclusion when he noted that smaller papers have fewer resources, smaller staffs and are typically more “intimate” with their audiences (p. 852). But Reader’s study (2006) focused on ethical differences, finding that “at larger newspapers, the emphasis seems to be to preserve the reputation of the institution of the newspaper, whereas at smaller newspapers the starting point seems to be to manage journalists’ individual connections with their communities” (p. 861). The study also found that when it came to dealing with sensitive issues, small-town editors stated that “community values were often given priority over journalistic values,” whereas the larger papers tended to focus solely on the journalistic value (p. 861).

2.5 Media Bias

As professionals, most journalists are expected to serve the public by giving them objective reports on issues that are politically unbiased and that impact their communities and lives. As Dennis (1984) explained, “Objectivity in journalism or science does not mean that all decisions do not have underlying values, only that within the ‘rules of the game’ a systematic attempt is made to achieve an impartial report” (p. 118). A former journalist himself, Berry (2005) stated that objectivity is the ideal and defined it as “a standard the requires journalists to try to put aside emotions and prejudices, including those implanted by the spinners and manipulators who meet them at every turn, as they gather and present the facts” (p. 16).

Many newspapers and television news stations operate under a “code of ethics.” In 1999, The American Society of Newspaper Editors had two media ethicists review the guidelines written by 33 news organizations (Steele and Black, 1999). The codes of ethics they reviewed ranged from just 500 words (*The Arizona Republic*, Phoenix, Arizona) to 8,000 words (*The Daily Press of Newport News*, Newport News, Virginia). The codes touched upon numerous issues, including conflict of interest, confidential sources, editorial independence and diversity issues and racial identification. As Steel and Black wrote,

Carefully written codes highlight and anticipate ethical dilemmas so we don’t all have to reinvent a decision-making process each time we fact a new dilemma; they inspire us about our unique roles and responsibilities; they make each of us custodians of our profession’s values and behaviors, and inspire us to emulate the best of our profession; they promote front end, proactive decision-making, before our decision ‘go public.’ (p. 1).

While traditional media outlets tend to operate under a set of ethical guidelines, the public does not always trust the media to be unbiased about political issues, or even credible. In fact, as reporter Harry Stein described in a 2002 article, the media is often viewed as “distinctly liberal in character” and even hostile towards those with alternative views (Scholar, 2002,

February 13, p. 1). A 2008 report on “The State of the News Media,” by the Pew Project for Excellence in the Media, found that only 22 percent of Americans believed most or all of what was reported by their daily newspaper. A decade ago, that number was 40 percent. While this may appear alarming, these respondents actually reported that they viewed their local daily paper as more credible than *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, the Associated Press or *USA Today* (Pew Project, 2008). In fact, 80 percent of respondents had a positive opinion of their local newspaper and television news.

Some media outlets, such as Fox News, target conservative viewers, employing hosts and reporting on stories that favor Republican ideals. A study by DellaVigna and Kaplan (2006) found that the mere introduction of this channel into the cable programming in American towns resulted in a 3 to 8 percent increase in the number of people who cast ballots for Republicans, a result the researchers deemed a sizeable media effect. They claimed one of the reasons for the findings was the effect of persuasion on the viewers – that “viewers do not fully take into account the bias of the media source and therefore are subject to persuasion upon exposure” (p. 31).

2.6 Immigration Statistics and Studies

Immigration is one issue that is frequently discussed in the mainstream press, which is not surprising given the increasing numbers of immigrants, especially Latinos, in the United States. Researchers from the Pew Hispanic Center estimate there are now 11.5 to 12 million unauthorized immigrants in the U.S. (Doherty, Escobar, Keeter, Kohut, Suro, 2006). Meanwhile, polls have shown that Americans have increasingly become more concerned about immigration. The Pew Center survey asked Americans to name the biggest problem confronting the country (Doherty, et al., 2006). In November 2005, only two percent of respondents stated that immigration was the biggest problem. By May 2006, that number increased to 10 percent. Another study conducted in May 2006 by *The New York Times* and CBS News asked respondents, “How serious a problem do you think the issue of illegal immigration is for the

country right now: very serious, somewhat serious, not too serious, or not at all serious?” (p. 4). Fifty-nine percent of respondents felt illegal immigration was a very serious issue.

While there are no known communication studies looking at municipal immigration ordinances, there are several studies on this issue that can be found in law journals (Oliveri, 2008; Kobach, 2008). Oliveri (2008) looked at anti-illegal immigrant ordinances, or more specifically, housing ordinances such as those proposed in Hazleton, Farmers Branch and other communities such as Escondido, California. Oliveri (2008) took issue with these ordinances, writing that it is “difficult (if not impossible) for landlords to verify the immigration status of every potential tenant they encounter. They are instead likely to resort to shortcuts, such as discriminating based on accent, surname, appearance, or other ethnic markers” (p. 57). Discrimination is one issue Bono (2007) tackled in her research on municipal housing ordinances, in which she compared the ordinances to Jim Crow laws enacted between 1876 and 1965. Bono stated that “like racial zoning ordinances, restrictive housing ordinances are passed to maintain racial segregation and white dominance” (p. 29), primarily in small or rural communities. Bono (2007) noted the sudden influx of immigrants in both Hazleton and Farmers Branch prior to the cities passing their immigration ordinances, and writes:

In short, local governments’ willingness to engage in certain behavior – ignoring the variety of obvious legal solutions, willingly incurring staggering economic and legal costs, and simultaneously admitting to the nonexistence of evidence that links predominantly Latino undocumented immigrant populations to threatened safety or welfare – speaks for itself. The intent behind exclusionary ordinances is to use immigration status as a pretext for the racial exclusion of Latinos” (p. 32).

Not all legal professionals believe these municipal ordinances to be discriminatory or unworkable. Kris Kobach, who was the lead attorney for the city of Hazleton, and who also helped draft Ordinance 2952 in Farmers Branch, has written on the issue in his capacity as a

professor of law at the University of Missouri School of Law. Kobach (2008) wrote that “those who claim that the states have no role in addressing the problem of illegal immigration are evidently unaware of the substantial body of legal authority that exists to the contrary, or blind to the financial burdens borne by the states” (p. 482). Kobach (2008) also spoke out about those who argue that municipal and state immigration ordinances create a “patchwork of divergent laws,” stating that “far from creating a patchwork quilt, the states are providing the fibers that strengthen the rule of law throughout the country and fill in the gaps created by inconsistent federal enforcement” (p. 483).

2.7 Research Questions

As Soderlund (2007) wrote, “the way the public perceives the contentious issue of Mexican immigration is important because their opinion about immigration influences policy-makers’ decisions about those laws” (p. 1). Yet, communication researchers have yet to explore the issue. Thus, this thesis will look at two cities at the forefront of the immigration debate: Farmers Branch and Hazleton. It will determine what issues the media embraced and reported on in both cities. It will look at whether the issues addressed came from opponents or proponents of the two ordinances. In addition, it will look at whether the stories were slanted – supporting one side, as opposed to the other, and who each paper chose to quote in immigration stories -- government officials, lawyers, proponents or opponents. Finally, it will look at the presence of the illegal “alien” frame.

This study will answer the following research questions:

RQ1: To what extent were the immigration issue attributes discussed by opponents and proponents of Farmers Branch Ordinance 2903 found in *Dallas Morning News* articles from January 2007 until May 13, 2007?

RQ2: Was there a difference in the newspaper coverage in terms of support for Ordinance 2903 versus opposition to Ordinance 2903?

RQ3: To what extent were the immigration issue attributes discussed by opponents and proponents of Hazleton's Illegal Immigration Relief Act found in *Hazleton Standard-Speaker* articles from March 1, 2007 to July 27, 2008?

RQ4: Was there a difference in the newspaper coverage in terms of support for Hazleton's Illegal Immigration Relief Act versus opposition to it?

RQ5: Was there a difference in whom the *Dallas Morning News* and the *Hazleton Standard-Speaker* chose to directly quote in immigration articles?

2.8 Hypothesis

In addition to answering these research questions, this study will use a framing approach to determine how often the term illegal "alien" is used in newspaper coverage. The assumption is that this frame will be seen more often in reporting on Hazleton because the Hazleton ordinance specifically used this term (Ordinance 2006-18, 2006), as opposed to "illegal immigrants," which was the term used in Farmers Branch (City of Farmers Branch Ordinance 2903, 2006). Thus, the following hypothesis is posed:

H: Use of the term illegal "alien" will be found more often in coverage of the Hazleton immigration ordinance than in coverage of the Farmers Branch ordinance.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Using content analysis, this thesis examines how many times specific attributes of the immigration issue were discussed in print articles of newspapers serving Hazleton and Farmers Branch. In both cities, there were distinct groups who supported and opposed these immigration measures – and each group had a message for voters or citizens. The attributes that this study focuses on were found in direct mailings, on Web sites and in direct statements made by key members of these opposition or support groups. Specifically, attributes discussed by proponents in Farmers Branch were identified in a letter sent from city councilors to constituents (see Appendix A) and in the transcript of an interview that was given by these city councilors just after they passed the ordinance (see Appendix B). Attributes from opponents were identified in a letter (see Appendix C) and flyer that was sent to citizens from the opposition group Let the Voters Decide (see Appendix D). Attributes discussed by proponents in Hazleton were found in a letter written by Hazleton Mayor Lou Barletta, which was posted on smalltowndefenders.com (see Appendix E). Finally, attributes from opponents of the Hazleton ordinance were identified through press releases distributed by the ACLU (see Appendix F).

