

FROM THE MARGINS TO THE MAJORITY:
PORTRAYAL OF HISPANIC IMMIGRANTS
IN THE GARDEN CITY (KAN.) TELEGRAM, 1980-2000

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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the
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To my parents, Donald and Vernilea Fuhlhage,
and to the memory of my mother, Margarita Dolores Martinez Fuhlhage.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ii
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION:.....	1
Garden City as microcosm of news coverage of modern Hispanic immigration in the Heartland	
2. LITERATURE REVIEW:.....	4
Invisible, incomplete, and incoherent: Review of literature on immigration and news coverage of Hispanics	
3. METHODS:.....	32
Critical discourse analysis in historical context	
4. BIG BEEF, SUGAR BEETS, AND IRON HORSES:.....	51
The rocky road to Hispanic integration in Garden City	
5. BEYOND SOMBREROS, GANGS, AND ALIENS:.....	79
Fresh Hispanic frames in a growing Garden	
6. LAW ENFORCEMENT, BROKEN BORDERS,.....	96
AND NATIVIST BACKLASH: When news slips past the gatekeeper	
7. VOICES OF BACKLASH, VOICES OF WELCOME:.....	121
Official English, <i>La Semana</i> , and the segregated construction of reality	
8. LESSONS FROM THE GARDEN:.....	148
Strategies for newsrooms in the new immigration states	
REFERENCES.....	167

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION: GARDEN CITY AS MICROCOSM OF NEWS COVERAGE
OF MODERN HISPANIC IMMIGRATION IN THE HEARTLAND

The multicultural future of rural America is painted on the windows of an Anglo-owned pool hall, a Mexican bakery and a Vietnamese grocery at East Garden Village along U.S. Highway 54 on the east side of Garden City, Kansas. The strip mall in the southwest Kansas town 210 miles west of Wichita serves as a bellwether of the linguistic and cultural shift that has quietly occurred from Kansas to the Carolinas in the past 30 years. Spanish names and language, in particular, are increasingly appearing on storefronts in small, Midwestern meatpacking towns as immigrants from Mexico and other parts of Latin America, seeking work in slaughterhouses and poultry farms and later founding their own businesses, find their way north and east. This track is leading increasingly away from the Borderlands states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, where Mexicans have historically tended to settle after their trek from Mexico.¹

Researchers have studied newspaper coverage of Hispanics and immigration in the Southwest, but they have paid little attention to more recent migration into the Midwest. In 1980, IBP Inc. built the world's largest packinghouse in Garden City.² With the accompanying boom in meatpacking employment came rapid change in the community, including increased unemployment, greater stratification of income, and a decline in the average level of education.³ From 1980 to 1990, the city's population rose to 24,318 from 18,246, a gain of 33 percent, and with the population increase came increased demand for police and firefighters.⁴ Garden City's population as of the latest Census is 28,451, of which 43.9 percent is Hispanic.⁵ This percentage is extraordinarily

high compared with the statewide percentage of Hispanics, which is only 7 percent.⁶

With more than 26,000 food processing plants in the United States, employing 1.5 million workers, food processing is one of the nation's fastest growing industries.⁷ Such factory farms and food processing plants have spread across the Midwest, the Southeast and the Rocky Mountain West.⁸

Potential significance of this study

Understanding how framing of Hispanic immigrants has changed in the daily *Garden City Telegram* newspaper, which has chronicled the Hispanic population's rapid growth, can provide lessons for journalists in other rural areas for which the phenomenon is relatively new. This sets the stage for two broad research questions: How has the framing of Hispanic immigrants changed between 1980 and 2000 in the *Garden City Telegram*, and what role has the *Telegram* played in shaping the context of reception for Hispanic immigrants? The time span is significant in that the first year, 1980, saw the opening of the IBP plant in Holcomb, Kan., west of Garden City. The end year, 2000, saw Hispanics approaching majority status in both population composition and civic influence. The most notable example of this is the rise of a Mexican immigrant woman to the position of Garden City mayor. Subordinate questions within the broader research questions include: What sources has the *Telegram* relied on for its coverage of immigration? How has the representation of Hispanic immigrants changed, and to what extent have they been framed as "other" or framed in a more inclusive manner? One of the strengths of qualitative research is its ability to assess salience. So, going beyond the question of how many more or fewer Hispanic sources have been used, a purely quantitative question that will not be addressed in this study, it can ask whether the

significance of Hispanic sources selected for use in stories has changed. Comment from a Hispanic businessman about the economy, for instance, could be of greater news value than a comment from a token Hispanic at the county fair about something on which he or she has no expertise. At the heart of this study is the role a newspaper plays in the social construction of reality through its portrayal of Hispanic immigrants, assimilation, and acculturation.

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CHAPTER 2
INVISIBLE, INCOMPLETE AND INCOHERENT:
REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON IMMIGRATION
AND NEWS COVERAGE OF HISPANICS

Inclusion of all races, colors and creeds is a must for depiction of society to be whole. The story of America cannot be considered accurate if it omits the story of a minority group or tells only the partial story of that group. To do so risks, at best, ignorance and indifference to the minority group. An intermediate evil is the continuation of the dominant group's misconceptions and unwarranted fear about the minority group, with the result that the group is kept at arm's length by the rest of society. At worst, telling only the partial story of the minority group risks the perpetuation of myths of racial superiority of the dominant group and the demonization of whole classes of people.

The case of Garden City, Kan., provides a unique opportunity to examine the ways the portrayal of Hispanic immigrants has changed since the construction of the world's largest meatpacking plant brought waves of Mexican workers to an overwhelmingly white rural community. Was it an example of assimilation, in which immigrants quickly adopt the ways of the receiving community? An example of accommodation on the part of the host community? A blending of two cultures? How did the town's only daily newspaper, the *Garden City Telegram*, portray this new population, and how were its efforts viewed by members of the community?

The depiction of minorities by news media has been the subject of a vast body of scholarly work, but that work has focused primarily on interactions between whites and African Americans. Much less research has been done on Hispanics and the news media.

This could be due to a sort of intellectual segregation that took scholarship on Eurocentric culture seriously but regarded Chicano studies as a fleeting outgrowth of the civil rights movement.

A review of the literature on depiction of Hispanics in the news media reveals two themes. First, Hispanics in the United States have been for the most part ignored by the mainstream media. Second, when the media have taken note of Hispanics, it was not because of a need to be inclusive of all in the community, but because of negative social changes involving foreign newcomers. Hispanics have been, for the most part, portrayed as “problem” people, and that portrayal ignores the depth of the Hispanic community. Hispanics show up in news coverage primarily as victims or perpetrators of crimes, or as participants in ethnic festivals such as Cinco de Mayo celebrations. In both instances, the framing of reality is skewed. In the first case, media create the impression that problems in Hispanic communities are rampant, which could exacerbate segregationist fears that contribute to the attitude of “there goes the neighborhood” that fueled white flight from American cities to the suburbs in the 1970s. In the second case, an entire people is summed up in a simplistic cultural cliché of sombreros, hat dances and tequila and puts the focus on Mexico’s past rather than the present and future reality of the community.

Indeed, the story should be all about the future. Anxiety among Anglos in America has focused on the rise of the Hispanic demographic in the last quarter of a century. The Census Bureau announced in 2003 that Hispanics had become the largest minority group in the United States. Fear of displacement has led some in California to rail in favor of establishing English as the official language of the state. Furor against undocumented Mexican immigrants ultimately brought the approval of Proposition 187, a

California referendum to cut off some social and health services, along with access to public education, for illegal immigrants and their families. Anti-immigrant attitudes were evidenced in the California legislature's preparations to repeal driver's licenses granted to illegal immigrants under Gov. Gray Davis.¹ All these examples provide evidence of the social construction of Mexicans as a "problem" in the United States. Might all this fear and anxiety be different if Mexican immigration had been framed differently by the media?

Research on the intragroup relations of Hispanics suggests that ethnicity is only one of a number of factors that include nativism, assimilation, language and other cultural matters that influence how people of other ethnicities interact with and form impressions about Hispanics. Another concern is the paucity of recent research on portrayal of Hispanics in the news media. Most scholarly studies on this topic are from before 1997.² Much has changed in the United States since that time. Demographic shifts have brought increasing numbers of Mexicans into the American interior seeking work, mainly in slaughterhouses and poultry processing plants of the Midwest and South.³ But most studies of Hispanics in news media focus on California and the Borderlands states.

History of Mexican immigration to the United States

To understand its portrayal, one must first understand the history of Mexican immigration to the United States. The INS and Border Patrol take great pains to control the flow of immigration in the Southwest, but this wasn't always so. INS statistics generally reflect growth in the number of migrants turned back as well as those who get through to the Promised Land. One factor these numbers don't take into account is the

number of Mexican workers with residences in both the United States and Mexico who lead their lives in two countries, crossing many times a year, and consider the border to be an artificial construct. The concept of the malleable border is evidenced by the phenomenon of Mexican meatpacking workers in Marshalltown, Iowa.

Meatpacking has made Marshalltown a new destination for Hispanic immigrants, and the town's role in transnationalism illustrates the growing dependence on migrant workers and consequences for rural towns.⁴ The authors' analysis of census figures found that Marshalltown's 1990 population was 25,178, with only 0.9 percent Hispanic. In 2000, however, population had grown to 26,009, 12.9 percent of whom were Hispanic. And although median age rose that decade to 38.4 years from 31.1 years, hiring Hispanics compensated for the aging of the white labor force. Joining Marshalltown in enjoying the benefits of immigrant labor is the sending community, Villachuato, Mexico, which has engendered loyalty to workers' home region due to feelings of religious and economic obligation to those left behind in their homelands. Workers said their hometown had dirt streets, limited public services, isolation and a poor economy. So they used their transnational status to transfer money from north to south, sending home money not just to take care of their immediate family but to collectively improve the community. For example, they procured materials and built an underground water system and electricity, upgraded homes, paved streets, bought park benches, renovated their church and remodeled the plaza at the center of town. Social and spiritual connections are maintained strongly, with natives returning to the annual Holy Week fiesta in honor of the village's patron saint, El Señor de la Salud, or Our Lord of Health. These ties, Grey & Woodrick found, build social capital from generation to generation through godparent

relationships. Return migration is such an important part of life that quitting work at the packinghouse is just a part of life; the job will be waiting to be filled when the migrant returns because of high turnover. In migrant workers' eyes, their behavior was highly responsible and served as a means of earning money north of the border while serving their homeland.⁵

A common response from Mexican Americans who are asked about their status as Americans is, "*We didn't cross the border; the border crossed us.*" The expression is a reference to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the Mexican War, and the subsequent Gadsden Purchase, Mexico's sale of a strip of southern New Mexico and Arizona to the United States. Together, the two deals transformed about a third of Mexico into U.S. territory in the mid-19th century.⁶

This attitude is not shared by nativists — those who believe that public policy should treat native-born citizens more favorably than immigrants. Voter News Service pollsters found a correlation between support for Proposition 187 and the belief that the California economy was in bad shape; non-Hispanic ethnicity; and a perception that immigrants would compete with voters for jobs.⁷ That Mexican immigrants tend to take jobs that native-born American citizens refuse to take is irrelevant to nativists.

Also irrelevant to nativists is the love-hate relationship between American enterprises and Mexican immigrants, both legal and illegal. In the early 20th century, immigration was open to Mexican migration, but it was restricted in the 1920s. That was followed by decades of a vast, U.S.-sponsored guest worker program called the Bracero program that lasted until 1964, followed by an era of undocumented immigration until INS crackdowns began in earnest in 1986.⁸ Track the state of the U.S. economy and

permissiveness of Mexican immigration, and a pattern emerges: The more dire the economy, the greater the restriction of immigration. In times of economic expansion, the system looks the other way and allows undocumented workers to provide cheap labor for American agribusiness and industry. As Fox puts it, “For Mexicans, therefore, the United States was alternately welcoming and threatening: Anglos needed Mexicans but didn’t really want them around.”⁹ The power brokers of agribusiness and industry who depend on cheap, plentiful illegal labor are bound to bring pressure upon decision makers in the news media. That pressure could influence newsroom leaders’ willingness to tackle immigration as a coverage topic and could affect whether newspapers take a favorable or unsympathetic tack on Mexican immigrants. By the same token, religious and civic leaders with an interest in the social justice movement could also bring pressure on journalists to provide positive coverage of immigrants.

This history and these attitudes about that history have the potential to shape the approaches taken by Hispanic and Anglo editors alike and demand consideration in crafting questions to ascertain editors’ attitudes on immigration and its portrayal.

Another factor that could affect the framing of Mexican immigrants is popular opinion on the topic. A sample of 1,363 adults in June 1993 by CBS, the *New York Times* and the Tokyo Broadcasting system found that the poorest respondents favored less immigration. The most highly educated respondents favored more immigration. Most significantly, respondents who were deemed alienated or who were having trouble in their personal lives were more likely to oppose increased immigration, as were isolationists. And those who think immigrants mostly take jobs Americans don’t want and that most immigrants contribute to the U.S. economy think immigration should not

be decreased. It seems reasonable to expect that those involved in agribusiness would view Mexican labor more favorably.

Skin color and economics aren't the only factors in the perception of immigrants. Anti-immigrant attitudes reach far back in American history, and Mexicans aren't the only group that has been singled out for negative portrayal. An elitist, Anglo-centric attitude has pervaded the history of American immigration and has roots that go back to the time of Benjamin Franklin, who complained that Pennsylvania, founded as an English colony, was being overrun by Germans.¹⁰

Assimilation, accommodation, and immigrants

The new IBP meatpacking plant resulted in explosive Hispanic population growth in Garden City and the surrounding area in Finney County, resulting in stresses on infrastructure as the new Hispanic population was accommodated by the community. If *framing* is the key media concept in this study, then the key concept from outside communication theory is *assimilation*, a concept that has been developed by a lengthy body of research and theory. Two components of assimilation and acculturation, economics and political power, are of particular significance.

Park and Burgess provided the seminal definition of assimilation in 1921 as “a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons and groups and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life.”¹¹ Although Alba and Nee note that the theory has been dismissed by recent scholars as worn-out because it assumes

minority groups must give up their identity and adopt white Anglo-Saxon Protestant values, life ways, language, and other cultural norms, they concede its importance to understanding intergroup relations. Key components of Park's theory include social assimilation, which he defines as "the name given to the process or processes by which peoples of diverse racial origins and different cultural heritages, occupying a common territory, achieve a cultural solidarity sufficient at least to sustain a national existence."¹² Assimilation, according to Park, is the end stage of a "race relations cycle" of contact, competition, accommodation, and assimilation, with Park assuming that the last stage is inevitable and irreversible.¹³

Milton Gordon expands on Park's definition. The critical distinction in his framework of assimilation involves acculturation and structural assimilation — the entry of members of a minority into primary group relationships with the majority group. He defines acculturation as the minority group's adoption of the cultural patterns of the host society; Gordon argues that this is inevitable.¹⁴

Structural assimilation involves minorities' entry into the majority group's social groups, cliques, and institutions, and Gordon says once this has happened, all other forms of assimilation naturally follow.¹⁵ But is assimilation a one-way street? Gans' theory of straight-line assimilation leaves this question unanswered. The theory says that each new generation represents a further step away from the norms of the previous generation and a step closer to more complete assimilation.¹⁶ But what is meant by that? Alfred Korzybski theorized that communication affects both the sender and the receiver of a message, and that each interaction changes both parties.¹⁷ Why, then, wouldn't assimilation work the same way, with the majority group being affected by the minority group? Gans later

revised straight-line assimilation into bumpy-line assimilation, acknowledging critics' charges that his theory ignored revitalizations of ethnic consciousness evidenced by revivals of black culture in the 1970s.¹⁸ This seems a half-step short of what has happened in contemporary society. Witness the example of white, middle-class, suburban teens adopting Fubu, Kangol and other apparel originally associated with the inner-city black experience. Alba & Nee write:

The influence of minority ethnic cultures can occur also by an expansion of the range of what is considered normative behavior within the mainstream; thus, elements of minority cultures are absorbed alongside their Anglo-American equivalents or are fused with mainstream elements to create a hybrid cultural mix (141).¹⁹

The Fubu/Kangol example is backed up by Alba and Nee's question, how can one recognize the incorporation into American culture of ethnic influences? "The hallmark, we think, is that a cultural trait gradually loses its association with an ethnic group."²⁰ This occurs when people who aren't part of the group with which the trait originated take on the trait, weakening the perception that the trait and the originating group are exclusively related to one another. Given that this phenomenon of two-way acculturation has been acknowledged by the literature, one expectation of this study is that framing of Hispanic immigrants might take on a more positive frame, assuming that reporters take steps toward the culture they are covering even as that culture takes steps to assimilate into the Garden City community.

Economics is the driving impulse in neoclassical theory on migration and immigration.²¹ But Massey & Espinoza warn that it is important not to interpret the term "economics" strictly in terms of money. There are two forms of capital: economic and

social. And it could be that interactions with the news media turn out to be another factor in creating social capital for assimilation, acculturation and accommodation.

Immigration and Garden City

Commerce and workers alike felt the impact of the new employer in town when IBP built its Garden City plant in 1980. That included beefpacking as well as the retail and service trades; growth in the latter industries included the opening of thirty-nine new retail stores, many in a new shopping center anchored by J.C. Penney and Wal-Mart. In addition, 17 new restaurants and bars and four new motels opened.²² More than 6,000 new jobs were added to packinghouses in Garden City, Liberal, and Dodge City from 1980 to 1990. They were filled mainly by Laotian and Vietnamese refugees and Mexicans.²³ As much as 80 percent of the two leading plants' labor forces consisted of Hispanic immigrants, Leiker writes, resulting in strains on social services, education, and police and fire protection. Strain on society increased as well, with complaints about ethnic gang violence, workplace discrimination, and police profiling becoming common.²⁴ Leiker writes further that anti-Hispanic and anti-Asian prejudice in southwest Kansas often flows from an unfair association with social disruption brought by the meatpacking industry, and that racism could be a consequence of capitalist greed that creates exploitable classes.

