

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

DEMOCRACY IN THE AGE OF NEW MEDIA: A REPORT ON THE
MEDIA AND THE IMMIGRATION DEBATE

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ANDERSON COURT REPORTING
706 Duke Street, Suite 100
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone (703) 519-7180 Fax (703) 519-7190

PARTICIPANTS:

Introduction

DARRELL WEST
Vice President and Director of Governance Studies, The
Brookings Institution

Featured Speakers

BANU AKDENIZLI
Index Methodologist, Project for Excellence in
Journalism

MARTIN KAPLAN
Director, Norman Lear Center, USC Annenberg

E.J. DIONNE JR.
Senior Fellow, The Brookings Institution

ROBERTO SURO
Professor, USC Annenberg

Moderator

MARVIN KALB
Edward R. Murrow Professor Emeritus, Harvard
University

Panelists

T. ALEXANDER ALEINIKOFF
Dean, Georgetown University Law Center

STEVEN LIVINGSTON
Professor of Media & Public Affairs, George Washington
University

JAMES CARAFANO
Senior Research Fellow, The Heritage Foundation

TAMARA JACOBY
President, ImmigrationWorks USA

DORIS MEISSNER
Senior Fellow, Migration Policy Institute

ANGELA KELLEY
Director, Immigration Policy Center

AUDREY SINGER
Senior Fellow, The Brookings Institution

MARK KRIKORIAN
Executive Director, Center for Immigration Studies

PETER SKERRY
Nonresident Senior Fellow, The Brookings Institution

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. WEST: Okay, why don't we get started. I'm Darrell West; I'm Vice President and Director of Governance Studies at The Brookings Institution. And I would like to welcome you to a discussion of Democracy in the Age of New Media.

The last decade has been a revolutionary time, in the history of the American media. We've seen the rise of 500 television channels, the emergence of talk radio and the development of the Internet.

Now the advent of this 24-hour news cycle has created a noisy media environment that has complicated our nation's ability to handle a wide range of issues, from health care and the deficit, to religion and politics.

I think it's fair to say that few topics have been more challenging than the debate over immigration. It is a topic that divides many people, and it is one that had been very difficult for reporters and analysts to cover, and for Congress, the President and courts to resolve.

Today we are releasing a report on the media and immigration that helps us understand media coverage, and public opinion regarding immigration.

This project is a partnership between Brookings and the Norman Lear Center at the University of Southern California. It's been a great relationship, I think everybody has enjoyed and benefited from.

I want to point out that, financial support for this project has been provided by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and the Arca Foundation of Washington D.C. And I believe with us today from Carnegie is Geri Mannion. Geri, are you here? We really appreciate Geri's help and advice on this work.

And then also joining us today from the Arca Foundation are the President of that organization, Nancy Bagley, the former Executive Director Donna Edwards, and the current Executive Director Anna Lefer Kuhn. And we're grateful for the support and counsel provided by Arca as well.

Now I would like to introduce Martin Kaplan, the Director of the Norman Lear Center. Marty is a research professor at the USC Annenberg School for communications. He holds the Norman Lear Chair on entertainment, media and society. He's been a Washington journalist, a White House speechwriter, a Deputy Presidential Campaign Manager, a screenwriter, a studio executive and many other things. And so I think all of that gives him great credibility to discuss our topic for today. So, it is my pleasure to turn the podium over to Marty.

(Applause)

MR. KAPLAN: Thank you. This idea began in a conversation between Strobe Talbott at Brookings and Geoff Cowan who was then the Dean of the Annenberg School. And the goal was to ask the question; how do we do democracy, in the age of new media? And the two people who got to carry out the plan were E.J. and myself, in a collaboration.

If you think of the kind of crude triangle of the people who make laws, the elected legislatures

and the policy analysts who work with them as one point of the triangle. Of the -- at -- media as a second, and as a third public opinion and organized interest groups, and elections themselves as a way of expressing public points of view. The question is what happens when media become as Darrell just described new media. When new standards and practices of journalism as well as new distribution outlets for journalism arise. How does that affect the way we deliberate especially on contentious issues?

We came up with a shopping list of a number of contentious issues. They included health, and energy, and entitlement, and immigration. And we were fortunate enough that the first one that got funded was immigration. And Geri Mannion and Arca were our angels, and so we were able to produce the case study that you have today.

This conversation and discussion has two acts. The first act is a presentation and summary by the people who worked on the materials. They are up

here, and the second act is a discussion of their work that includes them, but also includes other voices.

I'm going to introduce the people who are up here with me, who wrote the sections of today's piece. Let me introduce them in terms of the data that they worked from. This is an empirical study. And there are three sets of data that were worked from.

The first was the work of the project on Excellence in Journalism, thanks to Tom Rosenstiel. They do a news index, which looks at a broad range of outlets, and does content analysis. And we are fortunate enough to have an index methodologist from the Project for Excellence in Journalism, who has done a detailed analysis on immigration, focused on the year 2007, a key year in the immigration debate. And, she has a Doctorate from Temple University. Please welcome Banu Akdenizli.

A second set of data is public opinion research, and there we are able to draw on, thanks to Andy Kohut and others at the Pew Research Center, data that the Pew Research Center and the Pew Hispanic

Center and also Gallup data, and new data that was generated by Pew for the purposes of this. Public opinion data, stretching from 2001 to 2007, and the person who did that analysis of the data is an old friend, who has at least three hats at Georgetown, at Brookings and is a Syndicated Columnist at the Washington Post.

If you look at the titles of his books, you have a kind of a tour of American public life in the past couple of decades. Ranging from *Why Americans Hate Politics* to *They Only Look Dead: Why Progressives Will Dominate the Next Political Era*, please welcome E.J. Dionne.

The third set of data was an original set of analysis, which was commissioned by the analysts and leader -- lead report writer at the USC Annenberg School. They looked at data, news content from 1980 to 2007, and the outlets they analyzed in that large period, New York Times, USA Today, four regional papers, the AP, other wire services, three broadcast networks, NPR, five political blogs, and not only was

that analyzed, but so also was the work that Banu and E.J. did.

And the person who led that data collection at Annenberg, and who analyzed them all, and wrote the lead report in the document you have today, is someone who certainly knows journalism, given his life at the Chicago Sun Times, The Chicago Tribune, Time Magazine, The New York Times, and The Washington Post. He was the founding Director of the Pew Hispanic Center, and is now a professor at the USC Annenberg School for Communication. Please welcome Roberto Suro.

So, I'm going to ask Roberto a question, and he's going to lead off the conversation. And that is, what has the coverage of the immigration debate been, and how has that coverage actually affected the deliberation on immigration policy?

MR. SURO: Thank you, and that's a simple question, which you can either -- where I'll try and summarize the answer very quickly.

It -- I mean to give you the bottom line on the second question. My conclusion is that the media

coverage over a long period of time has actually made it more difficult to reach -- to produce policy on immigration. Simply to make the wheels of government turn, and produce some kind of resolution.

Immigration policy turns out -- turned out to be a really superb subject for this kind of a case study, for a variety of reasons. One, that there've been successive rounds of policy making or attempted policy making over the course of three decades, and the terms of those debates haven't changed very much. Having covered immigration since 1974, and having committed all of the sins described to the media in this report. It's remarkable how repetitious the subject, especially in terms of policymaking, as we're talking -- all talking about the same stuff. So those of us, who follow it continuously, have these discussions now for a long, long time.

Which actually made it easy to do a case study, because the terms of the debate haven't changed that much and the actual yield and policymaking has progressively declined.

During the course of that time, we've had all the changes in the media landscape that we've talked about, and also a great change in the immigrant population, due to its growth and change. And the end result has been almost universal dissatisfaction with the state of policy. It's one of these areas in which the one point of absolute agreement -- people from virtually every point of the spectrum, is that the status quo is unsatisfactory.

And so my task was to try to understand how the media contributed to that outcome. And it's not -- we're not making the claim that it was a decisive influence, or -- but it certainly played a role. And I think that the findings sort of come in a couple of broad categories, and looking at the progression of time and how the change in the media has affected this interaction of policy. There are several tendencies that are evident, going back a long time, but relate to the basic epistemological framework, which drives a lot of American journalism. That's really, really deeply ingrained habits of the way we, and I still

call -- think of myself as a journalist, look at the world and describe it to people.

As the media landscape has changed, some of those tendencies have become exaggerated, in a way that's particularly noticeable, in the coverage of immigration.

And finally, in this last round of policymaking, we saw I think a very important demonstration of the new phenomenon, in the relationship of media, media writ large, and policymaking. That reflects an idea that Henry Jenkins, the Media Scholar at MIT has called convergence. And I'll talk about each of those separately, in convergence in a way that had a profound impact on the policymaking.

In the tendencies, these basic tendencies that are evident throughout all of the coverage and they've become exaggerated in recent years. One is very episodic attention to immigration. The report shows how the volume of coverage rises and falls, quite dramatically over the years.

In describing a phenomenon that has been, somewhat more -- that is much more steady and continuous. And this has -- this kind of coverage, has been shown to create a mindset in the public that reacts to sudden surges of coverage, associating the subject with crisis, controversy, with something dramatic happening, when the underlying phenomenon has been really quite uneventful. The arrival of millions of people here, mostly through legal channels, mostly going about their business, and the overall change has been gradual, while the coverage has been very episodic, very dramatic, and driven by breaking news events.

