

Immigration and Language Threat in a Local Newspaper: A Case Study of Hazleton, Pennsylvania

by

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Abstract

This research is a case study of immigration issues in Hazleton, Pennsylvania from 2005 – 2006 in the lead-up to the passage of the Illegal Immigration Relief Act by the city. Using reporting data from the local newspaper, the Hazleton *Standard-Speaker*, qualitative data from the city, such as crime, census, and school district data, and a discourse analysis of letters-to-the-editor, an analysis was made using the Social Amplification of Risk framework, Social Identity Theory, and Realistic Group Conflict Theory. The research questions sought to find what role may the *Standard-Speaker* have played in the formation of public opinion about the Illegal Immigration Relief Act and the Official English Ordinance (IIRA) of 2006 in Hazleton, PA, how the reporting in the *Standard-Speaker* compared to the quantitative data, and how immigrants and immigration were portrayed in articles from the Standard Speaker about crime, language issues, education, and letters to the editor. Results showed that the newspaper likely may have played a role in shaping public opinion, particularly by amplifying threats of crime, while minimizing threats pertaining to education.

Resumen

Esta investigación es un estudio de caso de cuestiones acerca de la inmigración en Hazleton, Pensilvania desde 2005 – 2006 en cuanto a la preparación a la aprobación del Acto de Alivio de la Inmigración Ilegal (Illegal Immigration Relief Act) por la ciudad. Usando data de la presentación de informes del periódico local, el *Standard-Speaker* de Hazleton, datos cualitativos de la ciudad, como crimen, el censo, y datos del distrito escolar, y un análisis del discurso en las cartas al editor, un análisis fue hecho usando la estructura de riesgo de amplificación social, la teoría identidad social, y la teoría conflicto en grupo realístico. Las tres preguntas buscaban descubrir si el Standard-Speaker pudo jugar un papel en el fomento de la opinión publica sobre el Acto de Alivio de la Inmigración Ilegal y la Ordenanza Oficial de Ingles (IIRA) de 2006 en Hazleton, PA, como los informes del periódico local comparaban a los datos cualitativos, y como inmigrantes e inmigración fueron representados en los artículos del Standard-Speaker sobre crimen, cuestiones de lenguaje, educación, y cartas al editor. Los resultados demostraron que el periódico posiblemente pudo haber jugado un papel en la formación de la opinión pública, particularmente al amplificar amenazas de crimen, mientras minimizando amenazas relacionadas a la educación.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

“If you’re not careful, the newspapers will have you hating the people who are being oppressed, and loving the people who are doing the oppressing” –Malcolm X

Human population movements have defined the course of human history and civilization. Going back far enough in time, there is not a person who can say that at some point an ancestor of theirs did not migrate to the country or region in which they now live. Globally, there were about 191 million people living outside of their country of birth in 2006, representing about 3% of the global population (United Nations: Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division, 2006). Within the United States in 2009, 38.5 million are foreign-born¹, accounting for 12.5% of the US population (Grieco & Trevelyan, 2010). However, as is evident from recent controversies regarding immigration, such as Arizona’s immigration legislation, SB-1070, passed in 2010, France’s decision to ban the wearing of Muslim headwear in 2004, and the rise in popularity of anti-immigration political parties in Finland, Denmark, and the Netherlands, immigrants often bring prejudices, fears, and insecurities to the surface in the countries in which they settle. Even countries traditionally thought of as welcoming towards immigrants show surprising levels of hostility towards immigrants. In Australia, 45% believe that ethnic diversity weakens the nation (Dunn, 2003), while 44% of Canadians believe that there are too many immigrants in their country (Esses, Jackson, & Armstrong, 1998). Only 19% of Americans believe that immigration is a bad thing, but 54% support halting or limiting immigration to the

¹ The United States Census Bureau refers to native-born as anyone who was a U.S. citizen at birth, whether born in the United States or abroad to U.S. citizens. The foreign-born population includes anyone who was not a U.S. citizen at birth, including those who have become U.S. citizens through naturalization. These definitions of foreign- and native-born are used in this paper. (Grieco & Trevelyan, 2010)

U.S. (NBC/Wall Street Journal News Poll 6/10/2007). The questions surrounding the reasons for these complex attitudes towards immigration are complex and multi-faceted.

Since 2010, the states of Alabama, Arizona, and Georgia have all passed legislation seeking to target undocumented immigration in those states. In addition, cities and towns have been passing their own legislation and ordinances dealing with undocumented immigration since 2005. In July of 2006, the city of Hazleton, PA, with a population of slightly less than 25,000, passed the first substantial piece of local legislation targeting undocumented immigrants and immigration in the country, known as the Illegal Immigration Relief Act (IIRA). Within one year, nine other municipalities had passed legislation based on Hazleton's and 30 more were considering it (Barry, 2006). Despite the national controversy over Hazleton's immigration legislation and the still ongoing litigation over the act, the legislation remains in effect, though it is currently not enforced due to a court injunction. Meanwhile, the then mayor, Lou Barletta, who strongly pushed the bill, has since been elected to U.S. Congress.

The city of Hazleton and the surrounding area is principally served by one newspaper, the Hazleton *Standard-Speaker*. Small town newspapers play a unique role in their communities. Typically considered to be newspapers with circulation of less than 50,000, small town newspapers, such as the *Standard-Speaker*, with a circulation of approximately 37,000 (Editor and Publisher, 2008), are typically the only printed source for local news (Mohl, 2003). Additionally, due to the small size of the population they are serving and lower operating budgets, community newspapers also tend to value community involvement rather than journalistic independence (Mohl, 2003). The intense local focus of community newspapers in building connections with their community on issues of both local and national importance lends itself to coverage that likely reflects, as well as informs, the community that it serves.

History and Background of Hazleton, Pennsylvania

Hazleton sits in northeastern Pennsylvania at the intersection of Interstates 80 and 81, approximately 125 miles west of New York City, 100 miles northwest of Philadelphia, and about 45 miles directly south of Scranton, PA. Hazleton is a city largely built by immigrants. First incorporated as a borough in 1851, the city was primarily a small farming town of about 4,000, with a large German population. The population grew slowly but steadily until the 1880s. In 1880 the city's population was 6,935, but in 1890 the population boomed to 11,872, and electricity was established in 1891, making Hazleton the third city in the nation to electrify. By 1900 the population was 14,230 and in 1910 it increased further to 25,452 (Greater Hazleton Historical Society). The cause of this rapid expansion in the population was caused by the rapid growth of anthracite coal mining. Anthracite coal burned cleaner and hotter than any other coal, and was used extensively in the American industrial revolution. Hazleton, and the areas surrounding it, sat atop the largest and most easily accessible anthracite deposits in the world.

According to the Luzerne County (in which Hazleton resides) website, the initial immigrants that came to the area were those with experience in mining from England, Wales, Germany, and Ireland. However, as immigration from these areas slowed, new groups of immigrants, largely from Southern and Eastern Europe filled the demand. These new immigrant groups, unlike those arriving previously, were largely Catholic and did not speak English. Typically, single men from Europe would arrive in Hazleton, obtain work, then have their family immigrate, dramatically increasing the population and fueling a substantial manufacturing industry that took advantage of the ready availability of coal and immigrant labor (N.A., 2009). To highlight the changing demographics, in 1880 for example, the Slavic population in Northeastern Pennsylvania made up about 2% of the population, but by 1900 it made up 46% (Greene, 1964).

However, as the 20th century progressed demand for coal declined as the global economy began to switch to petroleum-based fuels. Coal production in Northeastern Pennsylvania peaked in 1917, at 99.7 million tons, and decreased steadily year after year. The Hazleton area mines employed 13,500 people in 1927, but only 6,000 by 1950. In 1955, Hurricane Diane dropped several feet of water on the Hazleton area, flooding most of the remaining deep mines in the area. As a result, more than half of the few remaining coal miners were laid off. Unemployment measured about 23% as a result of the hurricane and mine closures (CAN DO HAZLETON).

As the coal industry declined, so too did the population; by 1940, the population of Hazleton peaked at 38,009. By 1970, the population had decreased to 30,426 (U.S. Census Bureau, 1970). In 1980, the population further declined to 27,318 (U.S. Census Bureau, 1980) and by 1990 the city had 24,730 people (U.S. Census Bureau, 1990). In 2000, the decline in population had slowed and stood at 23,329 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a). However, in 2010 the population increased for the first time in over half a century to 25,340 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

The most evident reason for the slow, and eventual growth, in population from 1990 to 2010 was the large increase in the Hispanic population². In 1980, the population of “Spanish origin”, which included Latinos, was 71 (U.S. Census Bureau, 1980). By 1990, the Hispanic population increased to 249 (U.S. Census Bureau, 1990), and by 2000 the number of Hispanics more than tripled to 1,132, or 4.9% of the city’s population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a). In 2010, the number of Hispanics had exploded to 9,454, or 37.3% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

² The U.S. Census uses differing terms depending on the year to describe the Hispanic population. The terms used here are reflective of the terminology used in the Census being cited.

This rapid and drastic increase in the Hispanic population was not an entirely smooth one however. In 2006, the city of Hazleton passed the Illegal Immigration Relief Act (IIRA), which prohibited employing or renting to undocumented immigrants, and established English as the official language of the city and prohibited the use of any language other than English in city business, forms, signs, and documents, unless required by the federal or state government³ (Ordinance 2006-10, 2006). The IIRA was later amended to be more specific in regards to its definitions of “illegal immigrant” and lessened the penalties for businesses and landlords hiring or housing undocumented immigrants (Ordinance 2006-18, 2006). Additionally, the section of the original IIRA establishing English as the official language of the city was separated from the act and passed as its own ordinance (the Official English Ordinance) so that if the IIRA was struck down in full in court, the Official English Ordinance would remain in effect. The IIRA was immediately challenged in court by the ACLU and the Puerto Rican Legal Defense Fund, and an injunction was ordered to keep the ordinance from taking effect. The IIRA was ruled unconstitutional on 14th Amendment grounds by a federal appeals court in July of 2007. However, on appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, the Supreme Court ordered the appeals court to reconsider the case on the basis of its recent decision in favor of an Arizona employer sanctions law, the Arizona Legal Workers Act. The case regarding the IIRA is still under consideration in the Third Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia. Aside from seeking to maintain its immigration law, the City of Hazleton also has a large financial stake in seeing the law upheld in court. Legal fees and court costs in the event that the IIRA is struck down could amount to over \$2 million, though the city has collected over \$400,000 in donations through its website www.smalltowndefenders.org (Jackson, 2011).

³ See appendix 1 for full text of the City of Hazleton Illegal Immigration Relief Act

Tension between large groups of newly arrived immigrants in the Hazleton area, and legislation seeking to restrict them, is not unique to the wave of Hispanic immigration that arrived to the area in the late 1990s and into the first decade of the 21st century. With the rapid increase of the foreign-born population in the Hazleton area between 1880 and 1900 came legislation seeking to restrict immigration based on ethnicity and immigration status. In 1889, what was to become known as the Gallagher law was passed by the Pennsylvania State Legislature, which sought to limit Eastern European immigration to the state and required coal miners to pass an English examination. In 1897, the Campbell Act was passed, which imposed a three cents a day tax on mining companies for each non-native born worker they employed. All of these laws were eventually declared unconstitutional and struck down by the courts (Greene, 1964). However, ethnic tensions culminated in late August and early September of 1897 with a strike over wage issues, which included the tax levied in the Campbell Act, which was passed on by mining companies to non-native workers, by approximately 5,000 coal miners in the Hazleton area, and over 10,000 in all of Luzerne County, most of whom were of Slavic and Italian descent. On September 10th, 1897, 19 marching coal mine workers were killed and 38 more were wounded by the Hazleton sheriff and his deputies during a march by 400 immigrant workers protesting various labor issues in an event that would come to be known as the Lattimer Massacre (Wolensky, 1997).

Chapter 2: Research Objectives and Questions

The objective of this research is to investigate the role that the local newspaper, the Hazleton *Standard-Speaker* may have played in the fomenting of support for local legislation that sought to restrict immigration and establish English as the official language in Hazleton, Pennsylvania, according to the Social Amplification of Risk framework (SARF). The SARF lays out guidelines that seek to explain the influence that the media may play in increasing perceptions of risk from risk events that may in fact be of far less threat than perceived (Kasperson & Kasperson, 1996; Kasperson et al., 1988). If the SAR framework is correct, then articles pertaining to immigration, local immigrant issues, and language in the *Standard-Speaker* would serve to influence its readers and the community by affecting perceptions of the threat that immigration in the community presents.

By conducting a case study of the possible role that the Hazleton *Standard-Speaker* may have played in swaying the public towards the passage of anti-immigrant legislation, an analysis of how immigrants and immigration were portrayed is made. Additionally, reporting in the *Standard-Speaker* is compared to the data from the U.S. census, city crime statistics, and school budgets. Furthermore, through a closer analysis of the discourse of letters-to-the-editor on the topic of immigration, insights into the possible effects that the newspaper played in shaping opinion in regards to immigration are explained, as well as the influence of direct and indirect nodes of communication in transmitting immigration threat.

The research questions for this research thus are as follows: 1) According to the Social Amplification of Risk framework, what role may the *Standard-Speaker* have played in the formation of public opinion about the Illegal Immigration Relief Act and the Official English Ordinance (IIRA) of 2006 in Hazleton, PA? 2) How does the reporting in the *Standard-Speaker* compare to quantitative data from the census, crime reports, and educational budgets, for crime,

language issues, and education? 3) How are immigrants and immigration portrayed in articles from the *Standard Speaker* about crime, language issues, education, and letters to the editor?

The use of case study research in focusing on Hazleton and the *Standard-Speaker* has guided this research project. Given the geographic and temporal boundaries of the topic, research objectives, and research questions, a case study is best suited to look deeper at this issue. One of the central strengths of case study research is its ability “to observe effects in real contexts” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 253). Again, of primary interest in this research is the analysis of potential effects that the paper may have played in building support for the IIRA in a Social Amplification of Risk framework. Furthermore, given the unique context of the situation in Hazleton leading up to the passage of the IIRA, the investigative nature of a case study to report on complex subtleties and interactions suits itself well to this research (Cohen, et al., 2007).

Chapter 3: Literature Review

Feelings and perceptions towards immigrants and immigration are complex, multi-faceted, and at times seemingly at odds with each other. This is not to say, however, that extensive research has not been done on the topic. Through a variety of disciplines and theories, feelings towards immigration, and the possible roots of these feelings, have been investigated in a variety of contexts. Using a cross-disciplinary approach pulling from sociology, psychology, and communications and media studies, a theoretical framework can be constructed to assess feelings towards immigration and the reactions that immigration provokes in the native-born population.

Theoretical Framework

By analyzing attitudes towards immigration and the reactions that they provoke, common patterns begin to emerge. Central to these patterns is threat and risk. Threat is loosely defined as an expressed intention to inflict, or an indication of, impending harm, injury, or loss (Kasperson & Kasperson, 1996). Risk, though similar to threat, is different in that risk represents an exposure to a chance of injury or loss. In terms of immigration, threat is more frequently used as a measure when analyzing anxiety and feelings towards immigration and immigrants. While the term risk is used in some of the theoretical literature, threat more closely reflects the realities of immigration, as evidenced by the usage of the term in the literature regarding the subject (Brader, Valentino, & Suhay, 2008; Carroll, 2009; Eva G.T. Green, 2009; Stephan, Diaz-Loving, & Duran, 2000). However, the two terms for practical purposes are largely interchangeable.

Threat plays a role in explaining and predicting levels of anxiety about immigration on both a micro and macro level. Additionally, an understanding of the role of threat in attitudes towards immigration provides a framework to reduce or eliminate immigration threat, as well as provide an understanding of the political repercussions that immigration threat may have. Key to

this understanding are the Social Amplification of Risk framework (SARF), realistic conflict theory, and social identity theory.

The SARF seeks to explain how risk is perceived by the public, and why for example a small risk event can elicit disproportional concern amongst the public (Kasperson, et al., 1988). According to the SARF, public perceptions are “the product of intuitive biases and economic interests and reflect cultural values” (Kasperson, et al., 1988, p. 178) (178). These perceptions can be analyzed in a wide range of contexts, ranging from environmental issues, health problems, to cultural issues such as immigration. In the framework, a risk event is transmitted from some source with direct experience with, and information about, the event to another source, such as a friend, family member or the media, who form their own perceptions of the risk event. That new source then continues to spread information about the risk event until it reaches another source, which may again in turn transmit the risk event onward.

Kasperson (1988) separates risks as coming from direct and indirect experience, based on the proximity of the individual or group to the actual risk event, in this case immigrants. Direct experience with risk according to the SARF would increase the memorability of the event and can either serve to amplify or attenuate views of the risk. Indirect, or secondary, threat plays an important role when direct experience is either lacking or minimal. Thus individuals come to learn about the risk from the media or other people. With indirect experience, attributes of the information flow include: the volume of the information, how dramatized it is, how disputed the information is, and the symbolic connotations of the information (Kasperson, et al., 1988). Indirect experience also explains how the impact of a risk event can spread geographically far, through the media and communication between individuals, from where the event occurred and how it may be an issue in a part of the country or world where the original risk may be smaller or

nonexistent. For a more detailed explanation of the SARF, see the appendix for Kasperson's diagram showing the factors and nodes involved in transmitting and amplifying risk.

Perceived and Real Threat

When it comes to immigration, threat can be categorized as real or perceived. Both types of threat have a theoretical framework in which they operate. Realistic conflict theory in its simplest terms states that opposing group interests will lead to competition over scarce resources.

Groups in realistic conflict theory are defined as a social unit,

which consists of a number of individuals who, at a given time, stand in more or less definite interdependent status and role relationships to one another and which explicitly or implicitly possesses a set of values or norms of its own regulating the behavior of individual members, at least in matters of consequence to the group (Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961, p. 8)

Such a definition of a group could certainly be applied to various immigrant and native-born groups. In realistic conflict theory, competition between groups for limited resources in a social setting will lead to increased group cohesion and ethnocentrism amongst members of a particular in-group and increased antagonism towards out-groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In terms of immigration, the competition over resources is what can be termed realistic threat.

Realistic threats in the context of immigration threat are most often economic. Economic threat is most commonly viewed as competition from immigrants over jobs and government resources, such as social welfare, housing, and medical care (E.G.T. Green, 2009). Economic threats often take the form of zero-sum game beliefs, meaning that an individual or group's economic gain comes at the expense of another's (Esses, Dovidio, Jackson, & Armstrong, 2001; Wilson, 2001). However, real threat can also include security, such as crime and terrorism (Esses, et al., 2001; Vala, Pereira, & Ramos, 2006), and health issues (Green et al., 2010). It is

important to note that real threats are not strictly limited to those resources mentioned, and may include any tangible factor or resource.

Perceived threat, in the context of immigration, meanwhile is slightly more ambiguous in its definition. Perceived threat is often defined as symbolic threat, representing threat from immigrants in regards to intangible ideas such as identity, values, and culture (E.G.T. Green, 2009; Vala, et al., 2006). However, perceived threat is not to be thought of as subjectively viewed or non-existent threat as its name might imply. Rather, it more commonly refers to those non-tangible threats mentioned above. While the concept of perceived threat also has a basis in realistic group conflict theory, realistic group conflict theory primarily explains attitudes and reactions in terms of resources like those classified under realistic threats. Social identity theory supplements realistic group conflict theory by stating that an individual has not just one “personal self,” but several that each relate to various levels of group membership (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). These group identities help an individual define who they are. This group self-categorization favors the in-group, of which the individual is a member, at the expense of out-groups. Individual self-esteem is boosted by demonstrating the positive differences, or “positive distinctiveness,” between the in-group in which they belong and out-groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

With this view of the individual and their identity as members of a group, one can potentially see how threats to the identity, values, and culture of a group may likewise be viewed as threats to an individual as well. Social identity theory compliments realistic threat theory in terms of immigration by explaining the relationship between group competition and identity. If an individual identifies themselves as a member of a nation or social group, they also carry with them an identity that is steeped in the values and culture of that country or social group. Immigrants, as members of an out-group, also bring with them their own culture, identity, and

values from their home country. A competition in turn can arise over the intangible resource of national identity and the in-group dominance in defining that identity (Esses, et al., 2001). A threat to identity is thus a threat to the individual and the in-group view of national identity. A seeming failure or refusal by immigrants to become members of the in-group, by adopting its identity and values, is then thought of as a threat to the national collective identity (Johnson, Farrell, & Guinn, 1997).