The starting wage at IBP in 1995 was \$6.60 an hour.²⁵ For comparison's sake, at the local Monfort plant, the starting wage was \$6.25. Gross annual income for IBP line workers ranged from \$15,500 to \$22,000, determined by job grade and length of

employment. As at other IBP plants, hours varied from season to season and week to week depending on demand, supply of cattle ready for slaughter, and profit margins.

Outside the packinghouses, most new jobs were in the service sector, paid even less, and were not even full-time. Many with such jobs relied on social service agencies for supplemental food, medical care and other basic needs. Per capita income dropped from 94 percent of the state average in 1980 to 91.5 percent in 1988, more than \$1,300 below the state average and \$2,111 below the national average.

Critics charge that IBP does not do enough to help the workers that its workplaces harm. Health insurance does not start at IBP until six months of employment, and the individual deductible of \$300 is the equivalent of a week's gross pay.²⁶ A second family member must incur another \$300 in covered expenses before the family deductible is covered, and preexisting conditions, including pregnancy, are not covered. In addition, benefits are reduced by \$500 if the carrier is not notified of pregnancy six months before the due date.²⁷

In Garden City, employment grew 55 percent, accounting for a gain of 4,400 jobs from 1980 to 1988 and increasing demand for housing.²⁸ Most line workers lived in mobile home parks just outside the city limits; 10 percent of the city's population lived in one mobile home park that was built specifically to house IBP workers.

In addition to increased demand for housing and social services, school enrollment rose 45 percent, to 6,600 from 4,535. Three new elementary schools were built and existing schools were expanded to meet demand. Minority enrollments nearly doubled, and bilingual and English as a Second Language programs expanded to meet the need, but recruitment of minority and bilingual teachers proved a challenge. The school

district had the highest dropout rate in the state in 1990, and student turnover was nearly a third each year.²⁹ Negative social impacts are also notable. Violent and property crime rose from 1980 to 1990 in Finney County, while it dropped in the rest of the state, and child abuse more than tripled, exceeding the state average by 50 percent.³⁰

Emmaus House was started by church volunteers to provide temporary shelter and hot meals for indigent transients and newcomers looking for work. It also provides food boxes and commodities for Garden City's poor. It sheltered 625 people in 1988, served 69,000 meals and gave out 3,614 holiday food boxes, 250 percent more than it did six years before.³¹

Nativist whites have made clear their anxieties about an influx of foreigners, but it is also important to get the Hispanic perspective to fully understand community concerns. Hispanic immigrants in three rural Midwestern communities were questioned about their concerns about economic strain, community concerns, community services, treatment in the community, change in the community, change at the packing plants, and how community services could be improved.³² The towns were selected for study because of the presence of meatpacking plants, Excel in one instance and Iowa Beef Processing in the other two.

Highlights include a change in the kinds of community problems noticed. At the initial interview, the greatest concerns were with alcohol and drug use, teen use of alcohol, teen parenting, adult and youth education, and language barriers. But at the second set of interviews, participants reported less concern about teen parenting, alcohol use and youth education. The ability to obtain adequate job training within their communities became a greater concern. The amount of discrimination by whites

decreased as non-Hispanic whites became more accustomed to living with the increasing number of Hispanics and as the ratio of immigrants kept rising. Nonetheless, the perception of prejudice divided the community. A number of respondents said they lived in towns made up of two separate communities, one Hispanic, the other white, with little commingling among the ethnic groups.³³

On changes in the packing plants, respondents noted that the Excel plant expanded to include a library corridor where workers were taught ESL classes, but they also said such efforts at accommodation went underused because workers were too exhausted from their labor on the meatpacking lines. Some workers said the line speed, or the rate at which the production line ran, continued to increase, and one participant who was a representative for the union said that when he worked to slow down the line, the changes were only temporary. In addition, line speed was decreased for a union inspection and then increased when production fell behind schedule. Adding to pressures on the receiving community, then, are the physically punishing nature of meatpacking work combined with medical indigence due to low wages and migrant transience.

Along with workplace injury and illness, however, immigrants' attitudes and lack of adjustment to American-style medicine can exacerbate stresses on the health care system. A clash between mainstream biomedical standards and folk medicine can result in lingering illness.³⁴ For example, parents buy antibiotics over the counter in Mexico, where such purchases do not require prescriptions, and administer them to their children at the first sign of illness. This results in development of antibiotic-resistant strains of respiratory disease and, more commonly, lack of diagnosis of other medical problems because doctors do not get the opportunity to examine child patients. Thus, increasing

cultural diversity leads to misunderstandings among patients and physicians. The commodification of health care has been cited as another factor in declining quality of health care for indigent Hispanics in Garden City.³⁵ One physician told an interviewer he could not be a “banker” for his patients, reflecting a tension between his Hippocratic oath to “do no harm” and the common practice of “firing” families who cannot pay their bills.³⁶

How well has Garden City accommodated its new Hispanic residents? The story is mixed.

Spanish-language radio and ethnic Mexican festivals have become common.³⁷ Savvy businesses have recognized the importance of learning Spanish to promote customer relations. The *Garden City Telegram* launched a bilingual weekly edition in English and Spanish called *La Semana* in 1991 that shifted to Spanish-only within six months of its introduction.

Benson contends that Garden City has dealt with the challenges of immigration better than many other towns and has become a national model for planners. And like Marshalltown, its response of accommodation has been the result of the need for a secondary labor pool. But a duality exists, with native-born residents and Hispanic immigrants alike sticking to themselves. Intergroup relations are sometimes strained. Older whites say, “You have to lock your doors now” and contend that there are “foreigners” around. Many residents worry about crime, which has risen with the number of single men. Local gangs have worried police since the 1990s. Established Mexican-Americans resent that Mexican immigrants evoke white stereotypes about Hispanics, according to Benson, who writes:

Established Anglos have their golf tournaments, sports events, and rodeos; immigrant Latinos have their fiestas and dances with well-known musicians from northern Mexico. Churches are almost entirely dominated by one group or another; speakers of different languages use the same space at different times. In many respects then, newcomers and established residents are living together separately (p. 51).³⁸

Sourcing and ethnicity

The ethnicity of reporters has a great bearing on the sources they use. The language barrier posed to Anglo reporters is difficult to surmount, and lack of knowledge of the nuances of Spanish can result in a flawed interpretation of information despite reporters' research and preparation of questions. Lack of common ethnic heritage could make potential Hispanic sources stay at arm's length from journalists because of unfamiliarity with Anglo reporters and suspicion of their motives. Quiroga details how lack of Hispanic sourcing distorts news about Hispanics by telling only part of stories.³⁹ Stories in the Quiroga study included the Los Angeles riots, routine crime stories, and a racial confrontation between whites and Hispanics that culminated in a cross burning after a stabbing out of retaliation for alleged harassment of Hispanics. Quiroga also notes that in the Rodney King case, one of the officers in the beating was Hispanic but that the incident was framed in terms of the black-white paradigm, thus omitting part of the story. Such oversights may be due to the lack of Hispanic and Spanish-speaking reporters. Invisibility of Hispanics as sources is one of the main themes in scholarship on media coverage of Hispanics. Public policy decisions on matters such as immigration are less likely to be influenced by the needs of Hispanic constituencies when Hispanics aren't given a voice. Absent reporters fluent in Spanish and conversant in border culture, that voice could remain silenced. Joseph Tovares' experience posing as a Mexican migrant

laborer illustrates the dimension that Hispanic heritage and Spanish language, in common with sources, can add to journalism. He and a crew for ABC's *Prime Time Live* shed light on the economic impact of immigrant labor: Contrary to the notion that Mexican workers were bleeding California dry, the story that appeared provided evidence that such laborers are exploited. In one case, the ABC News crew found a father and son who had expected to make \$6,000 between them for seven weeks of 12-hour days clearing brush for a private contractor on national forest land. Each was paid \$300.⁴⁰

News media portrayal of Hispanics

Sourcing and the ethnicity of reporters tie in with the overall theme of news media portrayal of Hispanics. Fernández and Pedroza studied the Border Patrol and news coverage of illegal immigration, examining the number of sources who were sympathetic, neutral, and unsympathetic toward undocumented Mexican immigrants; whether reporters' ethnicity (Hispanic vs. non-Hispanic) had a correlation with balanced coverage of the issue; whether use of language on the topic is positive, negative or neutral; and whether coverage of the topic was increasing.⁴¹ The authors concluded that coverage was biased, used mostly institutional sources with an interest in portraying illegal immigration as a growing problem, portrayed the topic in a negative way, and was mostly reported by non-Hispanic reporters. They found a statistical correlation between Hispanic ethnicity and use of noninstitutional sources such as illegal immigrants in their study of the Border Patrol and news coverage of illegal immigration. Their explanation was that Hispanics are more likely than Anglos to speak Spanish and thus have greater access to undocumented workers who speak only Spanish. Although the question of ethnicity in

this case concerns background of reporters, the same principle could apply to ethnicity of the editors directing the reporters. In the field, Anglo reporters can have difficulty even finding sources willing to speak on the record (or at all) because Anglos are immediately identifiable as outsiders who may even be involved with the Border Patrol or the federal Immigration Control and Enforcement agency. And unless their knowledge of Spanish is solid, reporters may misunderstand those sources who do speak with them.

Reporter ethnicity and immigration coverage involve more than just shared language and ethnic affinity, however. Speakers and participants in the National Association of Hispanic Journalists conference in 1993 noted that the mainstream media cover Hispanics without a grasp of their history in America, which results in superficial coverage.⁴² A representative of the United Farm Workers said that the group got media attention only when there was a strike; the UFW representative said peaceful actions were frequently portrayed as violent — anecdotal support for the notion that Hispanics get more coverage as a problem than positive coverage as a part of the community.⁴³

The theme of Hispanics portrayed as “problem” people comes up frequently, and immigration is seldom portrayed in terms of its positive aspects.⁴⁴ Santa Ana analyzed the use of metaphors in *Los Angeles Times* articles on the 1994 debate over Proposition 187, an anti-immigrant referendum, and found that metaphors reflected anti-immigrant sentiment.⁴⁵ He explains the mechanism of metaphor, in which a set of assumptions or ideas about one concept are applied to another concept as a shortcut to understand it. He writes that when conceptual shortcuts such as metaphors are applied, both individual and public understanding are co-opted because in relying on the pre-packaged meaning of the metaphor, people do not exercise individual creativity. The effort involved in critical

thinking makes it more likely that new evidence will be weighed, influencing attitudes and beliefs. He found these metaphors used in Proposition 187 discourse: immigrants as animals, immigrants as debased people, immigrants as weeds, and immigrants as commodities. He concludes: “While the *L.A. Times* news writers are not overtly racist, their continued use of the metaphor contributes to the demeaning and dehumanizing of the immigrant worker.”⁴⁶

In addition to use of language, the overall themes of coverage provide cues about framing. Patterns in immigration coverage in the past have included an emphasis on sensationalism, exaggerations of the extent of illegal immigration, harsh tones in reporting on the subject and a lack of critical inquiry into assertions that illegal immigration places a heavy burden on local taxpayers.⁴⁷ The same study found that patterns in coverage of Hispanics include depiction of Hispanics as foreign to America, use of demeaning terms such as “alien” and “illegal” as nouns characterizing undocumented immigrants, and a lack of coverage other than as subjects of stories about crime, entertainment and civil rights. A study of local news programs in Los Angeles reflected these findings: Hispanics were more likely than whites to be portrayed as perpetrators.⁴⁸ Hispanics also were less likely to be portrayed as law defenders than they were to be employed as officers in Los Angeles and Orange counties. These inaccurate portrayals are noted in Close’s 2000 essay “Seething in Silence — the News in Black and White.” Close notes that Robert Entman, then of Northwestern University and now a professor at George Washington University, says a disproportionate share of television news and reality-based shows depict minorities stereotypically, with large numbers of blacks and Hispanics cast as victims or victimizers of society.⁴⁹ Few, he asserts, are

portrayed as productive citizens. Close quotes Entman as saying that Hispanics are portrayed as people who play a heavy role in causing violence but do little to help society deal with it.

Hispanics and other ethnic minorities have been historically portrayed “through a negative white lens.”⁵⁰ Hispanic men have been portrayed in film as hot-blooded, vicious killers, while Latinas are portrayed as “the sexy and submissive woman of easy virtue while upholding contemporary stereotypes of Hispanics of both sexes as deviant, inferior, violent, lazy and uncultured.” Castro notes that a 35-year study of *Time*, *Newsweek* and *U.S. News & World Report* showed that the magazines regularly exhibited bias by reproducing government definitions of crime in spite of evidence that officials define crime in a discriminatory manner. Further, the study found that the weekly news magazines directed readers’ attention away from white-collar and corporate crime, advocating tougher punishment for street crime while saying that for corporate criminals, getting caught was punishment enough. The study by Robert Elias, “Official Stories: Media Coverage of American Crime Policy” in *The Humanist*, January/February 2004, found that minorities were in the magazines’ crime coverage most frequently even though minorities don’t commit the majority of crimes.

The 1970s gave rise to communications scholars’ efforts to focus attention on stereotyping in the media, including Charles Ericksen’s study bemoaning the absence of Hispanic leaders and experts as news sources. Indeed, journalists have a pattern of “relying on sources hostile to immigration while ignoring the beneficial social and economic aspects of immigration.”⁵¹ The author cites John O. Miller of the Center for New American Community, who notes:

The common accusations about high costs, neighborhood decline, welfare use and job competition serve as covers for closet xenophobes who won't admit in public that they are uncomfortable with the racial and ethnic make-up of today's immigrants. That these complaints don't have much empirical support makes their case a tough sell, but sloppy journalism turns a complex and encouraging reality into a simplistic and ominous fiction (p. 176).

Again, this phenomenon is not limited to print media. A content analysis of local television newscasts revealed that Hispanics, blacks, Asians and American Indians were virtually invisible as anchors, reporters and subjects in the news. Hispanics were rarely interviewed as sources.⁵² The study analyzed newscasts in 26 television stations from 1987 to 1989.

Gandy wrote that blacks and Hispanics tend to be presented in roles that define them as violent criminals, and that because of this, there should be concern about the media's role in cultivating social perceptions.⁵³ According to Gandy, this cultivation perpetuates racism and may reduce the public's willingness to support public policies designed to help minorities escape poverty and criminal victimization. He cites another factor from Shanto Iyengar's book *Is Anybody Responsible?* that contributes to misunderstanding of racial matters: Journalistic tradition favors episodic over thematic frames for stories, which leads the public to assign blame and responsibility to individuals in each episode rather than organizations and institutions. "Where individuals are understood to be responsible for their own misfortune, there is no place for a public response beyond punishment," Gandy writes.

This leads to the other broad theme in coverage of Hispanics: Historically, Hispanics have been virtually invisible to mainstream media. Dixon & Linz provide evidence of the lack of representation of Hispanics in both positive and negative roles.⁵⁴

That evidence adds to the body of knowledge chronicled in “The Hispanic Americans,” which notes American journalism’s neglect of Hispanics, with the exception of sensational coverage of violent outbursts such as the Zoot Suit Riot in 1943.⁵⁵

A distinction must be drawn between reporting on Hispanic issues and mere inclusion of Hispanics in coverage. A study of six Southwest dailies in 1980 illustrates this distinction. It found that Mexican-Americans were covered proportionately to their communities’ populations, “although the majority of local stories met this requirement only because they contained Spanish surnames.⁵⁶ More in-depth news stories focusing on Mexican-Americans accounted for only 10 percent of local news stories. Studies in subsequent years had mixed results. Six years later, Van Slyke Turk, Richstad, Bryson & Johnson found in a study of the *Albuquerque Journal* and *San Antonio Express* that both newspapers gave fair treatment to Hispanics.⁵⁷ Hispanic stories involved negative news less often than did Anglo stories, and they were also less likely to be portrayed negatively in crime stories than Anglos. Additionally, stories about Hispanics were longer than stories about Anglos. A content analysis of the *Chicago Tribune*, *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, *San Antonio Light* and *Washington Post* reported difficulty finding any story, positive or negative, about Hispanics.⁵⁸ It also provides a definition for negative stories (ones that perpetuate negative stereotypes of Hispanics) and positive stories (ones that involve Hispanic culture or treat an issue, even a negative issue, fairly). Heller criticized the *L.A. Times* for including Hispanic-oriented stories not in the regular paper but in *Nuestro Tiempo*, a bilingual supplement, an effective segregation of the news that could exacerbate the invisibility of Hispanics in the media.⁵⁹

Few researchers in journalism and mass communication, perhaps owing to the journalistic tradition of not taking sides, offer suggestions for remedy. But two strong voices have emerged. Although much of the literature focuses on the problems in portrayal of Hispanics and immigrants, little of it offers solutions. Miller notes that the media could ease stereotyping and unfounded belief that immigrants pose problems by increasing the quality of reporting on immigration.⁶⁰ He writes:

The common accusations about high costs, neighborhood decline, welfare use and job competition serve as covers for closet xenophobes who won't admit in public that they are as uncomfortable with the racial and ethnic makeup of today's immigrants. That these complaints don't have much empirical support makes their case a tough sell, but sloppy journalism turns a complex and encouraging reality into a simplistic and ominous fiction. We owe it to the immigrants — and ourselves — to set matters straight. (27)

Miller points out that no single immigrant can stand in for the rest. For instance, lumping legal immigrants, the undocumented and refugees together results in bad information disguised as the truth. "On a whole range of issues," he writes, "immigrants get shortchanged by reporters who don't know what they're talking about."⁶¹

As an example, he counters the misconception spread in editorials that immigrants take jobs from native-born Americans. A report by Ohio University and Cato Institute economists found that median unemployment in 10 states with the highest percentage of immigrants from 1960 to 1990 was 5.9 percent. In contrast, unemployment was 6.9 percent in the 10 states with the lowest percentage of immigrants.⁶²

"When immigrants get a bum rap," Miller writes, "it's often because a writer reports the hard-luck story of a small group of people in a single place." In other cases, the bum rap comes when editors refuse to accept that their assumptions about reality were

incorrect and report inaccurately in spite of the facts.⁶³ Bad sourcing is another problem: In the summer of 1993, a *Newsweek* article headlined “The Economic Cost of Immigration” cited Donald Huddle of Rice University, whom it referred to as an “immigration expert.” Huddle told the magazine that immigrants would cost taxpayers \$50 billion a year over the next decade. It turned out that he lacked credibility among serious immigration scholars, yet Miller writes that Huddle has found his way into print as a source since the *Newsweek* article in the *Los Angeles Times*, *Orlando Sentinel* and *Sacramento Bee*.⁶⁴

What Miller seems to be advocating is the use of credible sources, an eagerness to ask sources how they know what they know, and a commitment to tell the truth rather than continue to pursue stories that lack grounding in fact. In short, the answer to shoddy reporting about Hispanic immigrants is to take the journalistic mission seriously and not settle for stereotypes, which by definition convey shadowy versions of reality. In addition, sensitive use of language is of tantamount importance.