3.1 Farmers Branch Attributes

The following statements were chosen as attributes of the immigration debate in Farmers Branch and Hazleton. They are being categorized as attributes, rather than frames, because they are specific issues of the immigration debate that were publicly being stated in campaign/public relations material intended to influence the public. Some of these attributes represent reasons to support immigration ordinances, such as the idea that these ordinances will help reduce crime. Others represent reasons to oppose these ordinances, such as the idea

that they are discriminatory and divide cities. Just as job loss and foreclosures are attributes of stories on the economy, these are attributes of stories on immigration.

Supporters of the ordinance in Farmers Branch focused on four attributes of the story: 1) that illegal immigrants contributed to a drop in property values and decline in retail areas; 2) that illegal immigrants have a negative impact on public schools; 3) that illegal immigrants contributed to a rising crime rate; 4) and that immigration must be handled at the local level because the federal government refuses to handle the problem.

Opponents of the ordinance in Farmers Branch focused on four attributes of the story: 1) that the ordinance tarnishes the city's image, subjecting it to negative media attention; 2) that the ordinance would cost millions of dollars to defend in court; 3) that immigration should be handled at the federal level, not the local level; 4) and that the ordinance is discriminatory against many in the community.

In regards to Farmers Branch, this thesis seeks to determine how often these attributes appeared in the only major Dallas County newspaper, *The Dallas Morning News*, from January 2007 until May 13, 2007. This paper was chosen because it has the highest circulation of any paper in Dallas County, reaching an average of 338,933 people a day. Farmers Branch is a first ring suburb of Dallas and is located within Dallas County. It does not have its own community paper.

The above mentioned time frame was chosen because there was considerable press attention from the time the ordinance was approved (January 15, 2007) until it was voted on by the citizens (May 12, 2007). While there have been many developments since the actual election, the election is significant because it was the first in which voters were able to cast a ballot on an immigration related issue.

3.2 Hazleton Attributes

Supporters of the ordinance in Hazleton focused on three attributes of the issue: 1) that illegal immigrants were responsible for a rising crime rate; 2) that illegal immigrants are an

economic burden because they use government services and drain city resources; 3) and that immigration must be handled at the local level because the federal government refuses to handle the problem.

Opponents of the ordinance in Hazelton focused on three attributes of the issue as well: 1) that the ordinance is unconstitutional; 2) that the ordinance discriminates against Latino families; 3) that immigration should be handled at the federal level, not the local level.

In regards to Hazelton, this study works to determine how often these messages appeared in Hazelton's "hometown paper", the *Hazleton Standard-Speaker*, from March 1, 2007, until July 27, 2007. The *Hazleton Standard-Speaker* is the only newspaper in the region that focuses on Hazelton. It has a circulation of just over 20,000 papers a day.

The above mentioned time frame was chosen because there was considerable press attention from the time the issue went to trial in a federal court (March 2007) until it was struck down by the court (July 27, 2007). It is the trial itself that made this case historical – it was the first trial that explored whether municipalities could pass and implement immigration measures.

Print articles from the *Dallas Morning News* were located using a search on NewsBank, a Web-based newspaper database, using the key words "immigration" and "Farmers Branch." Fifty-nine news stories and nine editorials were found, for a total of 67 articles. Print articles from the *Hazleton Standard-Speaker* were located using a NewsBank database search using the key word "immigration." Ninety-eight news stories and five editorials were found, for a total of 103 articles.

3.3 Coding Categories

The unit of analysis for this study is the individual news story. Coding categories include the name of the publication (*Dallas Morning News* or *Hazleton Standard-Speaker*), article type (news or editorial), word count, the mention of attributes, the mention of the term "alien," opinion of whether the article supported/opposed or was neutral in tone, and source types (government officials, lawyers, supporters, opponents).

The coders were asked to identify whether the attributes were mentioned in the headline or in the article, regardless of whether those issues were discussed in a positive or negative way. For example, one article may mention that opponents of the ordinance disagree with the idea that property values will go up if the ordinance is passed. The mere mention of property values is an example of the proponent's message making its way into the media.

In addition to looking for these specific attributes, coders were asked to identify the use of the term "alien" in reference to illegal immigrants. It is believed that this frame will be found more often in coverage related to Hazleton because the term is used in the city's ordinance, whereas the term "illegal immigrant" was used in the Farmers Branch ordinance.

Regarding the coding category for article tone, coders were asked to state whether or not they felt the reporter was biased in his or her coverage – showing support for the ordinances or opposition to them. Stories that the coders felt were well-balanced were coded as neutral in tone.

Coders were also asked to identify who was quoted in direct quotes. Specifically they were asked to identify whether the source the reporter quoted was a: 1) government official (city councilor, mayor, city secretary, city spokesperson, etc.); 2) a lawyer representing the city; 3) a lawyer representing opponents of the ordinance; 4) group or private citizen opposing the ordinance; or 5) a group or private citizen supporting the ordinance.

For this content analysis, two coders were selected. The first is a 48-year old Caucasian female who lives in Fort Worth, Texas. The second is 71-year old Caucasian female who lives in Norton, Kansas. The coders are removed from the immigration debate, in that they do not and have not lived in Farmers Branch or Hazleton, and they were not familiar with the media coverage of the immigration ordinance debates. Both were given a codebook (See Appendix F) and instructed on what issues to look for within the articles and headlines. For a trial run, the first ten coded articles were compared in order to determine if the coders were

finding similar patterns. With only a few exceptions, they were, so the coders were instructed to complete the rest without speaking to the other coder.

After completing the coder workbooks, inter-coder reliability was determined for each variable tested using the Holsti method. Inter-coder reliability was determined separately for Farmers Branch and Hazelton. When coding for Hazelton, coders had to look for 9 attributes or issues (such as the tone of the article and absence or presence of the term “alien”) in each of the 103 articles. Of the 927 variables coders were asked to identify on the Hazelton sheet, the coders agreed on all but 142 of them, thus the inter-coder reliability was .84. Of the 804 variables on the Farmers Branch sheet, the coders agreed on all but 75 of them, thus the inter-coder reliability was .89.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

4.1 Issue Attributes in Farmers Branch

Research question one asked, "To what extent were the immigration issue attributes discussed by opponents and proponents of Farmers Branch Ordinance 2903 found in *Dallas Morning News* articles from January 2007 until May 13, 2007?" Table 1.1 shows the frequency with which each of the attributes appeared in the *Dallas Morning News*. The attribute most frequently mentioned was related to immigration being a federal issue, an issue that should not be addressed at the local level. This was mentioned in 30 percent of the articles. The city image attribute, which was based on the idea that the ordinances were tarnishing the city's reputation, was mentioned in 25 percent (n=17) of the articles. The court cost attribute was mentioned 22 percent (n=15) of the articles, while property values/retail and the discriminatory attributes were mentioned in 19 percent (n=13) of them. The least mentioned attributes were crime (11 percent), schools (10 percent), and the attribute that focused on the idea that local immigration measures were necessary because the federal government was refusing to take action (9 percent). Thus, all of the attributes in opposition to and in support of the immigration ordinances mentioned in the media, at a frequency rate between 9 and 30 percent.

Table 1.1

Frequency of Attribute Mentions in *Dallas Morning News* Coverage

Attribute	Mentioned	Not Mentioned	% of the mentions	Total
Property Values/Retail	13	54	19%	67
Schools	7	60	10%	67
Crime	11	56	16%	67
Tarnish City Image	17	50	25%	67
Cost of Court	15	52	22%	67
Fed. Issue/Not Local	20	47	30%	67
Fed. Not Doing Job	6	61	9%	67
Discriminatory	13	54	19%	67

4.2 Support for v. Opposition to Farmers Branch Ordinance

Research question two asked, “Was there a difference in the newspaper coverage in terms of support for Ordinance 2903 versus opposition to Ordinance 2903?” Table 1.2 shows whether the articles supported, opposed, or were neutral in their representation of the immigration ordinance in Farmers Branch. It was found that 91 percent (n=61) were neutral in tone. Just one, or 1.4 percent, of the articles were found to show a bias in support of Ordinance 2903, while 7 percent (n=5), were found to show a bias in opposition to the ordinance.

Table 1.2

Support, Opposition or Neutrality of *Dallas Morning News* Articles

	# of Articles	% of Articles	Total Articles
Support	1	1.4%	67
Oppose	5	7%	67
Neutral	61	91%	67

4.3 Issue Attributes in Hazleton

Research question three asked, “To what extent were the immigration issue attributes discussed by opponents and proponents of Hazleton’s Illegal Immigration Relief Act repeated in *Hazleton Standard-Speaker* articles from March 1, 2007 to July 27, 2008?” Table 1.3 shows the frequency with which each of the attributes appeared in the *Hazleton Standard-Speaker*. The most frequently mentioned attribute, of the six selected, was crime. The issue appeared in 36 percent (n=37) of articles. The second most mentioned attribute was related to the constitutionality of the ordinance. This attribute was mentioned in 23 percent (n=24) of articles. The third and fourth most mentioned attributes were opposing views – that immigration is a federal issue that should not be handled at the local level, and that immigration reform must happen at the local level because the federal government is not doing its job. Both of these attributes were mentioned in 20 percent (n=21) of articles. The idea that immigrants are an economic burden and use government services was mentioned in 17 percent (n=18) of articles. Finally, discrimination was mentioned less frequently than any other attribute, as it was found in 13 percent (n=14) of articles. Thus, all of the attributes were mentioned in the media at a frequency between 13 and 36 percent.