In terms of real and perceived threat, it is important to keep in mind that whether a threat is legitimate or not is largely unimportant. According to Kasperson (1988), “risk has meaning only to the extent that it treats how people think about the world and its relationships. Thus there is no such thing as “true” (absolute) and “distorted” (socially determined) risk.”(184)

Causes and Correlations of Threat

With these theoretical frameworks in mind, the specific causes of threat from immigration can be analyzed at both a macro (national) and micro (individual or community) level. The specific factors that lead to immigration threat are numerous, though they can be largely broken down into the real and perceived categories mentioned earlier. There are, however, two basic factors in determining the level of threat that immigrants generate. The first is the social and economic status of the individual (and to some extent nation). The second is the number of immigrants in the country or community as a ratio to the native-born population and to what extent those immigrants can be grouped together as ethnically, religiously, or otherwise different from the native-born population.

In the largest study of perceptions of immigrant threat, Green (2009) correlates support for anti-immigrant legislation with increased levels of threat. Perceptions of threat were tied primarily to one’s social status in a European context. The lower the social status of an

individual, as measured by education, and income, and gender⁴, the more likely that individual is likely to perceive a threat from immigrants (E.G.T. Green, 2009). These findings are somewhat similar to Wilson (2001) which also found that lower education correlated to higher levels of threat. Chandler (2001) likewise found college education to be a powerful agent in determining pro-immigrant sentiment. However, in Wilson (2001) higher incomes were found to lead to somewhat higher levels of threat, contrary to Green's (2009) findings. These socio-economic findings are most often explained by increased insecurity when it comes to competition with immigrants for jobs and tangible resources.

When looking at immigration threat at a national level, the lower the GDP of a country (taken by the researchers as an indication of the economic resources of a country) and the greater the ratio of immigrants to the native-born population, the more likely there is to be a correlation to general opposition to immigration within that country (Eva G.T. Green, 2009). While Green (2009) found that higher ratios of immigrants to the native born population were generally found to equate to increased levels of threat, even low ratios of immigrants in countries that have less experience with immigration (such as Poland, Greece, Italy, and Ireland) were found to cause higher levels of threat than in countries with higher immigrant ratios but more experience with immigration (such as Canada, France, and the United States)(Bauer, Lofstrom, & Zimmermann, 2001). Again, these findings, though not as strong as individual factors, reinforce the role of anxiety, insecurity, and inexperience in terms of competition with immigrants over resources in shaping perceptions about levels of immigrant threat.

Additionally, there appears to be a link between the type of immigrants that a nation receives and the type of threat experienced. Bauer (2001) found that those countries with

⁴ Green (2009) cites women as more likely to experience economic threat from immigrants, while Bauer (2001) found it to be men.

traditions of immigrants arriving for economic reasons were, perhaps unsurprisingly, found to have higher levels of economic threat, particularly when it came to jobs. Alternatively, those countries that received predominately refugee immigrants were found to far more concerned with crime and social threats rather than economic ones⁵.

Prejudice and Group Cues

Brader et al's (2008) findings supplement those of Green (2009) by analyzing immigration threat where immigrants were largely of one distinct out-group. In a study of group cues, in this case racial, towards immigration attitudes, researchers found that anxiety (and in turn the likelihood of support for opposing or restricting immigration) towards immigrants was higher when the immigrant group being highlighted was present in large numbers in the country, in this case Hispanic, as opposed to European, immigrants in the United States (Brader, et al., 2008). Interestingly, anxiety towards the dominant immigrant group was higher regardless of whether the information presented towards participants was positive or negative (Brader, et al., 2008)⁶. Meanwhile, in a German context, positive information about Turkish immigrants was found to somewhat mitigate anxiety while negative information was found to increase it (Florack, Piontkowski, Rohmann, Balzer, & Perzig, 2003).

The role of racial prejudice towards perceptions of threat from immigrants is further analyzed in Vala, Pereira, and Ramos (2006). Looking at opinions of immigrants in the area of material, cultural, and security threats, researchers analyzed opinions in France, Germany, the UK, and Portugal. Immigrants were found to be viewed as threats in all three areas researched (material, cultural, and security) in each of the countries examined, though to differing levels and

⁵ The United States, which receives by far the largest number of immigrants, remains something of a paradox in terms of the types of immigrants it receives. 74% of immigrants legally admitted into the United States are admitted for family reunification reasons, with no further explanation of economic or refugee status. (Tichenor, 2002)

⁶ Though seemingly unusual, this finding is in line with several aspects of the Social Amplification of Risk Model, namely volume, pre-existing stigmas, and that reassuring messages cannot negate already existing views of risk (Kasperson, Renn et al. 1988).

degrees. While the threat from immigrants can be attributed to some extent to “real” threats and concerns over economic stability, racist beliefs, defined by Vala et al as “non-acceptance of marriage with people from other ‘races’, non-acceptance of leadership from people from other ‘races’ ...and the importance of ethnic-racial attributes in the selection of immigrants” (p. 126), did play a significant role in the basis of these threats. However, these racist beliefs are somewhat mitigated by egalitarian and democratic ideals within most nation’s society (Vala, et al., 2006).

While racist beliefs may not be a major factor in determining levels of immigration threat (Chandler & Tsai, 2001; Wilson, 2001), the role of ideology was found to be significant in those studies that considered it as a factor in determining perceptions of immigration threat. Chandler (2001) found ideology to be the single biggest factor in determining immigration threat, with self-described conservatives (right-wing) registering the highest levels of threat, while self-described liberals (left-wing) registered the lowest. Esses et al (1998) find no such connection between right-wing authoritarian ideologies and attitudes towards immigration, though again self-described liberals were found to be more supportive. However, these findings on ideology are difficult to separate from the socio-economic factors to which they are often tied.

In a U.S. context, stereotypes were also found to play an important role in determining levels of threat from immigrants. Stephan Renfro et al (2005) found that negative stereotypes about specific immigrant groups serve to increase levels of immigration threat. Conversely, high levels of threat also lead to the creation of these types of negative stereotypes in a sort of vicious circle (Stephan, Renfro, Esses, Stephan, & Martin, 2005). Negative stereotypes towards immigrants play a significant role in levels of threat. Negative stereotypes create a filter through which information about specific immigrant groups is passed. These negative stereotypes thus play a significant role in predisposing an individual to process immigration risk events as more

threatening than an individual without such stereotypes. Positive stereotypes about specific immigrant groups were shown to be of significantly less importance in determining threat, since such stereotypes are often not nearly as deeply ingrained (Stephan, et al., 2005). The initial role of the media in defining perceptions towards immigrants was similarly reported in Maio et al (1994), which found that initial positive messages about a specific, but in reality non-existent, immigrant groups' personality traits and values from the media led to an increased willingness to help these immigrants, through support for favored immigration status and providing room and board for students from the immigrant group. Conversely, Maio et al (1994) also cites the media's inclination to show extremely negative reactions to an immigrant group as strongly biasing those who have had no direct contact with the immigrant group. These findings also support the SARF by demonstrating the powerful roles that bias and the media play in perceptions of threat, especially in individuals with no direct contact to the risk event, immigrants.

With an understanding of some of the causes of immigration threat, there have been several studies on ways in which this threat can be reduced or eliminated. A study by Paxton and Mughan (2006) looked at under what criteria immigrants would be considered "assimilated" into a country (in this case the U.S.) by the native-born population through focus groups and a questionnaire derived from findings from the focus groups. Three main criteria were considered as fundamental for immigrants; language, productivity, and citizenship⁷. A perceived failure of immigrants in working towards or achieving these criteria came to be viewed as cultural threat to the native-born population. While most surveyed in Paxton and Mughan (2006) did not view the

⁷ An "integration contract" similar to the criteria found in Paxton & Mughan (2006) currently exists in France, though it is currently being protested by other EU nations. In order to receive long-term residence visas in France, immigrants are required to take language classes and lessons on French cultural values. An English summary of the contract can be found at http://www.expats-elan.com/doc/78_Elan_Art_CAI_050107_EN.pdf. (Besson, 2010)

use of English in the home as a necessity for assimilation or threatening, the use of English in public, either with English L1 Americans or to a lesser extent with others of the same L1 as the immigrant, was viewed as critical. In fact, many viewed the use of a language other than English in public as exclusionary, though more deemed the need to “communicate effectively” in English as more essential to assimilation than always using it in the public sphere. Productivity was found to be viewed principally as having employment and not collecting welfare, and having or seeking an education (whether for the immigrant adults or their children). Interestingly though, in comparison with popular opinion and rhetoric, productivity was found to have the weakest link towards being viewed as assimilated. Lastly, commitment was found to be defined as legal status, American citizenship or the desire to obtain it, not returning to the immigrant’s home country when employment is over, and a desire to be part of the larger society (Paxton & Mughan, 2006)⁸. Such criteria are often labeled “thin” assimilation, and runs counter to demands by some for “thick” assimilation that involves the adoption of the majorities’ religious convictions and work ethic (Citrin, Lerman, Murakami, & Pearson, 2007; Huntington, 2004).

With these criteria in mind, there seems to be a guide for how immigrants can be viewed as more complete members of their new country. Citrin and Lerman (2007) state that though assimilation contains many different aspects, including cultural, political, and economic factors, a simple definition of assimilation is “to become similar to”. In the context of immigration, assimilation more closely represents an increased homogeneity of a society through a lessening of ethnic differences. Paxton and Mughan (2006) found in their research that assimilation entailed, “blending in” and a “process of asymmetrical adaptation in which immigrants embrace American values and behaviors while retaining those elements of their former culture that enrich,

⁸ Interestingly, Citrin and Lerman (2007) found immigrants to be more committed and patriotic to the United States than native-born whites.

but do not usurp, American culture” (552). Key to the views held about assimilation found by Paxton and Mughan was the ability to interact, and the importance of immigrants acquiring English to do so was repeatedly and strongly made evident. If one takes assimilation to be parallel to the elimination of threat, the findings of Paxton and Mughan (2006) appear to provide a sort of checklist for what criteria immigrants would be expected to meet in order to eliminate the threats that they generate. While the contexts in the two studies were different, the criteria listed in Paxton and Mughan (2006) perhaps explain how the racist attitudes in Vala, Pereira, and Ramos (2006) can be allayed. Overwhelmingly, Paxton and Mughan (2006) found assimilation criteria to focus on the public sphere. While issues in the home were largely considered not necessary for assimilation, the equal treatment of women in the home, particularly among Muslim immigrants, was very strongly and uniquely viewed as a criterion for assimilation (Paxton & Mughan, 2006). Interestingly however, these views did not extend to immigrant food, music, and festivals, which were encouraged in the public sphere by the native-population.

The role of these public displays, such as festivals, music, and food, may in part be explained by the important role that contact with immigrants plays in allaying immigration threat. In looking at attitudes between Americans and Mexican immigrants, Stephan and Diaz-Loving et al (2000) found that “[t]he more favorable the contact (equal status, voluntary, positive, cooperative, individualized), the more the Americans liked Mexicans” and vice versa (Stephan, et al., 2000, p. 247). Such quality contact was found to be far more important in reducing levels of threat, than the quantity of contact. The positive effects of contact with immigrants were found to be true regardless of pre-existing beliefs and biases about immigrants or specific immigrant groups. Similar findings were found in Ward (2006) in research drawn from 500 New Zealand households, which found that increased contact with immigrants led to decreases in intergroup anxiety, perceptions of threat, and increased positive attitudes towards

immigrants. In fact, running counter to research by Brader et al (2008) stating that the presence of large numbers of immigrants from a single ethnic group tends to increase perceptions of threat, Citrin and Lerman (2007) found the larger the population of Hispanic immigrants in a state, the more such immigrants were found by native-born whites to be viewed as harder working, presumably because of increased amounts of contact between the native-born population and Hispanic immigrants. These findings are however in line with the basic premises of realistic group conflict theory in mitigating threat (Sherif, et al., 1961). It would seem that quality contact with immigrants by the native-born population, coupled with immigrants meeting the criteria found in Paxton and Mughan (2006) would appear to be the most effective way in allaying immigration threat, if not eliminating it entirely.

If anxiety from immigration is not allayed however, immigration threat can manifest itself politically, through individual support for legislation limiting immigration. As Green (2009) found those who most strongly oppose immigration, and support legislation doing so, are those that are, or feel they are, the most likely to compete for resources with them, and who identify themselves in terms of group identity (i.e. lower social status individuals). These socio-economic factors leading to support for anti-immigration legislation though are not simply reflections of ethnocentrism or prejudice towards immigrant minorities however, as similar levels of support are found amongst white and nonwhite native-born populations in the United States. Instead such support is largely economic (Wilson, 2001).

Immigration Legislation and the Role of Threat

Most legislation limiting immigration seeks to reduce or limit, in one way or another, the number or type of immigrants that a country receives. While some immigration legislation simply reduces the total number of immigrants a country will accept, more typically legislation limiting immigration attempts to do so by establishing requirements that must be met on the part

of the immigrant. Such legislation can be viewed as limiting immigrants by either ascribed or acquired characteristics. Acquired characteristics are those that an individual can potentially obtain, such as education or job and language skills. Ascribed characteristics meanwhile are inherent characteristics to a group that are unlikely, if not impossible, to change such as ethnicity, nationality, or religion. While immigration threat was found to lead to support of both types of legislation, legislation based on ascribed characteristics represented much greater levels of threat. Green (2009) found that only in those countries with relatively short histories of and experiences with immigration, such as Poland and Greece, was support for legislation based on ascribed characteristics substantial. These new immigration countries (Poland, Greece, Spain, Italy and Ireland) also register the highest levels of support for limiting immigration in general (Bauer, et al., 2001).

These findings correspond to the Social Amplification of Risk model by dealing with a poorly understood risk by overreacting (Kasperson, et al., 1988), in this case by supporting overtly racist immigration legislation. In the cases of Spain and Italy, the immigrants arriving were from outside of the EU, North Africa, Latin America, and Central and Eastern Europe. In the case of Ireland, immigrants largely came from India and Pakistan. In addition to little experience in dealing with immigrants, these “new immigration countries” also lacked the institutional mechanisms to deal with and control immigration. What control mechanisms there were for dealing with immigration in these new immigration countries, were largely set up and regulated by EU policies, strongly influenced by other EU nations with relatively longer traditions of immigration, such as France and Germany (Bauer, et al., 2001). The lack of experience, especially direct experience with immigrants, in these countries makes these countries particularly dependent on secondary means of experience, in particular the media.

Media

The role of the media in shaping attitudes about immigration and threat cannot be understated. According to Kasperson, “Since most of society learns about the parade of risks and risk events through information systems rather than through direct personal experience, risk communicators, and especially the mass media, are major agents...of risk amplification and attenuation.” (Kasperson & Kasperson, 1996, p. 97) Furthermore, Kasperson (1988) stated that in SARF, large volumes of information about a threat, such as immigration, conveyed through the media will amplify feelings of risk, even if the information is balanced and accurate. Given the nature of the media to dramatize risks and to over report rare and dramatic risks (Kasperson, et al., 1988), it is not entirely unexpected that dependence on secondary sources of information about risk events can lead to high perceptions of threat. In terms of immigration, the presentation of extreme or unusual examples of immigrants or people’s reactions to a particular immigrant group may play an important role in biasing the attitudes of those who have not yet had any direct contact with an immigrant group (Maio, et al., 1994).

The portrayal of immigration in newspapers has been looked at in several studies in the field of communications and issues of framing. Two studies found a positive relationship between the quantity of newspaper stories regarding immigration and the belief that immigration is a problem and support for anti-immigrant parties (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2007; Igartua et al., 2004). In terms of issue framing, articles covering immigration have been found to be largely negative in nature and focus on issues of crime, illegal border crossings, and other frames that portray immigration as a problem (Igartua, Otero, & Muñiz, 2006). In a study of reporting in the Hazleton *Standard-Speaker*, crime was found to be mentioned in 36% of articles covering immigration and the term “alien” was frequently found in articles regarding immigrants (Burnett, 2009).

Legislation

In the Social Amplification of Risk framework, high levels of threat trigger demands, through social and political pressure, on the part of the public for institutional measures to be taken to mitigate or reduce these threats. In terms of immigration, these demands for institutional change most often take the form of legislation.

Actual electoral support for political candidates or parties limiting immigration though depends on a confluence of threat felt by certain voters and the existence of a party or candidate, depending on the country's political structure, that vocalizes their support for such immigration (Mughan & Paxton, 2006). Lacking either of these two factors (threat on the part of the voters and a candidate that addresses this feeling of threat), immigration threat has little impact on elections. However, if these two criteria exist, support for anti-immigration politicians or parties causes a segment of the electorate to support anti-immigrant parties or candidates. Also, given that often times such politicians or candidates are considered by many to be outside of the mainstream, such votes serve to draw votes away from more established political candidates or parties and are often considered "protest votes" (Mughan & Paxton, 2006). Such support for anti-immigrant politics is short-lived though, as anti-immigrant positions, if successful at the polls, are quickly adopted by more mainstream candidates or parties. Thus, while anti-immigrant parties or candidates may temporarily gain substantial support from segments of the voting population, most anti-immigrant political stances will likely be co-opted by more mainstream candidates, who are more likely to get elected and actually enact such legislation.

The role of threat is essential in understanding attitudes towards immigration. Such an understanding allows one to put news and legislation regarding immigration into perspective. Immigration threat reveals that perceptions of immigration are complex and not simply manifestations of prejudice. While prejudice and stereotypes play an important role in

understanding and analyzing immigration threat, larger issues of resources and identity are critical to truly understanding opinions and attitudes towards immigration. While immigration threat can manifest itself in unappealing ways, such as discrimination and racially motivated violence, immigration threat also has implications in national policy and coherence. Fortunately, research on immigration threat also provides us with a framework to lessen feelings of immigration threat by highlighting positive steps that can be taken by both the immigrant and native-born population.

Providing opportunities for quality contact to take place between immigrants and the native-born population can assist in reducing intergroup anxiety, and build positive relationships, in schools and communities. Such opportunities can be easily provided, as they were in Stephan and Diaz-Loving (2000), where immigrant and native-born participants interacted at a festival. Schools, community centers, libraries, and community based activities, such as sports leagues and scouting, would be fertile contexts for the kind of quality and authentic contact necessary to reduce perceptions of threat. In terms of social identity theory, Brown (2000) finds that the addition of goals that supersede intergroup competition, such as support for common community goals, can also both increase opportunities for intergroup contact and redefine in-group boundaries, an assertion likewise supported in realistic threat theory (Sherif, et al., 1961). Furthermore, assistance in aiding immigrants in meeting the “thin” assimilation criteria laid out in Paxton and Mughan (2006) would also go far in both assisting immigrants adjust to their new nation and to reducing threat levels in the native-born population. Such assistance may include free or low cost language classes, better access to job placement assistance, and assistance when it comes to matters of naturalization and citizenship. It is important to note though that such assistance, while potentially reducing threat from an assimilationist and perceived threat

perspective, also has the potential to increase levels of real immigration threat, as immigrants will be better able to compete with native-born citizens (Esses, et al., 1998).