Intergroup and intragroup interactions

All reporting is influenced by the point of view of the observer. To understand portrayal of Mexican immigration, then, it is important to understand the intergroup relations between Hispanics and Anglos, and the intragroup relations between Hispanic Americans and recent Mexican immigrants.

Portrayal of Mexican immigration is affected by the portrayal of Hispanics as a whole. It must be understood, first of all, that Hispanics are not a monolithic group, as Italian, German or Irish Americans are understood to be. These three groups are for the

most part homogeneous, joined by geographic, language and historical bonds. Hispanics are not. Hispanics are a fragmented group of people of varying national heritages.⁶⁵ In the United States, the most numerous subgroup is Mexicans, who have settled across the nation from California to Maine but are concentrated in the Borderlands states. Cubans are most numerous in South Florida. Guatemalans are increasing in population in such cities as Santa Fe, N.M., and Houston. Nicaraguans have settled in U.S. cities, including Miami. New York has become a population center for Puerto Ricans, Dominicans and Colombians. And Hispanos, descendants of the first Spaniards to reach the New World, claim a homeland in the northernmost reaches of New Spain in present-day southern Colorado and northern New Mexico. These groups represent indigenous people and the descendants of those who subjugated them. They represent farm workers, merchants, mechanics, factory workers, bankers, bakers and upper-class businessmen. They are Spanish-speakers, and they are English-speakers who are descended from those who once spoke Spanish.

Mexican Americans of a variety of educational levels have varied attitudes about Mexican immigrants to their communities. A qualitative study of 23 Mexican Americans in La Puente, a predominantly Mexican American section of Los Angeles with a population of 37,000, contradicts previous studies that established economic competition as a reason for some Mexican Americans' hostile view toward Mexican immigrants.⁶⁶ Language and other cultural variables are among the reasons for conflict. For example, some of the interview subjects felt hostile toward Mexicans because the subjects were mocked for their poor skills in spoken Spanish — an insult to their ability to stay in touch with the culture of their ancestral homeland. Such subjects reported an attitude that

immigrants left behind something that was broken, so why do they want to rebuild that same broken system here where they moved? Conversely, similarity of ethnic background can be a source of cooperation for these subjects.⁶⁷

Related to this intragroup study is “Getting to know you? Latino-Anglo social contact,” which found that Hispanics’ levels of contact with Anglos, which were higher relative to their contact with other ethnic groups, translated to warmer feelings about Anglos.⁶⁸ The finding correlates with earlier research on the effect of casual contact between African Americans and Anglos on prejudice between the two groups. Welch and Siegelman’s research suggests that degree of intergroup contact, not merely belonging to one ethnic group or another, would have a bearing on increasingly favorable portrayal.

Ignorance and fear are byproducts of the lack of interaction between minorities and the dominant cultural group. Nativism is an outgrowth of that ignorance and fear, and *Immigrants Out: The New Nativism and the Anti-Immigrant Impulse* traces the origins of nativism, which is defined as the ardent opposition to immigrants and other non-native members of society. The white majority’s treatment and regard for each wave of immigration into the United States have some recurrent themes. These include fear of the mixing of races into one inferior to Nordic stock and biased, pseudoscientific attempts to portray non-Anglo ethnic groups as inferior and therefore unworthy of the full rights granted to native citizens.⁶⁹ Knowledge of anti-immigrant bias provides a universe from which to classify and examine the kinds of frames that become evident in critical discourse analysis of articles concerning Hispanic immigration.

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CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY: CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS
IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Most of the literature on the portrayal of Hispanic immigration has involved either quantitative content analysis over broad periods or qualitative content analysis that has involved short periods of time. Both of these approaches have focused on coverage in urban areas with relatively high population. This thesis aims to answer how framing of Hispanic immigration has changed over time in a rural community over a twenty-year period. A historical approach is the most appropriate methodology, given the time span and the goal of ascertaining qualitative changes in both journalistic methods and journalistic product over time. Methods will be assessed through depth interviews to learn how journalists and sources remember the process. Product will be assessed through critical discourse analysis of articles about watershed events in the immigration history of Garden City.

The lexicon of immigration coverage includes such negative terms and phrases as “threatening,” “on welfare,” “taking jobs from Americans,” “interlopers,” and “flooding the country.”¹ In the rare instances where Hispanic immigrants are portrayed as positive, (i.e., when they are working toward legal residency in the United States), journalists used “opportunity” as a means to frame the immigration issue and in doing so established an alternative to the frame of immigration as “problem.” “Good” immigrants are characterized with the terms “hardworking,” “law-abiding,” “contributing to society,” “upwardly mobile” and “future citizens.”² In seeking to answer the research question, the

study would examine each of these areas of discourse: accounts of Hispanic involvement in crime, the presence or absence of stereotypes in portrayal of Hispanics, insensitive language, and the use or exclusion of Hispanics as sources. For purposes of this study, Hispanic ethnicity is identified by surname.

Conversations with the *Telegram's* education reporter and a preliminary review of a selection of articles from November and December 2005 suggested that the frames that historically have marked coverage of Hispanics were not reflected in recent news coverage. The review of articles revealed a pattern of what appears to be a stereotype in reverse: Sources in the school district speak little about diversity's challenges and point only to success stories among students and staff. This raises the question of whether there might even have been an overcorrection of anti-Hispanic bias in framing. This seems congruent with findings that editors in more ethnically pluralistic communities are more likely to include ethnic minorities in lists of most influential people and important news sources, as well as a finding that editors who include ethnic minorities in a list of important news sources are more likely to consider it important to cover stories about ethnic minorities.³ By this reasoning, the presence of Hispanic civic and business leaders among sources in the *Telegram's* coverage suggests a shift toward greater pluralism in the framing of power within the narrative.

Reese defines framing as “organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world.”⁴ He cites Gitlin's view that frames are part of societal ideology. Gamson & Modigliani provide a rubric for measuring framing devices in texts. The markers they emphasize are the use of metaphors, catchphrases, exemplars, depictions and visual images.⁵

While interesting, studies about the framing of Hispanics and other minorities have limited significance unless the invisibility and negative portrayal of Hispanic immigrants influence readers, viewers, and policy makers. So how influential is media framing of immigrants on people's racial perceptions and political thinking? Domke et al. tried to answer this question through an experiment in which some test subjects were shown articles about Mexican immigration that were framed in ethical terms while other test subjects were shown articles framed in material terms. Stories with an ethical frame focused on human rights, civil rights, religious morals, or personal principles.⁶ Stories with a material frame focused on economics, expedience, practicality, or personal self-interest. Their findings suggest that news coverage of issues, by priming people to focus on some issues and not others, influences the link between people's thinking about race and thinking about politics. In a study that also focused on the link between framing and public perception of race, Kellstedt examined the volume and framing of news articles on race from 1950 to 1990.⁷ The frames he examined involved two core American beliefs: individualism and egalitarianism. When the volume of egalitarian frames increased, so did liberalism about racial policy. When the volume of individualist frames increased, so did conservatism about racial policy.⁸

Not all agree with Reese on the persistence of frames. Hertog & McLeod state that "frames are relatively stable cultural structures, but new frames are at times created and existing ones modified or replaced, or they may simply fade from use."⁹

It is not an assumption of this study that the lot of Hispanic immigrants, and media portrayal of them, will necessarily be a story of decline in this particular community. That is in part because of the emerging demographic dominance of

Hispanics in Garden City. One indicator of this is the election of a Latina mayor whose family immigrated to the United States from Mexico and who subsequently became a naturalized U.S. citizen. How to detect the change in portrayal will be a matter of framing. Framing involves selecting aspects of perceived reality and making them more salient in text in a way that promotes a particular definition of a problem, interpretation of cause, evaluation of morality or recommendation for treatment of whatever the text describes.¹⁰ To analyze framing, it is also necessary to note what the frame does not include because framing is about selectivity. For instance, a pro-immigrant frame might be present in a story about illegal immigrants that omits the point of view of members of anti-immigrant groups. Alternatively, anti-immigrant framing might be present if Immigration Control and Enforcement officials or other institutional sources are represented but immigrant advocates are not or if there is no evidence of an attempt to use illegal immigrants as sources.

A review of literature found just such a case. The authors concluded that coverage of undocumented workers was biased, used mostly institutional sources with an interest in portraying illegal immigration as a growing problem, portrayed the topic in a negative way and was mostly reported by non-Hispanic reporters.¹¹

One expectation of this study, then, is that the framing of Hispanics would shift over time as the dominant societal ideology shifted from one in which Anglos were the majority to one in which Latinos rise in prominence. This expectation comes in part from the notion that reporters would be informed by their Hispanic sources about what Hispanics regard as respectful language to use about them.

In 1980, the frame that seems most likely is one that reflects the dominant, Anglo culture of Garden City at that time. If that is the case, a number of studies about the portrayal of Hispanics in media suggest that they would be framed primarily as “problem” people who are involved in crime and who create drains on social programs. At the end of the study, 2000, framing seems likely to have shifted to reflect the emergence of Hispanics from small minority to large plurality with increasing civic involvement; the emergence of Hispanics in roles of political and economic power would translate to increased prominence as official sources for news reports. This frame as of 2005 would be more likely to portray Hispanics as people seeking out opportunities and solving problems that affect the Hispanic community.

Framing, by one definition, is the way journalists shape and contextualize news content with a familiar frame of reference and according to some latent structure of meaning.¹² While McQuail does not explicate the meaning of “latent,” that term could be taken to mean “inadvertent,” “unintentional” or “unconscious.” Bias may be intended or unintended. An assumption in this study is that journalists generally adhere to journalistic ethics that preclude overt, intentional bias in reporting; therefore, this study assumes that bias is unintentional.

Study limitations

This thesis will use historical research methods and qualitative textual analysis. In addition, it will focus on just one community. The qualitative nature of the study and the fact that it is a study of just one community mean the study has some inherent limitations. Because it will not use quantitative research methods, and because of the limited geographic area it focuses on, it will not be broadly generalizable to all communities in

the United States. It may provide a cross section generalizable to other rural American areas where the meatpacking industry has been relocating away from big cities where property prices and labor costs are higher and that are farther from livestock production. And because the study will focus exclusively on coverage of Hispanic immigrants, its findings may not be applicable to communities that are attracting immigrants of other nationalities. Another limitation: Using surname as an ethnic identifier could mean that some Hispanic sources and story subjects get overlooked because in mixed marriages in which a Hispanic woman marries outside her ethnic group, she and her children would not be identifiable as Hispanic if she takes her non-Hispanic husband's surname.

Historical research and critical discourse analysis

What happens to the framing of a minority group as it grows over 20 years to nearly the same proportion of the population as the majority? A mixed-method study employing historical research and discourse analysis seems an appropriate combination to address this overarching research question. To assess the history of a media phenomenon, Schudson contends that journalism history must ask several key questions, among them: How do people participate in civic affairs, and what role do the media play in the distribution of power? How do people arrive at social identities and associate with or separate themselves from other people, and what role do media play in this? How do people earn a living, and how is wealth accumulated and distributed?¹³

Economics must be taken into account when researching media history, according to Schudson, because one of the primary fallacies or problems for journalism historians is the assumption that media are always central to a historical event or process. Such an assumption, Schudson contends, ignores the role of politics, religion, economics, etc.

Another weakness he enumerates is declinism, the notion that history is a process of entropy; Schudson recommends looking for examples of how things have improved.¹⁴

Framing will be assessed using qualitative content analysis, specifically, critical discourse analysis. Berger notes that “deciphering deep meanings through such analysis implies the deconstruction of ideology and critique of social origins with a view to political action.”¹⁵ The context-dependent use of words can be examined to assess whether framing is favorable or unfavorable about a subject or subjects.¹⁶ Van Dijk notes that depending on one’s point of view, one may be considered a terrorist or a freedom fighter. In the same vein, the lexicon of immigration coverage includes such negative terms and phrases as “threatening,” “on welfare,” “taking jobs from Americans,” “interlopers” and “flooding the country.”¹⁷ Coutin & Chock’s study provides a useful lexicon of keywords and phrases to watch for in a framing analysis based on analysis of content.

In the rare instances where Mexican immigrants are portrayed as positive, i.e., when they are working toward legal residency in the United States, journalists used “opportunity” as a means to frame the immigration issue and in doing so established an alternative to the frame of immigration as “problem.” “Good” immigrants are characterized with the terms “hardworking,” “law-abiding,” “father helping family,” “vulnerable,” “contributing to society,” “upwardly mobile,” “future citizens” and “a stable presence.” So Coutin & Chock’s analysis also provides a guide to how to identify the language of positive and negative framing.

Metaphors can provide keywords to determining bias in reporting on immigration and Hispanics.¹⁸ A study of metaphoric language in coverage of California’s Proposition

187 campaign found that analogies equating immigrants to animals, e.g. *hunted*, were predominant, with secondary metaphors that included categories of war, e.g. *invader* and *soldier*; water, e.g. *wave*; disreputable people, e.g. *marauder* and *felon*; and body, e.g. *burden* and *parasite*. It is crucial, though, to recognize that words do not necessarily mean the same thing in one era as they do in another. Therefore, because this study will span twenty years, its primary method will be historical study.

Research method: historical study

Ronald T. Farrar lamented that “journalism and mass communications studies were divided between weak historical research and a very strong behavioral contingent with consuming interests in quantification.”¹⁹ He identified the root of problems in the performance of journalism historians not as a philosophical or methodological one, but one of a lack of spirit and teaching technique.²⁰ Atwood quotes him as saying, “Something made us journalists and historians instead of real estate salesmen or stockbrokers or taxicab drivers. Whenever we rediscover what that something was, and is, then our problems inside and outside the classroom will take care of themselves.” This speaks primarily to the need to find meaning and to find motivations for telling the story of a community or nation that run deeper than the need to just entertain with a tale of the past. Although the cult of objectivity has long been part of American journalism orthodoxy, the experiences and personal beliefs of researchers can impede the employment of objective research. Indeed, the methods of history demand that one rely on one’s intuition to help interpret what occurred in the past.²¹ Startt & Sloan assert that devotion to theory or hypothesis must not be the prime mover of historical method; rather, the prime mover should be a devotion to discovering truth.²² Truth, however, is a

moving target, defined according to the point of view of whoever holds a truth. There is not one truth; there are multiple truths. Historical study, according to Sloan & Startt, must be guided by the subjective judgment of the researcher after an exhaustive pursuit of historical fact. It is interpretation of the meaning of the past, rather than a mere chronology of events.²³

Wedding framing and critical cultural history

James W. Carey repudiated the progressive or Whig theories' domination of journalism history, saying such approaches had been exhausted.²⁴ Carey instead encouraged that journalism historians strive to propel their field forward by reformulating paradigms, his main thrust being that the study of journalism history is the study of the way men in the past grasped reality.²⁵ This thesis will look at framing through such a lens by striving to trace the evolution of framing of Hispanic immigration in Garden City, Kan., within its historical, cultural, economic, geographic, political and social contexts.

Entman provides a rubric for identifying frames in news:

News frames exist at two levels: as mentally stored principles for information processing and as characteristics of the news text. Examples of frames as internalized guides are the cold war frame imposed on international affairs and the horse race frame imposed on election campaigns; in this sense frames are information-processing schemata. But frames also describe attributes of the news itself, and that is the focus of this article. Frames reside in the specific properties of the news narrative that encourage those perceiving and thinking about events to develop particular understandings of them. News frames are constructed from and embodied in the keywords, metaphors, concepts, symbols, and visual images emphasized in a news narrative. ... Frames can be detected by probing for particular words and visual images that consistently appear in a narrative and convey thematically consonant meanings across media and time. By providing, repeating, and thereby reinforcing words and visual images that reference some ideas but not others, frames work to make some ideas more salient in the text, others less so — and others entirely invisible. (p. 7)²⁶

Entman notes reliance on a particular kind of source — in the case of his KAL and Iran Air study, the sources were elites — can also have a hand in how a story is framed. And he lists five traits of media texts that constitute frames: importance, judgments, agency, identification, categorization, and generalization.²⁷

Startt & Sloan have articulated seven criteria for well-executed history: topic definition, bibliographic soundness, research, accuracy, explanation, historical understanding, and writing.²⁸ These elements encompass the authors' criteria for sound definition of a topic: "It must be clearly defined. It must make sense in terms of time and space, and it must have continuity of content." To achieve these aims, Startt & Sloan note, it is necessary "to shape, limit and sometimes reshape the boundaries and purpose of the investigation." Another factor to consider in designing this research is the intellectual underpinnings of the study. The first assumption is that meaning is socially constructed. The study assumes that in the production of news, this occurs through the interactions between journalists and the sources with whom they work and the readers whom they serve.²⁹

The social construction of reality is also prominent in Alba & Nee's recasting of theory on assimilation of immigrants.³⁰ The authors recount a body of literature that contends immigrants and members of other out-groups absorb the characteristics of the receiving community or in-group, but then they contest this view, which they refer to as the "canonical account." Another part of this account states that "assimilation and its expression in the form of acculturation are, at bottom, no more than the attenuation of an ethnic or racial distinction and the cultural and social differences that are associated with it." They contend that such changes can happen in either the dominant or minority group,

and that acculturation does not require the substitution of cultural traits in one group by those of the other. Instead, they write, minority culture can affect the dominant culture by expanding the range of what is considered “normal” mainstream behavior. If this notion holds water, then an expectation of this study is that framing of Hispanic immigrants could well shift from a frame of immigrant as “outsider” or “other” to a more inclusive frame. The process of discovery in this historical discourse analysis of framing would hope to identify what those inclusive frames might be.