Table 1.3

Frequency of Attribute Mentions in *Hazleton Standard-Speaker* Coverage

Attribute	Mentioned	Not Mentioned	% of the mentions	Total
Crime	37	66	36%	103
Economic Burden/Govt. Services	18	85	17%	103
Unconstitutional	24	79	23%	103
Discriminatory	14	89	13%	103
Fed. Issue/Not Local	21	82	20%	103
Fed. Not Doing Job	21	82	20%	103

4.4 Support for v. Opposition to Hazleton Ordinance

Research question four asked, “Was there a difference in the newspaper coverage in terms of support for Hazelton’s Illegal Immigration Relief Act versus opposition to it?” It was found that 100 percent of the articles written about the Illegal Immigration Relief Act were found to be neutral, showing neither support for, nor opposition to the ordinance. These 103 “neutral” articles included 98 news articles and 5 editorials.

4.5 Sources

Research question five asked, “Was there a difference in whom the *Dallas Morning News* and the *Hazleton Standard-Speaker* chose to directly quote in immigration articles?” Table 1.5 shows sources quoted in direct quotes within the immigration articles in the two papers. In the Farmers Branch articles, it was found that government officials (city councilors, mayor, city secretary city spokesman, etc.) and opposition groups or private citizens opposing the ordinance were both quoted in 31 percent of articles (n=21). Proponents of Ordinance 2903 (groups or private citizens supporting the ordinance) were quoted in 26 percent (n=14) of articles. One lawyer was quoted for the opposition, while lawyers for the city were not quoted at all.

In the Hazleton articles, it was found that government officials (city councilors, mayor, city secretary city spokesman, etc.) were quoted in 47 percent (n=49) of the 103 articles. Proponents of the Illegal Immigration Relief Act were quoted in 20 percent (n=21) of the articles, while, while opponents groups and citizens were quoted in 20, or 19 percent (n=20), of the articles. Lawyers for the opposition were quoted in 16 percent (n=17) of the articles, whereas lawyers for the city were quoted least often - in 13 percent of articles (n=14).

In order to determine if there was a significant difference among the use of sources by the two newspapers, a Pearson chi square test was performed. The results show there is a significant difference between the two papers’ use of quotes from government officials (χ^2 (d.f.=1, N=170)=4.414, p=.036), city lawyers (χ^2 (d.f.=1, N=237)=9.924, p=.002), and opponent

lawyers (χ^2 (d.f.=1, N=237)=9.664, $p=.002$). There were not, however, significant differences between the two papers' use of opposition groups (χ^2 (d.f.=1, N=237)=3.155, $p=.076$) and proponent groups (χ^2 (d.f.=1, N=237)=.006, $p=.936$).

Table 1.4

Attributed Sources in Farmers Branch v. Hazleton Coverage

	DMN Quoted	DMN NQ	Total	HSS Quoted	HSS NQ	Total
Govt. Official	21	46	67	49	54	103
χ^2 (d.f.=1, N=170)=4.414, $p=.036$						
City Lawyer	0	67	67	14	89	103
χ^2 (d.f.=1, N=237)=9.924, $p=.002$						
Oppt Lawyer	1	66	67	17	86	103
χ^2 (d.f.=1, N=237)=9.664, $p=.002$						
Oppt Group	21	46	67	20	83	103
χ^2 (d.f.=1, N=237)=3.155, $p=.076$						
Prop Group	14	53	67	21	82	103
χ^2 (d.f.=1, N=237)=.006, $p=.936$						

4.6 "Alien" Mentions

Hypothesis one stated, "Use of the term "illegal alien" will be found more often in coverage of the Hazleton immigration ordinance than in coverage of the Farmers Branch ordinance." Table 1.5 shows the frequency by which the word "alien" was mentioned in the *Dallas Morning News* and the *Hazleton Standard-Speaker* articles on immigration. The word "alien" appeared in 26 of the 103 *Hazleton Standard-Speaker* articles, or in 25 percent of the articles. The word "alien" appeared in six of the 67 *Dallas Morning News* articles, or in 9 percent of articles.

In order to test this hypothesis, a Pearson chi square crosstabs test was used, which showed a significant difference existed between the number of mentions in the *Hazleton Standard-Speaker* and the *Dallas Morning News*, X^2 (d.f.=1, N=170)=7.048, $p=.008$. The results also showed that the number of alien mentions in the *Dallas Morning News* was lower than the expected count, while the number of alien mentions in the *Hazleton Standard Speaker* was higher than the expected count. Ultimately, both papers used the word “alien” in reference to illegal immigrants, but the findings support the hypothesis because the *Hazleton Standard-Speaker* did in fact print the word more often than the *Dallas Morning News*.

Table 1.5
Frequency of “Alien” Mentions in Newspaper Coverage

	Mentioned	Not Mentioned	% of Articles	Total Articles
DMN – Alien Count	6	61	9%	67
Expected Count	12.6	54.4		
HSS – Alien Count	26	77	25%	103
Expected Count	19.4	83.6		
X^2 (d.f.=1, N=170)=7.048, $p=.008$				

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This thesis looks at newspaper coverage of Ordinance 2903 in Farmers Branch, Texas, and the Illegal Immigration Relief Act in Hazleton, Pennsylvania, through the lenses of attribute agenda-setting and framing. By conducting a content analysis of newspaper coverage, this thesis was able to determine to what extent the *Dallas Morning News* and the *Hazleton Standard-Speaker* repeated attributes that were key talking points for opponents and proponents of the aforementioned ordinances. It also looked at story slant, whom was quoted in individual stories, and how often the reporters in Farmers Branch and Hazleton used the illegal “alien” frame.

5.1 Issue Attributes in Farmers Branch and Hazleton

A look at the issue attributes that the *Dallas Morning News* mentioned in articles about Ordinance 2903 reveals that every message or issue attribute discussed by opponents and proponents made its way into the coverage. Issue attributes discussed by opponents were found more frequently though than those discussed by proponents. These issues – the idea that immigration is a federal issue, not local (found in 30 percent of articles), the idea that the ordinance was tarnishing the city image (found in 25 percent), court costs due to lawsuits (found in 22 percent), and the idea that the ordinance was discriminatory (found in 19 percent) – were mentioned in a total of 65 articles. The least frequently mentioned of the four was the discrimination attribute, which was still mentioned in 19 percent of the articles.

Proponent messages were not found as often as opponent messages. In fact, they were found in just 9 to 19 percent of articles. Combined, proponent attributes were mentioned in 42 articles. The most frequently mentioned of these proponent attributes focused on the idea that illegal immigrants were having a negative impact on property values and retail areas within

the city. This attribute was mentioned in 19 percent of the articles, which is the same rate at which the least mentioned opponent attribute was mentioned. Crime, which we will see played a large role in the newspaper coverage in Hazleton, was mentioned in just 11 articles, or 16 percent of articles.

There are several explanations as to why the *Dallas Morning News* focused less frequently on the proponent messages, or attributes. It may be simply that reporters had a hard time justifying discussions of these proponent messages. While this study did not look at articles from newspapers other than the *Dallas Morning News* or the *Hazleton Standard-Speaker*, one article in the Fort Worth *Star-Telegram* addressed this very issue. The article, published in February 2007 (McGee, February 5), stated that “the average value of a Farmers Branch home increased 63 percent over 10 years to \$149,421 in 2006,” and found that the school district’s state accountability rating had actually increased to recognized from acceptable (p.1). Beyond that, it stated that SAT scores were higher than the state average and that the “10-year crime rate dropped 27 percent from 1995 to 2005” (p. 1). O’Hare countered that property values increased just 1.07 percent from 2005 to 2006 and stated that illegal immigrants have lower incomes, and low-income areas were more likely to have high crime. His defense of these issues could have been seen as him making broad generalizations, rather than using concrete data to back-up his assertions. This may have created a credibility problem for him with reporters. In addition, reporters tend to prefer hard facts. For instance, once it has been established that there is not a crime problem, there would be little justification for continuous stories on crime.

One possible reason opponent attributes appeared more frequently is that opponents may have focused their message more clearly than proponents. Opponents organized under the umbrella of Let the Voters Decide, a non-partisan volunteer organization that was created to “promote community involvement in the immigration ordinances” in Farmers Branch (Voters Decide, 2007). This grassroots organization was formed with the help of Travis Carter, a public

relations professional and president of Carter Public Relations. Carter became involved with the immigration issue because he handles media relations for the law firm of Bickel & Brewer, which filed several of the lawsuits against the city. Public relations professionals are tasked daily with developing talking points, or messages, that will resonate with an audience. With Carter as a resource, opponents had several advantages. Prior to interviews, members had access to Carter and were able to discuss questions that may be posed by reporters. They had a professional with whom they could develop and discuss the key message points for the campaign. By having a single point person giving advice, they were able to speak to the media in a uniform fashion, thus pushing their message more effectively. Opponents also benefited from the existing relationship and ongoing interaction Carter had with the lawyers involved in the lawsuits against the city of Farmers Branch. Having access to insight that only a lawyer could provide helped opponents to identify and advance “storylines” that were of interest to the press and community.

But message development was not the only advantage the public relations firm could offer. Carter was able to foster relationships with journalists covering the immigration issue. Early on, he reached out to these reporters, offering to provide them with court documents, quotes or access to opponent lawyers and group members. This ensured that the reporters were not only well-informed about the oppositions positions, but also that they knew who to turn to when it became necessary to balance a story. Newspapers such as the *Dallas Morning News* are working with smaller and smaller staffs, which make it more difficult for reporters to spend a substantial amount of time on one story. Many find themselves in the position of needing a quick quote in order to meet a deadline. If they knew that they could rely on Carter to put them in touch with an opponent in a timely fashion, it is argued that the opponents were more likely to receive media coverage.