Immigration will continue to play a critical role in the lives of individuals, whether they are immigrants or not. The social, economic, and political impacts of immigration are present, to varying degrees, regardless of the country receiving them. Current immigration trends present a situation where immigrants are arriving in nations and regions where mass immigration has not been seen for quite some time. For other nations and regions, new types of immigrants are arriving in larger numbers for which no accurate historical parallel can be drawn. With an understanding though of the role of immigration threat in defining attitudes towards immigrants, whether in areas with strong traditions of immigration or not, actions can be taken by individuals, the media, and governments to effectively and responsibly reduce tensions between immigrant and native-born populations, thereby building stronger schools, communities, and nations.

Chapter 4: Methodology

The data sample for this research consisted of articles drawn from the Hazleton (PA) *Standard-Speaker* dating from July 13th, 2005 to July 13th, 2006. July 13th, 2006 was when the *City of Hazleton Illegal Immigration Relief Act Ordinance* (IIRA) was passed. The year leading up to the initial passage of the ordinance would likely have been a crucial time for the forming and solidifying of opinions in regards to immigrants and immigration and was the rationale for using this time period. Kasperson and Kasperson state that the role of the media is key in the Social Amplification of Risk framework;

Particularly important in shaping group and individual views of risk are the extent of media coverage; the volume of information provided; the ways in which the risk is framed; interpretations of messages concerning the risk; and the symbols, metaphors, and discourse enlisted in depicting and characterizing the risk. (1996, p. 97)

Understanding the potential impact that the *Standard-Speaker* had in providing indirect contact with issues involving immigration and reinforcing opinion and attitudes during this time could assist in understanding the role of the media in other small towns where immigration legislation has been or is being considered. The quantity, framing, and discourse involved in immigrant stories is thus of critical importance.

Data Sample

The articles included in the sample were selected using a keyword search. The keywords themselves fall into larger categories that are the same as those mentioned in IIRA. Section 2A of the ordinance states:

That illegal immigration leads to higher crime rates, contributes to overcrowded classrooms and failing schools, subjects our hospitals to fiscal hardship and legal

residents to substandard quality of care, contributes to other burdens on public services, increasing their cost and diminishing their availability to lawful residents, and destroys our neighborhoods and diminishes our overall quality of life. (Ordinance 2006-10, 2006)

Given the initial focus on crime, the first category of keywords sought to select those articles relating to that category.

Crime related terms.

“Illegal Drugs.” This keyword term was selected as it would likely select those articles dealing with a key aspect of crime. The specific phrase “illegal drugs” was selected over other similar terms, such as “narcotics” and more specific types of drugs, as it was more likely to return articles that were focused on the reporting of crime, as opposed to court cases where more technical and specific terms in reference to illicit substances had a higher probability of being used.

“Shooting.” The keyword “shooting” was selected as it highlighted a very dramatic and public form of violent crime that was likely to leave deep impressions upon people who live in the vicinity of the act. Additionally, shootings are often related to other crimes, such as robbery, and thus the use of “shooting” is likely to provide a fuller sample of the articles pertaining to crime. Similar terms such as “murder” and “homicide” were not selected as these terms are often used in non-crime articles, such as court cases, and that frequently a “shooting” will become a “murder” but not until the victim passes away, which may be several days after the shooting takes place.

Immigration related terms.

“Alien,” “Illegal Immigrant,” and “Undocumented Immigrant.” - The keywords “alien”, “illegal immigrant”, “undocumented immigrant” were selected for several reasons. First, is that controlling undocumented immigration is ostensibly the reason for the passage of the IIRA. Therefore, those articles dealing with undocumented immigrants and immigration will be central to any analysis of the topic. Additionally, the rhetorical differences between each of the three keywords listed above merits closer analysis as to ascertain perceptions of immigrants that are cast in articles using these similar, but rhetorically different, terms. Lastly, these keywords were placed under the crime category, as technically speaking, undocumented immigration is a violation of the law.

Education related terms. After crime, the second portion of section 2A (2006-10) focuses on education. For this reason the following set of keywords were be used to add those articles dealing with schools and education.

“Overcrowd” and/or “fail” + “School.” The terms “overcrowd” and/or “fail” and “school” were selected as they would add those articles which dealt with the same education issues highlighted in the IIRA. Articles pertaining to overcrowded classrooms and schools, and issues of failing, such as in standardized exams, would thus be added to the sample.

Language related terms. Section 6 of 2006-10 states that:

A. The City of Hazleton declares that English is the official language of the City.

B. Unless explicitly mandated by the federal government, the state of Pennsylvania or the City of Hazleton, all official city business, forms, documents, signage will be written in English only. (Ordinance 2006-10, 2006)

Given the inclusion of a section establishing English as the official language of the city, it would appear that language issues were a concern in passing the ordinance. The evidence of language

threat is evident in the *City of Hazleton Official English Ordinance* (2006-19), which was passed in September of 2006 and sought to expand upon and separate the official English ordinance from the *City of Hazleton Illegal Immigration Relief Act Ordinance* in the event that the IIRA in its original form was struck down in court. Section 2E of the official English ordinance states, “That in today’s modern society, the City of Hazleton may also need to protect and preserve the rights of those who speak only the English language to use or obtain governmental programs and benefits.” (Ordinance 2006-19, 2006). The rights of the speakers of a language arguably only need to be protected and preserved in the face of threat, and thus the impact that the *Standard-Speaker* may have had in transmitting such a threat merits investigation.

“English” and “Spanish.” The terms “English” and “Spanish” were searched for together to select articles pertaining to language use and policy. “Spanish” was chosen as it is the most commonly spoken language in the city after English, as most of the immigration to the city has come from Spanish speaking countries (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a, 2010). The importance of threat to the English language was found to be a key factor in immigration threat in Chandler (2001). The terms “English” or “English language” were overly broad.

“ESL.” The term “ESL” (English as a Second Language) was chosen for two reasons. First, “ESL” highlighted articles featuring the educational aspects of the English language and larger sociolinguistic patterns that may have been the result of the change in demographics of the city of Hazleton. Additionally, school budgeting and resourcing, for which ESL is frequently discussed, would highlight issues of competition for resources, which is key in the research pertaining to immigration threat (Esses, et al., 2001; Esses, et al., 1998; Wilson, 2001). Furthermore, given the argument in the Official English Ordinance that immigrants learning English is critical to the economic and social wellbeing of the city, articles pertaining to

the negative aspects of budget allocations to ESL education seem contradictory and thus worth closer investigation.

Coding of Data

The articles from the sample were coded in two ways:

First, all articles returning hits from the keyword search from the list above were compiled. From these articles every fourth article returned for each keyword from the sample (determined in chronological order) was analyzed. While an analysis of every article from the sample would provide a complete assessment of the topic, it is not realistically possible, given the number of articles and time constraints. Any articles that were repeated were not included twice in each category. However, the same article may have been included across categories if the article could be classified under multiple keywords. Articles were first analyzed for immigrant references. Immigrant mention may have been direct, in the use of “immigrant” or “alien,” but group cues inferring immigrants, or ethnicities or nationalities typical of immigrants, play just as strong a role in evoking emotions towards salient immigrant groups, which in Hazleton would be Hispanics (Brader, et al., 2008). To determine if an article contained an inferred or indirect reference to immigration or immigrants, the following factors were used (adapted from Igartua et al (2004)):

- a. Geographic place: Countries or regions where the person is from.
- b. Actors: People or institutions typically involved with immigrants, such as Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE).
- c. Immigrant synonyms: Includes other terms besides “immigrant” or “immigration” but also terms such as “alien,” “undocumented,” and other references to immigration status.
- d. Ethnicity: Ethnic terminology, such as Hispanic, and names (first or last name) that are commonly associated with Hispanics, the predominant immigrant group in Hazleton.

Second, those articles with immigrant references from above were classified as being either on the front page (greater importance and noticeability), letters to the editor, or elsewhere in the paper. These three categories were chosen because the database of articles from the *Standard-Speaker* does not give specific page numbers or section. Additionally, the *Standard-Speaker* is a relatively short newspaper with two main sections and a total of about 36 pages, with the exception of Sunday.

After carrying out the two criteria above, those articles with immigrant references from above were then classified as showing immigrants in a positive, negative, or neutral perspective.

Comparison to quantitative data

The articles collected from the keyword search for the year leading up to the passage of the IIRA were then be compared to the quantitative data from the U.S. Census, the U.S. Economic Census, Hazleton Area School District budgets, and Uniform Crime Reports from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania regarding Hazleton. The comparison looked for differences that the SARF states are likely to occur:

It is also apparent that the mass media cover risks selectively, according those that are rare or dramatic-that is, that have "story value"-disproportionate coverage while downplaying, or attenuating, more commonplace but often more serious risks, such as smoking or aspects of lifestyle. Viewed somewhat differently, risk and risk events compete for scarce space in the media's coverage, and the outcome of this competition is a major determinant of whether a risk will be socially amplified or attenuated in society's processing and disposition of the risk.

(Kasperson, et al., 1988, p. 98)

A comparison was also be made of the time periods from July 13, 2005 – July 13, 2006 to July 13, 2004 – July 13, 2005 using both the number of articles returned from the keywords described

earlier and the quantitative data mentioned above. This comparison sought to gauge whether there was a significant difference in the quantity of articles with the keywords between the two years, and whether there was a difference in the quantitative data that is or is not reflected by the number of articles.

Discourse Analysis

In addition to the analysis described above, four letters to the editor were also chosen from the sample's time period with the key term "immigration" for a more in-depth discourse analysis. Three of the articles portrayed immigration in a negative manner and one portrayed immigration positively. The reason for choosing only one positive letter to the editor is that there was only one available of substantial length from the sample.

Letters to the editor are fundamentally different from news articles written by the newspaper staff. First, they are not bound to the conventions of journalism. Second, letters to the editor are written by the newspaper's audience and may be reflective of attitudes, reactions, and opinions formed in part by stories read previously in the paper, especially if they refer to past articles. Third, letters to the editor reflect a strong motivation on the part of the author to take public action by expressing their beliefs for publication in the newspaper. Lastly, the letters that the newspaper chooses to publish are also reflective of the issues that the newspaper wishes to present, much like the newspaper with the stories it chooses to run in the paper (Jorgensen, 2002).

The discourse analysis followed the framework laid out by van Dijk (1992; 1997). The selected articles were analyzed in more detail using the following discursive structures and strategies:

Topics. What does the article speak and write about? van Dijk expresses that topics largely express and reproduce dominant stereotypes and when dealing with topics about

“others”, the variation of topics tends to be small. However, topics about immigration tend to be very focused, particularly when negative; “immigration is never topicalized as neutral, or as a contribution to the economy, but at least as a major problem, if not as fraud, and invasion or a threat to ‘us’” (van Dijk, et al., 1997, p. 168). In addition to the headlines, where topics are generally expressed, the editorials and letters to the editor often deal with a number of more specific topics related to the focus of the article, in this case immigration.

Local Discourse Feature. A closer semantic analysis focused on coherence, implications, presuppositions, and descriptions of immigration. In particular, meaning, word choice, and “apparent denials” and “apparent concessions”⁹ will be analyzed.

Style. An analysis of strategies such as mitigation and euphemism, and the variety of potential word and phrase meanings based on context was conducted. Aspects included pronoun usage, issues of face, and syntactic structure.

Argumentation. Van Dijk highlights the use of argumentative structures in supporting opinions about ethnic groups (van Dijk, et al., 1997). Several argumentative strategies common to immigration are “national self-glorification”, “apparent empathy”, and “reversal”¹⁰. The use of these argumentative strategies was assessed.

Storytelling. Discussion of immigration often focuses on specific topics as mentioned earlier. These topics are likely to have a narrative structure that conveys a negative view of ethnic and racial relations. Van Dijk (1984) found that negative news stories about minorities

⁹ van Dijk defines “apparent denials” as when “a positive first clause denies prejudice or racism, and is followed by a contrasted *but* clause invariably saying or implying something negative” (van Dijk, et al., 1997, p. 170). An example of an “apparent denial” would be the classic “I’m not racist, but...”. “Apparent Concession” is defined as “when it is conceded that we have done something wrong (or they have done something well), but it is then added that our negative action is excused or mitigated, or that their positive action is not that positive after all.” (p. 170)

¹⁰ van Dijk defines “apparent empathy” as a strategy to make actions or decisions that will have a negative impact seem less harsh by asserting that they are actually advantageous to the victims. “Reversal” is an argumentative strategy that makes the claim that it is not “they”, or immigrants, who are the victims, but “we” who are discriminated against.

typically did not have a resolution, implying that such problems cannot be solved. An assessment of whether or not a narrative structure was present, and if a resolution was provided, was done for each article.

Chapter 5: Findings

Introduction

Data in this section was pulled from three general areas. The first section consists of the quantitative data compiled from the Hazleton *Standard-Speaker* by means of the keyword search. *Standard-Speaker* articles were gathered from NewsBank Access World News for the period 7/13/2005 – 7/13/2006. Articles that returned the keywords laid out in the methodology (“Illegal Drugs”, “Shooting”, “ESL”, “Illegal Immigrant” or “Undocumented Immigrant”, or “Alien”, “English” and “Spanish”, “Overcrowd” and/or “fail” and “school”) formed the sample from which every fourth article from each keyword was analyzed for immigrant references and whether those references depicted immigrants or immigration in a generally positive, negative, or neutral manner. The total number of articles returned for the same keywords for the period 7/13/2004 – 7/13/2005 is also provided as a means of year-on-year comparison. The articles from the 2004 – 2005 time period were not analyzed however.

The Hazleton section contains population data taken from the U.S. Census, crime statistics from the Pennsylvania Uniform Crime Report System, and educational data pertaining to the Hazleton Area School District from the Pennsylvania Department of Education. This data is intended as a means of comparison for the articles published in the Hazleton *Standard-Speaker*. Lastly, a discourse analysis of letters-to-the-editor found in the paper that returned the keyword “immigration” is included. From the total letters returned, four were subjected to a discourse analysis based upon their discursive interest.

From the keywords, a total of 546 articles were returned from the keyword search. From these 135 were analyzed. The total number of articles and the number analyzed is not an absolute total of the different number of articles. Several articles were included under multiple categories as they contained keywords from two or more terms, which was expected. There are

no articles listed with dates prior to 10/4/2005. The possibility that there were no articles with the key terms prior to this date in the *Standard-Speaker* is unlikely. Given the large number of articles returned with the date 10/4/2005, it is more likely that for whatever reason the search engine (News Bank: Access World News) assigned that date to articles that had appeared earlier in the paper. Unfortunately, it is impossible to know the exact date of these articles.

Additionally, some of the articles returned may have appeared sometime somewhat before the time period chosen for the search (July 13th, 2005 – July 13th, 2006). However, the inclusion of articles from a few days, or even weeks, before the search date only should add to the depth of the results.

Many of the articles analyzed did not contain article titles, authors, or both. Specific articles mentioned below have the date and the author or article title, so as to properly identify the article. All articles analyzed are included in the appendix.

Keyword Results

Table 1: Returns from the Standard-Speaker July 13th, 2005 – July 14th, 2006

Term	Total Hits	Included in Analysis
“Illegal Drugs”	25	9
“Shooting”	326	75
“ESL”	33	9
“Illegal Immigrant” or “Undocumented Immigrant”, or “Alien”	73	19
“English” and “Spanish”	52	14
“Overcrowd” and/or “fail” and “school”	37	9
Total	546	135

“Illegal Drugs”

Table 2: Codification results for “illegal drugs”

Date	Total Articles/Number analyzed	Immigrant References	Positive/Neutral/Negative
7/13/2005 – 7/13/2006	25/9	3	0/0/3
7/13/2004 – 7/13/2005	14/NA		

From 25 returns on the keyword search, for “illegal drugs,” nine articles were analyzed. Three articles contained immigrant references, all of which were negative. Article 2/15/2006 “Shen Police” listed several distinctly Hispanic individuals, along with several non-Hispanics, arrested for possession of crack cocaine and drug paraphernalia ("SHEN Police," 2006). The article dated from 10/4/2005 “Nine People who entered guilty pleas...” featured one individual with a Hispanic name who plead guilty to a non-drug related weapons charge ("Nine people who entered guilty pleas to criminal charges were sentenced Tuesday by Judge Charles M," 2005). Article 7/7/2006 “SHEN Drug Bust” features a Hispanic named individual, though it may not be one traditionally associated with Hispanic origin in the United States, and thus may not be a clear immigrant reference for many readers of the *Standard-Speaker (Light, 2006)*.

The year on year change in the number of articles from 2004 – 2005 to 2005 – 2006 represents a 56% increase in the number of articles containing the keyword “illegal drugs”.

“Shooting”

Table 3: Codification results for “shooting”

Date	Total Articles/Number analyzed	Immigrant References	Positive/Neutral/Negative
7/13/2005 – 7/13/2006	326/75	17	1/2/14
7/13/2004 – 7/13/2005	232/NA		

From 326 returns on the keyword search, 75 articles were analyzed. A majority of the articles (58) did not contain an immigrant reference. All of the articles with immigrant references were negative with three exceptions, the 10/5/2005 letter to the editor and Alan Gregory’s 10/4/2005 article which quoted the mayor asking the Hispanic community, amongst other groups, to come forward and provide information regarding a recent shooting (2005). Ed Conrad’s 10/4/2005 article referenced shooting in a review of a book about Eastern European immigrants in Pennsylvania, which spoke positively about immigrants who came to work in the coal mines of Pennsylvania (2005). Unfortunately, many of the articles returned for the keyword “shooting” pertained to sports related articles, in particular high school basketball and to a lesser extent the local minor league hockey team.

The year on year difference from 2004 – 2005 to 2005 – 2006 is significant as 2005 – 2006 represents a 71% increase in the number of articles returning the term “shooting”. However, given the large number of articles from 2005 – 2006 not pertaining to “shooting” as an act of violence it is difficult to entirely attribute this increase to an increase on the number of articles covering violent “shootings”.

“ESL”

Table 4: Codification results for “ESL”

Date	Total Articles/Number analyzed	Immigrant References	Positive/Neutral/Negative
7/13/2005 – 7/13/2006	33/9	6	1/4/0 ¹¹
7/13/2004 – 7/13/2005	46/NA		

From the 33 returns for the keyword search “ESL”, 9 articles were analyzed. Six of the analyzed articles contained immigrant references. The three that did not, contained ESL without any discussion, such as a list of courses being offered or as it pertained to scheduling. Those articles containing immigrant references were mostly neutral (4) in their depiction of immigration, focusing largely on official school district business. The 6/22/2006 letter containing ESL contained a positive depiction of immigration and sought to recruit volunteers to teach ESL in the community (Tevlin-Klemow & Klemow, 2006). The 10/4/2005 article by Sam Galski discussed recent hires by the school district, including a new bilingual community liaison (2005). The article both spoke of the work of the existing liaison, who had a Hispanic origin name, in reaching out to the community, but also contained quotes with criticism of the money being spent on the additional liaison.

The decrease in articles returning the terms “ESL” from 2004-2005 to 2005-2006 is of note. Given the inclusion of educational issues in the IIRA (see methodology for a more detailed explanation) this year on year decrease is unexpected.

¹¹ The 10/4/2005 article by Sam Galski analyzed in the ESL category contained both positive and negative depictions and was thus not counted as being either the “positive”, “neutral”, or “negative” categories.