Immigration is classically the story that one great newspaper editor called an oozer. And it oozes it doesn't break. It happens slowly over time, and these are stories that American journalists have a great deal of trouble describing.

The other important tendency is a pension to focus on acts of illegality, something, which is an age-old tendency in journalism. It's not just that the

man biting the dog is news, and visa versa. If either the man or the dog is a felon, particularly if the dog is a felon, it's a much better story.

And in this case the focus in a phenomenon event for it's most -- for the most part over time, has been one of legal entry, the coverage has focused rather relentlessly on acts of illegality, by immigrants or the government efforts to control illegality. And this skews the picture of the larger phenomenon in important ways, I believe.

And finally, there has been a tendency to focus on immigrants, and sometimes government actors, and advocates as the major protagonists in this drama, to the exclusion of other important actors. And this has decontextualized the whole story of immigration, which is intimately related to the way our economy is developed, to the demography of the country, to a whole series of other externalities that have gotten lost. All of these tendencies have become exaggerated in the recent period that has transformed the media, through the arrival of cable television, the Internet,

talk radio, and other developments have exaggerated the episodic nature of coverage, the tendency to flood the zone, and then abandon a story, the focus on illegality, very dramatic elements of a story, and the lack of contextual coverage.

All of these things kind of came together in 2006. As I said and this -- sort of borrowing this idea from Henry Jenkins, of convergence, where you had classic mainstream media, big corporation media, grassroots types of media, both playing off the story in two episodes. The immigrant marches on one side in 2006, and then a very substantial backlash against the Senate bill in 2007, from the other side of the debate. Where you saw the public using a lot of different types of media. Talk radio, ethnic radio, big corporate media, grassroots communications, advocacy groups, mixed into this picture. Creating a kind of broad response to a public policy activity that then feeds back on Washington, in a very powerful way. And that if it's a -- becomes a set piece of

policymaking will have very substantial implications for the future. Thank you.

(Applause)

SPEAKER: 2007 of course was the year that the comprehensive immigration reform grand bargain died, which makes it an ideal study for media analysis. Banu looked at and her colleagues looked at five media sectors; Cable talk, radio talk, newspapers, radio, and network TV emerging from 48 outlets, and analyzing 70,737 stories. What did you find?

MS.AKDENIZLI: Thank you, yes at PEJ we do analyze 48 outlets daily, from five media sectors, and this gives us about 1300 stories per week. And when you look at that, that actually equals the size of a full academic study every week. And for the year 2007, our universe was more than 70,000 stories, and the most important thing that we found on the topic of immigration, was that American media did not cover immigration as a topic continuously.

Media's tendency to flood the zone with instant coverage, and then quickly drop the subject was evident in immigration as well. We see over the months that a sudden surge came in May and June, in which the numbers rose dramatically, compared to the rest of the year. And when we looked closely we saw that coincided with the May 17th announcement of the compromised bill among the Senate and the White House, and its defeat on June 28th.

It was the top story over all media sectors at the same time. Meaning it was the top story in cable, network, radio, online, and in newspapers. More dramatically for the period of May 17th to June 28th, we see talk radio hosts and cable TV talk hosts had the highest amount of coverage. It was 31 percent for the cable -- for the radio talkers, and 19 percent for the cable TV talk hosts.

This is actually magnified in significance when you take talk as a group out of the overall index numbers. While it was number one with talk, when we

take that out of the universe, immigration drops to the third biggest story for May 17th to June 28th.

Among all of the cable talkers, the one who was clearly devoted to the cause of immigration we saw was CNN's Lou Dobbs, and we sort of expected that. But throughout the whole year, immigration was its top story at 22 percent; we see that during that time, he devoted 44 percent almost of the entire noose hole to the immigration bill coverage.

On Fox, we saw Bill O'Reilly more than any other of his counterparts. MSNBC really didn't do much, because for them, just as the rest of the year, the Iraq War and the Presidential Campaign was much more of an agenda.

Outside of this period for the -- in terms of talking generally for cable, in the year 2007, we see that during the nighttime, policy and legislation discussion in regards to immigration. But during the day we see more stories on immigrant crime, rally and protests. Examples: live May Day rallies from Chicago and Los Angeles. ICE Raids, illegal border crossing

stories, where some of the -- you know are some of the typical examples of the day fare.

And for talk radio, we see most significantly that immigration as an issue is on the agenda -- is on the agenda more for conservative talk radio hosts, than it is for the liberals. When we look at the specific time from May -- from between May and June for the immigration legislation bill in the Senate, we see that 31 percent of the conservative talk radio hosts were covering this issue, while the liberals were only devoting three percent of their time. And when you look at it, even for the rest of the year, for example, Randi Rhodes didn't devote any time to the immigration topic in the period -- in the airtime that we studied.

Of all the media sectors -- you know besides talk radio and cable talk, we see that newspapers had a special role. While immigration as a topic was consistently present, it did increase in May and June as much as the others, but here we see it had -- there

was an effort to track immigration as a topic that ebbed and flowed throughout the year.

And the emphasis in our findings for print or actually more is a little bit more enlarged, because at PEJ we only consider the first -- the front page of every newspaper that we analyzed. So the prominence is there -- I mean obviously it's going to be included in the study if it's on the front page, the prominence there is elevated.

And we saw for national, regional and local newspapers that the newspapers would actually devote staff to this issue, most all of the stories that were written, were written by local internal staff.

And actually what I wanted to -- well the one thing is that network and online did not give a lot of prominence to immigration even during the May 17th-June 28th period. But I thought what was interesting, and we don't have in the report, was what I wanted to give you some updated numbers on immigration for the year 2008. And so I looked into January 1st to August 31st, and we see that immigration

unfortunately has dropped to the seventh big story, from its fourth big story slot in 2007. There's only one percent of coverage. The year has been dominated so far by the Presidential campaign. Even for talk radio hosts we see that the campaign is at 61 percent, and immigration unfortunately is at 0.3 percent, and it's at the 16th place for conservative talk radio hosts, who were so you know -- who you know -- when immigration was so much on their agenda in 2007, in 2008 we don't see that, thank you.

(Applause)

MR. KALB: Thanks Banu, my favorite data point from that study is that on MSNBC immigration was not in the top ten stories for the evening programs, but during the daytime it was fourth, just behind Anna Nicole Smith.

Next, we're going to look at the analysis of public opinion that E.J. did, and the challenge is to look at the relationship between what Americans think about immigration, and how that correlates to the particular news media that those people consume. E.J.?

MR. DIONNE: Thank you very much Marty, and I am so glad Roberto, my old friend still thinks of himself as a journalist. If you are a journalist or a Red Sox fan, or for many of us a Catholic, those things stay with you always. So, bless you, and you know -- I really enjoyed marinating myself in these numbers. Somebody wrote a book about polling, called *Lies, Damn Lies and Statistics* and what I concluded is that there's such a profound ambivalence in the public on this issue, that you can prove almost anything you want with immigration polling.

There is either no majority or there are multiple majorities, and I think this ambivalence explains why it is so difficult to reach any sort of consensus, if the -- it's to paraphrase what Barney Franks said, if the politicians are no great shakes, we citizens are no great shakes either. We are very confused, and in some cases sensibly confused about this issue, and about where we should stand.

Let me just give you an example of two majorities. This is from a study by Sam Greenberg by

Greenberg Quinlan Rosner. The restrictionists in the room will be glad to know that 52 percent of Americans in this survey wanted to deport all illegal immigrants. However, 64 percent in the same survey wanted to allow illegal immigrants who pay a fine and learn English to be eligible to apply for citizenship. This is in the same survey.

And to give you from a similar -- from the same survey, just to give you a sense of how divided people are in the services they want to give, 74 percent favored public schools from kindergarten through high school for the children of illegal immigrants who are American citizens. But only 50 percent favored public schools K through high school, for children who are here illegally, and only 35 percent wanted to send them to college at instate tuition rates. Yes, 64 percent favored letting illegal immigrants use hospitals and emergency rooms, but only 25 percent wanted to give them Medicaid. And say a prayer for Hillary Clinton, only 31 percent approve of drivers license's for illegal immigrants.

That gives you a sense of this profound ambivalence, and I think this ambivalence really does make it difficult for policymakers to solve this problem. I do want to thank Andy Kohut and Scott Keeter of Pew, and also Frank Newport and Maura Strausberg of Gallup, who made available enormous amounts of data to us, and thanks to Dominique Melissinos for helping me go through all this.

In the Pew surveys we wanted to look at the talk radio effect, and the Lou Dobbs effect. And Banu's study I really -- as well as Roberto's, I really urge you to spend time with it, because I think when you look at that period of immigration, it's quite clear, that while conservative and restrictionist voices were very mobilized outside of the Latino community, which was very mobilized. The liberal voices were not mobilized on this issue at that time.

The most fascinating thing about our study of Dobbs and talk radio is that they didn't affect everybody. If you simply looked at the top line, and

we used a question about favoring a path to citizenship, or amnesty. Andy split a sample to ask both ways, and we combined the results. There was no difference between those who regularly relied on talk radio for information, and those who didn't. However, among conservative Republicans, there was an enormous difference. Among Conservative Republican talk radio listeners, 54 percent opposed a path to citizenship. Among Conservative Republicans who didn't listen to talk radio, 62 percent favored a path to citizenship, a real, clear difference.