In addition to relationship building, Carter Public Relations drafted press releases for major volunteer events and endorsement announcements, such as the endorsement given by

the Apartment Association of Greater Dallas. The firm then sent the announcements to a wide-range of media outlets – TV stations, radio stations, newspapers and Web sites. It created a direct mail political advertisement that was sent to voters, and also helped draft numerous letters to community members. Finally, it operated a Let the Voters Decide Web site, which updated the community on recent news, facts and volunteer opportunities.¹

Proponents of the Farmers Branch ordinance also has a “grassroots organization” – Support Farmers Branch. Like Let the Voters Decide, Support Farmers Branch had a Web site, created yard signs and informational door hangers, and organized volunteer events. The organization had a well-known point person, Farmers Branch Resident Tom Bohmier. But unlike Let the Voters Decide, Support Farmers Branch did not have the active support of a public relations professional or firm who could focus its message. Still, it developed a reputation within the community, and its members were cited in numerous newspaper articles, even if its message attributes were not found as frequently as those of opponents.

As will be discussed later, the majority of editorials in the *Dallas Morning News* opposed the ordinance. Specifically, five opposed the ordinance, one supported it and two were found to be neutral. Those editorials that opposed the ordinance mentioned several of the attributes: property values, schools, retail areas, tarnishing the city image, the idea that the federal government is not taking action, thus the local government must, the belief that immigration is an issue that only the federal government should tackle, and court costs. This shows a fairly even mix of opponent and proponent messages making their way into editorials – even when the editorials were opposing the ordinance. The one editorial that supported the ordinance did not mention any of the opponent or proponent attributes. Instead, it discussed a

¹ The author of this thesis currently works for Carter Public Relations and became involved in the Farmers Branch campaign in February 2007. Prior to joining the public relations firm, the author covered the community debate as a reporter for the NBC affiliate, KXAS-TV, in Dallas/Fort Worth.

controversial statement by Bishop Charles Grahmann of Dallas, who stated, “I often wonder if Joseph, Mary and Jesus would find a place in Farmers Branch. They would probably be told they would have to find another place” (Dreher, 2007, February 18, p.4P).

Regarding Hazleton, it was determined that the newspaper, by far, focused on the crime attribute. Crime happened to be a major issue for the defense during the federal trial that determined the constitutionality of the Illegal Immigration Relief Act. The city contended that one of the main reasons it had to pass the ordinance was that illegal immigrants were responsible for a skyrocketing crime rate in Hazleton. They also frequently discussed the May 2006 murder of Derek Kichline, who was allegedly killed outside his own home by two illegal immigrants (Davidson, 2006, May 13). Thus, it is not surprising that the newspaper would most frequently discuss the issue of crime – mentioning it in 36 percent of articles.

Another key issue within the trial was the constitutionality of the ordinance. This was one of the issues the ACLU addressed in each of its press releases – stating that Hazleton’s ordinance was unconstitutional and violated the Constitution’s Supremacy Clause, which gives the federal government exclusive federal power over immigration. Given how crucial this issue was to the prosecution’s case, it may be expected that this would be an important issue for the media to discuss. Ultimately, this issue was the second most frequently addressed attribute, appearing in 23 percent of articles.

Overall, the proponent attributes were found in a total of 76 articles, whereas the opponent attributes were found in a total of 59 articles. One could question whether the newspaper in Hazleton focused on attributes from proponents because of what was known about public sentiment for the ordinance. By the time the trial began, polling results had already been released, stating that 65 percent of Pennsylvanians supported the ordinance. At the same time though, it must be mentioned that the coders felt that all of the Hazleton articles were neutral in tone – showing no political bias in support of or opposition to the ordinance.

Another reason proponent message may have been found more frequently is that Mayor Lou Barletta was an outspoken advocate for the ordinance. He appeared frequently in the *Hazleton Standard-Speaker*, and also in national and international media reports. On the other hand, there was no organized opposition or even proponent group in Hazleton. There were opponents such as the ACLU and MALDEF who opposed the ordinance, but there was no Hazleton-based grassroots advocacy group, as there was in Farmers Branch. The Farmers Branch group “Let the Voters Decide” was created with a single purpose – to encourage residents to become educated about the ordinance, and ultimately vote against it. It is possible that we do not see the same in Hazleton because of the nature of the situation. Opponents in Hazleton did not have clearly defined end goal, such as working to get voters to cast a ballot in opposition to an ordinance. They may have felt that there was no need for an advocacy group – although this thesis indicates if they had had one, their message may have been promoted more clearly. Regardless, this lack of an advocacy group may be the main reason why we see conflicting results in Farmers Branch and Hazleton. Those conflicting results being that the *Dallas Morning News* focused on opponent attributes, whereas the *Hazleton Standard-Speaker* focused on proponent attributes.

In both the Hazleton and Farmers Branch coverage, no issue attribute was mentioned in more than 36 percent of articles. It may be inferred from this that the reporters were working off their own agenda, not relying on proponents or opponents to feed them specific stories. In both of these cities, the media had numerous “newsworthy” events to focus on. In Farmers Branch these included voter registration, early voting and Election Day coverage. In Hazleton the focus was on day-to-day trial coverage. Thus, reporters had time sensitive events to cover, rather than simply focusing on the back and forth exchanges between proponents and opponents, or publicity stunts orchestrated to push agendas. At the same time though, each of the identified attributes made its way into the newspaper coverage. The attribute mentioned the least frequently – the idea that the federal government was not taking action, thus Farmers

Branch city officials must do so – still garnered coverage in 9 percent of articles. This may mean that while proponents and opponents did not control the newspaper coverage, they did have an active voice, as was expected.

McCombs (2004) believes that “setting the agenda of attributes for an issue is the epitome of political power. Controlling the perspective of the political debate on any issue is the ultimate influence on public opinion” (p.82). If so, in coverage of the Farmers Branch immigration ordinance, it was the opponents who had the “political power.” Their messages were found far more frequently, yet their ability to set the agenda of attributes did not translate into public support for their position among Farmers Branch voters, who overwhelmingly approved the ordinance. In Hazleton, proponent messages were mentioned more frequently, potentially giving them the “political power.” Thus, though this thesis may not be able to determine whether specific attributes became more salient for readers, we can determine who set the “agenda of attributes,” influencing the newspaper coverage.

Branton and Dunaway (2006) stated that attribute agenda-setting “suggests that by highlighting the negative aspects associated with immigration and Latino immigration, local media outlets increase the salience of these negative aspects in the minds of citizens, and by doing so influence their evaluation of the issue of immigration as a whole” (p. 3). Reporters in Hazleton and in Farmers Branch both discussed the “negative aspects” associated with immigration at different rates, with reporters in Hazleton mentioning them more frequently than those in Farmers Branch. In fact, in Farmers Branch the news articles gave numerous reasons to oppose Ordinance 2903. Yet despite the repeated references to problems with the ordinance, the public supported it. What we see here is support for agenda-setting in some ways. The newspaper coverage may have influenced people to talk about reasons to oppose the ordinance, but it did not impact their decision making process in the voting booth. That begs the question, why? Was there a transfer of issue salience from the media to voters, and how big of a factor was voters' everyday interaction with immigrants in their community? Was their decision

to support the ordinance based on fear of immigrants, or truly a perceived threat to the community, whether that was a financial or social threat? These are questions this thesis can not answer, but ones that deserve further study.

5.2 Support for Versus Opposition to Ordinances

While this thesis examines the frequency with which specific attributes were repeated in the newspaper stories, it is also important to look at the issue of story slant or political bias. Journalistic standards require most reporters to take an unbiased approach to each story – reporting facts, and giving fair and balanced coverage. But despite their best efforts, it is not always possible for a reporter to repress their feelings about certain stories. That is one reason this thesis chose to look at how readers viewed the stories and whether they felt reporters were pushing them to support or oppose the immigration ordinances.

In Hazleton, it was found that proponent messages were more frequently mentioned than attributes from opponents. But this does not mean that the stories were slanted, or politically biased towards proponents. In fact, coders felt that all of the *Hazleton Standard-Speaker* articles were unbiased, or neutral in tone. This included both news articles and editorials. On the other hand, in Farmers Branch, only the news articles were viewed as neutral. The editorial coverage was primarily seen as opposing the ordinance. In fact, five of the editorials were seen this way, while just one was viewed as supporting the ordinance. These findings may indicate a difference in operating guidelines or journalistic standards between editorial writers at the two papers.

Rather than giving their opinion about the immigration debate, editorial writers in Hazleton tended to present pieces in a format that stated what each side was feeling and then summed up the issue with a sentence expressing a need for common ground to be found. For instance, in a piece written about CNN's Lou Dobbs' "town meeting" broadcast on May 4, 2007, the editorial writer wrote:

Hazleton has gotten a reputation as ground zero in the fight over illegal immigration. Many Americans see Barletta as a hero. Others think the city's Illegal Immigration Relief Act is the product of bigotry.... Dobbs' producers are to be congratulated for making sure panelists on the show and 250 invited audience members represented both sides of the debate.

It was a good mix of supporters and opponents and the discourse remained civil throughout. Viewers saw serious people having serious discussion. That's just the sort of impression we hoped the country would get about our hometown (Editorial, 2007, May 4, p.1).

Dallas Morning News editorials were far more pointed. The writers made it very clear that they objected to certain issues, which can be seen in a May 7, 2007, editorial titled "A Message Unread – Farmers Branch Vote is a Pointless Sideshow." It stated:

Legal costs for lawsuits are just the start. Enforcing this pointless law wouldn't be cheap, if even possible. And, of course, there is the opportunity cost. What could Farmers Branch do with the time and energy its staff and citizens are pouring into the immigration debate?