Parameters: Location, time and sources

The boundaries for this thesis, then, are articles in the *Garden City Telegram* concerning Hispanic immigrants. The years 1980 and 2000 form the beginning and end of the study, 1980 having been the year that IBP’s pilot meatpacking plant opened and 2000 marking the most recent decennial census. Latinos were not the first wave of immigrants to come to Garden City for the jobs created by the plant and service industries that accompanied growth in Garden City and its environs. Southeast Asian refugees sponsored by local Catholic families beginning in 1975 represented the area’s first non-Anglo immigrants, with Latin American immigrants following in the mid-1980s.³¹ Access to primary sources required twenty-six working days of archival research in the microform newspaper archives and document repository of the Kansas State Historical Society in Topeka in May, June, July and December 2006. In addition, interviews with current and former *Telegram* journalists were conducted by e-mail, by telephone, and in person in Garden City, Dodge City and Hutchinson, Kan., in July and August 2006. The visit to Garden City included research at the Finney County Historical

Society library, which held books, documents and artifacts concerning the history of Garden City and Finney County.

A preliminary sampling of *Telegram* articles in November and December 2005 found a dozen articles concerning Hispanics by the newspaper's education reporter. The 25 years since the opening of the IBP plant and the subsequent waves of immigration might have produced so many articles that study of all of them would not be feasible. Therefore, articles were selected to coincide with watershed events in the history of immigration in Garden City, starting in 1980. Examples included coverage of the campaigns to pass school bond issues that Garden City residents approved to accommodate an increased child population, largely driven by births in immigrant families; the controversy over whether to annex county land outside the city limits for the construction of a mobile home park to accommodate thousands of new workers at the IBP plant in the early 1980s; the passage and consequences of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 and other immigration-control legislation in the mid-1990s; the debate over English as a Second Language and bilingual education in the mid-1980s and early 1990s; the launch of the Hispanic-oriented weekly publication *La Semana* in 1991; the debate over proposals to declare English as the official language of the state of Kansas in the late 1990s. This sampling produced a distribution of smaller time periods across the twenty-year span of the study in which to also note coverage of nonepisodic matters, such as discourse in the form of editorials and letters to the editor as well as coverage of cultural milestones such as fiestas, weddings and engagements. The aforementioned episodes involving increased demand for services, both public and private, provide civic flashpoints for discourse analysis. A disadvantage of this approach

is that it could primarily yield frames of Hispanic immigrants as problems and could exclude narratives in which Hispanics are portrayed positively, but this did not turn out to be the case.

Startt & Sloan list four basic activities that are involved in research:

(1) compiling a complete record, (2) evaluating the sources that compose that record, (3) understanding the explicit and implicit meaning of those sources, and (4) explicating the essence of those sources in the history one produces (p. 49).³²

Another key assumption: Theory may inform historical research, but it must not be the driving factor behind it, the researcher must be willing to alter his or her theoretical framework depending on what the data have to say.

Primary and secondary sources

The obvious choice for primary sources of news coverage is the *Garden City Telegram*, the community's only daily newspaper, which now has a weekly Spanish-language supplement called *La Semana*. Because immigration has become such a pervasive phenomenon in the community in the past quarter-century, including every article would be too exhaustive for this thesis. Therefore, a review of secondary sources on the history of Garden City was conducted to gain guided entry and construct a timeline of critical events in the town's immigration history. One example is the early history of immigration to Garden City in the early 20th century and Hispanics' subsequent struggle for racial equality. Such flashpoints are likely to include comment from city officials, industry spokesmen, workers and members of the community. By limiting the study to critical historical events, the number of stories was limited to a manageable level without sacrificing a meaningful analysis of framing.

To flesh out the context of coverage of Latino immigration and assimilation, it was necessary to understand the politics, economics, culture and demographics of the times, as well as those of the place. Therefore, to gain guided entry into the topic, preparatory research on the era was conducted. To better understand the cultural context of Garden City, two theses and two histories were examined: *You Get What You Pay For: Landlords and Latino-Immigrant Tenants in Garden City, Kansas*; *Boundaries, Barriers, and Benefits: The Struggle for Immigrant Children's Health Care in Garden City, Kansas*; *Kansas: The History of the Sunflower State, 1854-2000*; and *Garden City: Dreams in a Kansas Town*. For understanding of how Kansas fit in the regional history of the West, *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own: A New History of the American West* was consulted along with *The Great Plains Experience: Readings in the History of a Region*. The literature review includes a wide range of readings on news media portrayal of Latinos and immigrants from which the theoretical framework sprang.

Depth interviews of journalists, sources and observers

Depth interviews were conducted and oral histories were gathered to learn from the recollections of journalists, sources and community leaders concerning coverage of Hispanic immigration in and around Garden City. Berger describes depth interviewing as focused, extended conversation.³³ Its purpose is to “get at particular issues, such as hidden feelings or attitudes and beliefs of which a respondent may not be aware or that are only dimly in his or her consciousness.”

The subjects are a Hispanic journalist who edited and reported for *La Semana* who has since left the newspaper; two former editor/publishers of the *Telegram*; a columnist who began working for the *Telegram* after she graduated from journalism

school in the late 1940s and still writes for the *Telegram*; the current managing editor of the *Telegram*; a pastor and member of the local Ministerial Alliance; and the director of the United Methodist Mexican American Ministries health clinic, which provides health care, food and immigration aid for foreign newcomers to Garden City.

Berger offers these cautions about depth interviews: It can be hard to select the right respondents. Shy subjects might hesitate to speak. It can be hard to pin down interview subjects who talk around the issue, while others might find it difficult to express their feelings. Sometimes it is not possible to continue the interview long enough to get real answers. And last, an interview subject simply might not have the information the interviewer seeks.³⁴

Depth interviewing has substantial advantages, however, according to Berger. Because its unstructured format allows the interviewer to ask follow-up questions, depth interviewing can yield a lot of detailed information. It also can provide unexpected information that can lead the researcher into new directions and possibly tell the interviewer where to find more information. And its nonlinear format allows the interviewer to adapt to the situation, allowing for a more freewheeling examination of the issues.³⁵

Berger offers these pointers for carrying out depth interviews: Tape the interview and take notes on important points that can be used as an index to the conversation. Watch out for feelings, opinions, and attitudes because such details can be revealing. Ask open-ended questions and let respondents speculate and offer opinions. Record preliminary demographic data on each subject to seek correlations between the

characteristics of interview subjects and what they say. Follow a prepared set of questions to get off to a good start. And last, be neutral.³⁶

What oral history offers to this project is thick description of the experience of interview subjects. Anderson & Jack recommend that the researcher “search for the choices, the pain, the stories that lie behind the constraints of acceptable discussion.”³⁷ This could be particularly appropriate for this thesis. Hispanic immigration has proved to be a polarizing issue in America, evidenced by the scores of demonstrations across the United States and the immigration-control legislation proposed in the U.S. House of Representatives in the spring of 2006. Anderson & Jack say this about the dichotomy of information gathering and the experience of the interview itself:

Realizing the possibilities of the oral history demands a shift in methodology from information gathering, where the focus is on the right questions, to interaction, where the focus is on the process. (169)³⁸

What Anderson & Jack advocate is for the researcher to go beyond what is expected to the personal construction of experience. Each oral history subject will have seen the world through different lenses, and the oral historian should aim to capture each person’s unique view of events.³⁹

Dana Jack recommends these tips in listening for meaning: Listen to the subject’s own moral language — what slant does he or she put on events? Attend to the meta-statements, spots where the interviewee stops and comments about his or her own thoughts and what was just said. These meta-statements alert interviewers to what they see as discrepancies. Examining moral language lets the interviewer examine the relationship between self-concept and cultural norms.⁴⁰

Anderson & Jack describe a disconnect between male-defined roles and woman-centered interviewing, which allows a more free-flowing exchange of ideas and empathizing.⁴¹ This disconnect can be applied to the question of cross-cultural interviewing. Could there be a disconnect between roles as defined by the Anglo-centric culture of Garden City and the way that Latinos communicate? If so, this could explain discrepancies in the way articles and issues are viewed by Anglo journalists and Latino sources from what Berger refers to as “bastard institutions” such as health clinics or church-run charities as well as Latino community leaders. A focus on facts and activities, Anderson & Jack write, leaves out the rich context of how people feel about what makes activities fun or drudgery, what they were proud of, and what they see as failure.

Fontana & Frey distinguish the structured interview from the unstructured interview. Structured interviews use a set of pre-established questions with a limited set of response categories; this technique offers little flexibility. The unstructured interview is more typical of ethnographic study; it is more interactive, offering greater give and take between interviewer and interviewee. It seeks to understand, not to explain.⁴² The most useful guidance Fontana & Frey offer, however, is on setting up the interview itself. First, they recommend, find an informant who can explain the background of the issue or culture and, if necessary, translate. Act as the subject does to fit in. Once trust has been gained, protect it because trust is fragile. Establish a rapport, but guard against going native, and don't take care not to anger the subject.

To what end will depth interviews be used in this project? The first is to breathe life into the study that only can be obtained with the words of those who took part in coverage of Latino immigrants. The second end, though equally important, is

triangulation and authentication of the conclusions drawn through critical textual analysis of *Telegram* articles.

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CHAPTER 4
BIG BEEF, SUGAR BEETS, AND IRON HORSES:
THE ROCKY ROAD TO HISPANIC INTEGRATION IN GARDEN CITY

“A peon’s mind is very much like that of a nine or ten year old child, with the difference being that the child’s mind matures and the Mexican’s never does.”

— Advice from a Santa Fe Railroad foreman
on how to handle Mexican labor, 1918.¹

“It would blow your mind to know our struggles in trying to achieve first class citizenship. To most, we’re second class, and to the Archie Bunkers, yes, they still feel that we ought to go back to where we came from. Hey, that wouldn’t be a bad idea, then we could give the land back to the native Americans, that were here to begin with.”

— Pedro “Pete” Sandoval, whose family immigrated
from Mexico to Garden City in the 1920s.²

What one finds in news stories in the *Garden City Telegram* of the early 1980s is shocking in its progressiveness compared with other American newspapers of its time, whether in the big cities or in other rural areas. The *Telegram’s* routine inclusion of Hispanics³ in its pages in a variety of contexts defies a historical tendency in news and entertainment media to portray them as criminals, illegal immigrants and seducers when they bother to include Hispanics at all.⁴ Although journalism scholars in the critical cultural tradition such as Entman, Gandy and Gutierrez and practitioners, including the National Association of Hispanic Journalists in the professional realm, have bemoaned stereotypical portrayal, little in the way of stereotype seems to have occurred in the 20-year span of this study. This tendency did not emerge overnight: Both internal and external pressures contributed to the evolution of the newspaper’s practices and product. A shift occurred in the kinds of journalists who came to report and edit at the *Telegram*, whose early years were not marked by the progressiveness of the end of the 20th century.

External forces include the much-debated character of Kansas and the decades-long struggle by Southwest Kansas' first generation of Mexican immigrants for economic survival, followed by the second and third generations' struggle for racial emancipation. Although Hispanics made strides toward equality after World War II, they still were denied a voice in civic affairs up through the early 1980s and their concerns about racism were ignored by much of the community. But the *Telegram* seems to have treated them even-handedly and even made attempts to set its readers straight concerning the need to heed Hispanics' concerns.

In November 1979, the optimism that ran high in the *Telegram's* accounts of preparations for the IBP plant to come on line comes from institutional sources, both in local government and in the business community.⁵ While expressing uncertainty about the effects 2,000 additional jobs and a \$30 million annual payroll might have on Garden City and its environs, *Telegram* reporter Pam Zubeck writes, "Finney County, already in the midst of its greatest growth era, stands at the edge of a boom that could double or triple its population." The first of a two-day series about the impact of the IBP plant uses sources from local government and industry.⁶ Most of their assessments were neutral, meaning they expected little impact on the economy, to positive, meaning they expected more jobs, more business, and few complications. Two said they worried that labor rates would be driven up by what would become the city's biggest employer. In almost all cases, their predictions turned out to be off the mark.

Some examples: IBP's spokesman insisted that although management would come from other IBP plants, most of the employees would be hired from the region:

1,160 from Garden, 840 from towns within 50 miles of the new plant in Holcomb, just west of Garden. Zubeck points out that the town didn't have 1,000 jobless people to work at the new plant and that the new hires would have to come from "other cities or states," not anticipating that foreign labor might be brought in.⁷ Ingalls Feedyard manager Larry Penka lamented, "The days of cheap labor will be over,"⁸ but in the years to come it would turn out that IBP kept wages at its plant low compared with the unionized Farmland plant and did not force wages higher. Though revenue would certainly rise with an increased population, it would be folly for Wheat Lands Motor Inn co-owner Gary Salyer to count on the wives of newcomers to work at his hotel and restaurant;⁹ most of the immigrants in ensuing years would be single men from Mexico.

In selecting businesspeople, city officials and economic development bureaucrats, all with a financial stake in the plant's future, the *Telegram* likely passed along an overly sanguine portrayal of the plant's impact on the community. Had it spoken with rank-and-file workers to find out whether the slaughter, skinning and cleanup jobs might appeal to them, they might have made a more solid connection that outsiders would be needed to run the packing lines. Another article in the package quoted ranchers expecting better prices for their cattle, with one saying, "Since they (IBP) will be closer, we assume they'll bid higher," and others said IBP's savings on shipping would pass to cattlemen in the form of higher prices.¹⁰ IBP spokesman Charles Harness would only concede, "I suppose we might try to buy more" once the \$60 million plant was operating. It does not seem to have occurred to area beef producers that a large plant would be in a much stronger position to dictate price to small ranches and feed yards. A call from the reporter

to an agricultural economist might have revealed the possibility, given the industry's decades of restructuring in other parts of the Midwest. The only gloomy voice in Day 1 of the series came from Larry Earnest, a postmaster and Holcomb's representative on the County Planning Board. "Everyone told me to vote against it," he said of the IBP plant, and "no" is how he voted. His was the sole dissenting vote,¹¹ and it reflected concern that the plant would strain city services and disrupt the rural life to which residents had become accustomed.

The prime concerns in Day 2 of the series involved housing capacity, the need for additional firefighters, police officers and other city and county employees. Though school district and Garden City Community College officials said more classroom space might be needed, given an estimated influx of 7,000 people, or 25 percent of the city's population, they did not mention English as a Second Language or bilingual education. This suggests further that ethnic diversity was not even considered a possible factor in planning for growth.¹²

Perhaps it also demonstrates recognition of southwest Kansas' history of segregation and unequal opportunity for Hispanics, a history that stretches back to the turn of the 20th century. The state of ethnic relations and the *Telegram's* portrayal of Hispanics at the end of the 20th century cannot be understood without reference to economic, labor and immigration history in southwest Kansas from the time the first Mexicans arrived in 1905 to the time when Mexican-Americans came back from World War II. At that point, Mexican-Americans began more assertively claiming their social and political rights¹³.

Segregation, discrimination, and Mexicans' arrival in the Garden

Finney County's boosters between 1900 and 1910 crowed about a wealth of opportunity awaiting those who would pull up stakes and head west for the Arkansas River Valley, made fertile primarily by a state irrigation project and made more appealing through state agricultural subsidy. However, the Progressive Era was not so progressive if you were a Mexican immigrant laborer in rural America. Under the notions of Manifest Destiny and Social Darwinism, Americans considered Mexicans to be inherently inferior racially and culturally, and these notions continued to be widespread when Mexicans arrived around the turn of the 20th century.¹⁴ Though viewed with contempt, Mexicans were considered good laborers. In 1917, a German-American foreman with the Santa Fe Railroad and his White workers considered Mexican laborers "as more or less animals sufficiently tamed to respond to their handler, but otherwise to be left alone unless they got in the way."¹⁵ Though most Mexicans came to work laying and maintaining track, many switched to sugar beet labor when they learned their wives and children could also get work.¹⁶

Boosters hoping to attract farmers to Finney County touted the sugar beet as a miracle crop and the Arkansas River Valley as the cradle of that miracle. A 1908 leaflet sung of the superiority of Finney over "Improved Missouri Land." It boasted that an Arkansas Valley farm of 160 acres yields an income of \$8,300, as compared with an income of \$1,401.50 from a Missouri farm of the same size. Small print notes that for the Arkansas Valley farm, "Above estimates are very conservative." But the small print with the Missouri farm estimate states, "Above facts and figures are furnished by Missouri farmers as all they claim for their land."¹⁷ Reeves notes, "The difference in profitability

lies between 80 acres of sugar beets and 80 acres of corn,” though she fails to mention the state government subsidy of \$100 per ton. Also unmentioned was the de facto subsidy provided by cheap Mexican labor and the barely subsistence wages paid to workers. The seven months from May through November were spent planting, hoeing, thinning, and topping the plants, and the whole family worked the fields from dusk to dawn. The pay: two to nine dollars per family for caring for 100 acres, wages that made Kansas pay the lowest among the fifteen major beet-producing states from 1931 to 1940. The company loaned the family money for food and other necessities, and it provided meager housing. It subtracted the loan from the family’s pay at the end of the season; often the family received no cash once expenses were deducted.¹⁸

In the 1920s, authorities consistently blamed Mexicans for conflicts between Mexicans and Whites in Garden City. All who were arrested were Mexican, and animosity festered among the two communities.¹⁹ In addition, wage and employment discrimination on the railroad were common. Many Hispanics said they received less pay than other workers and seldom worked on crews with non-Mexicans. Though they received the same pay for the same job, Oppenheimer notes that the biggest pay discrepancies concerned job status and hours. Racial prejudice and the language barrier relegated Mexican immigrants to the bottom labor tier through World War II.²⁰