Now there is a methodological problem about the chicken and the egg, or the people who listen to talk radio are more inclined that way or not. But somehow there is a talk radio affect.

We found the same thing that if you look at the public as a whole, there is no difference between Lou Dobbs viewers, and non-Lou Dobbs viewers. However, Lou Dobbs had his main impact on conservative, and moderate Democrats. Among conservative and moderate Democrats, 52 percent of Lou Dobbs' listeners oppose a

path to citizenship, among conservative and moderate Democrats who didn't rely on Dobbs for information, 59 percent favored; less dramatic than the split among Conservatives, but a very definable difference.

And if you were on the restrictionists side of this debate, and if you were going to plan a division of labor, the two groups you would most want to influence, are Conservative Republicans, and Moderate to Conservative Democrats, because they were the key swing votes in the immigration debate. And so I think that is very -- a very, very important finding.

I also argue and I may get into this a little later in the questions, that there is a very big difference between how this issue plays nationwide, and how it plays district by district, because the Latino population is not distributed equally among congressional districts. So again, swing districts tend to have a lower Latino population. And so it plays differently at the State and the district level.

And so the final point is simply that this is an environment where Americans are genuinely ambivalent, and often I say intelligently ambivalent. They're torn about injustice that they see in having illegal immigrants here, and failures of government. They see that as something to oppose. But majorities also want to solve this problem, and they also look at our immigration tradition as a positive thing for the country. In this ambivalent environment a lot of forces play a big role, but the media surely play an extremely important role, and so my part of the study shows why you've got to read all that Roberto and Banu wrote in the front of the study. Thank you.

(Applause)

MR. KALB: So I get to ask one question of each of the authors, about something that interested me in their report, just to expand on it. And I'll start with you Roberto, you talked about the focus on illegal immigration that there -- immigration itself is a much larger picture and employers and consumers are part of that. Would you expand on that?

MR. SURO: Yes, I think in -- if you're trying to portray the whole of this phenomenon, you -- it needs to be contextualized to understand the -- what the economic forces are that attract people here. The demographic forces that have created that demand, rather than seeing if immigrations portrayed as an act committed by immigrants solely, and detach from all the other elements of social and economic elements that produce it.

A number of things happen, one in policy terms, people will then tend to think if you act on the immigrants, you can solve the problem without looking at the much larger panoply of social actors that bring about the immigration you're trying to control, especially the employers. So the notion is if we can stop them from coming in, we control the phenomenon, because you have focused simply on them, and this coverage is focused very highly on the border in particular.

And the second is, if over time you tell the story over and over again, even in positive terms, of

the struggling immigrant who has come here to better their life, and crosses the desert, and comes here, to find a job, and does well, raises a family, all that stuff achieves the American Dream. The story told thousands and thousands of times over the last 30 years. It -- if you create that protagonism that it's this person, doing this quite independently to us, then perceptions of immigration turn negative. And the tendency is to see the immigrants as the villains, and the population as victims. When in fact we as a society played a very substantial role in creating this situation. We are the primary actors here, in creating the immigrant situation, whether you like it or not. You have to take responsibility for it, and the media has made it very easy for the American public to think it has no responsibility in this situation.

MR. KALB: The role of Spanish talk radio in mobilizing a national demonstration, is something discussed in papers. But in addition there's an interesting analysis in the paper that Banu wrote,

which describes the differences and similarities between Spanish language broadcast news, and newspapers, and English language. Can you describe that?

MS. AKDENIZLI: Sure.

MR. KALB: And it's Banu, not Bonu.

MS. AKDENIZLI: Sure, as a supplement to all of this study - you know all of this -these numbers, there's also a little snapshot study that was done by one of our colleagues at PEJ, and she looked into network -- English language network news, ABC, NBC, CBS, and she considered American newspapers, The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, and The Washington Post. And for Spanish language media, she looked into xxxphonetic spelling L'Dialdio, (??) L'Opinion, and Nuevo Herald, and for broadcast, she was looking into Telemundo and Univision.

From June 25th to 29th, during that week, we saw that English language network news, compared to Spanish language media, gave significantly less coverage to the immigration bill. They had only eight

stories, which is actually not that atypical, because for the rest of the year, immigration was not one of their top stories, both in morning or evening network news. For Telemundo and Univision, we see 18 stories compared to the eight of -- in the English language media.

When we look at newspapers, we see that the English -- English language media actually covered more. They had 37 stories, compared to the 22. But here the difference is that only 14 of those English language stories were on the front page. Compared to the Spanish ones, 15 were on the front page. So again, there's a difference in prominence.

And in a very qualitative, sort of general assessment that was done, we saw that English language media, was more focused on the politics of the bill, the winners, and the losers, and the Senate, while the Spanish media tended to focus more on the immigrants themselves, the ramifications of the bill on the ethnic community, and even in the reporting we saw that especially for broadcast that the reporters

themselves, would announce their feelings and their own opinions regarding the bill.

MR. KALB: E.J., you tantalized us with a brief mention of the way in which this issue plays out in Congressional districts, and in Senate races. Can you expand on that?

MR. DIONNE: Yes, and thank you. I'm just going to stay here, so the folks on the end don't mind. Are these mics on? Push the button, okay.

The -- it's another way to ask the same question though is not only about Senate race, but also why isn't it a bigger issue right now in the Presidential race. And I think that what I did, I looked at on the one hand, Congressional Districts that were swing districts, I defined -- you can define those in a lot of ways. I looked at from the 2006 results, the 34 most competitive Democratic House Seats, the ones that are likely to be very contested this year. In those 44 seats, there are only four in which the Hispanic population is more than 18 percent. In 19 of them, the Hispanic population is less than

three percent, and in the bulk of them it's on the low end rather than the high end.

(Recess)

MR. KALB: The usual kind of panel these days, you know, when you have a rambunctious media is to have two people. One representing the far right, the other representing the far left and the media--and the moderator in the middle being, you know, sent there from God to look after this madness.

But here, we have 12 panelists, and T. Alexander Aleinikoff has been the Dean of the Georgetown University Law Center and Executive Vice President of the Georgetown University since July 2004. Welcome.

James Carafano is the Assistant Director of the Heritage Foundation's Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute for International Studies and your Senior Research Fellow for Defense and Homeland Security Issues.

Tamar Jacoby is President and CEO of ImmigrationWorks USA, a national federation of local coalitions working to advance immigration reform.

Angela Kelly--where is she--yes, there she is--is Director of the Immigration Policy Center, IPC, at the American Immigration Law Foundation.

Mark Krikorian, to the right, is Executive Director of the Center for Immigration Studies, which is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization here.

And Steve Livingston is Professor of Media and Public Affairs and International Affairs at the George Washington University.

What I would like to do to get us started is to ask you all to give me in one minute, less if you can, in answer to a rather simple question, since we're focusing on the impact of the media on immigration legislation.

Please provide me with a single illustration--focus on a single vote, if you have to, on a single senator or congressman, issue, a vote in a committee, how did the media literally affect that vote or that Senator?

In other words, be as specific as you possibly can. Start with Mark.

MR. KRIKORIAN: Everybody else gets to think

about the answer. This is why I wanted the question.

MR. KALB: That always happens. Okay.

MR. KRIKORIAN: This is why I wanted the question beforehand. But that's a good question. I don't know. Maybe--it's hard to say honestly, but the one thing that I guess comes to mind is the Senators, the Republican Senators who were on the fence, the two Georgia Senators and several others, were inclined to go along with what their business constituents wanted them to do, which is vote for the package.

And I think those, the two Georgia Senators, got flipped by bloggers, by the talk show hosts and the outrage they had stirred up among their--

MR. KALB: Mark, do you know that for a fact or is that your supposition?

MR. KRIKORIAN: --that's my supposition. I mean, they haven't told me that.

MR. KALB: Okay. Okay. All right.

MR. KRIKORIAN: But that's my sense. I mean, I'm not sure anybody would disagree, but I'd love to hear that.

MR. KALB: No, no. That's fine. Thank you. Steve?

MR. LIVINGSTON: Thanks, Marvin. You know, when you look at E.J.'s data, one of the things that stands out to me, and E.J. I'm sure will be happy to correct me if my impression is wrong, but there was a shift in how conservative Americans came to understand immigration right after 2001.

And I think what happened there is that in some views, some conservatives' immigration became-- it's a cumbersome word, but it became securitized. It was reframed away from an issue of what do we do about the immigrants to what we do about the potential terrorists that are knocking at our door and coming in and all of that.

So as cliché as it may be today, I would say that the one event that perhaps changed the framing of debate was 9/11 and how it came to be reunderstood immigration within the context of the larger narrative about terrorism after 9/11.

MR. KALB: Alex?

MR. ALEINIKOFF: I don't have an answer as to a particular vote that was affected by the media, because I'm at least skeptical of the causation claim here, and this is something the social scientists

always know that correlations are not causation.

So, E.J. mentioned the chicken and egg question. It's not clear whether people who are of a certain mind tune in to talk radio and find their views reinforced, or whether an unsuspecting person just happens to turn the dial to Rush Limbaugh, and, my God, their view is changed because they happen to land there.