And all of this for what?

Well, says supporters, to send a message! To lead the charge! As if Congress needs a message from Farmers Branch, Texas, to realize that we have a national immigration mess. Besides, what happens if you charge into battle and no one follows? You gain battle wounds for nothing (Editorial2, 2007, May 7, 12a).

Both of these editorials give a different perspective than a typical news story would, yet the difference between the writing in the *Hazleton Standard-Speaker* and the *Dallas Morning News* is striking. Part of the reason may be the size of the actual papers. The *Dallas Morning News* is a much larger paper than the *Hazleton Standard-Speaker*, with an approximate

circulation of 340,000. Farmers Branch residents make up only a small portion of that subscription base, thus the editorial writers may have felt less pressure to pander to city officials or citizen groups. On the other hand, the *Hazleton Standard-Speaker's* circulation is just 20,000, making it a small-town paper. The paper's editorial writers may have felt that it was necessary to stay neutral and not take a positioned stand in support of or opposition to this controversial immigration ordinance in order to avoid alienating a large portion of the subscribers. This idea is somewhat supported by Reader's 2006 study. It addressed the ethical differences between small and large papers, stating that "at larger newspapers, the emphasis seems to be to preserve the reputation of the institution of the newspaper, whereas at smaller newspapers the starting point seems to be to manage journalists' individual connections with their communities" (p. 861).

It should be noted that all but one of the *Dallas Morning News* editorials read for this study were bylined, meaning a specific author took credit for the story. But the *Dallas Morning News* also has an "editorial board," a group of people who work together and position themselves as advocates for the community. This board states online that its role is to speak out on challenges facing the community, using its "editorial voice to provide leadership," in hopes of creating a better city (Editorial, 2009, par. 2). It is possible that the editorial writers who wrote pieces on Farmers Branch were influenced by the editorial board's mission. This may be another reason we see more positioned statements in the paper. But this is simply speculation.

5.3 Sources

Nearly all of the articles in the *Dallas Morning News* and the *Hazleton Standard-Speaker* were found to have been written in a poitically unbiased, or neutral, manner. But for the purpose of this thesis, coders were also asked to note who was quoted in each article. When comparing the sources in Farmers Branch and Hazleton, one thing is apparent: lawyers were rarely quoted in Farmers Branch, whereas they were quoted in an average of 15 percent of

Hazleton articles. One possible explanation for this is that during the time period this thesis focuses on, Hazleton was in the midst of a federal trial, whereas Farmers Branch was preparing for a public vote. While articles in Hazleton focused on what was being said in the courtroom, Farmers Branch articles focused on what was happening in the court of public opinion. This explains the significant difference found in testing between the two papers use of lawyers as sources.

In Farmers Branch, all city officials (except one) expressed support for the ordinance. In May 2007, Mayor Bob Phelps came out in opposition to the ordinance. Thus, the vast majority of quotes by these city officials were offered in support for Ordinance 2903. These government officials were quoted in 21 articles. That is the same number of articles in which citizens and members of groups opposing the ordinance (Let the Voters Decide) were quoted. This would make it appear as though these two groups received equal coverage, but in addition to the quotes from city officials who supported the ordinance, proponent groups and/or citizens were quoted in 14 articles. Thus proponents of the ordinance appear to have been quoted more frequently than opponents. There are explanations for why this happened. For instance, the media turned to the politicians as authoritative sources, but then turned to citizens for their reaction. Once they had quoted a citizen who supported the ordinance, they balanced the story by turning to someone who opposed it. In this instance, you would find supporters quoted more frequently. But this makes it all the more interesting that attributes mentioned by opponents were found more often than those by proponents. As was discussed earlier, this may have occurred because opponents were simply more effective at promoting their talking points or attributes. It may also be the case that the newspapers were drawn to opponent messages, putting proponents in the position of defending statements by opponents, rather than promoting their own agenda.

In Hazleton, government officials were quoted twice as often as any other group. Reading the articles, it is apparent that the majority of the 49 government official quotes came

from one man, Mayor Lou Barletta. Barletta was an outspoken advocate of his ordinance, and he was also one of the first people to take the stand in the federal trial. Lawyers for the city were the least-often quoted, but given how outspoken Barletta was, there may have been less reason for the press to rely upon them as sources. Just as in Farmers Branch though, proponents of the immigration ordinance appear to have been quoted far more frequently than opponents. In fact, opponents and lawyers for the opposition were quoted in just 35 percent of the articles, whereas government officials alone were quoted in 47 percent of articles. Another reason opponents were quoted less frequently may have stemmed from the lack of a grass-roots opposition group, such as Let the Voters Decide. This may have made it harder for reporters to locate citizens who were willing to speak out against the ordinance. There is also the possibility that many of those who opposed the Illegal Immigration Relief Act were minorities and/or immigrants who feared they would become targets if they spoke out in opposition. If that was in fact the case, this would have been another challenge for reporters looking to tell both sides of the story.

While we have just addressed why each individual paper may or may not have quoted certain sources, it is also important to recognize that a significant difference was found between the *Dallas Morning News* and the *Hazleton Standard-Speaker's* use of government officials as sources. The Hazleton paper relied on government officials in nearly half of their articles, while the *Dallas Morning News* relied on them in roughly one-third of the articles. One possible reason for this disparity is the newspapers' size. As a small-town paper, the Hazleton reporters may have felt a greater need to rely on city officials as their sources, given that they may be accustomed to reaching out to these officials on a regular basis. In a small town, a paper would typically devote far more coverage to city council or government activities than would a large paper. For instance, the purchase of a new fire truck could make the news in a small town, whereas it most likely would not in a large city, where crime stories often fill the pages. This

constant contact creates a bond between reporters and officials that can bleed into media coverage.

Another possible reason Farmers Branch city officials were not quoted as often was the threat of lawsuits. By the time the ordinance came to a vote, several lawsuits, including one related to an alleged Texas Open Meetings Act (TOMA) violation, had already been filed. Additional lawsuits had also been threatened if the ordinance was approved. This may have forced city officials to be more cautious about what they said or whether they chose to speak at all about certain subjects.

At this point, it is necessary to address one limitation of these findings. In hindsight, one issue that the researcher would change would be the coding categories for the attributed sources. No category was created for neutral parties, which ultimately may have forced the coders to place a neutral observer into either an opposition or support role. This may have influenced the results of this section. In addition, while the large majority of city officials were in fact in support of the ordinances, coders stated that there were several times in which state representatives were found making statements in opposition to the ordinances, but because of the way the coding was devised, these officials were also placed in the “government official” category. Thus these findings must be viewed in light of the limitations of the methodology.

5.4 “Alien” Mentions

Hypothesis 1 was supported by the results, which showed that the word “alien” was mentioned more often in the *Hazleton Standard-Speaker* than in the *Dallas Morning News*. This assumption had been made because the author of Hazleton’s Illegal Immigration Relief Act specifically used the term “illegal alien” repeatedly in the ordinance. However, the author of Farmers Branch’s Ordinance 2903 used the term “illegal immigrants.” As the results show, the word “alien” was found in 26 of the Hazleton articles and in just six of the *Dallas Morning News* articles.

Regarding the use of the term “alien” in editorials, only one Hazleton editorial used this frame, but it was used in a discussion of the immigration debate rhetoric. This March 23, 2007, editorial in the *Hazleton Standard-Speaker* discussed the national attention being given to the immigration ordinance issue, and why it was important that public officials try to “cool things off” (Editorial, 2007, March 23, p. 1). Specifically, the piece stated:

A good start would be to tone down the rhetoric. The mayor’s insistence on calling undocumented residents illegal ‘aliens’ as opposed to ‘immigrants’ is one example. His oft-repeated mantra, ‘illegal is illegal’ is another.

Although such terminology may be technically correct, it is an oversimplification and a generalization that lumps industrious but undocumented workers together with hardened criminals (2007, p.1).

It was Lakoff and Ferguson who noted that the use of the word “alien” creates a sense of otherness. These Hazleton editorial writers appear to also acknowledge that the use of this word “alien” creates an unflattering frame – a perception of these workers as criminals. Yet, if the paper itself truly disagreed with the use of the term “alien,” it is not apparent in the news articles. Of the 98 news articles, 25 contained the word “alien.” Granted, many of the times that word was used were in direct quotes – often by Mayor Lou Barletta. But this was not always the case. Dozens of articles referenced “illegal aliens” within the reporter written copy. This indicates a disconnect between the editorial and news writers. There are a number of reasons this could have happened. As a smaller paper, perhaps there was not an occasion on which the staff sat down to formalize how it would address immigration related issues. Perhaps the paper does not strictly follow *AP Stylebook* guidelines, which prefer the use of the term “illegal immigrant.” Another possibility is that the paper did not have a clear chain of command when copy editing these stories. If there was, perhaps we would see a more consistent usage of

terms related to immigrants. Only someone who worked for the paper during the studied time period (March 2007 to July 2007) could answer these questions.