“Illegal Immigrant” or “Undocumented Immigrant” or “Alien”

Table 5: Codification results for “illegal immigrant” or “undocumented immigrant” or “alien”

Date	Total Articles/Number analyzed	Immigrant References	Positive/Neutral/Negative
7/13/2005 – 7/13/2006	73/19	17	0/0/14 ¹²
7/13/2004 – 7/13/2005	22/NA		

Articles containing any or all of the terms “illegal immigrant”, “undocumented Immigrant” or “alien” were the next to be analyzed. From the 73 returns for articles containing either of these terms, 19 were analyzed. All but two of the articles analyzed contained immigrant references. Of the articles containing immigrant references, 14 had negative depictions of immigration or immigrants, with three articles having both positive and negative depictions in the same article. Of the articles with immigrant references, “illegal immigrant” was the dominate term used in six of the articles, and “alien” was the dominant term used in seven, with the term “legal alien” was used in one of those seven articles. The term “undocumented immigrant” was not the dominate term used in any of the articles analyzed, though it was used on occasion, particularly in quotes.

The difference in the number of articles from 2005 – 2006 and 2004 – 2005 is of particular note, as the time period 2005 – 2006 represents a 331% increase over the previous year. This is likely attributable to news articles pertaining specifically to the IIRA.

¹² Three articles in this category contained both positive (Hispanic named individuals working for the city, for example) and negative (city funds needed to hire individuals for Hispanic community outreach, for example) depictions and was thus not counted as being either the “positive”, “neutral”, or “negative” categories. These articles are dated 6/16/2006, 5/4/2006, and 4/19/2006.

“English” and “Spanish”

Table 6: Codification results for “English” and “Spanish”

Date	Total Articles/Number analyzed	Immigrant References	Positive/Neutral/Negative
7/13/2005 – 7/13/2006	52/14	12	3/6/3
7/13/2004 – 7/13/2005	51/NA		

From the 52 articles containing both the keywords “English” and “Spanish”, 14 were analyzed. All but two of the articles contained immigrant references. The depictions of immigrants in the articles containing “English” and “Spanish” were much more varied than the other keywords. Three of the articles had positive depictions of immigrants or immigration, six had neutral depictions, and three had negative ones. The comparison of the number of articles between years is not significant.

“Overcrowd” and/or “fail”, and “school”

Table 7: Codification results for “Overcrowd” and/or “fail”, and “school”

Date	Total Articles/Number analyzed	Immigrant References	Positive/Neutral/Negative
7/13/2005 – 7/13/2006	37/9	0	NA/NA/NA
7/13/2004 – 7/13/2005	40/NA		

Of the 37 articles matching the keywords “overcrowd” and/or “fail” and “school, nine were analyzed. None of the nine articles analyzed contained an immigrant reference. The year on year change from 2004 – 2005 and 2005 – 2006 is not particularly substantial, a growth of about 8%. Given the inclusion of illegal immigration and its purported negative effects on education in the IIRA, the lack of immigrant references in any of the articles analyzed is of particular note.

From the analysis, immigrants and immigration appear to only constitute a substantial portion of the articles returned for the “illegal immigration”, “undocumented immigrant” and “alien”, “ESL”, and the “English” and “Spanish” categories, which is to be expected given the nature of those keywords. The almost unanimous negative depiction of immigrants and immigration in the “illegal immigration”, “undocumented immigrant” and “alien” category is of note, as is the tendency to use “illegal immigrant”, and particularly “alien”, as the terminology in referencing undocumented/illegal immigrants. Additionally, in the crime related keywords, “shooting” and “illegal drugs”, immigrant references were substantial, though by no means found in a majority of the articles. The absence of immigrant references in the “school” related category is also of note for the reason cited above. The year-on-year data indicate the number of articles for each of the categories does not change substantially, with the notable exception of the crime related categories and the immigration category, which each show substantial increases, some of them quite dramatic. The small change, and even decrease, in the number of articles for the educationally related terms is unusual.

A comparison then of the quantitative reporting of the Hazleton *Standard-Speaker* with the quantitative data and statistics from Hazleton is thus of primary importance. Such a comparison should determine whether the quantity of reporting by the Hazleton *Standard-Speaker* accurately reflects the reality of the city, or if another factor is perhaps at play.

Qualitative Data

Demographic Data According to the 2000 U.S. Census (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a, 2000b), the population of the city of Hazleton was 23,329. The total non-Hispanic white population was 21,741 or 93.2%. The total Hispanic population was 1,132 or 4.9%, with the three largest groups being those of Mexican descent (159), Puerto Rican (271), and Dominican (329). Additionally, 857 individuals, or 3.7%, were foreign born with 314 of those being naturalized citizens and 543 being non-citizens. Of the foreign born population, 408 were from Latin America, 302 were from Europe, 105 were from Asia, and 20 were from Africa.

The 2010 U.S. Census (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010) reported the population of the city of Hazleton at 25,340, an 8.6% increase from 2000. The white population, which in 2010 included white Hispanics, was 17,592. The Hispanic population was 9,454, or 37.3% of the city's population. This represents an 835% increase in the Hispanic population from 2000. Amongst the Hispanic population, the largest reported groups were those of Mexican descent (886) and Puerto Rican descent (1,669), with 6821 reporting "other".

Language Data According to the 2000 U.S. Census (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000b), 8.1% of the population, or 1,779 residents, used a language other than English at home. Amongst the largest non-English language group, Spanish speakers, 635 individuals older than five years-old reported speaking English either "very well" or "well" and 246 reported speaking English either "not well" or "not well at all". Additionally, 524 individuals reported living in "linguistically isolated households" where no member of the household over age 14 spoke English "very well".

Crime

Table 8: Hazleton city crime data 2002 - 2007

Time Period (July – July)	Total Offenses for selected offenses	Murders	Assaults and Robberies	Drug sale and Possession	Burglary
2002 – 2003	993	1	15	22	45
2003 – 2004	1,013	0	25	11	57
2004 – 2005	1,056	0	26	23	73
2005 - 2006	1,010	2	34	48	58
2006 - 2007	1,021	1	60	24	123

Data from the Pennsylvania Uniform Crime Reporting System (available at <http://ucr.psp.state.pa.us/UCR/Reporting/RptMain.asp>) was used for yearly information on offenses reported in the City of Hazleton. Data was collected for a number of offenses including those that would have featured in articles in the *Standard-Speaker* based on the keywords if the incident was covered in the paper¹³. From the period July 2004 – July 2005 there were 1,056 reported offenses for the offenses queried compared to 1,010 offenses in July 2005 – July 2006, a year on year decrease of 4.36%. Of particular note is that drug related offenses, with the exception of drug sale or manufacture of opiates or cocaine, increased substantially however. Drug possession offenses for cocaine increase from 3 in the 2004 – 2005 period to 10 in the 2005 – 2006 period, marijuana from 1 to 14, and other drugs from 3 to 10.

There were two murders in the July 2005 – July 2006 time period. The first murder occurred on 10/20/2005, involving a Hispanic victim and a Hispanic offender over a narcotics transaction. The second murder occurred on 5/10/2006 and involved a non-Hispanic victim and

¹³ See appendix for full list of offenses that were used.

two Hispanic offenders. The victim was a stranger to the offenders and was killed with a firearm. This particular event will be discussed in greater depth in the next chapter.

Education The Hazleton Area School District (HASD) is one of the largest in the state of Pennsylvania in terms of area, serving a total population of just over 70,000 people spread over an area of approximately 250 square miles. The district therefore serves a geographic population that includes surrounding towns and boroughs that are not part of the city of Hazleton. The district currently operates nine schools throughout the area, though during the time period in question for this study, the district operated eight. While some of the elementary and middle schools are located within the city of Hazleton, many are located in other towns and boroughs. The district's sole high school (Hazleton Area High School) is located within the city of Hazleton. Additionally the area is also served by several private Catholic and prep schools, though the Catholic high school was closed in 2007.

Student enrollment in the HASD has consistently been around 10,000 and 11,000 for much of the last decade. Enrollment in the 2004-2005 school year was 10,470, in 2005-2006 it was 10,759, and in 2006-2007 it was 10,923. Total revenues for the district were as follows from school year 2004-2005 to 2006-2007:

Table 9: Hazleton Area School District revenues 2004 - 2007

School Year	Total Revenue	% Local	% State	% Federal
2004-2005	\$83,772,318	48.6	43.3	6.3
2005-2006	\$85,539,014	48.6	44.7	6.7
2006-2007	\$92,688,232	48.1	45.8	6.1

As can be seen, revenues for the district show an increase of over 10% from 2004 to 2007, with an increasing share of state funding. However, this increase in revenue is slightly offset from an

increase in expenses for the district. From this, revenue actual instructional expenses (calculated as the expenses relating to classroom instruction, not including administrative and extra-curricular spending for example) were as follows:

Table 10: Hazleton Area School District actual instructional expenses

School Year	Actual Instructional Expenses
2004-2005	\$53,655,554
2005-2006	\$55,136,414
2006-2007	\$57,694,813

Public school students in Pennsylvania are required to take the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) exams. The PSSA exam is required of students in grade 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 11. For purposes of comparison, only grades 3, 5, 8, and 11 have been listed. The exam consists of a math and reading portion, with a writing portion of the exam given in selected years. On the 2006 PSSA math exams, the district results for all students were as follows:

Table 11: Hazleton Area School District 2006 PSSA math exam results

Grade	# of students tested	% Advanced or Proficient	% Basic	% Below Basic
3	675	80.0	13.0	7.0
5	702	72.2	18.7	9.1
8	778	61.1	20.3	18.5
11	719	46.7	21.6	31.7

As can be seen there is a downward trend in scores as students progress through the grades, showing a percentage drop of students achieving advanced or proficient scores of just over 35%.

For the reading portion of the exam HASD PSSA results were as follows for 2006:

Table 12: Hazleton Area School District 2006 PSSA reading exam results

Grade	# of students tested	% Advanced or Proficient	% Basic	% Below Basic
3	675	64.0	14.0	22.0
5	586	64.1	16.8	19.1
8	778	64.9	17.2	17.9
11	717	79.0	11.0	9.0

As opposed to the math section of the exam, there is actually an improvement in general student performance, with an advanced or proficient students increasing by 15% from third to eleventh grade.

PSSA results are also available for various subgroups, including by race and ethnicity, and for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students. These scores allow for a comparison of Hispanic students, who are more likely to be immigrants, to white students, who are more likely to be native-born. Broken down by ethnicity, there is a sharp contrast between PSSA scores for white students and Hispanic ones¹⁴. On the math portion of the exam in 2006, white students had the following results:

Table 13: 2006 PSSA math exam results for white students in the HASD

Grade	# of students tested	% Advanced or Proficient	% Basic	% Below Basic
3	507	84.0	11.0	4.0
5	547	76.8	16.6	6.6
8	627	67.5	16.7	15.8

¹⁴ There were an insufficient number of students from other minority groups taking the PSSA exams in 2006 to warrant including

11	603	50.6	21.7	27.7
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White students show a drop in math performance very similar to that of the district as a whole, approximately 33%. For Hispanic students, the math scores were as follows:

Table 14: 2006 PSSA math exam results for Hispanic students in the HASD

Grade	# of students tested	% Advanced or Proficient	% Basic	% Below Basic
3	147	66.0	17.0	17.0
5	129	54.3	27.9	17.8
8	125	31.2	36.0	32.8
11	92	22.9	21.7	55.4

As can be seen, the drop in Hispanic student performance is both lower than that of white students and shows a far greater drop in the percentage of students achieving advanced or proficient scores. For the reading portion of exam, white students had the following scores:

Table 15: 2006 PSSA reading exam results for white students in the HASD

Grade	# of students tested	% Advanced or Proficient	% Basic	% Below Basic
3	507	71.0	12.0	17.0
5	547	70.5	14.3	15.2
8	627	71.5	15.9	12.6
11	602	64.8	19.9	15.3

Contrary to the district wide results, there is a drop in performance from third to eleventh grade, though the percentage of students scoring below basic shows a slight decrease. For the Hispanic students, the following reading scores were obtained:

Table 16: 2006 PSSA reading exam results for Hispanic students in the HASD

Grade	# of students tested	% Advanced or Proficient	% Basic	% Below Basic
3	147	48.0	16.0	37.0
5	129	34.9	28.7	36.4
8	125	32.0	21.6	46.4
11	91	34.1	25.3	40.7

Hispanic scores on the reading portion are again much lower than the white scores, and show a larger decrease in students scoring advanced or proficient. The sharp drop between third and fifth grade in student achievement, and the more or less stable scores from the fifth grade onwards is perhaps due to a shift from a “learning to read” model of education in the early years of schooling to a “reading to learn” paradigm that is likely to exist in the later grades. Such a shift would result in poor reading performance for those students in the early grades who did not truly master their reading skills (Spor, 2005). For LEP students, who are likely immigrants or the children of immigrants, the following scores were obtained on the math portion of the PSSA exam:

Table 17: 2006 PSSA math exam results for limited English proficiency students in the HASD

Grade	# of students tested	% Advanced or Proficient	% Basic	% Below Basic
3	54	38.0	28.0	38.0
5	36	25.0	19.6	43.1

8	45	11.1	31.1	57.8
11	22	0.0	12.6	86.4

As should be noted, there is a tremendous decrease in scores on the math portion of the exam and the percentage of students achieving advanced or proficient is significantly lower than that of Hispanics or whites. On the reading portion of the exam, limited English proficiency students obtained the following scores:

Table 18: 2006 PSSA reading exam results for limited English proficiency students in the HASD

Grade	# of students tested	% Advanced or Proficient	% Basic	% Below Basic
3	54	13.0	18.0	72.0
5	36	5.6	22.2	72.2
8	45	6.7	13.3	80.0
11	22	0.0	4.5	95.5

Again the scores for LEP students are much lower than that of whites or Hispanics. The decreasing scores of LEP student is likely partially due to the changing population of LEP students, as once their English is deemed acceptable, they are no longer categorized as LEP.

This leads to an LEP student population that likely consists entirely of those students demonstrating extremely poor English skills. It is likely that most of these students are of Hispanic origin, based upon census data for the area, and that these students would be the most recent immigrants to the area amongst the student population.

As an additional point of reference, SAT scores over time for students from HASD were:

Table 19: 2001-2007 SAT results for students in the HASD

Year	Number of students	Verbal	Math
2001	318	474	480
2005	410	461	481
2006	387	461	471
2007	437	448	458

There is a decrease in both the verbal and math portions of the exam from 2001 to 2007.

However, there was also a large increase in the number of students taking the SAT exam, which may have in some way served to lower the overall score, with possibly more lower achieving students taking the exam than in previous years.

Discourse Analysis

For the period from July 13th 2005 – July 13th 2006, there were 20 letters-to-the-editor published that returned the keyword “immigration”. From these twenty, five were selected based on several criteria. First, only those articles which principally dealt with the IIRA or immigration in general were considered. There were several letters that specifically discussed pending immigration legislation at the federal level that were excluded, or discussed immigration amongst several other topics. Additionally, only letters written by individuals, and not non-profit groups, were included. From the letters meeting the criteria, five were chosen due primarily to their length (several letters were only a few lines long) and the potential richness of the discourse. Four of the letters selected discuss immigration in negative terms and one selected discusses immigration in a more positive depiction. This ratio of four negative letters to one positive one is not representative of the letters returned by the keyword search. The letter

portraying immigration positively was the only such letter returned by the keyword search that met the established criteria. All other letters generally contained negative portrayals of immigration. The letters ultimately selected are listed chronologically by the date they were published. The name of the author has been excluded, though in each letter the author's name and city is published after the letter.

Two of the letters that were initially chosen were revealed to not likely have been the work of the author listed at the end of the letter, but were popular forwarded emails. Letter 1 is almost certainly not the work of the author listed, as verbatim versions of this letter appear on a number of websites, some dating from 2003, three years before the letter was published in the *Standard-Speaker*, and is attributed on several of the websites to having been received via an e-mail forward. Letter 3 also appears verbatim on a number of websites and is reported to have been originally received via e-mail. However, no postings of this letter can be found dating from before the date the letter was published in the *Standard-Speaker*, though none of the websites with the letter make any citation towards the *Standard-Speaker* or the author listed in the published letter in the *Standard-Speaker*. Thus it is possible that Letter 3 is the work of the author listed in the article, though this is extremely unlikely. The motivation to publish an e-mail in a local paper that is not one's own work is an interesting phenomenon that unfortunately falls beyond the scope of this research. Letter 3 is analyzed below, though Letter 1 has not been analyzed, as the interest of this research is largely in local opinions and discourse on the IIRA and immigration.

For each letter, the discourse analysis is presented for the five discursive structures and strategies laid out earlier in the methodology (topics, local discourse features, style, argumentation, and storytelling) as well as further analysis for each letter.

Letter 1 – January 30th, 2006 (Found in Appendix) Letter 1 was included as it met all of the criteria established and seemed to possess a wealth of notable discursive strategies. However, as this article is almost assuredly not the work of the author listed nor was it likely written by a resident of the Hazleton area, it has been omitted from any further discourse analysis. Letter 3, which was similarly not likely the work of the author listed, nor likely from a resident of the Hazleton area, has been analyzed however.

Letter 2 – February 17th, 2006 (Found in Appendix) Letter 2 is 16 sentences long with two large blocks of quoted material appearing in the middle of the letter. Letter 2 is generally positive in its depiction of immigrants and immigration. Several discursive strategies are employed by the author that differ sharply from the other letters. Most notable are the citations used to justify the author's opinion and the longer historical perspective that is used by the author.

Topics. Topics in this letter deal with immigration in a historical context going as far back as the colonial period of American history. Of primary focus, is the issue of immigrant language use and English acquisition.

Local discourse features. Letter 2 is of interest for its longer historical view of immigration and the description of the author's own familial history of English language use and acquisition. The implication throughout much of the letter appears to be that immigration and assimilation, particularly in terms of language acquisition, are processes that occur over several generations and that this process takes time regardless of the immigrant group in question.

Style. The second paragraph of the letter is exemplary of the general style of the letter; "People express concern over the Hispanic population not learning English, and their perceived fecundity. Such concerns over groups of immigrants is older than the United States

itself.” In terms of word choice and noun usage, the author employs the term “People” as the ones expressing concern, separating himself from those critical of immigration. Additionally, the use of the term “fecundity” is unusual given the uncommon nature of that word in journalistic writing. The author is perhaps trying to establish himself as being knowledgeable and educated, though the subject/verb agreement in the second sentence (“Such concerns...is”) perhaps belies this image.

The author states towards the end of the letter, “we Americans should be patient with the Hispanics and their language.” The use of the pronoun “we Americans” and “the Hispanics” is of note, as Hispanics are differentiated from the first-person plural “we Americans” and the use of “the” before Hispanics, in “the Hispanics,” further distances the Hispanic population from “we Americans.”

Argumentation. The letter ends by stating that “World War II was won by our Army, and others, made up of descendants from all immigrant groups. Such diversity is the greatest strength of our United States.” The author here highlights a contribution of immigrants and their descendants in “*our* Army” and in the author’s opinion of the role of diversity in the United States in an apparent bid at national self-glorification. However, in this case national self-glorification is done with the intent of portraying immigration positively rather than negatively, as is frequently the case in much discourse about immigrants.

Storytelling. In terms of storytelling aspects of the letters, this letter is the only one with something of a resolution. One of the last sentences of the letter says, “[w]e probably will have several Spanish words merged into American English, as have been several words of the many other immigrant groups.” From a sociolinguistic perspective, this is something of a resolution to the Hispanic immigrant story, and is the only such resolution that can be found in

the other letters that were analyzed. It is also the only mention of specific linguistic issues besides from English acquisition on the part of immigrants found in the 5 letters.