We can all ask ourselves in our mind when we go to our computers and go to blogs, do you go to the Drudge Report or do you go to Huffington Post? And that's--maybe you go to both, but there's a selection process here that makes me skeptical of the social science claim.

Let me say one other thing, if I can. Do I have another 30 seconds more or am I out of time?

MR. KALB: Go ahead.

MR. ALEINIKOFF: I think the--a plausible explanation for the defeat of the legislation is not so much the media's role here, but the fact that you can't beat something with nothing.

And there was a coherent story on the right here, whether caused by the media or not, of amnesty

being a bad thing.

The problem for the legislation, from my mind, is that there was no countervailing narrative on the left. There was no narrative in favor of the legislation except that it was a patchwork of measures that had been put together as a grand bargain. And that's not a legislative strategy.

The 1986 legislation actually had a powerful narrative that got it through, which we can talk about later. But there was no compelling narrative here except we've got all the people on the boat together, and we've got enough votes may be to get it through.

MR. KALB: Doris?

MS. MEISSNER: I can--okay. I actually do know of a situation in which a vote was directly connected to what members were hearing based on I think the media, but I'm not sure that that really is essential. I mean, I happen to have been in a meeting with a senator who was a centrist Democrat who every expectation would be that he would have voted for it. But, you know, he just told the group that there was just too much noise. There was just too much in the e-mail, too much talk radio, too many--too much

punishment coming at him, and he just couldn't do it.

But I think much more broadly that what Alex says is what I would agree with, that this was a situation where there was a very simple one-line negative--no amnesty.

And there was no countervailing message on the other side, because the other side was much more ambivalent. Now is that the media's fault? That's obviously what the media covers. It does go the point that Roberto says about the difficulty of covering complexity as compared to covering, you know, a straight forward one sentence. I think that really is the dilemma.

MR. KALB: Which would be true no matter what the subject would be?

MS. MEISSNER: Precisely.

MR. KALB: Yeah.

MS. MEISSNER: And you can even go further than that just to say that the major issues I think we could all agree that face us as a country at this point fall into the category of complicated issues that are nuanced, that have lots of different parts, and how do we get public understanding of them.

MR. KALB: And really do not play to the media's strength. It is--there are parts of the media which can do very well with complexity. But most of it does not deal with complexity. Most of it these days unfortunately and that's been explained is done through headline services of one sort or another. Angela, you were nodding.

MS. KELLY: Yeah. I have just two observations building off of what Doris--what Doris mentioned.

I think that this issue, because it's so complex, what we're seeing is it--the reporting on it very much suffers because there's a shrinking pool of reporters with expertise. If those reporters are covering the story, they get it right. They are very smart about following the details and the nuance and reporting it fairly.

If you've got a new reporter or a reporter who's covering many more beats now because there have been layoffs in the industry, then they don't get it right. And they just go for the first press release that they get, which often the restrictionist forces are good at moving lots of press releases into their

offices.

The second observation is that sort of like--it's sort of like in the election. There's, like, this arugula versus Budweiser dynamic, where you've got, you know, editorial boards and sort of the elite media that gets the issue and that tends to be more pro-immigrant quite frankly, but then you've got like the talk radio and talk TV that isn't that way and that is more about, quite frankly, perpetuating myths.

And so I think you've got a lot of policymakers that are looking at a Wall Street Journal editorial, a New York Times editorial, and they want to pay attention to that, but, you know, because of the talk radio, because of the cable TV, they're just getting all these calls, and that's quite frankly they're voting with their--you know, what they perceive to be their constituents.

MR. KALB: What they perceive to be their constituents. Tamar?

MS. JACOBY: Yeah. Obviously, Mark (inaudible) and I don't agree on much. But the same two Senators actually leap to my mind--Senators Isaacson and Chambliss, peeling off from the

coalition.

But at the same time, I recalled two other very conservative senators who were not peeled off-- Senator Lott and Senator Kyle.

And to me, this points to my general hesitation to attribute too much of this to the media. I mean, I'm not so sure American voters and viewers are as gullible and hypnotizable as we may be suggesting.

And that's both bad and good news if you want reform, because I think contrary to some of the assumption in the report, I think Americans are generally concerned about immigration.

And I think it doesn't--we should do them justice of addressing their concerns and thinking about them. On the other hand, I think there's a limited influence of media, and the two numbers that really struck me the most in the report were that 53 and 54 percent of Lou Dobbs viewers and conservatives who listen to talk radio are still for amnesty. I mean, that's pretty remarkable.

MR. KALB: Fascinating.

MS. JACOBY: So, you know, who does Lou

Dobbs represent. Lou Dobbs talks. Some people listen. But does he really represent a significant number of people? I'm not so sure, and this report really undercuts the sense that he does represent a lot of people.

MR. CARAFANO: Advertisers.

MR. KALB: James, are you a watcher? Excuse me.

MR. CARAFANO: First of all, for the record, I'd like to say that I like both arugula and Budweiser.

I also just wanted to get from the record that I agree with Tamar and Alex. I mean, there's a lot of the data in the report that I really like, but I think I actually totally disagree with the premise that the media played a negative role in the debate.

I think the media just reflected society, and actually I think I might craft an argument that the media actually played a positive role in the debate.

But since you're in charge and I'm an ex-military guy, I follow orders so I'll give you one example. And it's the example of there was a

commercial, at the height of the debate, there was a commercial that ran on talk radio that basically was-- well, for the--if you add up all the benefits we're going to give these 13 million people by legalizing them, we could buy every illegal immigrant a Mustang.

And that commercial generated an enormous amount of e-mails and phone calls into offices, and it made--it did make a real problem for a segment in the Congress, particularly on the conservative side, who actually may have liked many components of the immigration reform bill, but also kind of saw themselves as fiscal conservatives.

And then, when they were faced with then criticism of, you know, if you're a fiscal conservative, how can you be signing up for this. They didn't have a real good answer for that, and that data was kind of sprung on them in the 11th hour of debate and I think it created a real problem for them.

MR. KALB: E.J., a brief intro.

MR. DIONNE: Yeah. The--in a way, my answer to your question is Barack Obama as representative of a lot of liberals that on a key vote, he wanted to put sort of restrictions on the guest worker program,

because he, like many liberals, preferred to have people move towards citizenship and full rights, if you were going to do that.

And I think that showed the problem with this bill, which does get to the media, that opponents of the bill really hated it, and supporters barely liked it. And that's not a good balance, because a lot of the liberals who were naturally in favor of immigration were very uneasy because they worried about worker rights with some of the guest worker provisions.

And I think that refracted back in the media that Banu's study showing that the conservative media were mobilized. The liberal media weren't mobilized, because there was ambivalence about the product itself.

And so, I think there's a back and forth between media and--the media and the politics.

MR. KALB: And it's also not clear, at least to me, whether you can identify the left in the media as easily as you can identify the right. Audrey, Peter; Audrey first.

MS. SINGER: Well, I think this discussion

about ambivalence and complexity and the role of the media in sorting it out for people is important, because we did see through E.J.'s part that people are--part of the report--people are upset; are willing to go along with something other than what happened in the last round.

But Roberto's part of the report points out that the public is more upset with the government and officials rather than the immigrants themselves.

And I think part of the problem is that immigration is presented as this concept that is in and of itself many dimensional. People hear the word or they're asked the question, are you concerned with immigration? Do you think, you know, we need to do something with immigration? They have an idea of what that means. It could be economic. It could be cultural. It could be something on their block. It could be something national. And it's not clear what people are saying when they say they are concerned with immigration.

So there's a vagueness there, and I think the media has played a role in providing something on

the other side of the word, you know, what immigration equals.

Whether it means illegality, whether it means diversity, whether it means anything in between those two things is up to the individual and the public at large.

MR. KALB: Peter, please.

MR. SKERRY: Yes. Thank you. I guess I wanted to weigh in a bit on the side of skepticism about the--to some extent, about the influence of the media in this debate.

At least, while I thought these papers were really good and very careful in terms of making limited claims about the influence of the media, I do worry that there's a--there might be a tendency here or once they're beyond here in response to these that--of a tendency to kind of criticize, if not exactly kill, the messenger, because you don't like the message.

And there's several sort of underlying social, political realities that I think it's worth invoking at this point. There is a substantial class bias in terms of who benefits and who doesn't benefit

from immigration today.

One of the most consistent findings of economists is that while immigration doesn't tend to change the total GDP very much, if at all, it does have an enormous distributional effect.

There are clear, or at least there are winners and losers. It's not--maybe it's not clear winners and losers, but there are winners and losers here.

And, at the same time, there's definitely been a tendency for elites in American society, as in other Western societies, to not--to try to keep immigration off the agenda.

Over the longer view of this, over the last 25 years, it's been a while coming before we get here in Washington really focusing on this issue.

And it seems to me that all adds up to a scenario whereby, like it or not, there was a substantial vacuum in the public's fear whereby entrepreneurs like a Lou Dobbs filled it. And I think that's an important aspect of this that needs to be acknowledged.

And I'd also just point out, too, in terms

of a skepticism about the influence of the media here, that when Roberto, in his fine paper, which I really enjoyed, talks about employers being left out of the narrative, well, clearly they have been, but let's face it, the political actors also had good reasons to leave the employers out of the narrative. They're the more powerful elements in the story.