Regarding the six mentions of the word “alien” in the *Dallas Morning News*, all were found in direct quotes in news articles. Three of those direct quote mentions came directly from Farmers Branch Mayor Tim O’Hare. However, none of the mentions are found in editorial coverage. As a side note, it should be mentioned that in the ordinance that was passed after Ordinance 2903, the city changed the language it used. Instead of referencing “illegal immigrants,” the city began referring to them as “illegal aliens” in Ordinance 2952, which was drafted with the help of Kris Kobach, who served as legal counsel for the city of Hazleton (Sandoval, 2008, Jan. 23, p. 1). Ordinance 2952 was approved in January 2008. Is it possible that O’Hare was most often found referring to these illegal immigrants as “aliens” in 2007 because he was already having discussions with Kobach about approving a new ordinance if 2903 failed? Or was O’Hare more comfortable with the term “alien” because he is a lawyer and “alien” is a term often found in federal explanations of immigration status? These are simply possible explanations, but either way, O’Hare was responsible for the majority of “illegal alien” references in the *Dallas Morning News* coverage.

Framing suggests that simple changes in the wording and phrasing of an issue can impact an audience. One may assume that those in Hazleton felt more of a disconnect from illegal immigrants because they were referred to as aliens, as opposed to the citizens in Farmers Branch who did not have to face this frame. But in both cases the result was the same. The people seemed to show support for the ordinances, most obviously in Farmers Branch, where the media and the city ordinance avoided the frame. Given this information, it is hard to say how powerful the “illegal alien” frame truly is. In fact, there are some that argue that “illegal immigrant” is a negative frame and that these people should be referred to as “undocumented immigrants.” If they had been referred to as “undocumented” in Farmers Branch and Hazleton, would the results have been any different?

5.5 Limitations and Future Research

There were several limitations to the study. For example, the researcher had full discretion to choose the attributes that she felt were most important to proponents and opponents of the immigration ordinances. They were issue attributes that were repeated time and time again in campaign material, on Web sites and in media interviews. It is possible though, that another researcher may choose to look at different attributes, or may take issue with those that were chosen.

While this study looked at attributes of the municipal immigration issue, such as crime, discrimination and economic impact, it could be argued that these attributes create a specific frame. Adas (2007) chose to take this route when looking at media coverage of Proposition 187. Adas chose frames that were in opposition to and in support of Proposition 187 by defining them 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 (p. 27).

It would be possible to create frames based on the attributes studied in this thesis, but the intention was to strictly determine if the attributes mentioned by proponents and opponents of the ordinances were or were not discussed by the media. Rather than taking Adas' approach, this study was structured more like one conducted by Kim et al. (2006), which investigated attributes from proponents and opponents of a retail development in order to determine how often these messages appeared in media coverage. But without question, future researchers could take the framing approach created by Adas when looking at these attributes.

Another issue is that while we know that voters in Farmers Branch ultimately approved Ordinance 2903, and that early polling numbers showed Pennsylvanians supported Hazleton's

Illegal Immigration Relief Act, we have no data that specifically addresses which issue attributes were most salient for readers. Understanding what issues or messages resonated with voters and/or citizens could help get to the root of the emotions behind this often divisive topic, and potentially help communities find common ground and solutions to cultural differences. Due to time constraints though, this thesis was unable to explore the public's perception of issue salience. Another researcher though, could conduct a public survey in order to fill this gap – especially given that both of these cities are still engaged in legal battles to defend their ordinances.

Another issue that could be addressed in further research is the impact of the term “illegal alien,” or just “alien,” on readers of the *Hazleton Standard-Speaker*. The paper appears to not have set guidelines on how or when to use the term, and as previous studies have suggested, use of the word “alien” often creates a negative stereotype of immigrants – a sense of “otherness.” Surveys of residents could help to determine how, or if, the frame changed, or changes, their view of illegal immigrants. At the same time, it may be helpful to look at how the term “illegal immigrant” impacts a reader. There is still continuous debate about whether the “illegal” frame creates an unjustified perception of “criminality,” and whether the term “undocumented immigrant” is a more suitable substitute, as the National Association of Hispanic Journalists suggests.

5.6 Summary and Conclusion

Both Farmers Branch and Hazleton are cities that have taken expensive and controversial steps to reduce the number of illegal immigrants living in their communities. Citizens in Farmers Branch were the first to ever vote on, and pass, a municipal immigration ordinance. Hazleton was the first city to have its ordinance debated in federal court. Thus far, federal judges have deemed both cities' ordinances unconstitutional, but these towns are still pioneers on the immigration front. Yet, communication researchers have yet to conduct thorough studies into media coverage of this controversial issue. It is argued that this research

is needed, that these ordinances will continue to appear in cities across the country until the federal government takes action and passes comprehensive immigration reform. It is also important to look at these issues because of the potential these ordinances have to create a division between Caucasians and Hispanics, who are currently the fastest growing minority group in the United States.

Researchers looking at media coverage of these issues need to investigate how the media are portraying this issue. In particular, how much coverage media devote to the issue of immigration, the tone of this coverage, the issues media choose to focus on within the debate and the people chosen to quote. Media representation of whether or not illegal immigrants pose a threat to the community, and whether or not this is a social or economic threat may have a significant influence on lawmakers in municipalities. Just as important is the media representation of the success or failure of these measures. In addition, media coverage of municipal immigration ordinances may impact federal law when the federal government finally decides to take on this important public policy issue. In fact, Farmers Branch city officials, such as current Mayor Tim O'Hare, have stated repeatedly that they believe their ordinances, 2093 and 2952, put pressure on the federal government to create and pass comprehensive immigration reform.

The media coverage also affects individuals. As Dunaway (2006) stated, existing perceptions of threat may be "exacerbated by a heightened salience of these issues, and a disproportionate focus on the negative aspects of these issues" (p. 23). Thus, it is possible that increased focus on "crime" in Hazleton, may subconsciously impact individuals own perceptions of their safety and their need to support stricter laws on immigration reform, in addition to influencing the way they interact with immigrants on a day-to-day basis. With this in mind, it is important to monitor news and editorial coverage and to speak with citizens within these communities to see what impact this coverage is having on readers.

In addition to offering further areas of research, this study has implications for journalists covering the immigration issue and public relations professionals who may become engaged in public policy disputes. While study results do not indicate this, the researcher notes that both coders made mention of the fact that neither the *Dallas Morning News* nor the *Hazleton Standard-Speaker* spent a significant amount of time attempting to tell the story of the average citizen. The two polarized sides were well-represented in media coverage, but few articles spoke with illegal immigrants about how these ordinances would affect them, their families or the community. Similarly, few articles spoke with citizens who felt they had been negatively affected by the immigrants – that is unless those citizens had become activists. These activists, whether they be supporters or opponents of the ordinances, do not represent the average citizen, but rather the far right and left of the story. Additionally, these activists are quoted repeatedly. In Farmers Branch, for instance, you consistently see the same five or six people quoted – City Councilor Tim O’Hare, City Councilor Ben Robinson, Support Farmers Branch Member Tom Bohmier, Let the Voters Decide Member Elizabeth Villafranca, Let the Voters Decide Member Chris McGuire and Let the Voters Decide Member and Former City Council Candidate Tony Salerno. The reporters knew that these were people who would consistently offer quotes. At a time when newspaper budgets are being slashed, staff size is shrinking, and the news cycle is requiring more and more coverage, these activists give journalists the opportunity to quickly piece together a story, without intensive digging. But one must question the impact this has on a newspaper’s ability to tell the whole story, and on important issues of public policy, the public should be as informed as much as possible.

When it comes to informing the public though, this study offers evidence of the importance of public relations – even if that was not the study’s intent. In Farmers Branch it is argued that opponent messages were found more frequently because of the assistance of a public relations professional, who was available to help focus the opponent messages, develop relationships with the media and a dialogue with those in the community. By creating an

organization that was structured and focused, Let the Voters Decide was able to effectively push its agenda into the mainstream press. Similar organizations have been formed to combat other public policy issues. For instance, Citizens Against the Taxpayer-Owned Hotel was formed in 2008 to fight the Dallas city council's decision to build a taxpayer owned hotel. Organizations such as these provide beneficial information to the public, and could be models for how to successfully operate a campaign in the court of public opinion.

In regards to framing, this thesis found that the newspapers in Farmers Branch and Hazleton took different approaches to the use of the "alien" frame. While reporters in Hazleton were willing to use the term in its written copy, the *Dallas Morning News* only printed the term if it was found within a direct quote. These differences are significant if you believe researchers like Merolla (2006), who stated that all "frames, to varying degrees, matter when it comes to shaping feelings toward legal and illegal immigrants; shaping specific beliefs about the economic, social and border consequences of immigration; and with respect to how these feelings and beliefs are weighted in overall support for differing policy proposals" (p. 26).

Without question, there has been obvious support for municipal immigration reform measures. In Farmers Branch, voters overwhelmingly supported Ordinance 2903, and continue to support city councilors as they push through new measures. In Hazleton, the city continues to pursue appeals in federal court, thus city officials are apparently not feeling pressured to end their pursuit of local immigration reform. But it is possible that public support for municipal immigration reform is actually more accurately an expression of frustration with the federal government and its refusal, or inability, to pass comprehensive immigration reform. It is even possible that support for these measures is a result of a culture clash, as the number of Latinos living in the United States continues to rise. Regardless of why these measures are being pursued, this is a unique opportunity for communication researchers to further examine this controversial issue.

A number of important developments are expected in the months and years ahead. For instance, in the next year it is anticipated that Farmers Branch will be forced to defend Ordinance 2952 (the ordinance the council adopted after 2903 was rejected by a judge) before a federal judge. This will only be the second time that a federal court has held a full trial on a municipal immigration measure – the first time being the trial in Hazleton. In addition, it is yet to be seen what will happen to Hazleton's ordinance during the appeals process. News coverage of these issues continues to appear periodically, and when these issues are addressed once again by the courts, a deluge of media coverage is expected. Monitoring and researching this coverage can help us to understand these controversial measures and the impact of those who actively take sides in the immigration debate.