Inequality extended to the educational system, as well. Dionicio Campos (D.C.) Garcia, who would become a city commissioner and Garden City’s second Hispanic mayor in 1974, was born in 1922 to Mexican immigrant parents in Holcomb. When he and his brother Phillip went to register at Hutchinson School, a teacher said, “My

goodness, I can't pronounce that name (Dionicio); choose another." He chose Henry, and he later just went by "Hank."²¹ Garcia spent three years in the first grade because he did not speak enough English to be promoted to second grade.²² He finally earned his General Equivalency Diploma in 1981.²³

Mexicans and Mexican-Americans across Kansas were subjected to segregation until the 1950s in movie theaters and barber shops, and they were not allowed in some sections of city parks, churches and other public places. Some businesses posted signs in their windows reading, "No Mexicans allowed," while Bell Memorial Hospital at the University of Kansas put darker-skinned Mexicans in black wards and light-skinned Mexicans in white wards where the care was much better.²⁴

Economic mobilization

Although social inequality would provide the catalyst for Hispanics to band together and demand equal treatment after the war, economic necessity led Mexican and Mexican-American alike to help each other in both formal and informal ways. In an interview conducted by Robert Oppenheimer, Aniseto Herrera of Garden City said that he and a friend split a Santa Fe Railroad job, each working three days a week on a section gang so that both could receive at least some pay. His two eldest sons out of eleven children had the same arrangement, while his wife, older daughters and younger children took in wash and worked in the beet fields.²⁵ When recession hit in the early 1920s, families shared wages, food and housing. Fiestas and dances were held to raise charity money, and missions opened to help the jobless. Methodist missions led some Mexican-Americans to join the Methodist Church in Garden City. When the Great Depression hit

in the 1930s, mutual aid societies, mirroring the *Sociedades Mutuas Benito Juarez* in Mexico, sprang up to provide aid in the event of death, illness or unemployment. And a sugar beet workers union that formed in the 1920s gained clout in the '30s.²⁶

Organizations founded to fill economic gaps eventually provided a framework of social capital that would be pressed into service to demand social equality in the 1950s. A base of organization had grown in strength and complexity through the first half of the 20th century, mainly oriented toward promoting people's economic survival within the *barrio* although it did not specifically aim at social equality. Mexican immigrant population contributed to the capacity for organization. In 1900, 71 natives of Mexico were listed in the census. By 1910, the number was 8,429, and it rose to 13,770 in 1920. Across the state, about 75 percent of Mexican immigrant men worked for the Santa Fe and Rock Island railroads, but beet employment remained high in southwestern Kansas.²⁷ In Finney County, the Mexican-born population was zero in 1905, but by 1925 it was 268.²⁸

Population gains and solidarity among the Hispanic working poor formed a foundation of mutual assistance and organization that ultimately led to a push for social equality in the face of slights from shops, restaurants and other businesses that sought to continue denying them the same services that Anglos received. This push was fueled by the indignance of returning Mexican-American veterans of World War II whose military services afforded them some measure of equal treatment similar to the experience of African-Americans during World War II. The following account, given in an

ethnographic interview by a Mexican-American veteran of World War II, is typical of the indignities faced by Mexican-Americans:

When I came back, I was wearing my uniform and at that time my brother says let's go into the restaurant and eat and see what happens so we went into this restaurant and I was wearing a uniform and he wasn't but he was a little lighter complected than I was ... the girl that was waiting tables brought him a menu and he ordered his meal and she didn't give me a menu ... I said ah am I not going to have a menu? She said no. I said well how come. She said well because you're a Mexican. I said well I'm going to tell you something honey this is my older brother here. ... He is born in Mexico he is not an American citizen I said I'm born here and I have the United States uniform on and you're turning down an American for a Mexican. ... Anyway she called the cook back there and he stood about 6'6" and he had a meat cleaver in his hands he said what is going on here and she told him what had happened and I told him the same thing that I told her. ... He said we just don't serve Mexicans period.²⁹

So the *Telegram's* enlightened stances on immigration from Latin America did not spring solely from egalitarianism that formed in a vacuum. Social forces bubbled up over a century to help form what constituted acceptable social behavior in the public sphere — and since the 1950s, tolerance for overt discrimination was pushed further and further to the margins of acceptable behavior in the Garden. What little evidence there is of the views of the *Telegram's* editors in any era comes solely by word of mouth. Dolores Hope's column has run in the *Telegram* for a half-century, and in person she seems loath to speak ill of anybody. But in an interview, she told of editor Gervais "Jerry" Reed's appearance at Fiesta in the 1950s; she could not remember which one:

Oh, the Fiesta Committee invited Gerry to give a speech one year, and it was just awful. Filled with stuff he thought was clever but the people were left speechless by it, it was just insulting. And he said, "What did you think of my speech? Are you going to write it up?" And I said, "Of course not. It was awful."³⁰

She would not go into more specific terms, but her husband, Clifford, was more to-the-point in his assessment of the editor: “He really was a racist. He said Mexicans and blacks belonged in the theater balcony.”³¹ To his credit, Reed had been willing to hire Dolores Hope as city editor after her graduation from the William Allen White School of Journalism at the University of Kansas in 1946,³² a time when women with prominent positions in newsrooms were rare.³³

The extent to which discrimination was questioned or even noticed by whites is unclear in Garden City is unclear. Although there clearly was racial segregation in Garden City through the 1950s, word of it rarely showed up in the *Telegram*, and when it did it was almost unrecognizable as such.³⁴ In Hope’s first column, dated December 14, 1954, she alludes to a conversation she had with an African American acquaintance:

Movies in the hereafter brings to mind Buster Lewis, Garden Citian who died not so long ago. Shortly before his death, he was reflecting on his movie-going days. Because of his color, he said, he guessed he had done practically all of his film-viewing from the balcony and that he hadn’t really minded until recent years. His complaint then was one that any aging man, regardless of color, might make. “I’m just gettin’ too old to climb them stairs,” he said.³⁵

Until that conversation, Hope said, she was unaware of racial discrimination in Garden City. But concerning mistreatment of Hispanics, she soon found out, “People knew more than what got into the newspapers.”³⁶

Stories involving Hispanics typically did not appear in the newspaper in the 1940s and 1950s, though Dolores Hope said there was an exception: “They would show up in the police notes for drunkenness, traffic violations, domestic disputes, and other sorts of things.” And although Hispanics are certainly abundant as sources in *Telegram* news

stories in the late 20th century, some areas were less inclusive. For example, although Hispanic surnames appeared on a regular basis in the police blotter in every year of the study, few Hispanics are represented in the social pages. Announcements of weddings and anniversaries run nearly every day, and though as early as 1980 Hispanics represented one in five people in Garden City, notices for the weddings of Latinos represented, at most, one in 10 engagements, weddings and anniversaries. Itzel Rodriguez, the editor of *La Semana* from 1994 to 2001, blamed that on the lack of a point person for Hispanics in the community to go to with such notices. “It is important to have a Latino presence on advisory boards or a contact person in the newsroom for Spanish-speakers to provide tips to,” Rodriguez said.³⁷

Asked about Hispanic immigration today, Hope revealed a mix of empathy and pragmatism. “On Fulton Street, in motels, in restaurants and in nightclubs, Hispanic immigrants are making it possible for businesses to keep doing business,” she said. The same applies to businesses in places with dwindling populations, she said, pointing to nearby Rexford and Satanta as examples: “What saves these towns? Hispanic workers. These people are doing the work.”³⁸

Fluent English, fluid discourse

The possibility that the Hispanic population would grow with the arrival of the packers doesn't appear to have even been on the city's radar. But ethnic conflict between Anglos and Garden City's already sizeable Hispanic minority even before the Latino migrant influx to come is evidenced by two key events in 1980. The first: conflict over the Garden City Public School District's bilingual education program from spring

through fall. The second: A riot in August, first framed as a “rock-and-bottle-throwing melee” between police and a crowd that was triggered by fighting between Mexican-Americans and whites.

The bilingual education conflict involved concerns raised by Garden City’s Mexican-American Council for Education about how the job of the district’s bilingual education director, Ladistado Hernandez, would be defined. Jane Daly’s Feb. 15, 1980, profile of MACE weighed in at 34 column inches and provided a comprehensive overview of the school district’s offenses as perceived by Hispanic parents. MACE was founded by concerned residents who banded together as an interest group in April 1979 to ensure bilingual education for children whose primary language is not English.

Parents decided to organize after “longterm problems” with the school district. Failure to implement bilingual services “brought it (decision to organize) to a head” when parents and children had only been getting ‘lip service’ instead of action.”³⁹

Daly writes that the group “does not see themselves as a group of rabblers demanding privileges, as they say they have been branded by the establishment. They are merely asking the district to provide ‘any person who speaks a different language the legal right to an equal education as stated in the laws of Supreme Court rulings and the Constitution.’”⁴⁰ Absent from the article is any school district response to MACE’s allegations, which suggests either sympathy with the subjects or blatant oversight on the part of the reporter. What the profile does have in abundance is details of problems and solutions as seen by the group. Daly quotes a MACE member’s prediction about how IBP would affect the community. The member foresees issues unmentioned in projections made by company, city, and county officials:

“There’s a lot of talk now that IBP will bring in a large percent of minority. MACE is saying now is the time to act. If you don’t straighten things out now, it will be difficult in the future. If you think it’s tough now, think what it will be then. ... We realize that Garden City is a ship by itself in Kansas, but that should necessitate some foresight, understanding and compassion. But if IBP brings in all the Mexicans that has been estimated we’re going to have some real, big problems here. We want to get people here who have the expertise. And if it takes more money, they should do it.”⁴¹

The article provides an early glimpse at one of the many ways the *Telegram*’s coverage of Hispanics runs counter to national trends. Whereas numerous studies cite the presence of Hispanics only as criminals, illegal immigrants, and victims of crime in the news media at large, within the time frame of this study the *Telegram* consistently portrayed Hispanics as a population with legitimate concerns and prescriptions for resolving them. That’s not to say that all of those solutions are popular. Daly enumerates a list of demands MACE offered at a December school board meeting: Fire the district’s superintendent and two assistant superintendents; increase the salary of the bilingual education director to \$25,000 from \$18,000 immediately; increase salaries of bilingual teachers and aides immediately; launch a public relations campaign to promote bilingual education; give MACE and other Mexican-American groups “a strong voice” in hiring replacements for the administrators that MACE demands be fired; promote the bilingual education director to assistant superintendent; and increase the bilingual program’s staff.⁴²

Events of the previous decade fueled the fury of MACE’s membership. The Office of Civil Rights cited the district in 1972 for noncompliance with federal regulations dictating that equal education be provided to students whose primary

language is not English.⁴³ In 1974, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Lau v. Nichols* that “failure to provide information and services in languages other than English could result in discrimination on the basis of national origin where the failure to do so resulted in a significant number of limited English proficiency (LEP) beneficiaries from the same language minority being unable to fully realize the intended benefits of a federally assisted program or activity.”⁴⁴ After the *Lau* decision, the school district was again cited for noncompliance in 1978.⁴⁵ And beyond the district’s foot-dragging, Daly’s sources say their children suffered retaliation for their parents’ actions. In one instance, MACE chairwoman Gloria Sandoval said a teacher embarrassed a child in front of his classmates “by using generalizations such as ‘when you Mexicans...’”⁴⁶

The MACE profile was followed five days later by a letter to the editor accusing the group of standing only for Mexican-Americans and not for other non-English-speaking populations:

They are asking for equal education for any person who speaks a different language, not just Spanish. But it seems that Spanish is the only language they’re worried about. They want the district to supply special classes for Spanish speaking students. They are not worried about other students who can’t speak English, such as the Vietnamese students. (By the way, those kids from Vietnam learned English on their own, without any help from MACE, in less than 6 months by working 3 to 4 hours a day.)⁴⁷

The letter ridiculed the group’s proposals for change in the school district, accusing it of being selfish. Finally, the writer showed he did not get the point of concern over a teacher addressing a Hispanic child with the phrase, “when you Mexicans,” asserting that the word “Mexicans” was the source of embarrassment, not the phrasing of

“you Mexicans,” which implies otherness and, ostensibly from the point of view of the speaker, inferiority.⁴⁸

As if in answer to the letter, the *Telegram* carried a front-page account the following week of what it’s like in a bilingual education classroom, depicting smiling first-graders, White and Hispanic alike, having fun while learning both English and Spanish in one of the first bilingual classes at Garfield School. Says teacher Jeanine Campbell, “We try to emphasize that no matter where you come from, you’re okay. We’re here to help you and you’re here to help us.”⁴⁹

MACE’s complaints weren’t the end of the matter. The committee’s anger with the school board was joined by two groups. The first consisted of district patrons threatening to file for a recall election to remove board members from office; their concerns were the school board’s micromanagement and use of closed executive sessions to make decisions. The second consisted of parents of students at Kenneth Henderson Junior High School who demanded that the school’s principal and the district’s bilingual director be reinstated after the board decided against renewing his contract.⁵⁰ Perhaps to keep from misinterpreting the views of the three groups, the *Telegram* ran verbatim text of statements by their spokespeople.⁵¹ Conception Mangana, speaking for the Henderson parents, said the group was primarily concerned with the disruption that would accompany a change in principals. And Gloria Sandoval, on behalf of MACE, voiced similar grievances to those Mangana raised. The difference between them, however, is that Sandoval tied MACE’s concerns directly to race:

The Garden City school system is at present a troubled one. Teacher turnover is high, lawsuits and complaints of discrimination in hiring and

promotion have been filed against the board and our own MACE organization has been forced to forward an administrative complaint to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare because of your misuse of bilingual Title VII funds. ... We feel that Mr. Hernandez has worked too hard, in the short time he has had, for this board not to renew his contract. We have seen him promote bilingual education as had never been done before. We have seen him encourage parental participation among parents who had always before felt excluded from participation. We have seen him working very hard with recruitment of bilingual teachers and aides. In short, the good work he has done in the past few months has gained him the trust of the Hispanic community and we do not believe that it would be in the best interest of the bilingual program to now lose him.⁵²

MACE's advocacy of bilingual education was greeted by dissent in some quarters, including an Aug. 30 letter to the editor remarking:

The demands of the Mexicans in Finney County (and elsewhere) are getting ridiculous. If they have chosen to live in the United States, the sooner they adapt to this country, the better. "When in Rome, do as the Romans do," was a maxim I was brought up with, teaching me at an early age to adapt. ... I would urge the Mexicans to continue to speak Mexican (which is quite different from Spanish) among themselves, but also to learn English which is what they will need in order to obtain and hold jobs the rest of their lives.⁵³

Of course, Gloria Sandoval took little time to respond with her own letter, faithfully reproduced by Brooks:

The people making demands in Finney County are U.S. citizens and residents. You sir, are in Rome, (especially in Oklahoma) in a land where Spanish was spoken by conquistadors 200 years before the arrival of English, a land called Aztlan from where the Aztec tribes migrated south around the 12th century.... Your maxim has no place in the discussion of today's educational issues. But if you insist, then a course in Spanish (not Mexican) is in order for you. Today's children must not only learn English but become educated as well. They must learn to think, how to conceptualize, how to be creative, imaginative and to learn good self-images. They must learn in a manner that will allow them to create jobs for everyone. Why limit a child to an education that will allow him to only obtain and hold a job?⁵⁴

In the months to come, Dolores Hope made a point of answering the critics of bilingual education. In November 1980, she used her “Distaff Side” column to cover bilingual education advocate Samuel Betances, who told a Garden City Community College audience:

Bilingual education is committed to producing American citizens because to be an American, you have got to speak English ... you cannot get along in this country unless you do. Teaching English is what bilingual education is all about BUT while students learn English, WHICH THEY MUST LEARN, they are taught math and science and geography in the language they already know. ... bilingual education IS compatible with the American way of life.⁵⁵

Where some worked to stymie bilingual education in Garden City, businesses and community agencies were already beginning to accommodate those who did not speak English. The business page informed readers that businesses were communicating with Spanish-speaking customers through bilingual employees. And though most sources said they were game to try to communicate nonverbally through hand signals, one remarked, “I think that this problem isn’t as bad as most people think. Necessity will make them speak English. We’ve talked about our employees taking some crash courses out at the college, but it seems like these people (Mexican-Americans) are taking care of themselves by picking up what they need to know.”⁵⁶ By December, public radio station KANZ in nearby Pierceville started a pilot program of supplemental lessons in English as a second language. Each day, two five-minute lessons would be broadcast, with a review of the week’s lessons every Friday.⁵⁷ The community was making efforts to reach out to Spanish-speakers. But not all relations among the ethnic groups were amiable.

Riot, yes, but was it a race riot?

It seemed more like a scene out of Los Angeles, Newark, or Philadelphia during the race riots of 1967. But when harsh words between an Anglo and the Mexican-American who defeated him in a barroom arm-wrestling match erupted into an argument and then boiled into the streets, the town was Garden City, the date, Aug. 8, 1980. Thirty people were arrested as people in a crowd of 250 to 300 hurled rocks and bottles at police. Ill-equipped to deal with so many people, police relied on firefighters to break up the crowd with a fire hose. At least that was the first-day story. Sources included police and a local TV news director, but no civilian witnesses were quoted.⁵⁸ Such omission could be written off to lack of time to produce the story on deadline. Because the *Telegram* is an afternoon paper, it would have been unusual for a reporter to have been monitoring police radio traffic or on the police beat when the riot occurred between 11:30 p.m. and 1:30 a.m. the night before publication.

But deadline pressure would have been much lighter for the next opportunity to print follow-ups. With no paper published on Sunday, the *Telegram* had time to regroup and ask more questions for the Monday paper. The second-day stories focused on reaction to the melee, which two unnamed witnesses blamed in part on the overreaction of “young and inexperienced” police officers.⁵⁹

In all accounts, culpability for the fight inside the bar lies with the two arm-wrestlers; how germane their ethnicity may have been fades further into the background as the story plays out over the next week. But it is the police, not Mexican-Americans, who are framed as the culprits for the riot that ensued. “The cops stayed around too long. They should have got that fight broken up and got out of there,” said one of the unnamed

witnesses, adding that the fight involved only six people. According to another witness, “When you see six patrol cars pull up and six officers get out of each car, there’s going to be trouble. ... (They) should have let the two individuals have their fight and go home” rather than try to break up the crowds outside the bar.