The immigrants are the weakest elements, not well situated to fight back at all, but employers clearly are. It's no accident that they're left out of the narrative. It's not the media's doing. It's the political system's doing.

So I'll leave it at that.

MR. KALB: Okay. Mark, hang on just one second. I want Roberto to come in and then we'll go to you.

MR. KRIKORIAN: Just very briefly on the question of causality. Peter is right. The claims of causality are quite limited and very much recognize there were a great many factors that determine the course of immigration policy.

But I think it's important to note, particularly in terms of partisan media, both on cable

talk and radio, it's not a matter of persuading people to change their views.

It's a matter of mobilizing people of a certain point to say this issue is important, to give them talking points, and to provoke reaction.

That's what we saw very effectively and very powerfully, particularly in 2007, when conservative talk radio mobilized in a very specific period of time, working in loose conjunction with a variety of advocacy groups, to define the bill in certain terms as amnesty and to mobilize people of like views to take action.

So, it's not a matter of persuasion, but of mobilization.

Meanwhile, the rest of the media has conditioned a lot of the public to be skeptical of government whenever it tries to undertake something large and complex, particularly on this subject.

It's an uphill struggle in dealing with public opinion to convince them to embrace a large government enterprise that touches on many aspects of life and the economy.

The Senate strategy, as created by Ted

Kennedy and enunciated very specifically, was to move the bill so quickly, in a week--I haven't heard that very recently--you've got to do it in a week--before you had an opportunity for forces to define and mobilize on it.

And it was defeated in particular because of delays in the process of legislating, and opportunities to mobilize opposition that those delays provided.

MR. KALB: And it's interesting, too. You raised the issue of advocacy and journalism, and Lou Dobbs calls himself an advocacy journalist. And it really cuts to the heart of what journalism is supposed to be doing in this country, whether it's supposed to be in there to advocate a particular line or to just lay out the evidence as best it could.

And I think we are at a point where enough advocacy now appears to blot out that central function of good journalism. Mark? And Andrew?

MR. KRIKORIAN: Thank you. I just--I had a couple of points. I wanted to agree partly with Peter and partly with Roberto. When Roberto says that the new media exacerbated some of the tendencies of the

way the old media covered the issue, you know, the focus on the illegality, the ebb and flow of coverage, I think that's correct, and, if I could add parenthetically, I'm waiting for another surge in coverage, because I have a book I'm trying to sell, and it's not going to anyway when the newspapers aren't talking about it.

But the New Case Against Immigration, from Sentinel, on Amazon now.

(Laughter)

MR. KRIKORIAN: My publisher will thank me. But I would challenge most of the people's dissent here that the media, the new media in particular, did not have that much of an effect. I think it did have an effect, although I think it's different. I mean, I guess I'm agreeing with what Roberto said to some degree.

The fact is what the new media did is take the issue, the debate over the issue, out of the hands of the elites, which is exclusively where it was. It wasn't just that it allowed mobilization by the opponents.

It actually permitted opponents to hear the

views that they weren't hearing, and hear essentially their own views. It was a kind of a populist uprising that new media made possible, because this is one of those elite, public issues that's much bigger split than on most other issues.

And I would also challenge the basic premise that the way this is covered has stymied policymaking, resulted in stalemate. I would actually submit that precisely because of the new media, we didn't have no policy. We had a different policy.

Stopping the--what the advocates succeeded in getting reporters to call comprehensive immigration reform was actually a success that was a policy, and the resulting, the resulting policy is an executive branch policy of stepped up enforcement--more worksite enforcement, expanded use of verification, et cetera, et cetera. That is a policy, and that is what the new media actually made possible.

So, policymaking worked. It's just that the policy the elite preferred wasn't successful.

MR. KALB: Mark, thank you very much. I'm going to go to three raised hands on this side, and then go back to Angela. Over here. Yes, Steve,

you're first.

MR. LIVINGSTON: I find myself in an unusual position, because I think I'm--I want to defend the media, and this is from somebody who just published a book called "When the Press Fails," University of Chicago Press.

(Laughter)

MR. LIVINGSTON: Let's talk about this idea that Lou Dobbs represents a part of this new media landscape, and that he's doing something called advocacy journalism, and that he panders to people's fears and anxieties. But is that new or are we looking at old wine in new bottles?

I'm certainly not a historian, but I do recall reading about Father Coughlin in the 1930's using a new media then, radio, to do similar sorts of things.

So, I guess one of the places that I would like to begin is wonder if despite the enormous amount of work that must have gone into analyzing 1,300 stories a week--I do that in a year maybe--a total of almost 80,000 stories--I wonder if the 1980 bookend is not giving us the historical perspective to see the

current debate accurately or at least fully.

That would be the first thing. So, I guess here my question is, is this moment in history the product of new media or is it a manifestation of an old story. If it's a manifestation of an old story, what's ringing in my ears are some of the words that we've been listening to--confusion, ambivalence.

Hasn't America--haven't we historically looked to immigration ambivalently? On the one hand, we are an immigrant society. On the other hand, we've had a series of times in our history where we've treated the immigrant as somehow a dangerous new element in our midst.

So I'm left wondering: is it a media event? Is it something driven by the media or is it something deeper, a cultural phenomenon that we're looking at?

MR. KALB: Very good point. James, please?

MR. CARAFANO: Thanks. My latest book is called "Private Sector, Public Wars: Contractors and Combat." There's nothing in it about immigration. But it is available in bookstores and on Amazon.com.

Okay. I--you know, I think the--I thought Marvin actually brought up the quintessential point,

not just for this study, but for all the studies in this area, which is fundamentally what is the purpose of the press, what is its role, because, in the end, that's the metric by which you're going to measure success or failure again. And the Constitution guarantees freedom of the press.

Essentially, you have a free press to guarantee freedom of expression, and, in that respect, I think Mark's perhaps right: the media did its job and actually did its job very well and perhaps played a very positive role.

But if your argument is that somehow the media has a unique obligation to inform a citizenry, create an informed citizenry, then you could maybe argue that it failed.

But I'm not so sure that it is a mantle that's really the media's job, that we have to rely on the press to have an informed citizenry, and without a press that kind of tells us the right narrative, we're not going to have an informed citizenry. I think that's actually not a very constructive construct.

I mean, I've heard several narratives here today, you know, some of which I agree with, some of

which I don't. So, and I think if we think in a strict fundamental first principle method of what the press was created for, I would maybe argue that here the press did exactly what the founders wanted it to do.

MR. KALB: Tamar?

MS. JACOBY: Yeah, I was--I'm struck by Roberto's point about what the press did was really not persuade people. It was mobilize a small group of like-minded people, because I think that highlights exactly what did happen last year.

This wasn't the majority of Americans standing up and saying no to this bill. It was a small, but vocal minority--very loud, very vocal. They sent a lot of e-mails. They made a lot of phone calls. They sent a lot of bricks.

But it was still a small, but vocal minority.

And, for me, that points interestingly to maybe what the answer is. I mean, as I was reading these papers, I kept saying, well, okay, this is true, but now what--you know, what could we have done about it. We're not going to silence Lou Dobbs.

But it points to me that the answer is not a kind of anti-Lou Dobbs, you know it's not the Lou Dobbs on the left, so to speak. The answer is objective journalism or the mainstream media or what have you--better journalism pointing to the reality of these numbers.

I mean, Lou Dobbs mobilized a small number of people, and they made a lot of noise, but we didn't read enough on the front page of the New York Times that it was really a small number.

And that kind of object--that would be how objective journalism would fight back against these, you know, guerrillas so to speak that we're concerned about. No pun intended.

MR. KALB: Now if it is a small minority, then where was the majority? Angela, you wanted to add something and Peter did.

MS. KELLEY: I did. I don't have a book. I feel like a slacker.

No, it gets to this causation question, and I just--I have three observations about '06 and '07, and then sort of more broadly in terms of how the media reports and the influence on the public.

I mean, in '07, the issue was it was sort of like the Rosemary's Baby of bills. It was really ugly, and even those of us who were working hard to get it to move, you know, kind of did holding our nose.

So, I think the observation that those on the left weren't, you know, loving the bill and weren't activating the left is completely accurate, in stark contrast to what happened on the right.

In '06, though, it's really clear, and it gets back to your first question, that the DJs that turned out folks in Chicago and Los Angeles, in Dallas, in Washington, D.C. had a direct impact in what was happening in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

When the Senate Judiciary Committee was marking up the--what was the McCain-Kennedy bill that Specter tried to tinker with some, you know, quite frankly, it was often only Ted Kennedy in the room during the markups, it was all the Republicans. They were all there and their suits. And it was Ted Kennedy.

As the marches began to happen, Dick Durbin started showing up. Dianne Feinstein was there. Joe

Biden came. Feingold came.

So there was an increased interest on the Democrats part as folks began to take to the streets in a very peaceful way, saying that they wanted to be part of this country. They wanted to be recognized and they weren't felons.

And it was quite frankly a delayed reaction to the Sensenbrenner bill, which passed very quickly in December of '05.

In '06, these marches began to happen at the time that the markup was happening, and I think there was a direct correlation with the DJs who got on the radio waves, in Spanish, and turned people out. There's--there's, like, there's no denying it.