APPENDIX A
LETTER FROM FARMERS BRANCH CITY COUNCILORS

**FROM FARMERS BRANCH CITY COUNCILMEN TIM O'HARE
(Place 2) and BEN ROBINSON (Place 5)**

Dear Neighbor:

On May 12th, or during early voting, which runs from April 30th – May 8th, you will have the opportunity to decide the direction of our City.

As you are probably aware, Ordinance 2903, which prohibits apartment landlords from renting property to most illegal immigrants, comes to the voters for approval. We believe this ordinance is important to ensure the safety of our community, the values of our homes, the quality of our schools and the ability to redevelop many of our retail areas that have been in decline for several years. There is a tremendous amount of false information being spread about this ordinance and its effects. We want our community to have what we believe is the real information about the impact of Ordinance 2903 and other measures that we have passed to curb the influx of illegal immigrants into our City.

FALSEHOOD #1: Ordinance 2903 is Bad for Business

THE TRUTH: Since this ordinance was first brought to the community in August of 2006, many positive things have happened in the business community in our City, including:

*Ordinance
has not
gone into
effect*

- a 200,000+ square foot building on the West Side of the City that had sat close to half vacant for years was leased in full
- a major fast-food chain moved their corporate headquarters to Farmers Branch
- a nationally known youth soccer club moved their headquarters to Farmers Branch – the contract guarantees our City 15,000 hotel room nights a year for 16 years, giving us substantial revenue for our Hotel-Motel Fund
- New Business Permits are up 20% during the 4th Quarter of 2006 compared to the 4th Quarter of 2005
- New homes are under construction in Branch Crossing at a record pace while homes continue to be built at The Courtyards after years of dormancy

FALSEHOOD #2: We Can't Afford the Lawsuits

THE TRUTH: As a result of legal fees to date, there has not been one job eliminated within the City, not one service for our residents has been reduced or eliminated, and there has been no discussion of raising taxes to pay for legal fees. **WE DO NOT HAVE TO RAISE TAXES TO PAY FOR OUR LEGAL FEES.** Any assertion to the contrary is simply false. We have an insurance carrier who will pay all of our legal fees after our deductibles are met on two of the cases if they are not dismissed outright, which is a very real possibility. In addition, if the cases are dismissed or won by the City, we can seek reimbursement for all of our attorney fees from those who have sued us.

Defending these lawsuits has cost money. But, the question needs to be asked: what is the cost of not passing this ordinance? Our property value trends are not where they should be in relation to our location, services and natural beauty. From 2002 to 2006, our

overall property values have gone **down** from approximately \$3.9 billion to \$3.5 billion. We must draw the line now and reverse the trend. If you want to see the result of not acting, tour the residential neighborhoods near Love Field and on either side of Harry Hines south of Walnut Hill.

FALSEHOOD #3: This Ordinance Gives Farmers Branch a Negative Image
THE TRUTH: According to a recent Dallas Business Journal poll, 84% of their readers approve of Ordinance 2903. A Fox 4 News poll indicated that 91% of their respondents were in favor of our actions. There have been other polls conducted through local media, and all of the approval ratings we have seen were overwhelmingly in favor of our efforts.

In addition, Sales Tax Revenue for the City from August – December 2006 was up on average more than 10% compared to the same time period in 2005.

You should also know that **major crimes dropped 15.6% in the 4th Quarter of 2006.** We believe this ordinance and its public discussion played a role in that reduction.

CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES

There are 5 candidates running for 2 open seats on our City Council. **Only two** candidates **support Ordinance 2903: Tim Scott in Place 1 and David Koch in Place 4.** In fact, David Koch's opponent provided a key affidavit supporting the Plaintiff who filed the lawsuit against the City that has been the most expensive to defend to date.

Tim Scott is an active participant in our City through his church, Janie Stark Elementary and our School Community Relations Committee. He and his wife have one daughter. Tim was a vital member of the Branch Revitalization Task Force and has excellent marketing and sales skills which will benefit our Council. He is a 10-year resident of Farmers Branch and currently trains the sales force for Trane Commercial Systems.

David Koch was born and raised in Farmers Branch and is married with 3 children. David is a partner in a law firm where his primary focus is commercial real estate law. His experience in this area would benefit the City in its efforts to bring in new development. David has frequently appeared at Council meetings speaking about revitalization and redevelopment and brought the idea of Branch Crossing to the City after hearing about the efforts of Bellaire, Texas to revitalize their neighborhoods.

VOTE ON MAY 12th!

We believe that Ordinance 2903 is right for Farmers Branch. We believe it will help our property values appreciate, strengthen our schools, help us to revitalize our neighborhoods and bring high-quality retail into our City. We are asking you to join us in **VOTING FOR 2903.**

We also believe that Tim Scott and David Koch are the right men to lead our City into the future. Please join us in voting for **TIM SCOTT, Place 1** and **DAVID KOCH, Place 4.**

Pol. Adv. Paid for By Support Farmers Branch PAC

APPENDIX B

INSIGHTS TRANSCRIPT WITH CITY COUNCILORS

Tim O'Hare: Well, you know, I brought up some of things to the table. Ben also brought some things. It was something that our residents were asking us to do first and foremost. I had a number of people in the city come to me and say why don't you do some of the things we are seeing happen across the country. And the reason that we are forced to do something, the reason we did something, is because the federal government's not doing what they are supposed to be doing. They are not securing our borders. So we are a nation of laws and the reason that people come in to this country is because we have laws that protect people that are here and those laws are not being obeyed when people cross the border and they don't do it legally. So people in Farmers Branch and all across the country say hey we are tired of it, do something and it has to start apparently at the local level because the federal government won't come on board.

Shaun Rabb: Tell me what were residents of Farmers Branch, some of them, saying to you?

Ben Robinson: Well, what they were saying – let me just reinforce what Tim says first. This council a little bit different from that of our federal representative does react to what our citizens request of us. And our citizens have indicated – did insist that we do something about these illegal immigration situations in the city. And so we do listen to our citizens and tell our citizens and we did take action in accordance with their wishes.

Shaun Rabb: What kind of things David where you and others asking, I guess, Farmers Branch elected to do?

David Koch: We were looking at what Hazelton had done and some of the other cities and asked them to consider similar ordinances relating to the English as the official language, the issues about renting to illegal immigrants and expand from there to consider any number of ideas and not just those, but to consider other options to address the issues that were coming up in the city.

Shaun Rabb: Exactly, what kind of issues?

David Koch: Oh, in terms of the city? We were seeing deterioration of the infrastructure, the housing, the retail, we were seeing issues, I think Tim raised one, that was prominent in the news several months back where we had a drive-by shooting and two alleged perpetrators were illegal immigrants. We were seeing issues like that across the city.

We were seeing a lot of homes deteriorate and we saw the property values in the city really take a hit over the last two years. You know, according to the Dallas Central papers there are 25 cities that are in Dallas County, and last year the average market value increase for single family detached dwellings, Farmers Branch was 25th and we didn't think that was good

APPENDIX C

LETTER FROM LET THE VOTERS DECIDE



April 4, 2007

Thank you for recently contacting and supporting our organization! The citizens of Farmers Branch have important decisions to make at the polls on May 12 – especially regarding Ordinance 2903. The following are just a few of the reasons we hope you will help us campaign and vote against this controversial immigration ordinance.

- For starters, we have now learned **our community does not suffer from declining housing values, poor schools or an increase in crime. Ordinance supporters told us we needed immigration reform because our city was hurting in all these key areas.** Now, ordinance supporters have backed off their original position. The truth is, housing values are on the rise, our schools are great, and crime is down. The future is bright and our outlook positive.
- **We've learned that federal immigration reform is on the way.** This is good news to many who agree with many economic experts, scholars and faith-based organizations: Immigration reform should be handled at the federal level, not the local level. **We should not pay the price for the enforcement or defense of immigration reform.**
- We've learned that the litigation surrounding the immigration ordinance is complex, time consuming and expensive. Already, four lawsuits have been filed against the city. **To date, the city has spent more than \$250,000 on legal fees. This is our taxpayer money – funds that are critical to promoting economic progress and building better neighborhoods.** Defending this ordinance could cost the city millions of dollars. That's a poor use of taxpayer money.
- As Farmers Branch residents or business owners, we have seen how this ordinance is tarnishing our city's image. Have you noticed it too? **Farmers Branch is making headlines for all the wrong reasons.** There are better ways than Ordinance 2903 to respond to the changes taking place in our city.

We can't afford it! We encourage you to **vote against Ordinance 2903**. We look forward to seeing you at the polls on May 12, and please visit us at www.votersdecide.org or call 972-616-0123 to learn more about this issue.

Sincerely,

Tony Salerno

Elizabeth Villafranca

Jim Manning

APPENDIX D

FLYER FROM LET THE VOTERS DECIDE

Vote **AGAINST** Ordinance 2892!

"Farmers Branch continues to make the wrong kind of headlines. But by repealing Ordinance 2892, we can embrace cultural diversity, promote economic progress – and build bridges of understanding in our community."

- Jim Manning, Farmers Branch resident and community volunteer

Ordinance 2892 forces landlords to verify citizenship of tenants. It was voted on by only the Farmers Branch City Council. The measure has come under fire from business, political and civic leaders for the way it discriminates against many – and affects the entire community. A recent petition drive now gives voters their say on this controversial measure.