Further analysis. The two large paragraphs in the middle of the letter, which contain quoted material, relate concerns of Benjamin Franklin over the large German population present in the colony of Pennsylvania. Two quotations are taken from a biography of Franklin that were likely selected due to the parallels that the letter's author sees between the German population in Pennsylvania in the 1700s and the current influx of Hispanic immigrants. The selected quotations from the biography also include a quote from Franklin where he wrote in a letter saying that if German migration were not reduced or changed, "they will soon out number us, that all the advantages we have will not in My opinion be able to preserve our language, and even our Government will become precarious." The inclusion of this information about the German population and Benjamin Franklin is notable. By referencing Franklin, the author is likely showing that contrary to popular "semantic memory," as described by van Dijk (Wodak & Reisigl, 2008), not all waves of immigration have gone smoothly with the immigrant population easily assimilating into the larger culture. The quotations about Franklin and German immigration are likely a setup for the following paragraph which expresses the author's opinion which appears to be based rather on "episodic memory."

Letter 3 – June 30th, 2006 (found in Appendix) Letter 3 contains 15 sentences found mostly in three large paragraphs. Like Letter 1, this letter seems to have been a popular e-mail at the time and is likely not the work of the author listed. An analysis of this article has been done in the interest of understanding the discourse of such mass-forwarded e-mails. However, the discourse found should not be considered necessarily typical of the residents of the Hazleton area.

Topics. Generally speaking, Letter 3 deals with issues of crime, with the criminal nature of undocumented immigration highlighted on several occasions. Undocumented immigration in this letter is akin to the very personal invasion of one's home. The context of immigration has been shifted from a national level to a household one. However, the topic of invasion, both of the country and in the case of the parallel, one's home, is primary, and a common one in discourse about immigration

Local discourse features. The author states early in the letter, "[c]ertain people are angry that the U.S. might protect its own border, make it harder to sneak into this country and, once here, to stay indefinitely." Of primary note from this passage is the use subject of the sentence "certain people," identifying the protesters as those who would be angry at the author's view of the proposed immigration legislation. Also, the use of the word "sneak" is semantically important, as its connotation is generally negative.

Style. The author of Letter 3 has a negative opinion of immigration and takes an interesting approach to portraying undocumented immigration, employing an analogy to further their argument. Letter 3 is also highly sarcastic in nature. The author begins by citing the immigration reform protests that took place between April and May of 2006. These demonstrations were largely in favor of immigration and opposed to a proposed federal immigration reform bill.

The author follows by stating, "[l]et me see if I understand the thinking behind these protests." before describing a seemingly parallel hypothetical situation through which the author hopes to express his point of view. The analogy proposed by the author is one in which the author, breaks into "your house" and when asked to leave, stays, saying, "I've made all the beds and washed the dishes and did the laundry and swept the floors; I've done all the things you don't like to do. I'm hard-working and honest (except for when I broke into your house)." The

inclusion of the caveat found in the parenthesis adds a sarcastic tone that is found throughout this letter.

The letter ends with the author urging, “[i]f this sounds crazy to you, call your senators and enlighten them...” This ridicule of pro-immigration supporters is in line with that described by van Dijk when they write “anti-racist discourse may be discredited (for example, as ‘radical’, ‘crazy’) more emphatically than the more ‘appropriate’ forms of racist text and talk.” (van Dijk, et al., 1997)

Argumentation. The parallel used in this letter ends with “[a]nd what a deal it is for me! I live in your house, contributing only a fraction of the cost of my keep, and there is nothing you can do about it without being accused of selfishness, prejudice and being anti-housebreaker.” The parallel interestingly ends with an argumentative reversal ¹⁵, where “we” rather than “they” are the victims of discrimination.

Storytelling. There is no resolution to the problem of immigration in this letter, and it seems to be an intractable one for “you,” the native-born, in this letter without change in governmental policy.

Further analysis. Again, while the author of Letter 3 is not likely the individual listed at the end of the letter, it is of note that certain discursive strategies (particularly the use of sarcasm) are found in Letter 3 as well as in the other Letters that support the IIRA and hold negative views towards immigration. This suggests that these strategies, as van Dijk states, are indeed common to discourse about racism and immigration, and that the discourse from the readers of the *Standard-Speaker* are no exception.

¹⁵ For a more thorough description of reversal see van Dijk, T. A., Ting-Toomey, S., Smitherman, G., & Troutman, D. *Discourse, Ethnicity, Culture, and Racism* (1997) page 173

Letter 4 – June 30th, 2006 (Found in Appendix) Letter 4 is 35 sentences long and is the longest of the letters analyzed. The letter is largely reactions to three previous articles that appeared in the *Standard-Speaker* and the *Times-Leader*, which serves nearby Wilkes-Barre and belongs to the same parent company as the *Standard-Speaker*. In each of the three articles referenced by the author of the letter, the article’s author or someone specifically quoted in the article expressed opposition to the IIRA in some way. In some respects the author of Letter 4 is in many ways conducting their own discourse analysis with their own explanation of the opinions given in the three articles cited by the author. For each of the three people the author addresses, there follows a critique and rebuttal from the letter’s author. Letter 4 is supportive of the IIRA and generally appears to view immigration negatively.

Topics. Major themes in Letter 4 include the apparent irrationality of those opposed to the IIRA and in favor of immigration, and issues of crime and racism. In particular, the topic of crime is a central focus. There are also several activities mentioned, such as playing loud music and jay-walking, that while not crimes are listed by the author as examples of unacceptable behavior, perhaps indicating that while not necessarily illegal, these activities perhaps display an unwillingness to obey perceived social mores.

Local discourse features. There are several points of note in the discourse of this letter. The letter begins with a statement stating the need for the author to write this letter; “I cannot sit quietly and read the ignoramus comments regarding Mayor Barletta’s proposed Illegal Immigration Relief Act Ordinance any longer.” This opening is very similar to that of Letter 5, where the necessity of the situation warrants the writing of the letter.

In addressing the first individual, a Hispanic city councilman from nearby Allentown who was quoted in a Times Leader article from 12 days (June 18, 2006) before this letter was published, the author of Letter 4 seeks to redefine the terms used in the councilman’s quote,

which appeared in an earlier newspaper article about the IIRA. The term “absurd” is dealt with in the most detail of the words taken from the Allentown councilman. The term “absurd” is used by the author to describe their opinion that the fact that the bill does not have “100 percent support from all legal citizens” seems illogical and irrational. This opinion that all rational legal citizens should be in favor of this bill implies that those that do not support the IIRA are either “illogical” or “irrational,” or are illegal immigrants themselves. This implication is explored in more detail by the author in the following paragraph. The author asks,

Why would any legal citizen want to see their tax dollars or their government funded assistance dollars wasted on illegal immigrants (criminals) or worse yet how can you sit idly by and watch your already high taxes increase as the quality of services decrease because of the large number of non contributing members in our community today.

This question also contains several key implication and assumptions. Again, in the author’s mind, only illegals or irrational people would want to provide any kind of tax-payer funded assistance to illegal immigrants, or as the author reminds us, “criminals,” again highlighting the criminal aspect of undocumented immigration. Additionally, the assumption can be made, though the author does not do so directly, that undocumented immigrants are “non contributing member to our community.” The author extends the presupposition that opposition to the IIRA equates to irrationality or being an undocumented immigrant, to also include that failure to actively voice one’s opposition to illegal immigrant is in some ways worse than irrationality. The supposed irrationality of those opposed to the IIRA is discussed elsewhere in this letter as well.

Later in the letter, the author states that “[the elderly’s] neighborhoods and our city are being infested with non-law abiding immigrants.” The use of the term “infested” is highly

significant in its semantic implications, as the term has an extremely negative connotation, and is frequently used in reference to insects and other pests. Additionally, the term “non-law abiding immigrants” would appear to include both “illegal immigrants,” based on the author’s previous explanation of the term “illegal,” but also now those legal immigrants who are engaged in illegal activity. This assumption is confirmed in the author’s next sentence; “I can’t attest to whether the people I am speaking of are here legally or illegally but I can assure you that the people I’m referring to are not law abiding citizens.” It is now apparent that immigrants in the city, regardless of legal status are the focus of the author’s criticism. The author provides examples of witnessed activities on the part of immigrants, whose identity as such by the author can be assumed to have been gathered by their appearance. These activities include “jay walking (s l o w l y)” while “taunting drivers,” “disobeying parking regulations,” “pulling over and stopping wherever they choose,” “playing extremely loud music,” “loitering and littering all over town,” and “the serious crimes that originally sparked the mayor’s proposal of this ordinance” (a reference to the 4/20/2006 shooting by two undocumented Dominican immigrants).

Style. In the ninth paragraph, the author’s use of the term “their foreign language” is noteworthy for both its third person possessive “their,” separating the author, and possibly the reader, from those speaking not just a different first language, but a “foreign language.”

Between addressing the first and second individuals the author is responding to in the letter, the author devotes two paragraphs to addressing racism. The author begins this portion of the letter with an apparent denial by stating “I am not a racist.” The author then states that “the only thing that keeps flashing ‘racist’ to me is the simple-minded comments being made in opposition to the mayor’s ordinance.” Again the presupposition here is that in addition to being

“irrational” and “illogical” (here denoted by the term “simple-minded”), those opposed to the IIRA are also “racist.”

Subsequently, Letter 4 devotes two paragraphs towards the potential civil lawsuits that Hazleton may face if the IIRA is passed by the city. The author asks the question, “[w]hat about the rights of our ancestors, my grand and great grandparents who migrated here in the early 1900s, who is protecting their civil rights?” Of interest is the use of the term “migrate” rather than “immigrate.” The terms “immigration” and “immigrant” are used exclusively elsewhere in the article when referring to the immigrant population, except in this instance.

Argumentation. An argumentative reversal is found in the latter part of the letter where the author states that the rights of the city’s elderly are not being protected, as “these people are prisoners in their own homes because their neighborhoods and our city are being infested with non-law abiding immigrants.” As can be seen here, the elderly in the city, not the city’s immigrants, are the victims, despite the intentions of the IIRA.

Storytelling. In a strictly local sense, Letter 4 does have a resolution to the immigration situation in the city, the passage of the IIRA. The author states his support for the IIRA at the beginning and end of the letter, which would appear to indicate that passage of the IIRA by the city would result in a resolution to the perceived problems caused by immigrants in the city.

Further Analysis. After the introduction of the letter, the following six paragraphs address the city councilman from nearby Allentown. The councilman was quoted as stating that proposed English-only legislation is “idiotic, mean-spirited, hypocritical and absurd.” The author then provides what appears to be a dictionary definition of the term “idiotic” and states that “[i]n regards to Mayor Barletta’s proposal the only ‘idiotic’ thing is that it can’t be effective immediately.” For the term “mean-spirited,” the author states that after having read the

proposed English-only ordinance and having “watched all the televised reports and read all of the material I could find regarding this issue” that “none of it was mean spirited.” The term “hypocritical” is addressed, to which the author states that the proposed legislation is “possibly” hypocritical, “but only in the sense that it took this long for Hazleton to take action.”

The author goes on to explain at least part of their thinking for this assertion that opposition to ordinance is “racist” by stating “[o]nly a racist would think that their foreign language should be written, spoken, and understood in America” without extending that same benefit to the languages of every person who has immigrated to the US. The author then includes a list of nine other languages they feel would warrant such equal treatment, though Spanish, the most commonly spoken second language in the city of Hazleton, is notably absent from the list. The author continues their explanation of whom or what is in their mind “racist” in the next paragraph. The author states “I also find it racist or at a minimum hypocritical and absurd...that a person from another country would feel they are superior and should be permitted to bypass the rules and regulations of immigration.” Here, the “racist” individuals are undocumented immigrants, rather than undocumented immigrants and those legal residents in opposition to the IIRA. However, the last sentence of the paragraph reaffirms the “irrationality” of those legal citizens who oppose bills such as the IIRA, stating , “[i]t shocks me that any legal citizen regardless of origin would support illegal immigration.” Of note is that opposition to the IIRA and English-only legislation is akin to support for illegal immigration and the opinion that legal citizens “regardless of origin,” which may be a subtle means of including legal Hispanic immigrants, should likewise not be opposed to the IIRA and English-only legislation.

The second of the specific individuals the author wishes to address is a Hispanic named businessman of the Hazleton area, who “came to the United States illegally” and later received amnesty, who was quoted in a June 19th article by the Associated Press as saying that the mayor

is “confusing illegal people with criminals.” The author affirms that, according to the dictionary, “illegal” and “criminal” are synonyms and that the only confusion that exists on this point on the part of the quoted individual, again highlighting the criminal aspects found in several instances earlier in the letter.

The following paragraphs deals with the topic of crime and activities, which though in most instances are not illegal, are generally socially frowned upon. The inclusion of the topic of crime when discussing immigration is one of a few common topics discussed in discourse concerning immigration and the author here seems acutely focused on this topic.

The letter ends with a rebuttal to a letter to the editor by a nun from New Jersey published in the *Standard-Speaker* on June 24th. The letter cited by the author “scolds” Mayor Barletta for his open letter which stated, “[i]llegal immigration leads to higher crime rates, contributes to overcrowded classrooms and failing schools, subjects our hospitals to fiscal hardship and legal residents to substandard quality of care, and destroys our neighborhoods and diminishes our overall quality of life.”¹⁶ The author takes issue with the nun’s statement of “[s]hame on any mayor who would advertise the previously mentioned ailments of their city.” and “[p]erhaps it is Mayor Barletta who needs to leave, not the hard working immigrants.” A clarification of this point is made by the author stating that the mayor was clear that legal immigrants are welcome in the city, and that “it is only the illegal immigrants that need to leave, hard working or not.” The author then ends the paragraph by asserting that “anyone who lives in or around the Hazleton Area can easily attest to the truth of the mayor’s letter.” This last sentence reiterates the “irrational” and “illogical” nature of those opposed to the IIRA, though in this particular case it may be due to lack of experience with the Hazleton area, as the nun being addressed resides in

¹⁶ This sentence is the same one that later would be the first point included in the “purpose and justification” section of the IIRA.

New Jersey, while the author includes the descriptor of “who lives in or around the Hazleton Area” for those who would vouch for the validity of the mayor’s open letter.

Letter 5 (Found in Appendix --) Letter 5 was published on June 30th, 2006 and consists of 12 paragraphs. Letter 5 expresses a negative opinion of immigration and is in support of the IIRA. Like Letter 4, the author of Letter 5 also addresses specific individuals quoted in a previous article in the *Standard-Speaker*, though not to the extent found in Letter 4. The individuals cited by the author of Letter 5 were found in the article “Hispanics mobilize against city immigration act” from June 29th, 2006.

Topics. This letter deals with a variety of topics, principally issues of legality and crime, racism, as well as language and assimilation. The focus on aspects of crime and race connect Letter 5 to Letters 3 and 4. However, Letter 5 deals with issues of language and assimilation as well, topics which are discussed primarily in Letter 2, which viewed immigration more positively. The contrasting views of language and assimilation between Letters 2 and 5 are of note.

Local discourse features. The letter begins with an apparent denial, with the author stating, “I am not racist, bigoted, or ignorant to other races, ethnicities, or the human population as a whole.” The author then states that they “feel compelled to respond” to the previously mentioned article. It is worth noting that this sense that the necessity of the immigration situation in Hazleton no longer let the author remain silent is found both here and in Letter 4.

Towards the end of the letter, the author addresses a Hispanic-named individual from the June 29th article and asks, in response to a statement made in the cited article, “how can you honestly state that targeting undocumented worker will not help better Hazleton?” The use of

the term “undocumented” is peculiar in this letter, as it differs from the term “illegal,” which was found in the other letters. This may be due to the fact that the author is paraphrasing the cited individual but may also reflect a different preferred terminology. The word “illegal” is in not used as an adjective to describe people in Letter 5 despite its frequency in the letter. Rather the term “illegal” is used on several occasions to describe the entry of undocumented immigrants into the U.S. but never the individual themselves.

The author states at the end of the letter that reducing crime is the goal of Mayor Barletta and that HALT (a local Hispanic community organization opposed to the IIRA) should “join Mayor Barletta not fight him.” The term “fight” demonstrates the confrontational view that the author has of the debate over the IIRA.

Style. This letter, like Letter 3 and Letter 4, contains a distinct sarcastic tone and emphasizes the irrational or illogical nature of those opposed to the IIRA. The second paragraph begins by the author stating that they are “utterly astonished” how the proposed IIRA has “become a race issue.” The remainder of this paragraph and the next one are devoted to criminal issues and a reiteration of the point that undocumented immigration is a crime unto itself and explains that “the moment someone enters the U.S. illegally,” it means “that person is breaking the law.” The explanation of the criminal nature of illegal immigration is followed by the question, “[h]ow can any intelligent person argue that fact?” Again, the supposed irrationality of anyone who would be supportive towards undocumented immigration, also seen in letters 3 and 4, is affirmed.

Additionally, the author’s word choice in separating “immigrants” from “American citizens” is noteworthy, as it separates the two groups, perhaps showing that the author does not perceive immigrants to be true “American citizens” in their mind. The author asks the reader that if one were to immigrate to another country, wouldn’t they “at least become familiarized

with that country's cultures and customs and learn the language? A little something we call assimilation." The sentence after the question is of note due to the use of the phrase "[a] little something we call." The use of this phrase strikes a sarcastic tone, implying that assimilation is a process which most should be aware of and capable of doing.

The responsibilities of immigrants, aside from assimilation, are continued in the next paragraph. The author asks "what responsibility does the immigrant have in the process of migration?" The author does not provide an answer to the question, but instead provides a retort to a specific Hispanic-named individual cited in the June 29th article mentioned earlier by the author. According to the author, the Hispanic-named individual "stated that she has never seen a white person planting and harvesting tomatoes." to which the author responds "[r]eally? My wife does. My neighbor does. My in-laws do. Shall I go on?" The author's response here is direct and punctuated by a sequence of short sentences, in a more conversational and perhaps confrontational manner, which is generally different from the rest of the letter. The answer also perhaps demonstrates a misunderstanding of the semantics of "planting and harvesting tomatoes" as it is likely that the Hispanic-named individual is referring to the more commercial aspects of farm labor, while the letter's author is more likely referring to a residential garden idea of growing tomatoes.

The final paragraph begins by referring to the debate over immigration as "the course of ignorance vs. reality," again reiterating the supposed irrationality of supporters of immigration as well as the confrontational perception of debates over immigration and the IIRA (by means of the "vs."). The author then addresses presumed grievances on behalf of immigrants towards their situation in the U.S., likely assumed by the author from the opposition to the IIRA from members of the local Hispanic community such as those addressed by the author, stating, "I am sure we can agree that if the U.S. is not meeting immigrant's expectations, well, I am sure that

immigrant's country of origin is still an option?" The use of the pronoun "we" is significant as it likely does not include the immigrant, indicating their opinion is not a deciding factor in this debate. Also, the term "well" denotes a sarcastic tone. After proposing that unsatisfied immigrants perhaps return to their country of origin, the author also proposes several other countries to which these immigrants might wish to go; "Or maybe Iraq? Or Yemen? I mean...they seem fun." Given the state of near-civil war at the time (2006) in Iraq, and the history of instability and poverty in Yemen, these two choices are obviously sarcastic and of note as neither of these locations are Hispanic, nor would most believe that they "seem fun". The letter concludes by informing the reader that they are free to join the author's group "LAWS – Legal American With Sense," though it is uncertain whether such a group actually exists or is sarcastic.