More broadly, though, because of the Immigration Policy Center, I work really hard to try to debunk a number of myths that are out there.

And based on public opinion research, it's really clear to me that the public is convinced that immigrants commit crimes at a much higher rate than native born.

Hundreds of years of research says that that's not the case, but the public believes it.

Why does the public believe it?

Well, I think it's in this report. It's because that is the story that always gets told. If there is a horrible crime committed and if it's by an immigrant, their immigration status becomes lead more than anything else surrounding the crime.

So, it is--to me, that and the other persistent myth that people choose to be here illegally, I think relates to the point that I made earlier--they have a lot of reporters that don't understand the complexity of the immigration law and are reporting on it often inaccurately so people, the average American, thinks that if you just went to the post office, you could get your green card.

So, there is a big disconnect between what the public gets and what the reality is.

MR. KALB: Thank you very much. Peter?

MR. SKERRY: Yes, I was going to raise a different question, but I want to respond to what Angela just said, because I thought her comments were really quite interesting and on target.

She mentions the issue of crime and immigration. And I think that's a good one to stop

and look at for a minute, because I agree with her that the evidence is not there that immigrants commit crime disproportionately. In fact, they may even commit it at--disproportionately in lower terms.

However, I think that's a good example of how the issue gets framed in a way that really misses what's on the public's mind, even though the public itself, because immigration is such a complicated and often myth-laden, symbolic subject, doesn't express its own anxieties very well.

And frankly, I think that's partly because elites often haven't really helped them very much sort of figure out what's eating them. And guys like Lou Dobbs have again, like I said, filled in the vacuum.

But with regard to crime per se, I don't think crime is really what's on people's minds. I think it's what I call social order or social disorder that's part of what we're dealing with when we're dealing with such mass numbers of people moving from one country to another, and moving around a lot in this country.

When you've got neighborhoods and cities that used to be single-family homes within which over

a period of months or so suddenly a house that was occupied by a family of four or five is suddenly occupied by 20 young men, hard-working young men, who are working in shifts and sleeping in shifts in that house, and who have 15 cars that they've parked all over the lawns and the street that begins to get neighborhoods anxious, and it begins to give people a sense that the social fabric is fraying.

And that gets caught up in a broader frame of crime. But it's not crime. It's social disorder.

And I think that's an example of what's eating at people, and it gets talked about as crime in a very misleading way, unfair to immigrants, but also misunderstanding what the problem is.

MR. KALB: Thank you very much, Peter.

E.J.?

MR. DIONNE: First of all, I was trying to think of who would be the exact opposite of Lou Dobbs, and the one name that came to mind was Calvin Coolidge, but we won't have to think about it.

I want to try to do the impossible, which is to reconcile Mark's point with Tamar's point. Peter and Mark--and I like Peter's last point, by the way--

but Peter and Mark are absolutely right. There is a real class split on this issue.

Lower-income Americans outside the Latino community, non-college grads are more skeptical of immigration than upper-income Americans and Americans with high levels of education. So, there is a populist thing going on here in part.

But populist sometimes suggests a mass majority movement, but I think what you actually have is a very important sizable minority that is very strongly against immigration.

You tend to get a majority who will say that they support a comprehensive solution that leads to a path to citizenship, though many pieces--parts of that majority are very grudging.

So, it's a very--it's a complicated picture. There is some populism here. I think that is what gives the anti-immigrant argument or the restrictionist argument its power.

But it's still not representative of a majority of Americans.

MR. KALB: Audrey?

MS. SINGER: Well, I wanted to go back to Peter's point about the connection between the local and the national, and how THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

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DEMOCRACY IN THE AGE OF NEW MEDIA
A Report on the Media and the Immigration Debate

Ronald Reagan Building, Rotunda Room
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
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proclaiming the same thing over and over again, either that immigration is on the rise or immigrants are in new places, and then that's also connected with the changing of racial and ethnic composition of the country. And so, these kinds of stories are not just national and they tend to be heavily played up in local areas. And this is something that, in local communities, you know, and we have seen -- there are so many examples across the country where it's not necessarily the base population that's at issue, but it's the pace of change. We are going to have bumper stickers, it's not the base -- it's the pace made. But, you know, where change is fast and people want an answer and people would like to have control, they are looking to their local elected officials and those people are coming back to their constituents and saying, it's not -- we are not really in charge of this. We need to get on the FEDS for this. So, there is this big connection that can't be missed and it's taken on great importance over the last four or five years.

MR. KALB: I think it's a terribly important point, because we all live locally. What we know nationally is through the media, and that places this enormous responsibility on the media today, to convey some kind of honesty across the board. So there is a common perception of the problem, and yet, it is often perceived locally. And locally, I think that all of us are aware, for example, of an enormous increase, or so it appears, in the number of Hispanics who are suddenly around you. You don't know. I mean, when I left to go up to Cambridge, where we lived for 12 years, and then when I came back to Chevy Chase, it seemed as if the entire community, except for the people who lived in the houses, had changed. The people who picked up the garbage, the people who cut the trash, all of that, they were suddenly Hispanic. Black had gone somewhere else. And so the problem is local big time, but when we try to understand it, what can we do? We -- How many of us here actually watch Lou Dobbs? One, two, three -- oh, all kinds of people watch Lou Dobbs. Well, that's good.

Okay. Now, Alex and James, do you want to --

MR. ALEINIKOFF: Sure. Just two observations. I think it's a -- I don't think one should focus on the complexity of the issue as an explanation for why there can't be a coherent narrative. Let me say this, it's been posed that we have an easy story on one side, no amnesty, against a very complicated story about the benefits of immigration. That's not the media's problem in telling the story. That's a failure of the proponents of the legislation to tell a coherent story. I mean, that's what politics is supposed to be, a way to take complex ideas and not dumb them down, but talk about them in a way that people can relate to them. And that may have been because there was a lukewarm support for the legislation, but nonetheless that's a failure of the proponents for immigration. I don't think the proponents have gotten the story down in a very, in a sellable way.

Secondly, both Marvin's comment and Audrey's comment before that I think points to something that

is really lacking in the report and is fundamental to the debate; and that is the issue of race. If we had been talking about legalizing the 30,000 undocumented Irish in Boston, this would not have been an issue. And there is an issue of culture; there is an issue of fear of loss of country here that is largely race-based, and I think we have to confront that. In the same way the Hillary Clinton voters in Ohio and Pennsylvania, the press was willing to say that this was, in some ways, a race-based vote that was creating victories among lower-class workers, and historically the populous movement has been linked to, has been race-baited quite frankly. The history of the populous was often related to white supremacy or anti-black attitudes in the south, and I think that to talk -- I mean, we have gone sort of gone the whole hour-and-a-half here on an immigration debate without talking seriously about race I think is really the big elephant in the room that we are not talking about.

MR. KALB: EJ has a brief insert?

MR. ALEINIKOFF: A piece of data, a 2006 Gallup poll, 20 percent of Americans said too many immigrants were coming from Europe; 31 percent said too many immigrants were coming from Asia; 39 percent said too many immigrants were coming from Arab countries; and 48 percent said too many immigrants were coming from Latin American countries. So there clearly is -- whether you call it race or whether you call it -- you have people who feel there are a lot of Hispanics here. There is clearly a difference in attitude, so you are partly right, the Irish, according to public opinion, might fair better than Latinos.

MR. CARAFANO: One comment, three quick points. I think fundamentally, about immigration, this is not a 50-50 country on this issue, and this is not a black and white issue of liberals versus conservatives. You've got to get past that to really understand the data. And all of the things that we have talked about, I think, in my experience, is regional class, economics, language, all those factors really -- you can look at two people, and I can turn to one and they

are radically against it and the other one is radically for it. So yeah I think you have to look at all these factors, and I think that explains it very simply why the Bill failed. There was simply something in it that everybody could hate. Whether you were really for immigration or really against it, you could find something in the Bill you just found abhorrent, and that's exactly why neither candidate is talking about this issue, because they both know they don't own their parties on one issue, and whatever they say, they are going to alienate as many supporters as they gain. That's why they have both kind of taken it off the table.

So, I just want to finish with my one quick story, because I actually have an Obama story. And I forget the exact language in Obama's amendment, but it was kind of one-tenth enforcement and kind of nine-tenths liberalization. So I actually wrote a short piece on this at the Heritage Foundation saying, there is a lot I like in the Obama amendment, but there is some stuff in here I really don't like. And it's my

one and only phone call from anybody in Obama's office that I have ever gotten, and this guy called me, you know, he is vociferously arguing with me that I'm just wrong. Well, what I was arguing was is that the enforcement part in the Obama piece was bad and the liberalization parts were fine, and he was yelling at me. And I thought, this is a very perverse world in which we live, when I am arguing -- when the guy at the Heritage Foundation is arguing, your measure is not liberal enough and the Obama guy is saying, you know, you are not tough enough on immigration enforcement.

MR. KALB: Thank you, Jim. Doris?