In the lead editorial on Aug. 11, 1980, editor and publisher Fred Brooks tried to make sense of the riot:

There were cries of police brutality from the mob attacking law men. You figure that out. There were also complaints, we are told, of overreaction of police. But from all reports we have, the police, troopers and deputies handled themselves well in an extremely hostile and dangerous situation. You can bet, though, that the Marquis of Queensbury rules did not apply. Only those at the scene know what happened and in the heat of the battle they may not be sure.⁶⁰

The third-day story on the riot, at least the one on the front page, featured a professor of forensic psychiatry at the Meninger Institute in Topeka who explained mob psychology and the assistant director of the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center’s explanation of how police are prepared to deal with mobs. That’s interesting but esoteric compared to what ran on page 3: three Garden Citians, all with Hispanic surnames, who blamed the riot on “action-hungry law enforcement officers and firemen who surrounded The Brick Barn, 901 E. Fulton, and preyed on exiting tavern patrons.”⁶¹ Thomas M. Herrera said he was arrested for standing by his car talking to friends. Timothy R. Cruz said he was arrested for asking why police struck his friend. And the *Telegram* gave this account about Raymond Lee Muñoz:

Muñoz said he had approached an officer and told him there was no reason to hit anyone. “Then they threw me against the cop car, and they said, “We wanted you first, you Mexican,” Muñoz said. During his handcuffing, he lost his glasses. “I asked them (officers) three times to

help me find my glasses,” he said. “Then they threw me against a car and beat me with a club.”⁶²

Notably, explicit references to the ethnicity of those involved in the riot are played down in *Telegram* articles, with the exception of Muñoz’s account that the police had called him “you Mexican.” Lack of ethnic categorization of those arrested, lack of judgment against the Hispanics involved and the decision to play down the men’s accusations against the police fit the bill of three of the five traits that constitute frames, according to Entman. Combined, they suggest a conscious decision to avoid provoking inter-ethnic tension. But in tandem with the lack of police comment about the three men’s account — police officials declined to say anything pending an internal investigation of the officers’ conduct — play of the story could indicate an effort to simply be fair to all parties. No follow-up on any such internal inquiry appears in the *Telegram*, and it does not appear that the paper pressed the matter. The story was allowed, for the most part, to die down from there, with only one account about it appearing in the next month. That article, about the first disorderly conduct trial connected to the riot, noted that charges against Herrera and Cruz had been dropped.⁶³

In all stories about the riot, any expectation that institutional elites would be included and minorities excluded are confounded. As sources, Hispanics are well-represented, both in articles about the riot and about the school board controversy. As reporters, they are nonexistent. But Brooks did make an effort to provide voices Garden City’s Mexican-Americans could relate to later in the form of the syndicated Hispanic Link column.

Giving Hispanics a voice in the press: Hispanic Link

The presence of Hispanic Link, a three-day-a-week fixture in the *Telegram* since January 1980, also provides evidence to counter interpretations of latent anti-Hispanic bias. Appearing without explanation by the editor, Washington, D.C.-based Hispanic Link presents the viewpoints of Latino writers across the United States. Its bylines are diverse. In this example of a typical Hispanic Link column, a writer makes the case that the federal government thinks it is in its best interest not to do anything about illegal immigration because it provides a source of undocumented workers who:

...are a blessing to many segments of the business community. ... Cheap, energetic, easily intimidated, quickly replenishable employees are hard to find these days. (Explains one satisfied customer: "It's plain economics. No production, no pay. And I can replace one wetback with another quicker than you can change the ribbon on your typewriter.") ... It's a good deal for everyone. It offers criminals a continuous flow of new people to beat and plunder with near-immunity. It gives bigots a platform to preach, both subtly and openly, against the mongrelization of America. And the revolutionaries have their victims-of-injustice to parade as proof that capitalism is cruel. Anyone left out?⁶⁴

The vitriol of Hispanic Link's voice provided a national context for the issues addressed in the *Telegram's* reports on Mexican-Americans in Garden. Intentionally or not, the *Telegram* took on the role of educator to the community in public discourse over the roles of majority and minority. Hispanic Link's role was to show that Garden City was not alone in its struggles with multicultural issues.

Local news media had a void to be filled to serve Garden City's sizable Mexican-American population, but the paper had no Latino or Spanish-speaking reporters. The syndicates provided the means to fill that void. In a community where the civic agenda was largely set by Anglos, Hispanic Link provided a smorgasbord of topics of interest to

the Latino community — as well as raw material from which non-Hispanics might form opinions about Hispanics. A sampling of headlines reveals the topics the column covers: “Will 1980s be the decade of Hispanics?”⁶⁵ “Among Hispanics, Puerto Ricans claim a distinction,”⁶⁶ “G.I. Forum: stepping out of character?”⁶⁷ “What happens to a barrio when the Hispanics move out?”⁶⁸ “Hispanics: many shapes, sizes and solutions”⁶⁹ “In search of the perfect poor white family,”⁷⁰ “Glow of America’s freedom lures new immigrants,”⁷¹ and “Turning a Mexican worker’s promise into a problem.”⁷² Not until July would the *Telegram* explain to its readers why it picked up the column. Columnist Dolores Hope wrote:

The Boss here at the Temple of Truth, Fred Brooks, says it isn’t always easy to decide what to buy and try on Telegram readers. Late in 1979 he took a flyer on a feature which we think is a winner ... “Hispanic Link.” ... “We are 20 percent Mexican-American in Garden City,” he (Brooks) said. “Hispanic Link” sounded as if it would offer something we’d be missing, that it would give us all some perspective on the problems and hopes of the people who are the largest minority.”

The column, Hope wrote, received a modest amount of favorable comment from Hispanic readers but little response from anyone else. She concludes:

You may not always agree with the link writers, but the most potent learning experiences are those which bring together conflicting points of view within a community. No one person or group is in sole possession of wisdom. The process in our system is, in its outcome, often a brokered solution.⁷³

The *Telegram*’s decision to include Hispanic voices in its report indicates sensitivity to both demographics and the political climate. Pedro Sandoval, in an Aug. 3, 1980, letter to the editor on behalf of MACE, praised the new column:

The series of articles, “Hispanic Link,” that have been appearing in our local newspaper are a most welcome asset to not only the Hispanics but

also to the Gringos as well. These continued articles are informative and educational and they also begin to erase a lot of negatives of the many misunderstandings that people have of other people for the reason that we do not know enough about each other. In the past, many times the only time that Hispanics were given the full treatment by the media was in their wrongdoings. This is not to (say) that we don't still get censored, deleted or biased reporting from other media. It is our sincere hope that other editors will follow the precedent and standard of reporting that you have brought forth to fill the need of all the people.⁷⁴

And though its inclusion of Hispanic Link would dwindle from three days every week in 1980 to twice or three times a week, space permitting, by 1983, the *Telegram* launched the first bilingual Spanish-English newspaper in the state, *La Semana*, in 1991.

This chapter has addressed the state of ethnic relations in the years leading up to this project's examination of coverage of immigration. But how would Garden City accommodate the influx of outsiders to take the jobs that could not be filled by local labor from 1980 to 2000, and how would coverage of the newcomers and the community's accommodation of them shift in the *Telegram*? It appears from *Telegram* articles in the early 1980s that local government and civic organizations — with the exception of MACE and other Mexican-American groups — thought little about how the ethnic mix would change. Although government officials expected increased demand for services, they do not appear to have anticipated a change in the kind of needs the newcomers might have, or even the possibility that the newcomers would not be Anglos. Housing, police, fire protection, social services, health care and education are among the resources that are strained by the increased population that accompanies a meatpacking operation. The *Telegram*'s coverage of those growth-related issues, and conflict over the extent to which

non-English-speakers should be accommodated by native Garden Citians, will be the subject of Chapter 5.

Along with pressure for more government services comes disruption to the social fabric as the Anglo majority attempts to maintain the status quo in the face of Latino growth from marginal group to equal partner in the community. Chapter 6 will examine the *Telegram*'s framing of nativist backlash topics, specifically the amnesty extended to undocumented immigrants by the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 and subsequent legislation that would restrict government assistance to immigrants.

Chapter 7 will address the way the debate over bilingual education boiled over into the nativist debate over whether English should be the official language of the state. As part of that examination, the chapter will consider the *Telegram*'s introduction of *La Semana*, a weekly publication targeted at Spanish-speaking residents of the region that was initially bilingual but switched to Spanish-only within six months of its launch.

What each of these chapters has in common is the seemingly conscious role that *Telegram* editors and reporters played in enhancing the context of reception for Hispanic immigrants. When anti-immigrant nativism evidenced itself in the form of letters to the editor or virulent comment at public gatherings, the timing of articles suggests that the paper responded by assigning reporters to topics that would educate the readership about the controversy. In doing so, the *Telegram* played a role in extinguishing stereotypes and promoted good relations among people who, while they may not share the same ethnic heritage, had to learn how to civilly share the same public spaces. Unlike the majority of American newspapers, the *Telegram* portrayed Hispanics as a positive force. The paper

did not always use what would now be considered racially sensitive language — the term “wetback” appears on occasion and the term “alien” is used frequently in both local and wire coverage for the first nine years of the study, as do other unflattering words. But these instances seem inadvertent or simply ignorant that the words may give offense, given the generally sympathetic way immigrants are framed as people seeking a better life, people contributing to the cultural fabric of the community, and people who deserve to be rewarded for working hard to improve their lots in life.

Mexican-American solidarity, invisible and inaudible to those who only spoke English from the turn of the 20th century to the Eisenhower era, provided a foundation of organization and motivation for a generation of Hispanics whose voices, in English, would grow louder in the 1970s. With unity of purpose and the courts as their means, they would begin to demand rights that had been denied their grandparents under Kansas law and their more distant ancestors under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. And the *Telegram*, with Fred Brooks and Jim Bloom as its editors, would prove far more sympathetic than Reed. Garden City’s Hispanics would be given their say in print starting in at least 1980 — and from 1991 on, they would have a print voice in Spanish with the introduction of *La Semana*.

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¹ James Craig, “How to handle Mexican labor,” *Santa Fe Magazine*, November 1914, pp. 27-29, quoted in Cynthia Mines, *Riding the Rails to Kansas: The Mexican Immigrants*, 1980, unpublished manuscript commissioned by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

² Pedro “Pete” Sandoval, “Editorial created racial tensions,” letter to the editor in the *Garden City Telegram*, Oct. 30, 1991, p. 4.

³ For purposes of this study, “Hispanic” and “Latino” will be used interchangeably unless a more specific term, such as “Mexican-American” or “Salvadoran immigrant” is more appropriate in context. “Hispanic” and “Latino” should be taken to mean a person whose ancestry derives from the predominantly Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America, Spain and its former colonies. The term itself is the subject of some controversy, in that some say “Hispanic,” a term created by the U.S. government, implies Spain’s

superiority over other countries that fit this definition. Some would prefer “Latino” instead. Others assert that both of these labels should be avoided because they promote the misconception that Hispanics or Latinos all fit a common description when they may be from many countries, speak different languages, and may even be fair-complected.

⁴ For a more in-depth description of these stereotypes, see Oscar Gandy, “From Bad to Worse — The Media’s Framing of Race,” in E. Dennis & E. Pease, eds., *The Media in Black and White*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers. 2000, and Dixon, T. L. & Linz, D. 2000. Overrepresentation and underrepresentation of African Americans and Latinos as lawbreakers on television news. *Journal of Communication*, 50 (2), 131-154. Also, see Robert Entman, “Framing: toward clarification of a fractured paradigm.” *Journal of Communication*, 43 (4): 51-8.

⁵ Pam Zubeck, “Finney, in boom era, on brink of another,” *Garden City Telegram*, Nov. 24, 1979, p. 1. From here on, the *Telegram* will be referred to in endnotes as *GCT*.

⁶ The sources were the manager of Garden City Job Service Center, Alan Reidel; IBP spokesman Charles Harness; Dennis McKee, director of planning and community development at the Kansas Department of Economic Development; Larry Penka, manager of Ingalls Feed Yard; Gary Salyer, co-owner of the Wheat Lands Motor Inn; Tom Pratt, manager of the Garden City Hilton Inn; Harley Foulks, manager of the Garden City Co-op; and Kenneth Dilldine, manager of the Farmland meatpacking plant.

⁷ Zubeck, “Finney, in boom era, on brink of another.”

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Zubeck, “Cattlemen hope for price jump on live cattle,” *GCT*, Nov. 24, 1979, p. 3.

¹¹ “Problems for Holcomb,” no byline, *GCT*, Nov. 24, 1979, p. 3.

¹² Zubeck, Pam, “IBP: more jobs, money, people ... and more demands,” *GCT*, Nov. 26, 1979, p. 1.

¹³ Hispanic community leader Pedro “Pete” Sandoval wrote about his experiences upon his return from the war in *Telegram* letters to the editor and columns for *La Semana*. He also tells the story of Hispanics demanding their rights in personality profiles in the *Telegram*.

¹⁴ Robert Oppenheimer, 2003. “Acculturation or assimilation: Mexican immigrants in Kansas, 1900 to World War II,” in Napier R. (ed.), *Kansas and the West: New Perspectives*, pp. 276-298. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.

¹⁵ Oppenheimer, 278.

¹⁶ J.R. Shortridge, 1995. *Peopling the Plains: Who Settled Where in Frontier Kansas*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.

¹⁷ Agnesa Reeves, 1996. *Constant Frontier: The Continuing History of Finney County, Kansas*. Garden City, Kansas: Finney County Historical Society, p. 37. A pamphlet from a couple of years earlier also touts the modern conveniences of Garden City and provides detailed testimonials from immigrant farmers on their first beet crops: Norris Bros. 1905. *A Glimpse of Garden City and Finney County Kansas: The Gems of the Great Arkansas Valley*. Garden City: Norris Bros. Printers and Binders.

¹⁸ Oppenheimer, 283.

¹⁹ Oppenheimer, 290.

²⁰ Oppenheimer, 285.

²¹ Reeves, p. 350.

²² Oppenheimer, 291.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Oppenheimer, 278.

²⁵ Oppenheimer, 291.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Shortridge, p. 171.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Oppenheimer, ethnographic interview, p. 279.

³⁰ Author’s interview with Dolores and Clifford Hope in Garden City, August 9, 2006.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

- ³³ Wm. David Sloan, 2005. *The Media in America: A History*. Northport, Alabama: Vision Press.
- ³⁴ Author's interview with Dolores Hope.
- ³⁵ Dolores Hope. "Distaff Side" column, *GCT*, Dec. 16, 1954, page 2.
- ³⁶ Author's interview with Dolores Hope.
- ³⁷ Author's interview with Itzel Rodriguez, Aug. 9, 2006. When she was a reporter and editor for the *Telegram* and *La Semana*, her surname was Stewart.
- ³⁸ Ibid.
- ³⁹ Jane Daly, "Mexican American students: 'it's a lopsided dash,'" *Garden City Telegram*, Feb. 15, 1980, page 2.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid.
- ⁴¹ Ibid. Daly quotes Dennis Garcia, a member of MACE.
- ⁴² Ibid.
- ⁴³ Ibid.
- ⁴⁴ Title VI Legal Manual. U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division. Online archive accessed Sept. 22, 2006. www.usdoj.gov/crt/cor/coord/vimanual.htm
- ⁴⁵ Daly, "Mexican American students: 'it's a lopsided dash.'"
- ⁴⁶ Ibid.
- ⁴⁷ Glenn Wiebe, "Vietnamese learned English on their own," letter to the editor, *GCT*, Feb. 20, 1980, p. 4.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid.
- ⁴⁹ Jane Daly, "No matter where you come from, you're okay," *GCT*, Feb. 22, 1980, p. 1.
- ⁵⁰ Jane Daly, "School board critics seek attitude change," *GCT*, April 8, 1980, p. 1.
- ⁵¹ *Telegram* staff, "Local lawyer assails school board action," "Parent asks board to reconsider Woodson contract," *GCT*, April 8, 1980, p. 3.
- ⁵² *Telegram* staff, "Mexican-American Council on Education questions school board," *GCT*, April 8, 1980, p. 2.
- ⁵³ Joel Fant Trout, "Bilingual demands ridiculous," letter to the editor, *GCT*, Aug. 30, 1980, p. 4.
- ⁵⁴ Gloria Mesa de Sandoval, "Bilingual education critic answered," letter to the editor, *GCT*, Sept. 8, 1980, p. 4.
- ⁵⁵ Dolores Hope, "Thoughts on bilingual ed." Distaff Side column, *GCT*, Nov. 24, 1980, p. 4.
- ⁵⁶ Pam Zubeck, "GC business world is bridging language gap," *GCT*, Oct. 4, 1980, p. 5.
- ⁵⁷ *Telegram* staff, "English as a second language program on public radio," *GCT*, Dec. 11, 1980, p. 3.
- ⁵⁸ Pam Zubeck, "Riot erupts in Garden City; 30 arrested," *GCT*, Aug. 9, 1980, p. 1.
- ⁵⁹ Pam Zubeck, "Reactions mixed following melee," *GCT*, Aug. 11, 1980, p. 1.
- ⁶⁰ Fred Brooks, "Friday night's shocker," editorial, *GCT*, Aug. 11, 1980, p. 4.
- ⁶¹ Mary Jo Prochazka, "Three men blame riot on action-hungry law officers," *GCT*, Aug. 13, 1980, p. 3.
- ⁶² Ibid.
- ⁶³ *Telegram* staff, "August riot: Two guilty; charges against two dismissed," *GCT*, Sept. 11, 1980, p. 3.
- ⁶⁴ Doug Martinez, "Illegal immigration: the problem's the solution?" Hispanic Link column, Feb. 15, 1980, page 7. Oddly, this one appeared on a lifestyle page with the Ann Landers advice column rather than on the opinion page with other political commentary. Its appearance here suggests that it was viewed by the editors as a lifestyle column.
- ⁶⁵ *GCT*, Feb. 11, 1980, People page, p. 6.
- ⁶⁶ *GCT*, Feb. 18, 1980, People page, p. 6.
- ⁶⁷ *GCT*, Feb. 21, 1980, page 9. G.I. Forum had just taken a stance against reinstating the military draft on the grounds that those drafted were more likely to be poor and minorities, populations underrepresented on local draft boards. G.I. Forum was founded by Hispanic veterans of World War II who, after experiencing an environment free of segregation and discrimination in the military, wanted to band together to eliminate segregation in civilian life, too. The column explains that the Forum "came into existence because one soldier, Pvt. Felix Longoria, after being killed in action during World War II, was denied a burial plot in his home town of Three Rivers, Texas, because he was Mexican American."
- ⁶⁸ *GCT*, March 3, 1980, page 7.
- ⁶⁹ *GCT*, March 12, 1980, page 5.