Argumentation. In a retort to a claim made in the June 29th article cited by the author that opposition to the IIRA is in some manner akin to the Civil Rights Movement, the author calls such a connection absurd and clarifies that the Civil Rights Movement "was about ensuring rights and liberties for 'legal' citizens." The author here separates the issue of race from legality. The following sentence contains an example of both national self-glorification and apparent empathy; "That time was not only a blemish on the American history, but also a success as to the laws and understanding that subsequently followed."

The following paragraph provides another example of an argumentative reversal, where the author and other presumably native-born residents of Hazleton are themselves victims in the controversy of the IIRA. It begins with "[t]he tired rhetoric of claiming hate as motivation is not only ludicrous, but also insulting to residents like me." The following two sentences contain what is perhaps the best example of an apparent denial from the four letters analyzed; "I do not hate illegal immigrants; I just feel they should not be entitled to anything the U.S. has to offer –

except maybe a one way ticket out.” The assertion made that the author does “not hate illegal immigrants” is followed what many might feel is a harsh suggestion as to how they should be treated in the U.S..

Storytelling. Letter five does not have a true resolution to the issue of immigration, neither in the context of Hazleton or nationally. The author proposes deporting undocumented and/or unsatisfied immigrants to either their native countries or the Middle East, though it is difficult to ascertain given the sarcastic nature of letter, whether the author believes this to be a serious resolution to the issue of immigration.

Further Analysis. The author tackles issues of English acquisition in the middle of the letter stating that “[a]s for limited resources here to help immigrants learn the English language, that is just comical. We have a hard enough time teaching English to American citizens.” The second sentence appears to contradict the assumption made in the first, as the perceived difficulty in teaching American citizens English would seem to imply a lack of adequate resources.

In addressing the Hispanic-named individual in regards to growing tomatoes, mentioned earlier under “style,” the author states “statements like that scream ignorance and cheapen any positive motives you may have.” The second portion of this sentence “cheapen any positive motives you may have” would appear to imply that the motives of the Hispanic-named individual may in fact be negative, and by using the term “any”, that the positives motives on the part of this individual may in fact be non-existent. Following this statement, the paragraph ends by addressing the argument that businesses may close as a result of the IIRA, to which the author responds, “I guarantee you that the residents of Hazelton [sic], Pennsylvania, and the United States will make that sacrifice if it means respecting and enforcing the laws of the land.” This “guarantee” by the author is a curious statement particularly because several arguments made in

favor of the IIRA were that it would create an overall improvement in the economy, at least for legal residents, something that may appear at odds with businesses closing.

Also of interest in this letter is a retort to a Hispanic-named individual who was quoted in an earlier article as saying that targeting undocumented immigrants will not improve the city by asking them, “[w]ould you state the same thing about murderers, drug dealers, rapists, child molesters, etc.?” The comparison between undocumented immigrants and “murderers, drug dealers, rapists, child molesters” is highly significant. An opponent of the IIRA, such as the individual cited by the author, is now forced to explain the difference in criminality between illegal immigration to the United States and the particularly heinous and typically highly amplified crimes of rape, murder, and pedophilia. In doing so however, this individual is also made to acknowledge the criminality of undocumented entry into the U.S., which the author reiterates in the next sentence. This comparison of crimes is also of note, as it may indicate that the author of the letter perhaps sees undocumented immigrants as criminals akin to those mentioned.

Common Themes From the discourse analysis above, there are several common threads and themes. Most striking is the common theme of the irrationality and illogical thinking of those opposed to the IIRA in the three letters in support of the IIRA. This theme, along with a generally sarcastic tone and issues relating to crime, is found in both the letters written by residents of the Hazleton area, and in Letter 3, the forwarded email. Thus it would seem that this theme and tone are not isolated to just Hazleton, but are perhaps found in much anti-immigration discourse. Such a finding would be in line with van Dijk’s findings mentioned in Letter 3.

Conclusion

In this section, an analysis of the reporting in the *Standard-Speaker* was conducted and comparable statistics gathered from a variety of sources pertinent to the keyword searches were also provided. In addition, a discourse analysis of four letters-to-the-editor was conducted to give a more nuanced view into not only the published written discourse regarding immigration in the Hazelton area, but also into possible reactions to coverage of immigration and news stories which may involve or insinuate immigrant actors. With this data in hand, connections between the information in this chapter and the theoretical frameworks and previous research found in the second chapter are now warranted.

Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusions

Introduction

This section will provide a look at the emerging themes from the data collected in the previous chapter and also put the data into the frameworks of the Social Amplification of Risk (SAR), Social Identity Theory, and Realistic Group Conflict Theory, outlined in the literature review. Using the theoretical frameworks previously discussed, this chapter seeks to provide answers to the research questions and put the findings in their theoretical perspective. Furthermore, using the data compiled I will provide possible impacts on language use, perceptions of threat and education. Additionally, limitations of the current study will be acknowledged and highlighted, and suggestions for future research will be made. Finally, pedagogical implications from this study will be addressed along with concluding remarks.

Emerging Themes

From the data compiled in the previous chapter, a discussion of the findings will compare the data from all three sources (reporting in the *Standard-Speaker*, the quantitative statistics available, and the analysis of the letters-to-the-editor) by the categories that were outlined in the methodology. These categories are crime, education, and language related terms pulled from the reasons given for the necessity of the IIRA found within Section 2A of the legislation.

Crime From the keywords “shooting” and “illegal drugs” there is a substantial increase in the quantity of reporting from the 2004 – 2005 period compared to the 2005 – 2006 period for both keywords (71% and 56% respectively). The increase in the number of articles returned for “illegal drugs” is matched by a nearly 100% increase in the number of drug sale and possession offenses reported in the city. Such a rise in the reporting in both the crime data and *Standard-*

Speaker reporting would seem to indicate that the reporting in the paper is more or less in line with the statistical realities of the city, though potentially underreporting such crimes. While the instances returned for “shooting” in the paper show a larger increase (71%), the large number of non-crime related articles (principally dealing with sports) make drawing conclusions difficult. However, given the 76% increase in assaults and robberies from the 2004 – 2005 to the 2005 – 2006 period, along with the statistically insignificant but extremely noteworthy two murders that occurred in the 2005 – 2006 period, it would seem likely that at least some of the increase in *Standard-Speaker* returns were for crime related instances of “shooting”. That the immigrant references in the crime related keyword articles were overwhelmingly negative is not particularly surprising given the nature of articles pertaining to crime, though such negative depictions of immigrants is certainly likely to cement any pre-existing stereotypes of immigrants as criminals, as should occur according to previous research (Brader, et al., 2008; Chandler & Tsai, 2001; Stephan, et al., 2005).

The discourse analysis revealed that while crime was a recurring theme in the three letters that supported the IIRA, and in Letter 3, which did not specifically mention the IIRA but generally opposed immigration, much of the discussion on crime dealt with the technical illegality of undocumented immigration. Only Letter 5 dealt specifically with criminal offenses other than undocumented immigration. Letter 5 references in particular the May 10th homicide that was frequently cited by Mayor Barletta as the impetus for proposing the legislation, along with a number of other minor offenses and generally socially frowned upon activities committed by immigrants.

Overall, crime in the city was more or less flat from 2002 – 2006. This is noteworthy especially since the city’s population was increasing, growing by 8.6% between 2000 and 2010. There is a sharp increase in robberies, assaults, and burglaries in the 2006 – 2007 time period for

the year following the passage of the IIRA, as the number of these crimes nearly doubled from the previous year. This increase in crime seems counterintuitive as, according to the mayor, as much as half of the Hispanic population left the city after passage of the IIRA ("Towns take a local approach to blocking illegal aliens," 2006).

It is worth noting that the May 10, 2006 homicide referenced obliquely in Letter 5 and much discussed by the then mayor was the result of a shooting by two undocumented immigrants from the Dominican Republic, who shot a non-Hispanic white stranger in the head after an argument ("Towns take a local approach to blocking illegal aliens," 2006). Previous murders in the city, of which there are three going back to 2002, all either involved a Hispanic offender and Hispanic victim or a non-Hispanic offender and non-Hispanic victim. It is also of note that the case against the two undocumented Dominican immigrants was later dropped due to a lack of available and reliable witnesses in 2007 ("Murder case fails against immigrants in Pennsylvania city," 2007).

The potential for the May 10th murder to have been amplified by the media, politicians, and residents of the Hazleton area is great given the use of a firearm, that the victim was a stranger, that he was shot in the head, and the differing ethnicities of the offenders and victim. It is apparent that this murder was certainly amplified by the mayor of the city who repeatedly referenced it in support of the necessity of the IIRA. Given the actual murder rate of the city, which even in the 2005 – 2006 period was at its highest in five years with two murders, the risk of being murdered was extremely unlikely, especially by a stranger. It would thus seem that given the role of the media according to Kaspersen et al. (1988)'s Social Amplification of Risk framework, and politicians' ability to use the media, that the risk of being murdered by a stranger would be greatly amplified beyond its actual statistical probability. The risk of murder would certainly be classified as a "realistic threat", as it poses a threat to one's very existence (Esses, et

al., 2001; Vala, et al., 2006). Given the cross-ethnic nature of the May 10th murder and that it was perpetrated by undocumented immigrants, this event likely also triggered competition between social groups in terms of safety according to Realistic Group Conflict theory. Such competition will, according to Tajfel and Turner (1979), lead to increased group cohesion and ethnocentrism amongst a defined social group, while also increasing antagonism towards out-groups. An event like the May 10th murder could, and seems to be, the catalyst that would drive individuals of the Hazleton community to coalesce around support for an anti-immigrant bill such as the IIRA. Furthermore, if social identity theory is also considered, seeking to protect the safety and well-being of the native-born population of Hazleton at the expense of the immigrant population is also potentially explained. From the discourse analysis of the letters-to-the-editor, “positive distinctiveness” was made on several occasions between the largely Hispanic opponents to the IIRA and its supporters. Letters 2, 4, and 5 all highlight positive aspects of the native-born population and their immigrant ancestors, such as being non-biased, hard-working, and willing to learn English, which Hazleton’s immigrants seemingly do not possess. Such positive differences are to be expected according to Tajfel and Turner (1979) when competition is perceived over resources such as personal safety. It would thus seem that the May 10th murder, given its high potential for amplification, was indeed amplified, which triggered expected responses according to social identity and realistic group conflict theories, such as the passage of the IIRA and the published discourse found in the letters-to-the-editor.

Immigration Though technically part of the crime related category, the immigration terms have been dealt with separately due to a number of differences from the other crime related terms, such as the different statistical data available. From the immigration related keywords (“alien”, “illegal immigrant”, and “undocumented immigrant”) there is a sharp increase (331%) in the number of articles between the 2004 – 2005 and 2005 – 2006 periods. Given the proposal

of and debate over the IIRA this is not necessarily unexpected. From the articles analyzed, all of them were found to have negative portrayals of immigrants, and though perhaps unwarranted, is to be expected given the undocumented status of the immigrants directly being referred to. Unfortunately, given the difficulty of accurately ascertaining the number of undocumented immigrants in a community, it is difficult to state that the increase in reporting in the *Standard-Speaker* for these keywords is also attributable or corresponds to a similar increase in the undocumented population. It is certainly likely though that a portion of the Hispanic population, which increased by 835% between 2000 and 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000b, 2010), was undocumented, though given the notorious difficulty in accurately counting undocumented immigrants it is extremely difficult to even estimate what that portion may have been.

The technically criminal nature of undocumented immigrants is a major theme found in the discourse of the letters-to-the-editor that supported the IIRA and were opposed to immigration. This is also perhaps reflected in the favored use of the terms “illegal immigrant” and “alien” in the *Standard-Speaker* articles. The use of the term “illegal immigrant” certainly alludes to the criminal nature of undocumented immigration. The term “alien”, though semantically lacking the criminal implications of “illegal”, implies foreignness and strangeness that may, along with the use of the term “illegal”, play into ideas of “positive distinctiveness” between native-born residents and immigrants. The reiteration of the fact that undocumented immigrants broke the law was repeatedly stated in Letters 3, 4, and 5. The focus on the illegal nature of undocumented immigration was cited as reason to restrict access to government services (Letters 3, 4, and 5), to establish “positive distinctiveness” between undocumented immigrants and the native-born population and their immigrant ancestors (Letter 5), and as an argument to support the perceived irrationality of those who would support “illegal” actions (Letters 3, 4, and 5). Letter 2 uniquely framed immigration over a longer time period than the

other letters, but did not specifically mention undocumented or illegal immigration. It would be interesting to know if the author of Letter 2 avoided mention of undocumented immigrants because of a perceived argumentative flaw that such an admission would provide, or if the author believes that immigration necessarily includes a number of undocumented immigrants as well.

Education The search for the education related terms “overcrowd” and/or “fail” and “school” notably lacked any immigrant references from the *Standard-Speaker*. Additionally, the number of articles returned for this keyword search showed a slight decrease from the 2004 – 2005 to the 2005 – 2006 periods. Generally speaking, the standardized testing scores from the district show an overall student performance more or less similar to surrounding districts, though generally the scores are slightly lower. However, when the overall district scores are broken down by ethnicity there is a sharp difference between the performance of the Hispanic and white students in both reading and math across the grade levels. From the state test score data, Hispanic students comprised approximately 30% of the student population in the third grade, with the percentage dropping to approximately 15% by 11th grade. Just as the percentage of Hispanic students decreases as the grade level increases, the test scores in both math and reading conversely show a drop as grade level increases. While this is true of both white and Hispanic students, the drop in scores of the Hispanic student population is much more drastic.

Additionally, the scores for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students show an even more substantial decrease in scores as grade level increases, along with a much lower general performance in both reading and math. If one assumes that the vast majority of LEP students in the district are of Hispanic background, which seems likely given the demographic and language data available from the census, it would seem that there is a particular subset of the Hispanic population which does extremely poorly on the state standardized assessments. It would seem thus that the assertion made in the IIRA that Hispanic immigration, which likely includes a

difficult to ascertain but significant number of undocumented immigrants, leads to failing schools is perhaps true, but largely for the Hispanic student population that the district serves.

As for the assertion that undocumented immigration leads to overcrowded schools and classrooms, this is a possibility. Enrollment in the district did increase slightly from the 2004 – 2005 school year to the 2005 – 2006 school year. However, given the 8.6% population increase of the city as a whole between 2000 and 2010, and that the district covers a large geographic area beyond the city of Hazleton itself, it would appear that overcrowding of schools and classrooms may have been a result of the unexpected increase in population in general, rather than solely the result of a boom in undocumented immigration.

Though not mentioned in the IIRA, the finances for the school district show both an increase in revenue and actual instructional expenses year on year from the 2004 – 2005 to the 2006 – 2007 school years. While proportion of local sourced revenue remained the same or decreased slightly during these years, due to the increasing total revenue for the district (including revenue from the state and federal government), revenue taken in from taxes from the school district area increased by slightly just under \$4 million between the 2004 – 2005 and 2006 – 2007 school years. It is unknown however, whether this increase in revenues was due to an increased tax base or an increase in the tax rate.

From the discourse found in the letters-to-the-editor, there is little mention of educational related issues aside from issues of learning English (found particularly in Letter 4, and implied in Letter 5). Apart from general arguments that undocumented immigrants avail themselves to taxpayer funded services, of which public education would be included, there is no mention of undocumented immigration's effects on the school district. It would therefore seem that there is a disconnect between the reasoning given in the IIRA that undocumented immigration "contributes to overcrowded classroom and failing schools" (IIRA) and the opposition given to

immigration in the letters-to-the-editor. Additionally, from the statistical data from the school district, it would seem that the Hazleton Area School District as a whole is performing more or less on par with surrounding districts, and that if the school district is failing students, it is largely the Hispanic student population, particularly those with limited English, rather than the white population. Also, while there is anecdotal evidence that certain schools in the district suffer from overcrowding (additional classrooms housed in trailers in the parking lot are now found at the high school for example), this seems to be due to the general unexpected increase in the overall population of the area which the district serves.

The disconnect between the discourse found in the letters-to-the-editor and the language found in the IIRA in regards to education may have two possible explanations. The first is that politically speaking, undocumented immigrants perhaps are being used as a scapegoat for issues regarding taxpayer funding for the district and overcrowding. Undocumented immigrants, lacking the ability to vote, would provide an easy target upon which to place blame for issues in the district. The second possibility is that given the seemingly relatively low risk value placed upon school overcrowding, such issues were not amplified to the extent that other more salient threats, such as crime and language threat were. While educational resources would certainly count as a realistic threat in the Social Amplification of Risk framework and social identity theory, this threat may perhaps only be an issue to that segment of the population that have an interest and see a competition for resources in the public education system, such as parents, school faculty, and local politicians. It may thus be possible that the authors of the letters-to-the-editor analyzed, as well as the reporters of the *Standard-Speaker*, may not form a part of this interest group and for them the competition over educational resources was not viewed as a risk worth amplifying.

Language The language related keywords “ESL”, and “Spanish” and “English”, returned the greatest variety of immigrant depictions. Returns for both sets of keywords were fairly low in comparison to the other keywords, with the exception of the education related terms. “ESL” returns showed a significant decrease in 2005 – 2006 in comparison to 2004 – 2005, which is interesting given the demographic changes in the city and the debate surrounding the IIRA in 2006. Returns for “Spanish” and “English” did not significantly vary between the two time periods, which again are of note especially given the inclusion of an English-only ordinance within the IIRA. As opposed to the other articles returned from the keyword search, the depictions of immigrants were not overwhelmingly negative. Depictions for the articles returned for “ESL” were largely neutral, and returns for “English” and “Spanish” were balanced with three positive depictions, six neutral, and three negative. Possible reasons for the more balanced depictions within the language related articles may be that the nature of the topic itself is not as implicitly negative, as it would be with crime for example, and that ESL programs and returns for “English” and “Spanish” highlighted articles dealing with immigrant acquisition of English and bilingualism, which would likely be viewed as reducing immigrant threat according to prior research (Citrin, et al., 2007; Paxton & Mughan, 2006).

While data from the 2010 Census on language use in Hazleton is not yet available, data from the 2000 Census is telling. In 2000, 8.1% of the population spoke a language other than English in the home, with Spanish being the principal language (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a). Given the increase in the Hispanic population by 835% percent between 2000 and 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010), it is extremely likely that the number of residents within the city of Hazleton that did not speak English in the home likely also grew substantially. It is thus again somewhat surprising that there were not more articles returned from the *Standard-Speaker* for

both time periods searched, and that the number would remain the same, as was the case with “English” and “Spanish”, or decrease, as was the case with “ESL”.

From the discourse from the letters-to-the-editor, all but Letter 3 discussed language issues. Letter 2, the letter that was generally positive about immigration, emphasized that recent Spanish-speaking immigrants would need time in acquiring English, but that eventually English would be learned. Letter 2 also made the interesting socio-linguistic note that many Spanish words would merge into the English language as a result of the large number of Spanish-speaking immigrants. On the other hand, Letters 4 and 5 featured much higher levels of language threat in their discourse. Letter 4 stressed the importance for immigrants to learn the English language if they are to be assimilated, which coincides with the assimilation findings of Paxton and Mughan (2006). Additionally, Letter 4 discussed the limited resources available for teaching immigrants English and the perceived difficulties in teaching English to “American Citizens”. Such an argument is exemplary of a perceived competition over resources that would lead to out-group antagonism according to realistic group conflict theory.

Letter 5 dealt with language issues at length in regards to the IIRA and its English-only provision. The author of Letter 5 takes issue with opposition to English only legislation, and appears to view opposition to English-only legislation as akin to opposition to anti-immigrant legislation in general. Opposition to English-only legislation is deemed “idiotic”. Additionally, from a language policy perspective, the author of Letter 5 argues that those who would espouse multilingualism, defined here as languages other than English being written, spoken, and understood in America, are in fact racist. Such views demonstrate high levels of language and identity threat. The use of a language other than English, and perhaps by extension opposition to English-only legislation, in terms of social identity theory, has become both an out-group marker and a means by which to antagonize that out-group.