MS. MEISSNER: Let me try to take another shot at this issue of local experience and the issue that Alex raises about race; and that is, there is no question but that the sense that your world and where you live is changing under nose, because it is changing your nose. I mean, we are going through an enormous, profound demographic change in this country, and in some ways, the story is that it is happening as

effectively in fact as it is happening. I mean, certainly there is tension and strife, but there isn't the kind of tension and strife that we have seen in, you know, prior periods in our history when similar things were happening. But setting that aside, I, I - - there is another phenomenon here that is at play, and that is that the immigrant that you know, legal or illegal, in your community, who does your lawn, or who takes care of your children, or who is part of a painting crew that did a good job on your house, you like that person, by and large regardless of his or her race or ethnicity. But, abstracted, those illegal immigrants or those big demographic changes are really hurting the country, and how you reconcile those -- and there is really no reconciling of those going on. I mean, I remember this kind of thing vividly from being in the Government. I could be testifying on the Hill and be railed and railed against about illegal immigration and what the problem is, and why weren't we doing about it, et cetera, et cetera, and get back to my office and literally have a message on my desk

from the congressman that was railing against me asking for some compassionate consideration of a particular foreign student who had overstayed their visa, because they really were contributing to the community and it was wrong to send that person home. Now, this is very much like -- people hate Congress, the -- you know, approval ratings of Congress are what, 19 percent now or some such thing? It's unbelievable. But, by and large, you poll people they like their local representative. They think their local representative does pretty well for them. And so that connecting of the dots is -- or that lack of connecting of the dots obviously is something that I think is a press issue. There are ways to make some of those crosswalks and they are not happening.

MR. KALB: And, of course, if the paint job was bad, then that painter is really illegal?

MS. MEISSNER: Probably.

MR. KALB: Out he goes. Mark?

MR. KRIKORIAN: Thank you, Marvin. I had a point. I wanted to respond to a couple of points

first though. The reason the candidates aren't talking about this is because they agree. Their positions are identical and so what's to debate?

Secondly, I would have to say, and no disrespect toward Doris at all, but all of the talk that we hear about immigrants, you know, doing our lawns, immigrants taking care of our children, you know, most people do their own lawns. Most people take care of their own kids and cook their own dinner. It's a clear -- it's a clear indication of the class division on this issue.

But the point I wanted to make specifically was on this race issue, and I think there is something there to debunk it to some degree. E.J. talked about well, you know, people wouldn't be all that much opposed to the 30,000 Irish being legalized. Well, there is a difference between 30,000 people and 12 million people. If it was 12 million Irishmen being legalized, I don't know, you might have some people concerned about that.

And the statistics about the people, the number of people objecting to, you know, thinking there was too much European immigration and too much Asian immigration, well the Europeans make up a small share of the immigration flow, and so you know, it's at least arguable that there is -- even if there were some objective way to measure it, they would be the least likely to, for people to perceive that as being excessive and likewise for Latinos. But, the media angle here I think is important and related to the race. There is, as Audrey said, every time there is a report from the Census Bureau, a lot of them are, you know, will be a minority in 2040 or 2050 or whatever it is. There is a triumphalism about that in all media coverage of those reports that I think grates on people, even those people who don't have problems with changing, organically changing racial composition; they don't have problems with individual people of different ethnic groups, but the triumphalism of that report, that thank God finally whites will be a minority in the United States by 2050 grates on a lot

of people. It really does. And that's a side of it that I think members of the journalist class don't get, because for the most part, even if they don't perceive it, they also see that as a positive thing. They are looking to that development and they write the stories that way.

MR. KALB: Be specific. Who is being triumphant?

MR. KRIKORIAN: The news coverage -- any -- I mean --

MR. KALB: No, which reporter? Which network? I mean, be more specific.

MR. KRIKORIAN: I can't, because every, every -- I mean -- no, but --

MR. KALB: Well, that's a serious charge.

MR. KRIKORIAN: Well, let me put it this way. I perceive it as triumphant, and I can guarantee you that ordinary folks actually reading the Post and the New York Times, and the AP coverage on this, you know increase, this, you know, increasing ethnic diversity in the United States perceive a certain triumphalism in saying that this is a good thing. Now, is it good?

Is it bad? Let's debate that. But, I am saying that that's one of the things that sort of grates on people and results in this kind of populous anger.

MR. KALB: Roberto?

MR. SURO: Just very quickly. Mark, I don't think you can demonstrate that point empirically, and in fact, a lot of the coverage is sort of, oh my God, we are losing. And one other point -- well, I'll give you the New York Times, the last headline in August, on the numbers, it was pretty much written that way. And the other point that's worth making is it -- and this I can demonstrate empirically, that in most of the coverage, the repeated coverage over and over again of the changing demographics of the country, there is one voice of advocacy that is quoted more often than any others and it's you and Commerata talking about how bad it is. And there is -- there is almost no -- there is nobody on the other side of these stories saying, this is a great thing. But, the Center for --

MR. KRIKORIAN: Roberto, when did we ever talk about that. We don't usually do those --

MR. SURO: Well, I can show you the stories in which you are -- because reporters turn to you as the reasonable voice of saying these things, and you are -

MR. KRIKORIAN: And we are.

MR. SURO: And you are a good dial-a-quote on it. So you end up actually, if there is a counterpoint, and you are complaining about something in which you have actually had extraordinary success.

MR. KRIKORIAN: Not enough though.

MR. SURO: Can I go on to one other point? Let me just --

MR. KALB: Absolutely. You've got the mike.

MR. KRIKORIAN: Well, thank you. I do have the mike. I earned it. Yeah. You know, on this question of the way people react to immigration, there was a -- when I was still at Pugh we worked on a, did a big survey of the general population and their attitudes towards immigration and one of the most interesting

findings was that negative views of immigration correlated with low density of foreign-born in a respondent's zip code or county. In other words, the people who lived in places with the least number of immigrants had the most negative views. There is an element of self selection in this depending on -- and you could just look at lives on both coasts and where, in this country, the foreign-born are still highly concentrated in a few places, and the non-immigrants who still live in those places have, for the most part, made choices. You know, if you are white and you don't like to live in a highly immigrant society and you are living in southern California, by now you are in Utah or Oregon, or Seattle, or someplace else. So, the media role in this is really quite important, because often people are forming opinions about something they have not really experienced, certainly not experienced in a large scale. And even if -- whether they are generalizing from a gardener or not even having seen a gardener, this is a phenomena of where people are drawing conclusions based very

substantially not on robust actual personal knowledge of the phenomena, but on what they are told about it from various realms, which makes it -- I found it a very compelling case study, and it is one of the ways that opinion towards immigration I think has developed. It is very easy to see immigrants as the human face of other changes, and Americans are reacting to a great many changes. Some of you mentioned the loss of sense of security after 2001, and now we are looking at an economy where we don't -- nobody really understands how our financial markets worked. People were reacting to a change in the sense of place and the importance of geography and how you define an individual locality in a global world, and immigrants are the human manifestation of all of these things and end up being the freight on which a great deal of these attitudes fall.

MR. KALB: Thank you, very much. Tamara?

MS. JACOBY: Roberto is pointing out an old human truth, familiarity breeds acceptance. But, I wanted to go back to this issue of race and how much of a

role race plays in America's anxieties about immigration, and undoubtedly it does. I mean, surely it does and surely it does for many people, but I also think that that is a little bit too easy, and then I think that those of us who want a more sensible policy -- again, it doesn't really serve us to demonize and write-off people's concerns as merely racism. I mean, it's a part of us. You know, we can argue about much, but I think those of us who are trying to fight for something different ought to be careful in casting it in quite so easy a way. That said, I think it's true that the debate is really one of emotion versus pragmatism. It's about fear and fear of perhaps of what's out of control, fear of change versus some sort of pragmatism about, what do we do with the situation we find ourselves in and with the big demographic, and geographic and economic forces that Roberto is talking about. And I think that's just an important big frame to put it in. It is about emotion versus some sort of pragmatism. And I think that -- I mean, I think -- Alex, I think you are right; that those of us who want

reform could do a lot better job of framing a narrative, but I think it's a lot harder because we are framing a narrative for pragmatism up against emotion, and that's just hard. And so I think it's, you know, you are right in your challenge, but it's a difficult challenge, and it's a challenge for those of us who care about reform, but it's also a challenge for the media. You know, I keep coming back to, what do we do about Lou Dobbs? You know, how does a more objective media counter his emotion and the emotions he stirs, and I think it's difficult. And I mean surely it needs a better narrative, but it's, you know, it's hard.

MR. KALB: There is also, I suspect that -- I'm sure it's commonly recognized, a deep, powerful underlying belief that this society is based on law, if you want things that are legal, and if you can point to something numbering in 13 million or something that is regarded or described as illegal, you sort of pull back almost instinctively. Angela, you are very patient, and I thank you.

MS. KELLEY: Oh, thank you. I want to take you back to race for a second, and you know, what we have seen quite frankly unfold over the last 15 months since the Bill failed. And, you know, I thought it was a debate about changing immigration policy, but what resulted was really a debate about how America is changing and what it's character is going to be. And probably the thing that has upset me the most isn't what happened on June 28th or even in the months since then, but it was a result that the Pugh Hispanic Center recently released -- it hasn't gotten a lot of coverage, at least not in the English language media -- about Latinos and the discrimination that they are experiencing. And the statistic that jumped out the most is that one in 10, both native-born and foreign-born Latinos has been stopped and asked for papers, one in 10 has been asked for papers. That is having a profound effect in our communities. You know, I have this great Irish last name, but I'm not Irish. My family is from South America. Most of my family speaks with accents. I have had family members that

have been undocumented. They are legal now. But, they are experiencing discrimination and racism in a sense that there is a change in the country that they are not welcomed anymore. In a way, that makes me really sad for my kids. And, to me, that's the core issue here. We can talk about the numbers. We can talk about the fee for people who have broken the law and try to get them on the right side of the law, but ultimately it's about the character of our country. And until really, quite frankly, leaders step up and identify this as an issue that they want to change. It's not about immigration policy, but it's about who we want to be. I think that's what's lacking. I think it's somebody who is willing to identify this issue and make it their own, and we'll be debating this until that happens, I am afraid.