⁷⁰ *GCT*, March 25, 1980, People page, p. 5. This column by the director of the Southwestern Regional Office of the U.S. Commission of Civil Rights, Richard Avena, lampoons Jan Jarboe's *Texas Monthly* article "Roots: The Mexican Version." Jarboe takes a bedroll with her and lives for a week with a Mexican-American family and describes, in stereotypical terms, the plight of the poor Hispanic family. Avena, in turn, offers to do the same with a poor white family. His stereotypes of rural Whites return the favor relative by relative: "The family I stay with must be a proud, enduring family which likes corn flakes and white bread, and always has a plate full of each on its small, linoleum-covered table. The father should be a man of strong will and gentle command, with a disability that keeps him from working. ... The mother must smile wanly and spin off homilies and folk remedies. ... Her little girl, Wanda Sue, cuddles her dirty, one-armed doll and confides to it that when she grows up, they'll both be Dallas Cowboy cheerleaders." Etc.

⁷¹ *GCT*, July 3, 1980, page 9.

⁷² *GCT*, July 8, 1980, page 14.

⁷³ Dolores Hope, "Hispanic link," *GCT*, July 18, 1980. Hope's column appears under the label "Distaff Side." In an interview August 8, 2006, Hope said the name came from its origin as a women's social column when it was introduced in 1956. A collection of social observation, digests of national reporting that she thought would be informative to *GCT* readers, and a chronicle of day-to-day living in Garden City, the column almost immediately defied the mission set forth by the editor who introduced it as a ladies' social column by branching out into serious societal concerns.

⁷⁴ Pedro "Pete" Sandoval, "'Hispanic Link' bridges gap," letter to the editor, *GCT*, Aug. 3, 1980, p. 4.

CHAPTER 5
BEYOND SOMBREROS, GANGS AND ALIENS:
FRESH HISPANIC FRAMES IN A GROWING GARDEN

“What does an American look like?
What does an American sound like? For that matter,
what language does an American speak?”

— *Jim Bailey, Immigration and Naturalization Service office supervisor, on how difficult it can be for employers to determine whether a job applicant is legal*¹

“What we’re talking about is people. We shouldn’t lose sight of that.”
— *Jim Bloom, editor and publisher of the Telegram from 1989 to 1995, on coverage of immigrants*²

With few exceptions, the *Telegram*’s frames of Hispanics and Mexican immigrants contradicted more common stereotypical news portrayal of them as criminals and interlopers taking away American jobs. Its terminology took a long time to switch from the dehumanizing use of the term “illegal alien” to the inclusive “illegal immigrant,” “undocumented worker” or “undocumented immigrant,” but the *Telegram*’s narrative frames have long portrayed immigrants positively. Editor and publisher Fred Brooks’ outlook on immigration played a substantial role in this, and his influence shows in the way Hispanics are portrayed both as a group and as individuals. In interviews and in community presentations, he points to Hispanics as positive examples. Speaking at the 1983 Mexican Fiesta, Brooks remarked:

Hispanics have added a positive dimension to the quality of life in this community. One example is this sharing of your cultural heritage with others. You have much to be proud of as you celebrate Hispanic Heritage Week. ... This is a changing society and it is changing for the better at long last for Hispanics and other minorities. While the vestiges of discrimination remain because you can’t write a law that changes men’s hearts toward their neighbors, there are opportunities today for young Hispanics that their parents and grandparents never enjoyed.³

Addressing the struggle to remove language barriers, he cited the school district's bilingual education programs:

It is indeed difficult enough to get through school for English-speaking students. You are fortunate to have many leaders in this community, role models, men and women to look up to and listen to. D.C. Garcia has served this community as an elected official, as city commissioner and mayor. Hank is a success story, but most of all he has succeeded as a human being. He is an inspiration to all who know him. He has been in the forefront in the fight for Hispanic rights and for equal opportunity, especially in education. I remember well the night several years ago at the height of the bilingual education controversy when Hank Garcia had heard enough at a meeting at the high school. Eyes blazing, he walked to the center of the room, recounted his own struggle to get an education, including his frustration with the language barrier and how he was forced to spend three years in the first grade because he couldn't understand the teacher. A few years later, he was forced to drop out of school and go to work. That night he made a telling argument about the need for bilingual education."⁴

The *Telegram*, then, added to an impoverished lexicon of media frames for Hispanics, immigrant and native alike, through its routine inclusion of success stories. The new frames fall into three categories: assimilated Hispanic as victor over racism and hardship, immigrant Hispanic as hard worker, and Hispanic as preserver of culture. The three frames frequently show up simultaneously in the same story. A 1983 profile of two-time Mexican Fiesta president Gregorio Mujica typifies this, simultaneously telling about the life of Mujica, born at the turn of the century and a Garden City resident since 1913, and the event's cultural importance. Reporter Dolores Hope paraphrases Mujica as describing it as "a festive occasion, a happy time, a way of celebrating life in a new country and of giving an outlet for the people, especially for the young, who worked so hard and had so little time for socializing."⁵

Fiesta's date is connected to the anniversary of Mexican independence from Spain and therefore is connected to Mexican cultural heritage. Nonetheless, Mujica, who like many other Mexican immigrants worked in the beet fields and on the Santa Fe Railroad, said celebrating life outweighed celebrating ancestry. "We older folks, we said we work here. We wanted citizenship here and this was our country now. But we like to remember our old ways ... our culture too."⁶

The frame of immigrant Hispanic as hard worker is exemplified by a story about the lives of Mexican immigrants who called Garden City home and took to the road to find work when no work could be found in the beet fields of Finney County. A photo spread depicts the immigrants, including:

- A group of section gang workers taking a break from their work repairing railroad track, possibly in the 1930s.

- The Mora, Rodriguez and Mujica families in the 1930s outside the two-room house they shared on a Finney County farmer's land.

- Dr. Ladi Hernandez, superintendent of Catholic schools in Great Bend, working in his boyhood in a beet field in the 1930s or 1940s. The lead-in on the photo caption reads, "From beets to books."

- A group of Hispanic baseball players posing for their 1928 team photo.

- Penny Cleaners, one of the first Garden City employers to hire Hispanics.

- Three Garden City girls and their father taking a break from work in a Nebraska potato field.⁷

The article tells of migrant labor families ranging as far as California to find jobs picking produce and details Garden City Hispanics' transition from agriculture to town jobs as the color line faded after World War II. The tone of writing suggests reverence for the sacrifices of older Mexican-Americans:

The contributions of citizens of Mexican descent in this community can be told in the work they came here to do, the work they have done and the work they are doing. Their lives and work here since the beginning of the 20th century is celebrated with a fiesta each year on Mexico's Independence Day, Sept. 15. It is an occasion of pride in their Mexican heritage and in their U.S. citizenship as is shown in this year's Fiesta theme, "Heritage Pride — American Proud."⁸

It is difficult to assess the intent of such articles. Some research suggests that Garden City's Ministerial Alliance coordinated with the *Telegram* to tell the stories of immigrants in a humanistic way to help people get to know them as individuals and quash rumors and stereotypes about them.⁹ But Brooks denied any team effort between the newspaper and any outside group:

If we did what they were hoping we would do, that was just by chance — there was no coordination between us and the Ministerial Alliance. We just covered what people needed to know. No one coordinated our coverage except me. We just had a job to do, and we did it.¹⁰

In the community, the paper's editors were seen as forces of inclusiveness. The Rev. Dave Sweley, pastor at Garden City Presbyterian Church, where Bloom was a member, gives a synopsis of *Telegram* editors and how they molded coverage of immigration:

Brooks was a dynamic advocate for immigrants, and Jim Bloom was here at the end of the boom — he was the most caring editor we had. Tom Bell was not as passionate as Jim about immigrants, but they were both good Christian men. Jim was viewed as kind of an outlaw — he said things in

his editorials that were more of reporting, and they got some people mad. He was not afraid of subscribers like some editors. All their faith had something to do with the dynamic of the paper. ... The Telegram has made a significant difference in how the community receives immigrants, and it did so through about 1995. Jim was the reason for it making a difference. He was just so passionate about covering it, and about covering the town. And Tom, well, when it comes to social issues, you can always count on a Catholic.¹¹

Bloom, who started in 1987 at the *Telegram* as assistant to the publisher before becoming editor and publisher on Brooks' retirement in 1989, sees reconciliatory value in publishing the histories of Finney County's older Mexican-Americans:

Some people just didn't know that what they were doing was hurting people so much, and to an extent the stories that our profiles of Hispanics who had experienced prejudice led to people kissing and making up in the community — not that that would happen everywhere, but in GCK the attitude generally was initially “you're making too much of this.” But there was a real supportive network of people in the community who, after the kind of article you're talking about (old-timer Hispanics who told about overcoming racism) would say, ‘I'm glad you told your story,’ and “I'm sorry.”¹²

Focusing on the older generations of Mexican immigrants, however, may have blinded the *Telegram* to the new wave, which remained for the most part invisible until the late 1980s. Instead of including newcomers from Mexico, most coverage of immigrant workers at the packinghouses concerned the Vietnamese refugees who constituted the first wave of immigrants to arrive in Garden for beefpacking jobs at IBP in 1980 to 1981 in the wake of layoffs at Wichita's aircraft factories. Their story was compelling. “The fall of Saigon saw the U.S. taking responsibility for the Vietnamese who helped us there,” Bloom recalled.¹³ The predominant frame of the Vietnamese portrayed them as people who share the Kansans' value of freedom, willingness to play

by the rules and dedication to hard work. In this sense, the frame mimics the Horatio Alger myth that if one works hard one may achieve the American Dream.

The fact that Asians stuck out so much more than recent Mexican immigrants could account for the disproportionate amount of attention they received. Notions of newsworthiness have evolved into routine in American newsrooms, and novelty is among the factors generally recognized as making something “news.”¹⁴ Despite a continuous flow of Latino immigrants, however, the *Telegram* focused on fundraising efforts to help send refugee Yen Nguyen to New York City after she was invited to be naturalized as a U.S. citizen in a special ceremony at the Statue of Liberty.¹⁵ Another example of the invisibility of Latino immigrants: An article explaining Garden City’s growth rate ties it to meatpacking plants, feedlots and industries that serve the beef industry notes:

In 1980, there were only 625 non-durable goods manufacturing jobs in Finney County. Last year, there were 3,850, a more than six-fold increase. Many of the new residents were what resettlement workers call “secondary migrants,” people who already had migrated to the United States and moved again to find work. Garden City acquired a southeast Asian population estimated at 1,800 people.¹⁶

Mexicans and other Latin Americans are ignored in this explanation.

As discussed in Chapter 3, city officials and business leaders in Garden City knew the meatpacking industry would bring outsiders into the community. It just would not be feasible for its labor force to fill the thousands of jobs that the packers would require, given the region’s low unemployment. But they did not seem to anticipate that the newcomers would include foreign immigrants with little or no command of English. The language barrier’s impact could be felt throughout the community. Neighborhood schools

had to hire and train more teachers in English as a second language and bilingual education. Law enforcement had hard lessons to learn about cross-cultural differences.¹⁷ Businesses and government had to learn to serve non-English-speaking customers and expand their goods and services to satisfy the needs of people who did not want the same things Anglo customers wanted. And the *Telegram* had to figure out how to cover the new immigrants in its news pages.

Community efforts to accommodate the newcomers were complicated by the fact that they did not all come from one ethnic group. From the early 1980s through the beginning of coverage of congressional negotiations of the Immigration Control Reform Act of 1986, Hispanic immigrants were largely absent from discourse about how to accommodate the influx of foreign newcomers.

A problem and solution from 1982 illustrate the community's pragmatic approach to the language barrier. For six weeks in June and July, the Kansas Fish and Game Commission reported that 99 percent of calls notifying it of poachers in the Finney County area involved Indochinese people.¹⁸ Game protector Richard Harrold said the problem was a combination of not understanding regulations and lax enforcement. "Until they got caught, they thought they could get by with it," Harrold said. The calls stopped after the commission posted hunting regulations in the Vietnamese people's native languages at IBP. The *Telegram*'s story makes a point of saying, "Poaching is a widespread problem, according to Harrold, practiced by all races of people, not just Vietnamese." Although Vietnamese poaching provides the story's lead, the second half of the story points out that Fish and Game continued receiving calls about poaching by

“local citizens who have lived here all their lives.” This contrast frames the Vietnamese as people who abide by the law once they understand the rules and the consequences of breaking them and are therefore possibly a better example than comparatively irresponsible native Kansans.

Hispanics are absent from the story, and a few possible explanations come to mind: It could be that Hispanics were already so integrated in Garden City life that the reporter thought it would be understood that they were included among “local citizens who have lived here all their lives.” A front-page story makes this connection in 1987, noting, “The number of Hispanics who moved to the area in response to packing plant jobs is difficult to assess because Garden City has had a sizeable Hispanic population since early in the century.”¹⁹ The article notes that according to the Kansas Division of Employment, most new arrivals were Caucasian, followed by Hispanics, Southeast Asians and Blacks. It could be a continuation of the “invisible man” syndrome identified by Gandy.²⁰ This explanation is supported by anthropologist Don Stull, leader of a team of social scientists with the Ford Foundation’s Changing Relations project in 1988 and 1989. Stull’s assessment:

The community needs to recognize that many new Hispanics are coming to town now. Not as much has been done to accommodate them. I think that is unfortunate. Many will not stay. But they are making a contribution to the community. Agencies need to work with them. Not all of the new wave of Hispanics are from Mexico; some are from Cuba, Nicaragua, El Salvador and other Central American and South American countries.²¹

Finally, lack of bilingual reporters who speak Spanish could have kept *Telegram* reporters from noticing the influx of Latino immigrants. The language barrier could result

in a lack of interaction with Spanish-speakers who knew what was going on in the Latino immigrant community. In coverage of the Ford Foundation team's study of Garden City, an overall lack of ethnic integration was noted, although the team notes this had some positive results. "The isolation of most of the recent immigrants from the mainstream of local life was mentioned as a main factor in the relatively smooth entry of so many immigrants from Southeast Asia and from Mexico and other Hispanic-speaking countries."²² Here, reporter Dolores Hope makes use of Stull's observation that the community must recognize the Latino immigrant influx, and she wrote frequently of his team's findings about ethnic relations in Garden City.²³ Bloom noted that prejudice and segregation were factors:

There will always be some flare-ups, particularly with teenagers in the high schools who might reflect the attitudes of their parents without really thinking about it. In the community, there is no true mixing of the groups, so if I wanted to take part in a Hispanic event, it would be something that I had to actively seek out.²⁴

If ethnicity was a factor in the overall picture of crime in Garden City, it was not apparent in the *Telegram's* reports on annual crime rates. A front-page package noted that although the crime rate in Kansas fell 8.4 percent in the first nine months of 1982, the Kansas Bureau of Investigation reported a 14.3 percent increase in Garden City.²⁵ Murder, aggravated assault and arson accounted for the increase, and Garden City police said most assaults occurred when people got drunk at home, in bars or on the streets. The *Telegram* does not mention ethnicity as a factor, although it quotes Police Chief Jerald Vaughn as attributing it to increased population, primarily young male workers who are more likely to be involved in assaults than women or older men. Rates of rape, robbery,

burglary, larceny and auto theft were all down in the KBI report. To answer questions about how police deal with foreign newcomers, Vaughn wrote a guest column in which he described migrants' responsibility to carry a green card and police officers' responsibilities in dealing with migrants. He writes, "Whenever an officer comes into contact with a suspected alien, the alien will be treated as any other suspect. This includes advising the suspected alien of his or her constitutional rights and, in addition, advising the suspected alien that he/she has the right to have a detention hearing within 24 hours."²⁶

Similarly, when the *Telegram* explores increased demand for medical care, descriptors emphasize the economic characteristics of clients, not their ethnicity. It is not until 12 paragraphs into an article about the lack of physicians and patients who can afford treatment that one encounters an ethnic term, and that is part of the name "United Methodist Western Kansas Mexican-American Ministries Care Center."²⁷ While it might have been accurate to use the term "Mexican migrant workers" or "Mexican immigrants," the article instead uses the terms "patients who cannot pay," "transient, uninsured population," "indigent pregnant women," "the medically unserved." And rather than merely describe problems, the article asks what might be done to solve them.

The tendency to omit ethnicity of newcomers wavers in education coverage in 1989, about the same time that Stull advised the *Telegram* about the exclusion of Mexican immigrants from coverage. A front-page story's subhead notes that increasing enrollment includes a minority population of 36 percent, and a photo caption reads, "READ-IN — Students in an Alta Brown communications class take to the main entry

hall during reading time because of limited classroom space.”²⁸ In contrast, an account of the school district’s decision to add two teachers and two paraprofessionals at Buffalo Jones Elementary School and a bilingual teacher at Victor Ornelas Elementary does not ignore ethnicity. The writer uses the Buffalo Jones Elementary principal’s description of the teachers:

We probably won’t be able to find bilingual teachers or have a chance to give bilingual training for teachers who are hired. But good teachers who really are determined to help these kids can do wonders. The paras will be Hispanic and bilingual. With their help, a lot of learning will take place.²⁹

The influx of non-English-speaking students is attributed to a plant shutdown elsewhere. “Something is shutting down in Colorado and workers are bouncing into Kansas,” bilingual and migrant program director Linda Trujillo is quoted as saying. She added that she had calls from Goodland, Colby, Cimarron and other towns in western Kansas telling her that families were on their way to Garden City in search of work.³⁰

A feature story on Emmaus House frames the mission of the homeless shelter and soup kitchen as one of serving “people in need” with little mention of ethnicity, although deep in the story it discloses that the shelter has taken in Vietnamese and Cuban refugees and single men who came seeking jobs but have no place to live.³¹ An example of the latter, an IBP worker with an Anglo surname, was living in town for three months but had not found a place to live, was staying at Emmaus until he could save enough deposit and rent money to get his own apartment. The impression created is that Emmaus primarily served poor whites.