Themes

Taken as a whole, the data indicates varying levels of threat, depending on the topic discussed. Most notable is that crime appears to be the most striking issue. If one includes undocumented immigration as a crime, which for technical purposes it has for this research, than issues of immigrant crime are reflected in the discourse of nearly all the letters-to-the-editor, the significant portion of crime-related articles containing negative depictions of immigrants, and the IIRA itself. The focus on issues of crime, regardless of the statistical realities, is a major theme in the frequently limited topics used to discuss immigration according to van Dijk (van Dijk, et al., 1997). The focus in Hazleton on issues of immigration and crime is thus to be expected. Additionally, given that issues of personal safety are classified as realistic threats, and are more likely to be amplified than other threat types, the focus on issues of crime is also to be expected according to the theoretical framework of this research and previous work on issues of immigration and threat.

Much of the same explanations surrounding issues of crime likely explain the existence of language threat that was found in the letters-to-the-editor. When one considers the demographic data regarding language use in the city of Hazleton, the growing number of non-English speakers is likely to elicit a threat to the language, and the culture associated with it, according to social identity theory and the theoretical frameworks regarding “perceived threats”. As mentioned earlier language use issues do play a role in heightening levels of threat, as found in previous research on the topic. That language related issues did not entirely contain negative depictions of immigration in the *Standard-Speaker* reporting and the letters-to-the-editor (particularly in Letter 2) is also to be expected. English language acquisition on the part of immigrants and the Hispanic population made up a portion of the articles that were returned. Prior research has shown that English language acquisition on the part of immigrants does

mitigate levels of threat to the native-born population. Therefore, depictions of immigrants learning and using English are likely to be viewed positively by the native-born population.

That issues surrounding education were largely absent from the reporting in the *Standard-Speaker* and the discourse in the letters-to-the-editor is notable. Given undocumented immigration's supposed negative effects on education in the IIRA, one would imagine that educational issues would have been discussed more in the *Standard-Speaker*. It is possible that education, despite being a resource over which competition occurs, did not register as a salient enough threat on the part of the newspaper and the authors of the letters-to-the-editor. There are however, two aspects worth considering that may explain the cause of this absence of perceived competition and threat regarding education and educational resources. The first is that issues surrounding education, particularly public education, are perhaps only of immediate concern to those with a vested interest in the public school system. It is possible that none of the authors of the letters-to-the-editor had an immediate interest in, or were aware of possible competition for, educational resources. Another aspect to consider is that, according to the standardized testing data, it is not the native-born who are truly competing for educational resources, but rather the immigrant and Hispanic population. Given that the white population, which from the census data we can assume is overwhelmingly native-born, is performing significantly better than the total student population as a whole, it may be that the white population of the city does not perceive a threat from immigrants in terms of educational resources. It would be expected that the Hispanic and immigrant population would in fact be the ones who would be the most likely to perceive issues of competition in terms of education. However, since the letters-to-the-editor appear to be, based on the names of the authors and their stance towards the IIRA, overwhelming white and native-born (there was only one letter to the editor returned from the keyword search that appeared to be written by a Hispanic), that the immigrant and Hispanic population are not

participating in the discourse found in the *Standard-Speaker*. The inclusion of undocumented immigration's deleterious effects on schools in the IIRA may be due to threats as perceived by school administrators and members of the local government that are either unnoticed or not salient for the native-born population in general.

It therefore seems that threat is perceived at three different levels based upon the keyword categories. Crime related immigrant issues seem to evoke the highest levels of threat, despite statistical evidence stating that the city is in most respects no more dangerous than it was in prior years. Meanwhile, threat from issues surrounding education seems to be largely ignored in the public discourse outside of the IIRA. However, in contrast to crime in the city, there appear to be statistical reasons to be concerned about education. Hispanic and LEP students do bring down the overall state standardized test scores for the district. Additionally, given that the great majority of the population increase in the city was from an increase in the Hispanic population, overcrowding issues may be, at least superficially, the result of the rapid increase in the immigrant and the Hispanic population. The underrepresentation of actual statistical threats is accounted for though in the Social Amplification of Risk framework. Those threats which are not salient or for which there is familiarity with are not likely to be amplified according to Kaspersen (1996; 1988). The language related issues seem to fall somewhere in between the two threat extremes posed by crime and education. Certain aspects of language use do elicit high levels of threat, as noted in the letters-to-the-editor and the *Standard-Speaker* reporting. Again, given the demographic data on language use in the city, this is to be expected according to Social Amplification of Risk framework and social identity theory. However, language issues also include immigrant English acquisition, which serves to mitigate levels of language threat. Thus, the varied immigrant depictions in the *Standard-Speaker* reporting and the letters-to-the-editor is to be expected.

After having discussed the main key word themes and how the data related to each, I will now answer the research questions that were posed at the beginning of this study.

Research Questions

1) According to the Social Amplification of Risk framework, what role may the *Standard-Speaker* have played in the formation of public opinion about the Illegal Immigration Relief Act and the Official English Ordinance (IIRA) of 2006 in Hazleton, PA?

While it is impossible to definitively answer the question of the exact role the *Standard-Speaker* played in the formation of public opinion of the IIRA, the Social Amplification of Risk framework does give some clues about the role that the *Standard-Speaker* may have had. First, given what the Social Amplification of Risk framework says about the role of the media, it is safe to say that the *Standard-Speaker* did play a role in shaping, and/or possibly reflecting, public opinion, though to what extent is difficult to ascertain. As the *Standard-Speaker* fulfills the role of a local newspaper, the paper often serves as the only means for residents of the Hazleton area to receive local news. With the high number of articles returned for the keywords related to crime, immigration, and language issues, it would seem likely that the *Standard-Speaker* amplified these topics. As these topics were either typically and inherently negative in nature, such as with crime, or tended to deal specifically with issues related to immigration, such as immigration itself and language issues, it would seem likely that the *Standard-Speaker* played a role in amplifying the risk of immigrant crime, and immigration generally, in the area.

The discourse from the letters-to-the-editor, if taken to be somewhat of a reflection of the reporting in the *Standard-Speaker*, would appear to confirm the idea that the *Standard-Speaker's* reporting influenced public perceptions towards immigration and the IIRA. From the letters analyzed, issues of crime, language, and the criminal nature of undocumented immigration, are

all mentioned in the letter supportive of the IIRA. These topics were also the three most commonly found in the *Standard-Speaker* reporting. Furthermore, the absence of reporting on educational issues in the paper is likewise reflected in the absence of topics surrounding education in the letters-to-the-editor. The notable exception however were topics related to language acquisition, which was reported on in the *Standard-Speaker*.

Again, while the exact nature of the role that the *Standard-Speaker* played in shaping public opinion is impossible to gauge from this study, the level of reporting on crime, language issues, immigration, and education, and the topics raised in the letters-to-the-editor appear to be too closely related to be coincidental. It would appear plausible that the authors of the IIRA, and the city council members who unanimously passed it, may have been strongly influenced by the reporting in the *Standard-Speaker* itself. The inclusion of undocumented immigration's negative impacts on education, as well as on hospitals and public services, in the IIRA may have stemmed from exposure to information regarding these areas that most of the city's population may not have been aware of. Most of the concerns surrounding the issues found in the IIRA existed in the public discourse, as reflected by the reporting of the *Standard-Speaker*, before the IIRA was proposed. It is therefore likely that these concerns shaped the language of the IIRA, and its justifications, when the bill was authored. The IIRA then amplified these concerns, and focused debate on the topic, while at the same time coalescing public support from the native-born in-group population that had already loosely perceived immigrant threat. If one also considers the possible political motivations of the then mayor of the city of Hazelton, and his future, and eventually successful, bids for national office, manipulation of levels of immigrant threat, as initially amplified by the *Standard-Speaker*, appears to have likely occurred.

It therefore seems that the reporting of the *Standard-Speaker* played a role in shaping public opinion in support of the IIRA at several times. First, the *Standard-Speaker* amplified

threat levels by reporting on issues of immigration, crime, and language, prior to the IIRA's being authored. After the proposal of the IIRA, the *Standard-Speaker* once again, as a principal means of conveying public discourse in the area, amplified levels of threat by increased reporting on immigration issues pertaining to the IIRA, which were negative in nature. The role of the *Standard-Speaker* as a local newspaper seems to have been used as a means to amplify levels of threat, though the paper likely did so in a largely passive manner. With the tendency of small town newspapers to go along with and support local officials, rather than question and critique them, it appears likely that the *Standard-Speaker* may have unwittingly amplified levels of immigration threat in the area above and beyond their statistical realities, particularly after the IIRA had been proposed.

2) How does the reporting in the *Standard-Speaker* compare to quantitative data from the census, crime reports, and educational budgets, for crime, language issues, and education?

The reporting of the *Standard-Speaker* varies widely in comparison to the quantitative data available. On reporting related to crime, the *Standard-Speaker* appears to be more or less in line with the statistical realities of the city. While crime typically is over-reported in the media, the crime reporting in the paper remains in line with the offenses committed in the crime reports. Returns for “illegal drugs”, for example, show an increase from 2004 – 2005 to 2005 – 2006 that is more or less in line with the increase in reported drug offenses. Reporting on language issues seems to be underreported however, with the demographic data indicating significant likely occurring in the city in regards to language use, while reporting on language issues actually decreases. The decrease in total articles returned for the language related keywords from the 2004 – 2005 to 2005 – 2006 period is of note, as both the changing language demographics of the city along with reporting regarding the IIRA, and its English-only provision, would give the

impression that reporting on language issues should have increased rather than decreased . The lack of reporting on educational issues stands out in comparison to the educational data. While budgetary issues due not appear to be a concern from the school district finances (both revenues and expenses increased), the Hispanic and LEP student population, many of whom are likely immigrants, are underperforming in comparison to the district as a whole. Issues regarding the flagging standardized test scores of Hispanic and LEP students from the quantitative data appear to be absent from the *Standard-Speaker* reporting. The reporting in the *Standard-Speaker*, at least in terms of issues related to the education related terms, may be reflecting the reality of non-immigrant students in the district, and perhaps of the majority of the newspaper's readers.

3) How are immigrants and immigration portrayed in articles from the Standard Speaker about crime, language issues, education, and letters to the editor?

As addressed above, the depiction of immigrants can vary widely. Immigrants were portrayed almost universally negatively in the reporting on crime. This however is to be somewhat expected given the topic. However, the lack of positive depictions of immigrants in the crime reporting is perhaps a testament to the need for more Hispanics in the city's police force and working in the judicial system in the area. As also addressed above, the depiction of immigrants in language related issues is more muddled, with both positive and negative depictions found. When reporting focuses on immigrants acquiring English, depictions tend to be more positive. However, issues of language threat account for much of the negative depictions found. Depictions of immigrants in education are largely absent, excluding issues pertaining to ESL, which was included under language issues.

The letters-to the editor contained overwhelmingly negative depictions of immigrants. As mentioned earlier, there was only one letter of any substance (Letter 2) that discussed

immigration and immigrants positively from all the letters that were returned from the keyword search. Even in the case of Letter 2, the author does not extol the virtues of current immigrants, but instead focuses on America's history of immigration and asks for patience on the part of the native-born when it comes to immigrant English acquisition. The remaining letters that were returned, including those analyzed in the discourse analysis, ranged from critical of current immigration, both nationally and locally, to outright hostile. Depictions of immigrants in the letters focused on topics of crime and the irrational nature of those who would oppose immigration restrictions, including the IIRA.

Limitations

There are several limitations to the current study. First and foremost is that while this research attempted to determine the role of the *Standard-Speaker* in the formation of support for the IIRA, the specific function of the newspaper in shaping public opinion is impossible to quantify from the current study. Additionally, while the quantitative data does provide a picture of the statistical realities of the city of Hazleton, it is by no means complete. Statistics for ethnicity of criminal offenders and victims, with the exception of those involved in murder, are unavailable for example. Also, data from the school district in regards to specific levels of funding specific programs, such as ESL education, was unavailable from the sources found for this study. While the keyword search sought to capture as many articles related to the justifications given in the IIRA, there are undoubtedly many articles that were not returned due to differences in the wording of the articles. Also, the use of the keyword "shooting" made an accurate analysis of the crime related aspects of "shooting" difficult as the keyword returned a large number of sports related articles.

Suggestions for Future Research

The present study lays forth several areas that warrant further research. The most pressing would be an analysis of the actual impact of the *Standard-Speaker* on public opinion for the IIRA by means of both qualitative and quantitative research. Such research would obviously tie in with the current study by measuring whether the findings of this study are indeed accurate. Similar research has been conducted in a European context in Boomgaarden (2009), though little, especially from the perspective of immigrant threat, has been done in the United States. Additionally, though some research, such as Burnett (2009), has analyzed the role of the newspapers in both small and large cities, research on the role of newspapers in metropolitan areas geographically far from the traditional Hispanic immigration areas of the Southwest and Florida, would also be of great use. Lastly, research similar to this study, but conducted in other small and medium cities in non-traditional immigrant destinations would be of interest to see if the finding coincide with those found here.

Pedagogical Implications

From the results of the current study, there are several pedagogical implications to consider. From the educational related data, it is clear that student achievement for Hispanic and immigrant students is subpar in the Hazleton Area School District. While the exact causes of this underachievement are beyond the scope of this study, the extremely low scores of the limited English proficiency (LEP) students likely contributes greatly to the low scores of the Hispanic students and serve to lower the overall scores for the district. Devoting more educational resources to ESL education and LEP students would thus likely greatly improve the Hispanic student standardized test scores and the scores of the district overall. Such a focus on improving LEP student achievement would likely produce the greatest overall increase in scores for Hispanics and the district for the least allocation of resources. The lack of reporting on

education issues means that a greater allocation of resources for schooling, particularly for ESL education, is unlikely to occur without activism on the part of parents and teachers.

Consciousness raising of educational issues is necessary for local newspapers, such as the *Standard-Speaker*, to report on such issues and amplify the risk that poor educational performance and inadequate resources has on the population it serves.

From the language related data, it is clear that while English acquisition is increasing in Hazleton's increasing immigrant population, there are still many households that are "linguistically isolated", where no one in the household is able to speak English well or very well. English acquisition is even more difficult in these instances and the children of such households are at a particular disadvantage when it comes to their education in schools. While ESL instruction is an invaluable resource for LEP students, without adequate exposure to English outside of school, English acquisition is likely to be difficult. Therefore, while more resources within the school district should be allocated for LEP students, additional resources outside of school are needed for both LEP students in linguistically isolated households and the adult population for whom English is not well understood.

Finally, demonization of undocumented immigrants in public discourse and seeking to deny public services to undocumented immigrants and their children does nothing to improve the educational attainment of immigrants. It is important to remember that many children of undocumented immigrant parents are legal U.S. citizens and therefore eligible for all applicable federal, state, and local assistance, even if their parents may not. Also, even in the case of undocumented children, public schooling cannot be denied to undocumented children as a result of *Plyler v. Doe* ("Plyler v Doe," 1982). The threat then to deny public services, particularly education, to undocumented immigrants is thus often misleading and may intimidate undocumented parents and their children from making use of their federally guaranteed right to

K-12 education. As a result, attempts to place the blame for school overcrowding on undocumented immigrants is a non-sequitur, as public school districts have a legal obligation to provide undocumented students with an education. Furthermore, as the IIRA only applied to the city of Hazleton, while the Hazleton Area School District serves not only the city, but also the surrounding area, limiting undocumented immigration in the city of Hazleton, would not likely resolve issues of overcrowding and poor test scores in the district anyways. Issues of overcrowding due to immigration, reflect less on undue demands on schools to provide educational services by undocumented children and more on inadequate allocation of educational resources and poor planning on the part of schools and municipalities.

Concluding Remarks

The passage of the IIRA and the role the *Standard-Speaker* may have played in shaping public opinion about the bill and immigration in general is a complex one. The case of Hazleton and its response to recent immigration presents a phenomenon that should be of interest to a number of different areas of study. Ultimately, the ongoing debate over immigration and the IIRA present a case where there are seemingly few winners. Litigation over the IIRA has cost the city hundreds of thousands of dollars. The downtown area of Hazleton, where stores catering to the immigrant and Hispanic population had replaced some of the long boarded up storefronts, is again facing difficulties in regards to occupancy. Concerns over immigrants and the coalescing of public opinion around the IIRA pitted neighbors against each other within the city of Hazleton. The Hispanic population in the city became viewed as a problem, rather than a resource and source of long absent growth. At the same time, antagonism between the Hispanic and native-born population has remained largely unchanged, as can be seen from continued reporting and letters in the *Standard-Speaker* to this day.

Fortunately, the prior research done on immigration does provide a guide for ways to bring the population of Hazleton together. The findings of Ward (Ward & Masgoret, 2006), Stephan (Stephan, et al., 2000), Citrin (Citrin, et al., 2007), and Paxton and Mughan (2006) give concrete means by which immigration threat can be reduced. Chief amongst these are increased quality contact with immigrants, where the contact is voluntary, cooperative, and individual. Initiatives such as those by Joe Maddon, manager of the Tampa Bay Devil Rays and Hazleton native, in the Hazleton area appear to meet these characteristics and provide a good idea of what such contact could look like in the Hazleton area (Chastain, 2011).

Ultimately, the issues surrounding immigration in the Hazleton area are not likely to disappear, just as the immigrant population in Hazleton is not likely to disappear either. With the Hispanic population constituting an increasingly larger portion of the area's population, the *Standard-Speaker* will likely begin focusing more on issues pertinent to the area's Hispanic and immigrant population, and feature more letters-to-the-editor that are favorable towards immigrants and immigration, lest it lose its relevance as the area's sole principal source of local news. However, given the nature of local newspapers, it is likely that the reporting of the *Standard-Speaker* will increasingly reflect the changing realities of the city as Hazleton enters a new phase in its immigrant history.