MR. KALB: Thank you, Angela. Thank you, very much. Peter?

MR. SKERRY: Yes. I wanted to pick up on this, the race issue as well. But, you know, at the risk of sounding either provocative or naïve, I don't quite

know always what, what is meant when people raise the question of race in these kinds of discussions. I think back, for example, to the Rodney King trial, if we can think back that far. You may recall, maybe not quite as well as I do, because I was focused on it at the time, that Rodney King was mercilessly beat up by five white cops. Well, one of those white cops was a guy named Alex Berseño, who was actually Mexican American, but that never saw the light of day, because I think the Los Angeles Times didn't want it to see the light of day, because they thought that Los Angeles had enough problems at that point in its history and not introducing that particular source of tension. But then when the scene shifted to the Simi Valley for the trial of those cops, we were told repeatedly by the Los Angeles Times that those cops, those white cops, were being tried by a racially mixed jury that consisted of something like six whites, three blacks and three Latinos. So, in one context Latinos were Latinos, but in another context a Latino was white. You know, half of Latinos in this country

identify themselves as white. That doesn't mean they don't get discriminated against or singled out, but it does mean that this is a pretty complicated topic when it comes to Latino immigrants. And so, I -- and when you look at intermarriage rates for the third generation of Latinos, they are probably more likely to marry outside their group, more likely to marry a non-Latino white than they are a Latino. So, it becomes really difficult to know exactly what's being claimed when Alex raises the issue of racism. Now, it seems to me there are lots of other dynamics going on in terms of perceived economic competition, dislocations of the sorts that I was talking about that are much more concrete and real and not simply emotional phantasms, which I think is what I am hearing to some extent from some of my fellow panelists, and that may be -- that may be in play. Those may be in play, but they are awfully hard to get a handle on here, it seems to me, and it seems to me there are much more parsimonious and concrete ways to explain the negative reactions, not all of which are

rational -- I wouldn't -- I am not suggesting that at all, but there are more concrete ways to try to understand what's going on than I think race broadly construes.

MR. KALB: Okay now, race has come up. E.J. has got his hand up. Alex, has raised it, so I am wondering if you have a comment and in a sense to answer it.

MR. ALEINIKOFF: Well, I didn't use the word racism, Peter did. I think I find myself in agreement with Tamara. I think she said it exactly, exactly right, so I am happy to stand by her comments.

MR. KALB: Okay. James?

MR. CARAFANO: A follow-up? You know, certainly there is demonization, but I think it is also fair to say there is demonization on both sides. I mean, the one side it's people that actively played into fears about immigration, which are historic and cultural, and even go back for centuries, but on the other side, they are playing on fear as well and they were playing on fear of the critics on the right; that these were

evil, no nothing people. And so, for example, you hear a critic on the right and they say, well they are against immigration. Now, that critic may be against illegal immigration. They may be perfectly happy with legal immigration, but they don't make that distinction when they say, they are against immigration, as if they are against anybody that came to this country regardless of whether legal or illegal. And so I think that is a large part of the problem. And I point out that we are really going in an unhealthy direction here, because what has the response of the far left been to talk radio on the right? Well, we went out and created Air America so we could have equally, kind of silly-sounding people on the left. So that's very helpful and productive.

MR. KALB: It just isn't doing terribly well is it? E.J.?

MR. DIONNE: The -- just on this question, the Irish versus the rest, first we should recall that, in the 19th century, the signs didn't say, no Latinos need apply. They said, no Irish need apply, so that part

of the immigration issue always in our country is who is the other at any particular moment. Once upon a time it was the Irish. Now it's predominantly Latino. I want to agree in part and just --

SPEAKER: Also black/Irish.

MR. DIONNE: Yeah. You've got to get that on the record. But, I agree with Mark and disagree in part with Mark, that of course you are right that people identify Latino immigration more in a more negative way because there are more immigrants on the whole coming in from Central America and South America. So you are right. It's not all, by any means, race and culture. On the other hand, your own response suggested that clearly whether you want to call it race or whether you want to call it culture, that is part of the response to the Latino immigration. It is part of the, you know, the sense of disorder that Peter talked about; the sense of somebody losing control that we talked about, and this again is an old story in American history. The Irish felt that way about my French Canadians when we came into New

England. But there clearly is an element here of something connected to race and culture, even though there is also a sense of injustice of illegal immigration. This is -- there are complicated reactions here, but I don't think you can deny -- your very answers suggest you understand that there is this cultural or racial component.

MS. JACOBY: Again, I don't want to defend the bigots, so to speak, but there is a difference between race and culture. I mean, it's one thing to say American politics are going to look like Mexican politics, and you know, over the rule of law is we are going to just go to bribing, you know, our relations with the cops are going to look like, what happens in Mexico and being a bigot. I mean, race and culture are different. Our political values are different. And I'm not saying we should be afraid of Latinos for that reason and I am not saying that, again racism is okay and I think those people who fear that the culture is going to go in those directions are wrong,

but I think it's important to draw a distinction between race and culture.

MR. KALB: All good things come to an end, and we are about five minutes away from the end of this Panel discussion, so I want to simply say, if you have something that you would like to end with please raise your hand now. I can't read your minds. Mark.

MR. KRIKORIAN: I want it to end with ironically enough agreeing with Tamara, that there is a difference between race and culture, but I want to get to this point, and this is important I think in the way the media and the public look at these groups of issues. And this is what E.J. was talking about as the other, you know, the Irish or the other. Well the fact is the circle of who is on the inside and who is on the outside, who is us and who is them, has been steadily expanding in American history for centuries. I mean, if you were an English protestant in Massachusetts Bay Colony of the wrong kind they hanged you, if you were a Quaker and didn't leave. English protestants then were okay and German protestants were

bad. Ben Franklin complained about German protestants; there were just too many of them. Then, northern European protestants were okay. Northern European Catholics showed up. They eventually became okay. Eastern southern Europeans came. They eventually became okay. And today what we are seeing is that Hispanics and Asians are, in effect, becoming white. Socially speaking they are white. And the divide in American society that constantly gets harped on is white versus non-white, and in fact I think it's much more relevant, much more salient is the divide between black versus non-black, and today's immigrants are on the same side of that line as those in the past, and I think the way we talk about Latinos as a separate race, and I would submit even eastern south-Asians as somehow separate is misconstruing the way race actually is lived in the United States.

MR. KALB: Peter, briefly.

MR. SKERRY: Yes. I just wanted to make one point about, one final point about race, I guess again responding to Angela's point. Obviously I am

responding to the Kelly in her name and try to make it concrete. It's not often pointed out in forums such as this it seems to me that 80 percent of illegal immigrants are Latinos. That's why so many Latinos get stopped. Is it fair that they get stopped? No, but that's a problem that speaks to the huge numbers of Latinos we are dealing with. Historically we haven't seen such huge concentrations from one sociolinguistic cultural group with the possible exception of the Germans in the 19th century, and it's an unfortunate logic that you can see possibly taking hold in the public that if 80 percent of illegals are Latinos, then if you are a Latino you must be illegal, which doesn't follow logically but follows sociologically.

MR. KALB: Well, let's hope that it doesn't.

MR. SURO: I mean, Peter, because the real question is, what proportion of Latinos are illegal? I mean, you have --

MR. SKERRY: I understand that, Roberto.

MR. SURO: I mean, people should be smart enough to draw that distinction.

MR. KALB: But, they may not be.

MS. KELLEY: Just because he's smart enough. Can I make one last point?

MR. KALB: Okay, we'll -- go ahead.

MS. JACOBY: I am just struck by, as we end, we have committed exactly the sin that Roberto accused the media of committing, in that we agree that it is -- really the point at the heart of this report is that we have ended up focusing on those individual actors and not on the larger geographic, demographic and economic forces that drive this. It's all but inevitable, but we are guilty and it's why this is such a hard debate.

MR. KALB: Let me just try very quickly to wrap this up. I have done probably hundreds, maybe even thousands of panels, but this has been a good one, and it's a good one because it's a terrific subject, an important subject, very articulate panelists and very knowledgeable, so my thanks go out to them, and I

think collectively we could thank them. And this overall, the headline for all of this is democracy in the age of new media, and I can confess to you, as someone who, for the last 20 years has been trying to understand what I was part of for the preceding 30 years, I suffer on alternate days when I observe what the media has become, but I suffer only on alternate days, because I am also aware on the other days that without the media, even in its occasional feeble state, it is the only way we know anything, and it's the only way democracy in the age of the new media can survive, the only way.

Thank you all very much. A pleasure.

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706 Duke Street, Suite 100
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Phone (703) 519-7180 Fax (703) 519-7190