Political advertisement paid for by Let the Voters Decide • 2704 Valley View Lane, Farmers Branch, Texas 75234



**VOTE
AGAINST
2892
ON MAY 12, 2007**

APPENDIX E

LETTER SUPPORTING HAZLETON ORDINANCE

(Letter located at smalltowndefenders.com)

Welcome to Small Town Defenders!

Submitted by Small Town Defender on Tue, 2006-06-13 04:01. ::

We need your help! Your contribution will help us win this fight! Send a check or money order to:

**City of Hazleton Legal Defense Fund, c/o Mayor Lou Barletta
City Hall, 40 N. Church St., Hazleton, PA 18201**

Or [donate online to Small Town Defenders](#) using a safe and secure online form provided through an industry leader in the online fundraising world.



I'm Lou Barletta, the proud Mayor of the City of Hazleton, Pennsylvania.

I believe the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth. People who are in this country have an incredible amount of opportunities and blessings.

But some people have taken advantage of America's openness and tolerance. Some come to this country and refuse to learn English, creating a language barrier for city employees. Others enter the country illegally and use government services by not paying taxes or by committing crime on our streets, further draining resources here in Hazleton.

Recent crimes – such as a high-profile murder, the discharge of a gun at a crowded city playground, and drug busts – have involved illegal immigrants. Some of those allegedly involved in those crimes were detained by other law enforcement officials over the years, but were somehow allowed to remain in this country. They eventually migrated into Hazleton, where they helped create a sense of fear in the good, hardworking residents who are here legally.

Illegal aliens in our City create an economic burden that threatens our quality of life.

With a growing problem and a limited budget, I could not sit back any longer and allow this to happen. I needed to act!

That's why I drafted the [Illegal Immigration Relief Act](#), a measure designed to say enough is enough.

To the residents of Hazleton, I say thank you for your support. To our recently arrived legal immigrants, I say welcome to our City. I wish you all the best and hope the United States and Hazleton can be a place where your dreams come true. I am proud to represent you as your Mayor.

And to illegal immigrants and those who would hire or abet them in any way, I say your time is up. You are no longer welcome.

There are thousands of small towns and cities across America like Hazleton, Pennsylvania.

I hope the steps we're taking in Hazleton to defend ourselves will inspire others to become small town defenders.

Thank you for visiting Small Town Defenders! Be sure to visit our [online petition page](#) and let us know

how you feel.

CLICK & PLEDGE

DONATE NOW

APPENDIX F

ACLU PRES RELEASE

Civil Rights Organizations File Lawsuit Over Unconstitutional Ordinance in Escondido, CA

(11/3/2006)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: media@aclu.org

ESCONDIDO, CA -- A coalition of civil rights organizations and law firms today filed a lawsuit against the city of Escondido, charging that the city's anti-immigration ordinance is unconstitutional and illegal under federal and state law. In a demand letter issued last week, the coalition urged the City Council to avoid spending taxpayer dollars on a lawsuit defending the unconstitutional ordinance, and pressed instead for the measure to be repealed before the November 18 implementation date. The city failed to respond to the letter.

The coalition, comprised of the American Civil Liberties Union, the Fair Housing Council of San Diego, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) and People For the American Way (PFAW), is challenging the anti-immigration ordinance passed by the Escondido City Council on October 18, which bans renting an apartment to undocumented residents. The coalition also includes the private law firms of Rosner & Mansfield LLP and Cooley Godward Kronish LLP.

"Under federal law, immigration issues belong only to the federal government," said David Blair-Loy, Legal Director of the ACLU of San Diego & Imperial Counties. "Under state law, non-citizens have the same property rights as citizens. Either way, Escondido has no business legislating in this area."

The coalition said that the ordinance is in direct violation of federal immigration law, since the federal government exclusively is charged with enforcing immigration laws, and it puts landlords in the untenable situation of serving as federal law enforcement agents. It also violates the property and contract rights of both landlords and tenants, as well as federal fair housing and privacy laws, and disproportionately discriminates against Latino families.

"Irrespective of your position on the merits of the issue, you cannot comply with the Escondido ordinance and comply with California law," said Rosner & Mansfield attorney Alan Mansfield.

Other states and municipalities across the country have unsuccessfully attempted to adopt similarly divisive, unnecessary and illegal measures.

"Just as in Valley Park, Missouri and Hazleton, Pennsylvania, Escondido residents will be wrongly evicted from their apartments and discriminatorily denied access to their homes. And just as in Valley Park and Hazleton, the city will be stopped from enforcing such a flawed and misguided ordinance," said Kristina Campbell, a MALDEF staff attorney.

Not only is the ordinance in violation of state and federal law, but it also presents a humanitarian crisis given the homelessness that will result from the law's implementation, said the groups.

"Federal and state laws prohibit discrimination based upon national origin or other 'protected' class status," said Mary Scott Knoll, Executive Director of the Fair Housing Council of San Diego. "The ordinance opens a wide door for discrimination against a host of Latino individuals and families, and exacerbates the already tedious and difficult path to discrimination-free housing choices in our society."

The coalition has requested that the city wait to enforce the ordinance pending a preliminary injunction hearing.

"We understand some of the frustration over immigration. Congress and President Bush had promised us comprehensive immigration reform to fix our broken system," said Melissa Daar, California Policy and Field Director for People For the American Way. "But our frustration should be directed where it belongs - at the president and his allies in Congress, who could not come up with just and humane reform legislation. Escondido's law comes disguised as a strike against lawlessness, but it will instead foment discrimination against anyone who simply looks like he or she might be an undocumented worker, citizen and non-citizen alike."

APPENDIX G

CODING INSTRUCTION BOOK

One coding sheet is to be used for each coder. Stories are to be coded in their entirety. Stories related to Farmers Branch and/or Hazleton will be coded.

Publication: Enter “DMN” for stories published in the *Dallas Morning News*. Enter “HSS” for stories published in the *Hazleton Standard-Speaker*.

Article Type: Enter “news” for news stories. Enter “editorial” for editorials/opinion pieces.

Word Count: Research will fill in the word count for each article.

Content (For Articles 1-68, relating to Farmers Branch):

Property Values: Enter a Code of ‘1’ if the story mentions that property values are going down because of immigrants. Enter a ‘2’ if the issue is not addressed.

Schools: Enter a Code of ‘1’ if the story mentions that immigrants are affecting the public schools. Enter a ‘2’ if the issue is not addressed.

Crime: Enter a Code of ‘1’ if the story mentions that crime is a problem because of immigrants. Enter a ‘2’ if the issue is not addressed.

Retail Areas: Enter a ‘1’ if the story mentions that an ordinance is needed to improve retail areas or because retail areas are underperforming. Enter a ‘2’ if the issue is not addressed.

Tarnish City Image: Enter a Code of ‘1’ if the story mentions that the local immigration issues/ordinance is tarnishing the city’s image. Enter a ‘2’ if the issue is not addressed.

Cost of Court: Enter a Code of ‘1’ if the story mentions that it will cost millions of dollars to defend the ordinance in court. Enter a ‘2’ if the issue is not addressed.

Discriminatory: Enter a Code of ‘1’ if the story mentions that the ordinance is discriminatory. Enter a ‘2’ if the issue is not addressed.

Federal Issue/Not local: Enter a ‘1’ if the story mentions that immigration is a federal issue and should not be addressed at the local level. Enter a ‘2’ if the issue is not addressed.

Federal not Doing Its Job: Enter a ‘1’ if the story mentions that the federal government is not doing its job (by passing/enforcing immigration reform), thus local governments must do the job. Enter a ‘2’ if the issue is not addressed.

Content (For articles 1-103, relating to Hazleton):

Crime: Enter a Code of ‘1’ if the story mentions that immigrants are responsible for the crime in Hazleton. Enter a ‘2’ if the issue is not addressed.

1. **Economics/Govt. Services:** Enter a Code of '1' if the story mentions that immigrants are placing an economic burden on the city/ and or using government services. Enter a '2' if the issue is not addressed.
2. **Unconstitutional:** Enter a Code of '1' if the story mentions that the ordinance/law is unconstitutional. Enter a '2' if the issue is not addressed.
3. **Discriminatory:** Enter a '1' if the story mentions that the ordinance/law is discriminatory. Enter a '2' if the issue is not addressed.
4. **Federal Issue/Not local:** Enter a '1' if the story mentions that immigration is a federal issue and should not be addressed at the local level. Enter a '2' if the issue is not addressed.
5. **Federal not Doing Its Job:** Enter a '1' if the story mentions that the federal government is not doing its job (by passing/enforcing immigration reform), thus local governments must do the job. Enter a '2' if the issue is not addressed.

Support/Oppose/Neutral: Enter a Code of '1' if you feel the story is partial to or supportive of those that support the city's immigration ordinance. Enter a Code of '2' if you feel the story is partial to or supportive of those who oppose the city's immigration ordinance. Enter a Code of '3' if you feel the story is unbiased, or neutral in its representation of the story.

Source Types: Enter a Code of '1' if a government official is quoted (city councilor, mayor, city secretary, city spokesperson, etc.). Enter a Code of '2' if a lawyer representing the city is quoted. Enter a Code of '3' if a lawyer representing opponents of the ordinance is quoted. Enter a Code of '4' if an opposition group or private citizen opposing the ordinance is quoted. Enter a Code of '5' if a group or private citizen supporting the ordinance is quoted.

Aliens: Enter a Code of '1' if the story mentions the term "illegal aliens." Enter a '2' if the term is not used.

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Burnett received her bachelors degree in journalism and minor in History from the University of Kansas in 2003. She began pursuing her master's degree in communication at the University of Texas at Arlington in 2007 and graduated in 2009.