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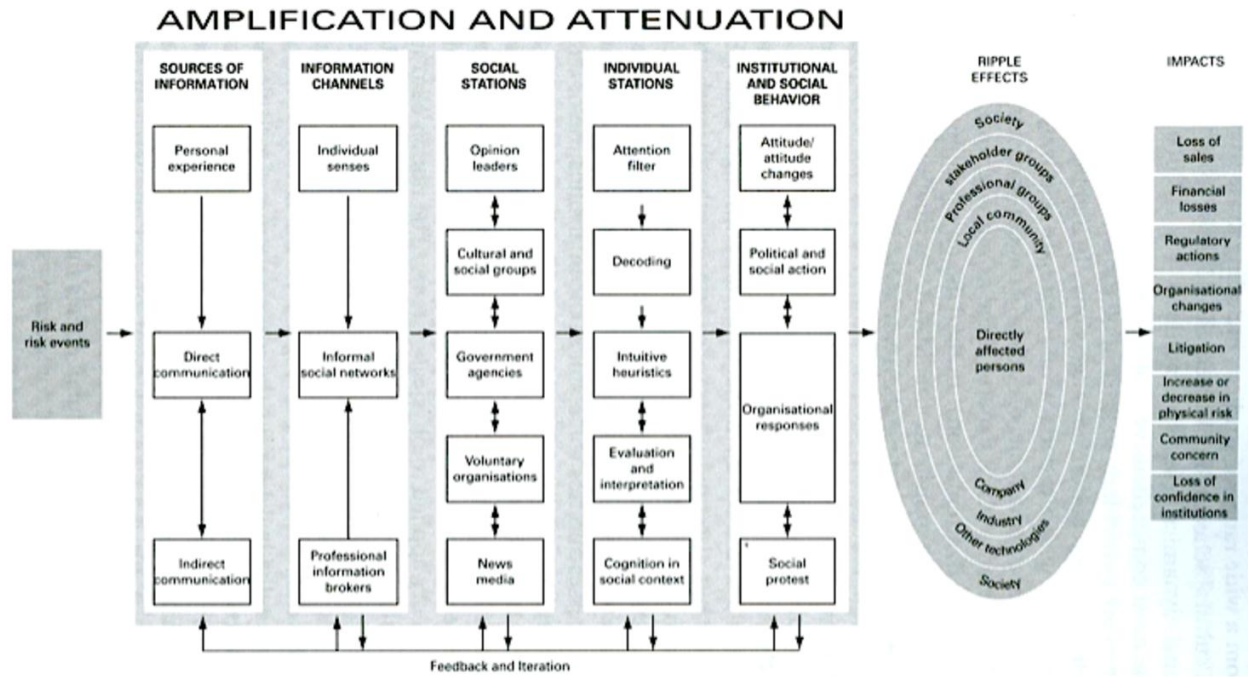
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Appendix

Social Amplification of Risk framework



(Kasperson & Kasperson, 1996)

Selected Crimes for Hazleton City July 2005 – July 2006

25/12/11

FOCUS Report



Reported Offenses

Return A

Offenses Report For Juris : HAZLETON CITY

For The YTD of July , 2006

Classification Of Offenses	Offenses Known 2006 YTD	Offenses Known 2005 YTD	Offenses Known Pct. Change	Actual Offenses 2006 YTD	Actual Offenses 2005 YTD	Actual Offenses Pct. Change	Offenses Cleared 2006 YTD	Offenses Cleared 2005 YTD	Offenses Cleared Pct. Chang
01A-Murder and Nonnegligent Manslaughter	1	0	N/A	1	0	N/A	1	0	N/A
02A-Rape by Force	0	0	00.00	7	4	75.00	1	3	-60.0
02B-Assault to Rape - Attempts	0	1	-100.00	0	1	-100.00	0	0	N/A
03A-Robbery Firearm	0	7	-14.29	0	7	-14.29	1	1	.0
03B-Robbery Knife or Cutting Instrument	0	0	.00	0	0	.00	0	0	N/A
03C-Robbery Other Dangerous Weapon	1	0	-66.67	1	0	-66.67	0	0	N/A
03D-Robbery Strong Arm(Hands, Feet, Etc.)	0	0	20.00	0	0	20.00	2	0	-33.3
04A-Assault Firearm	0	4	-25.00	0	4	-25.00	1	2	-50.0
04B-Assault Knife or Cutting Instrument	2	1	100.00	2	1	100.00	2	2	.0
04C-Assault Other Dangerous Weapon	4	2	100.00	4	2	100.00	1	0	N/A
04D-Assault Hands, Flat, Feet, Etc.	0	1	000.00	0	1	000.00	0	1	200.0
05A-Burglary Forcible Entry	04	44	-22.73	04	44	-22.73	2	10	-80.0
05B-Burglary Unlawful Entry - No Force	04	09	-17.34	04	09	-17.34	1	0	N/A
05C-Burglary Attempted Forcible Entry	0	7	-20.07	0	7	-20.07	0	0	N/A
060-Larceny-Theft	180	260	-30.12	180	260	-30.00	17	30	-43.3
07A-Motor Vehicle Theft - Autos	00	02	12.00	00	01	12.00	7	0	40.0
07B-Motor Vehicle Theft - Trucks and Buses	7	0	100.00	7	0	100.00	0	0	N/A
07C-Motor Vehicle Theft - Other Vehicles	0	7	20.07	0	7	20.07	0	0	N/A
080-Anson	1	4	-75.00	1	4	-75.00	0	0	-100.0
Total Part I	327	421	-22.33	320	410	-22.20	39	60	-40.0
04E-Other Assaults - Not Aggravated	00	00	.00	00	00	.00	00	00	-25.0
100-Forgery and Counterfeiting	0	7	-20.07	0	7	-20.07	2	2	.0
110-Fraud	10	0	200.00	10	0	200.00	1	0	N/A
120-Stolen Prop., Rec., Posses., Buying	11	4	175.00	11	4	175.00	9	4	125.0
140-Vandalism	140	100	-23.00	140	100	-23.00	04	03	4.0
150-Weapons, Carrying, Posses, Etc.	7	0	60.00	0	0	20.00	0	4	-25.0
160-Prostitution and Commercialized Vice	1	0	N/A	1	0	N/A	1	0	N/A
170-Sex Offenses (Except 12 and 180)	14	13	7.69	14	11	27.27	0	4	25.0
18A-Drug Sale/Qty - Opium - Cocaine	0	11	-27.27	0	11	-27.27	0	11	-27.2
18B-Drug Sale/Qty - Marijuana	0	0	.00	0	0	.00	2	0	-33.3
18C-Drug Sale/Qty - Synthetic	1	0	N/A	1	0	N/A	0	0	N/A
18D-Drug Possession - Opium - Cocaine	10	0	200.00	10	0	200.00	10	0	200.0
18F-Drug Possession - Marijuana	14	1	1,300.00	14	1	1,300.00	0	1	700.0
18H-Drug Possession - Other	12	0	140.00	12	0	140.00	2	0	-60.0
200-Offenses Against Family & Children	0	2	100.00	0	2	100.00	0	1	200.0
210-Driving Under the Influence	00	00	00.00	00	00	00.00	00	00	00.0
220-Liquor Law	27	00	-10.10	27	00	-10.10	27	00	-10.1
230-Disobedience	02	00	0.00	02	00	0.00	02	00	0.0
240-Disorderly Conduct	70	00	20.01	70	00	20.01	70	00	20.0
260-All Other Offenses(Except Traffic)	104	140	13.10	104	140	13.10	100	144	0.0
Total Part II	600	630	7.60	602	630	7.34	490	443	10.0
Total HAZLETON CITY	1,010	1,050	-4.30	1,007	1,040	-4.10	529	500	4.0

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Access World News

Editor,**Standard-Speaker (Hazleton, PA) - Monday, January 30, 2006**

Editor,

Question: Will we still be the country of choice and still be America if we continue to make the changes forced on us by the people from other countries that came to live in America because it is the County of Choice? Think about it. All I have to say is, when will they do something about my rights? I celebrate Christmas, but because it is not celebrated by everyone, we can no longer say Merry Christmas. Now it has to be Season's Greetings. It is not Christmas vacation, it is Winter Break. Isn't it amazing how this winter break always occurs over the Christmas holiday? We have gone so far the other way, bent over backwards to not offend anyone, that I am not being offended. But it seems that no one has a problem with that. This says it all! This is an editorial written by an American citizen, published in a Tampa newspaper. He did quite a job; didn't he?

Read on, please! Immigrants, not Americans, must adapt. I am tired of this nation worrying about whether we are offending some individual or their culture. Since the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, we have experienced a surge of patriotism by the majority of Americans. However, the dust from the attacks had barely settled when the "politically correct" crowd began complaining about the possibility that our patriotism was offending others.

I am not against immigration, nor do I hold a grudge against anyone who is seeking a better life by coming to America. Our population is almost entirely made up of descendants of immigrants. However, there are a few things that those who have recently come to our county, and apparently some born here, need to understand. This idea of America being a multicultural community has served only to dilute our sovereignty and our national identity. As Americans, we have our own culture, our own society, our own language and our own lifestyle. This culture has been developed over centuries of struggles, trials and victories by millions of men and women who have sought freedom. We speak English, not Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Russian or any other language. "In God We Trust" is our national motto. This is not some Christian, right wing, political slogan. We adopted this motto because Christian men and women, on Christian principles, founded this nation, and this is clearly documented. It is certainly appropriate to display it on the walls of our schools. If God offends you, then I suggest you consider another part of the world as your new home, because God is part of our culture. If Stars and Stripes offend you, or you don't like Uncle Sam, then you should seriously consider a move to another part of this planet. We are happy with our culture and have no desire to change, and we really don't care how you did things where you came from.

This is our country, our land, and our lifestyle. Our First Amendment gives every citizen the right to express his opinion and we allow you every opportunity to do so. But once you are done complaining, whining, and griping about our flag, our pledge, our national motto, or our way of life, I highly encourage you take advantage of one other great American freedom, the right to leave. Amen.


Hazleton**Section:** Letters**Record Number:** 10F7934965B749E8

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Letter 2

Editor,

Standard-Speaker (Hazleton, PA) - Friday, February 17, 2006

Editor,

There has been considerable concern over the influx of Spanish- or Mexican- speaking people in the area and in the country.

People express concern over the Hispanic population not learning English, and their perceived fecundity. Such concerns over groups of immigrants is older than the United States itself.

Consider this excerpt from Benjamin Franklin by Edwin S. Gaustad (available from the Hazleton Public Library):

"A sharp rise in the German immigration in the 1730s created an ethnic bloc in the colony (Pennsylvania) that worried many residents, including Franklin. He grew concerned that the Germans refused to learn English and seemed slow to assimilate into the majority culture. Most German communities created their own schools with both textbooks and instruction in the German Language.

"In a long letter dated May 9, 1753, to his favorite London correspondent, Peter Collinson, Franklin concluded his observations on the Germans in Pennsylvania with uncharacteristic pessimism. If German immigration is not diverted or stifled, he wrote, 'they will soon out number us, that all the advantages we have will not in My opinion be able to preserve our language, and even our Government will become precarious.'"

As a descendent of persons who emigrated from German territory (at that time Germany as such did not exist, it was many small independent principalities) slightly before 1730, I recall from my father's stories that it is true that the Pennsylvania Germans, now referred to as Pennsylvania Dutch, did have their own schools and after the Revolution sometimes employed Hessian deserters from the English Army as school teachers.

There were so many German-speaking soldiers in the Revolutionary Army that Von Steuben was brought over to provide better training and communication.

My grandfather's generation was the last to speak only Pennsylvania Dutch in the home, and my generation was

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the first not to learn to speak Pennsylvania Dutch. So, we Americans should be patient with the Hispanics and their language. We probably will have several Spanish words merged into American English, as have been several words of the many other immigrant groups.

World War II was won by our Army, and others, made up of descendants from all immigrant groups.

Such diversity is the greatest strength of our United States.



Nuremberg

Section: Letters

Record Number: 10FD846FB8828D80

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Letter 3

Editor,

Standard-Speaker (Hazleton, PA) - Friday, June 30, 2006

Editor,

"Recently large demonstrations have taken place across the country protesting the fact that Congress is finally addressing the issue of illegal immigration. Certain people are angry that the U.S. might protect its own borders, might make it harder to sneak into this country and, once here, to stay indefinitely. Let me see if I correctly understand the thinking behind these protests.

Let's say I break into your house. Let's say that when you discover me in your house, you insist that I leave. But I say, "I've made all the beds and washed the dishes and did the laundry and swept the floors; I've done all the things you don't like to do. I'm hard-working and honest (except for when I broke into your house)."

According to the protesters, not only must you let me stay, you must add me to your family's insurance plan and provide other benefits to me and to my family (my husband will do your yard work because he too is hard-working and honest, except for that breaking in part). If you try to call the police or force me out, I will call my friends who will picket your house carrying signs that proclaim my right to be there. It's only fair, after all, because you have a nicer house than I do, and I'm just trying to better myself. I'm hard-working and honest ... um, except for ... well, you know.

And what a deal it is for me! I live in your house, contributing only a fraction of the cost of my keep, and there is nothing you can do about it without being accused of selfishness, prejudice and being anti-housebreaker.

Did I miss anything? Does this sound reasonable to you? If it does, grab a sign and go picket something.

If this sounds insane to you, call your senators and enlighten them because they are stumbling in the darkness right now and really need your help.

[REDACTED]

Hazleton

Section: Letters

Record Number: 1131A22DF3B02D80

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Letter 4

Editor,

Standard-Speaker (Hazleton, PA) - Friday, June 30, 2006

Editor,

The straw has broken the taxpayer's back. I cannot sit quietly and read the ignoramus comments regarding Mayor Barletta's proposed Illegal Immigration Relief Act Ordinance any longer.

I will start by addressing Julio Guridy, a Hispanic Allentown councilman, who stated his opposition of English-only legislation in an article written by Steve Mocarsky, in the Times Leader June 18, 2006 edition. Mr. Guridy stated, "It's very discriminatory and a very dangerous thing to do on their behalf. It's very close-minded of what's going on in the world," Guridy said he encourages immigrants to learn English. "But is discriminating against them the best way to do it?" Guridy asks. He replied, "No, it's idiotic, mean-spirited, hypocritical and absurd."

I took a minute to look up the English meaning of Mr. Guridy's adjectives" idiotic – an offensive term meaning showing a lack of good sense or intelligence; mean spirited – malicious or bad-tempered; hypocritical – falsely claiming high principles; absurd – ridiculous because of being irrational or illogical.

In regards to Mayor Barletta's proposal the only "idiotic" thing is that it can't be effective immediately.

"Mean-spirited:" I've read the open letter, the proposed ordinance, watched all of the televised reports and read all of the material I could find regarding this issue and none of it was mean spirited.

Hypocritical: possibly but only in the sense that it took this long for Hazleton to take action.

Absurd, in my opinion the only illogical and irrational aspect of this proposal is that Mayor Barletta doesn't have 100 percent support from all legal citizens.

I have difficulty understanding why Mayor Barletta's proposal doesn't have total support. Why would any legal citizen want to see their tax dollars or their government funded assistance dollars wasted on illegal immigrants (criminals) or worse yet how can you sit idly by and watch your already high taxes increase as the quality of services decrease because of the large number of non contributing members in our community today.

I am not a racist and in my opinion neither is Mayor Barletta nor are the majority of his supporters. The only thing that keeps flashing "racist" to me is the simple-minded comments being made in opposition to the mayor's ordinance. Only a racist would think that their foreign language should be written, spoken, and understood in America without giving the same value to every language of every person who migrated to the United States such

as Italian, French, German, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Bulgarian, Ukrainian...etc.

I also find it racist or at a minimum hypocritical and absurd (to use Mr. Guridy's words) that a person from another country would feel that they are superior and should be permitted to bypass the rules and regulations of immigration and the millions of people throughout the world who await the legal go ahead to come to America. It shocks me that any legal citizen regardless of origin would support illegal immigration.

The next person I want to address is Jose Lechuga, who came to the United States illegally in 1982, received amnesty in 1986 and now operates a grocery store and restaurant in Hazleton. Mr. Lechuga in a June 19 article By Michael Rubinkam, from The Associated Press, stated the mayor is "confusing illegal people with criminals." Once again this quote sent me to the English dictionary just so I could affirm my belief that "illegal" and "criminal" were synonyms, sure enough they are. In my opinion the only confusion here is clearly on behalf of Mr. Lechuga.

Several of the articles discussing Mayor Barletta's Illegal Immigration Ordinance mention the possibility of civil suits after the ordinance is enacted. What about the rights of our ancestors, my grand and great grandparents who migrated here in the early 1900s, who is protecting their civil rights?

The rights of elderly people who are afraid to leave their homes to walk downtown, to church, to the beauty shop, to the corner store, or for a bite to eat. These people are prisoners in their own homes because their neighborhoods and our city are being infested with non-law abiding immigrants. I can't attest to whether the people I am speaking of are here legally or illegally but I can assure you that the people I'm referring to are not law abiding citizens. I see them jay walking (s l o w l y) across busy city streets taunting drivers, disobeying parking regulations downtown, pulling over and stopping wherever they choose, playing extremely loud music in their vehicles and around public streets, and loitering and littering all over town, not to mention the serious crimes that originally sparked the Mayor's proposal of this ordinance.

The last statement I want to rebut is from Sister Janet Yurkanin of Lawrenceville, N.J. She scolded Mayor Barletta in a letter to the editor in the June 24 edition of the Standard-Speaker for stating the facts in his open letter. The letter stated "Illegal immigration leads to higher crime rates, contributes to overcrowded classrooms and failing schools, subjects our hospitals to fiscal hardship and legal residents to substandard quality of care, and destroys our neighborhoods and diminishes our overall quality of life."

Sister Yurkanin said "Shame on any mayor who would advertise the previously mentioned ailments of their city." She suggested "Perhaps it is Mayor Barletta who needs to leave, not the hard working immigrants." The mayor clearly stated that legal immigrants are more than welcome in Hazleton it is only the illegal immigrants that need to leave, hard working or not. The facts are the facts and anyone who lives in or around the Hazleton Area can easily attest to the truth of the mayor's letter.

Sugar coating the facts would not make the current situation any better. I say "bravo" to Mayor Barletta and all who support this ordinance.



Hazle Township

Section: Letters

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Letter 5

Editor,

Standard-Speaker (Hazleton, PA) - Friday, June 30, 2006

Editor,

I am not racist, bigoted, or ignorant to other races, ethnicities, or the human population as a whole. With that written, I feel compelled to respond to the article I read in the Standard-Speaker on Thursday, June 29 – “Hispanics mobilize against city immigration act.”

I am utterly astonished as to how Mayor Barletta's proposal has become a race issue. Circumstances of why people migrate to the United States should carry no weight on the laws of the land. The issue is with immigrants who come to the U.S. illegally. For those of you who have forgotten what illegal means, allow me to define it: prohibited by law.

Do you realize the moment someone enters the U.S. illegally, that person is breaking the law - a law that is meant to protect the “legal” citizens of this nation. How can any intelligent person argue that fact?

Attempting to make an association between this ordinance and the civil rights movement is absurd. The civil rights movement was about ensuring rights and liberties for “legal” citizens. That time was not only a blemish on the American history, but also a success as to the laws and understanding that subsequently followed.

The tired rhetoric of claiming hate as motivation is not only ludicrous, but also insulting to residents like me. I do not hate illegal immigrants; I just feel they should not be entitled to anything the U.S. has to offer – except maybe a one way ticket out. Ms. Arias claims she has never heard of undocumented people doing business in the Hazleton area.

The amount of sarcasm building up inside me is overwhelming, but I will ask anyway. Do you know why that is, Ms. Arias? It's because they are undocumented.

As for limited resources here to help immigrants learn the English language, that is just comical. We have a hard enough time teaching English to American citizens.

Do you not agree if you were going to relocate to another country legally or illegally, you would at least become familiarized with that country's cultures and customs and learn the language? A little thing we call assimilation.

I ask, what responsibility does the immigrant have in the process of migration? This is the best one, yet. Ms. Arias stated she has never seen a white person planting and harvesting tomatoes. Really? My wife does. My neighbor does. My in-laws do. Shall I go on? Ms. Arias, statements like that scream ignorance and cheapen any positive motives you may have.

As for businesses possibly closing due to this ordinance, I guarantee you that the residents of Hazelton, Pennsylvania, and the United States will make that sacrifice if it means respecting and enforcing the laws of the land.

Mr. Lopez, how can you honestly state that targeting undocumented workers will not help better Hazleton? Would you state the same thing about murderers, drug dealers, rapists, child molesters, etc.?

No matter what law, if you break it, you are a criminal. And working within the justice system to curtail or stop crime will always better a community and society as a whole. That is what Mayor Barletta is trying to do. HALT should join Mayor Barletta not fight him.

In the course of ignorance vs. reality, I am sure we can agree that if the U.S. is not meeting immigrant's expectations, well, I am sure that immigrant's country of origin is still an option? Or maybe Iraq? Or Yemen? I mean...they seem fun. Feel free to join my group if you wish – LAWS – Legal Americans With Sense.



Freeland

Section: Letters

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