In some cases, the city was slow to let minorities into the power structure. The City Commission flouted a request by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development to include a minority on the city housing authority. Although a Black pastor was nominated, the commission appointed a Realtor instead because “we need someone on the board that knows housing.” Whereas coverage of immigrants gives newcomers the benefit of the doubt, the *Telegram* under Brooks did not hesitate to shine the spotlight when government officials sidestep federal guidelines. The article quoted this deliberation: “HUD said we need to reconstitute the board and get minority membership on there,” said City Manager Deane Wiley.”How much hot water is this going to get us in if we don’t do that?” Commissioner Al Towles asked. “I don’t know,” Wiley said. “Should we find out?” Mayor Frank Schmale asked. With that, the commission unanimously appointed Realtor Don Talley to the board, casting aside the nomination of the Rev. Robert Allen, Second Baptist Church pastor and piano tuner.³²

Even when Latinos were included in administrative positions, change was slow to come. The *Telegram* made sure its readers knew about it despite its own lack of Hispanic journalists. The Garden City schools’ director of bilingual education, Tulio Tablada, testified to the Kansas Advisory Committee of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights that the schools faced de facto segregation, saying that the district tolerated some segregation to make it easier to teach non-English-speaking students by group. He added that the schools tried to integrate non-English-speakers with native English-speaking students whenever possible and noted that because the district only had two bilingual counselors, it was difficult to administer discipline to minority students.³³

The other side: Nativists get a voice, too

Two common nativist laments appear in the pages of the *Telegram*: that illegal immigrants displace U.S. workers, and that natives should not have to speak the immigrants' language when the natives could not expect the same to happen if they went abroad. Both appear rarely, the former only in conservative James Kilpatrick's op-ed column and the latter principally in the occasional letter to the editor. Kilpatrick bases his argument, after noting that a General Accounting Office analysis of 51 studies on American worker displacement was "woefully inconclusive," on the work of Rice University scholar Donald L. Huddle.³⁴ Huddle, Kilpatrick writes, "has estimated that in some occupations the rate of displacement may approach 60 percent." He goes on to say, "That factor has not been confirmed by other studies, but if the rate of displacement is even 10 percent, the aliens have pushed half a million legal workers onto the unemployment rolls."³⁵

And although he puts it gently and sympathetically, syndicated columnist Mike Royko chastizes a *Chicago Reporter* article bemoaning the fact that someone who could speak only Spanish would not be able to buy a 44-cent stamp at post offices in Hispanic neighborhoods:

I'm quite sure that if someone walked into any post office in Chicago and asked for a 44-cent stamp in Italian, Greek, Polish, Lithuanian, German, Gaelic, Norwegian, Korean or any other foreign language, they would have a hard time being understood. That's because the language commonly used in this country is English. It is, in fact, the official language of the state of Illinois.³⁶

And making a case often echoed in letters to the editor, he writes:

It never occurred to me to be offended because they didn't speak English, even though millions of Americans travel to their country as tourists, or on business or to fight wars. They have their own languages and it was up to me to make myself understood, not the other way around.³⁷

Brooks' decision to include Kilpatrick and Royko on the editorial page did not mean he agreed with them. He did, however, agree with an editorial from *The Seattle Times* that he included under the house editorial column:

The growing movement to have English designated the official language of this country is a divisive, misguided effort that could undermine important gains in developing bilingualism in this society. ... It is unlikely that passing a law making English the "national language" will force immigrants to assimilate faster, but it surely will create ill feelings — especially in multi-ethnic communities. ... An official language law would not only be discouraging to foreign-born Americans; it could stall the push to have all students develop fluency in more than one language.³⁸

Itzel Rodriguez, the editor of *La Semana* in the mid- to late 1990s, credits Bloom with instilling racial sensitivity in the staff, particularly concerning the choice to avoid the term "aliens" when referring to immigrants.³⁹ Though he does not remember issuing any directive about it, Bloom agrees that such stylistic decisions as well as point of view play important roles in reporting:

The choice of language has become contentious in some places; some journalists are going back the other direction, to more inflammatory language — referring to "alien" instead of more inclusive options such as immigrant workers, immigrants, migrants. What we're talking about is people. We shouldn't lose sight of that. And so much of the attention that goes to the story is focused on the people who get arrested and not the corporate interests benefiting from illegal activity, many times in socially irresponsible ways. For instance, the packing plants have a waiting period to get benefits of six months, twice as long as most industries have, most have a 90-day waiting period. And what do you know, that conveniently matches up with the turnover period in meatpacking, so that most of the line workers don't ever qualify for benefits.⁴⁰

On how the newspaper approached the influx of Asian and Mexican immigrants, Bloom remarked, “We have to remember that these are people — and consumers, and we can take the approach of “why are they here” or we can be open and welcoming. I’ve always preferred the latter approach. It’s all a matter of attitude.”⁴¹

Telegram coverage reflects that pragmatism and openness, and its articles make it clear that Garden City businesses and government offices eventually did what was necessary to keep things running smoothly. The *Telegram*’s business decisions, as well, seem to have been made with good relations and practicality in mind. Bloom recalls that the paper initially hired Rodriguez, an immigrant from Panama, to sell advertising in 1991.⁴² Her bilingual skills allowed her to interact with Spanish-speaking clients. She joined the reporting staff of *La Semana* when it launched in late 1991 and became editor in 1994.

References

¹ “Glickman, following illegal aliens arrest, cites need for reform,” by Harris News Service reporter Kent Steward, *GCT*, page 24, September 6, 1983.

² Author’s interview with Jim Bloom at his office at the *Hutchinson News* in Hutchinson, Kan., August 7, 2006.

³ “Editor praises Hispanic contributions,” *GCT*, page 3, September 19, 1983.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ “Fiesta: a look back ...” by Dolores Hope, *GCT*, page 6, September 15, 1983. More than any other reporter at the *Telegram*, Hope appears to have taken a special interest in the city’s Hispanic community. That may owe to her longevity on the staff, which put her in a unique position to notice demographic change in Garden City. Asked by the author what accounted for her interest, she said it was just part of covering the community.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ “Mexican Americans: a heritage of hard work,” by Dolores Hope, page 6, September 9, 1986.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ The Ford Foundation’s “Changing Relations Report 55” notes, “In the early 1980s, key members of the Garden City Ministerial Alliance saw a potential for adverse reaction to the growing number of Southeast Asians and responded decisively, working with the newspaper, school personnel, and community volunteers to provide services to incoming Southeast Asians and to counter negative rumors and community reactions.”

¹⁰ Author’s telephone interview with Fred Brooks, Aug. 10, 2006. At the time, Brooks was retired and living in Dodge City, Kan.

- ¹¹ Author's interview with the Rev. Dave Sweley at his office at Garden City Presbyterian Church, August 10, 2006.
- ¹² Bloom interview.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ For further discussion of traditional factors of newsworthiness, see Brian Brooks' *The Art of Editing*.
- ¹⁵ "Garden Citian to represent Kansas: Yen Nguyen to be naturalized in New York," by Dolores Hope, *GCT*, page 1, June 7, 1986; "Worthy Cause," by Dolores Hope, *GCT* editorial, page 4, June 11, 1986; "Contributions ensure her trip," no byline, *GCT*, page 1, June 13, 1986; and "On her way," *GCT* editorial, no byline, page 4, June 14, 1986. Hope writes in her "Distaff side" column that the *Kansas City Times* ran a front-page story headlined "Southeast Asians flock to Garden City" on May 24 and that two other *Times* stories by Fred Mares reported about 800 of Garden City's 2,000 Vietnamese refugees had become U.S. citizens. Mares reported that because of the large number, they don't feel the same isolation they would face in many rural towns.
- ¹⁶ "Garden City's boom: It's pegged to feedlot, meat packing businesses," by Michael Bates of The Associated Press, *GCT*, page 1, March 15, 1986.
- ¹⁷ An Aug. 17, 1989, article in the *Telegram* notes that police frequently misinterpreted Mexicans' tendency to not look them in the eye as disrespect, whereas in Mexico, looking authority figures in the eye is taken as disrespectful.
- ¹⁸ Annette Galluzzi, "Vietnamese poachers stopped," *GCT*, page 3, November 4, 1982.
- ¹⁹ "Packing plants draw minorities," by Harris News Service reporter Fred Johnson, *GCT*, page 1, October 29, 1987.
- ²⁰ For further explanation, see Gandy, O. 2000. From bad to worse — The media's framing of race, in Dennis, E., & Pease, E., eds., *The Media in Black and White*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers.
- ²¹ "Distaff side," by columnist Dolores Hope, *GCT*, page 4, October 26, 1989.
- ²² "Ethnic integration minimal in Garden," by Dolores Hope, *GCT*, page 1, November 3, 1989.
- ²³ A series of Hope's "Distaff side" columns from October 23 through October 27 addresses observations on ethnic relations recorded by Don Stull's Changing Relations team, which visited Garden City as part of a six-city study of how ethnic groups learn to get along with one another. Garden City was selected to represent rural America; the other cities in the study were Philadelphia, Miami, Houston, Chicago and Monterey Park, Calif.
- ²⁴ Bloom interview.
- ²⁵ "Crime rate drops in Kansas" and "... but Garden shows 14.3 percent jump," no byline, *GCT*, December 3, 1982, page 1.
- ²⁶ "Alien suspects: just like others," *GCT*, guest column by Garden City Police Chief Jerald Vaughn, page 1A, November 23, 1982. It should be noted that page number here is not the front page of the newspaper; it is the front of the second section.
- ²⁷ "Needed: doctors, more paying patients: Medical services impact economic health," by Dolores Hope, *GCT*, page 1, September 22, 1989.
- ²⁸ "School enrollment still climbing: 36 percent are minority," by Dolores Hope, *GCT*, page 1, October 2, 1989. The story notes that in 1973, only 18 percent of the students were non-White.
- ²⁹ "USD adds bilingual teachers," by Dolores Hope, *GCT*, page 1, October 3, 1989.
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ "Emmaus House: Spirit of good will year around," by Jane Neufeld, *GCT*, page 5A, December 7, 1982.
- ³² "No minority for housing authority," no byline, *GCT*, page 2, December 30, 1982.
- ³³ Ibid.
- ³⁴ "Illegals displace U.S. workers," by James Kilpatrick, *GCT*, page 4, May 14, 1986. In his article "Immigration, the Press and the New Racism," John Miller writes that Huddle lacks credibility among serious immigration researchers.
- ³⁵ Ibid.
- ³⁶ "Learn English from necessity," by syndicated columnist Mike Royko, *GCT*, page 4, September 23, 1986.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ “Language law a boner,” *Seattle Times* editorial, *GCT*, page 4, October 8, 1986.

³⁹ Author’s interview with Itzel Rodriguez in her office at Garden City Community College, August 9, 2006.

⁴⁰ Bloom interview,

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

CHAPTER 6
LAW ENFORCEMENT, BROKEN BORDERS, AND THE REJECTION
OF NATIVIST BACKLASH:
WHEN NEWS SLIPS PAST THE GATEKEEPER

“Granting amnesty to 4 million illegal aliens to solve the immigration problem is like trying to solve the problem of illegal drugs in this country by legalizing cocaine.”
— *U.S. Rep. Dick Armey, R-Texas, on House approval of the Immigration Reform and Control Act*¹

“(Garden Citians) are overwhelmingly willing to vote for Mexican-Americans or a person of Mexican descent. But the attitude is hardening of late. I got an anonymous call on my voicemail. . . . And his opinion was that the only service we should be providing is a bus ticket back to Mexico.”
— *Penney Schwab, executive director, United Methodist Mexican American Ministries in Garden City*²

Demand built for change in the way the nation deals with Mexican immigration in the years leading to passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act in 1986 and carried on through 2000. A 1979 telegram from President Jimmy Carter to Kansas Gov. John Carlin, a fellow Democrat, underscored the national attention that the matter received. In it, Carter sought the governor’s help to ensure that the human rights of illegal immigrants from Mexico be respected.³ Concerns included enforcement of wage, hour, safety and health standards and “to assure that workers who are apprehended and removed from the country receive all wages due them. . . . The Department of Justice is giving special attention to investigating and, where warranted, prosecuting, possible civil rights violations against any person of Hispanic origin.”⁴ For the most part, the *Telegram* showed little awareness of immigration issues relating to Hispanics through the late 1980s. It took a combination of wire service reports and outside observers from the Ford

Foundation Changing Relations team for the paper to realize the full nature of the demographic change in the community. A comparison of wire and local stories in the *Telegram* in this study shows a divergence in framing emphasis, with The Associated Press emphasizing episodic frames and local reporters using thematic ones. This chapter will address the significance of this difference and how it relates to the context of immigrant reception in Garden City.

Given that the *Telegram* had a small reporting staff devoted to covering the local community, the principal factor in dependence on the wires for immigration news through 1989 was an apparent failure to acknowledge the presence of illegal immigrants in and around Garden City. In at least one notable instance, the paper depended on sources contacting reporters to pick up on changes in the community. “Pastors were seeing some attitudes in how Hispanics were picked up, stopped, searched and detained by the police,” said the Rev. Dave Sweley, the pastor at Garden City Presbyterian Church and a member of Garden City’s Ministerial Alliance. “(Tom) Bell ... he put someone on it. There was just a hunger for information. They continue to work on stories like that, and we continue to feed them information about people on the streets.”⁵

What resulted was a series of stories about relations between Hispanics and the police, culminating in front-page coverage of meetings in 1990 in which Hispanic leaders aired grievances about treatment by law enforcement officials. The first reported that a federal mediator met with city officials to discuss Hispanic residents’ belief that they were unfair targets for drunk driving and suspended driver’s license tickets, though it does not mention whether they thought citizenship status was a factor.⁶ The article notes

that Pedro “Pete” Sandoval and other local Hispanic leaders had negotiated an agreement with the city to try to improve communications three years before. Sandoval was quoted as saying most of the problems came from police not understanding cultural differences between Hispanics and Anglos. The next day, the *Telegram* reported that the city and Hispanic leaders were working toward an agreement aimed at improving relations. Among the sources was Norma DeLaO, area director for Harvest America and a former police officer in South Sioux City, Neb. “It was a very positive meeting. The police department is very open to suggestions. I don’t think there was so much of a targeting of Hispanics (by police) as it was a problem of not understanding the Hispanic cultural differences.”⁷

DeLaO gave this example of a relevant cultural difference: Anglo police officers think that if the suspect doesn’t look them in the eye, that person is probably lying. “But in the Hispanic culture,” she explained, “police are considered authority figures, and you don’t look authority figures in the eye — it’s disrespectful. You look at the ground.”⁸

Another example of racial profiling suspected by the city’s Hispanics:

While an Anglo leaving an upscale cocktail lounge in a fairly new car would draw little attention from a patrolling police officer, an Hispanic leaving a local nightclub in an older vehicle would be followed until the officer found a reason to affect a stop. “We know that is the perception,” said Halloran, “and it better not be happening. We’re going to monitor that.”⁹

Deeper in the story, Halloran said that as a result of the meetings, the police department would start instructing officers and command staff in conversational Spanish and put more emphasis on recruiting minorities into the police force. In addition, he said police would go into minority communities to demonstrate how Breathalyzer blood-

alcohol tests work and seek input that could be used in training officers. He added that the City Commission would try to establish scholarships for minorities interested in earning degrees in criminal justice.¹⁰ A week later, the *Telegram* reported that the City Commission hoped to establish a board to enhance relations between the city and “its ethnic communities,” a choice of terminology that implies Anglos do not constitute an “ethnic community” and therefore set the standard for normal behavior.¹¹ DeLaO remarks in the story, “People are not coming forward to complain to the city and they’re not going to,” but she said they would be more likely to take their concerns to a board that included Hispanics and Southeast Asians. The stories’ play, in the lead position of the front page, indicates that the editors saw the solution of interethnic tension as highly worthy of attention.

Waking up to a shifting Hispanic demographic

Awareness grew that native-born Mexican-Americans were not the only kind of Hispanics in Kansas, both in the state and in the *Telegram*. In 1986, the Senate Committee on Governmental Organization endorsed a bill changing the name of the Kansas Advisory Committee on Mexican-American Affairs to the Kansas Advisory Committee on Hispanic affairs.¹² The rationale for the change was explained in a March 1986 article:

“Our present limiting name discourages some Hispanics from seeking our services and fully participating in the governmental process,” said Marc Marcano, executive director of the advisory committee. “One of the principal functions of our office is to serve as liaison to the Hispanic community and state government. Passage of this bill will encourage more participation in and thus support of Kansas state government by all Hispanics.”¹³

As of 1986, 21 percent of Kansas' nearly 62,000 Hispanics were of Cuban, Central American, Puerto Rican or other background.¹⁴ Marcano said the name change was necessary to acknowledge that a growing percentage of the state's Hispanics were of non-Mexican lineage, though the article did not include whether that growth was due to natural increase, migration or immigration. But the story makes clear that the state as a whole recognized changes in the population makeup of its Hispanics. The *Telegram's* editors felt the change was significant enough to inform its readers of it, although the article's placement of it on page 7 suggests that their selection of the Associated Press brief might have been an afterthought.

Just as it relied on wire services for information about government policy on race and ethnicity, the *Telegram* did little of its own reporting on immigration enforcement. Harris News Service, the wire news operation owned by the *Telegram's* parent company, Harris Enterprises, reported a four-day INS sweep in Wichita that found four undocumented workers from Mexico working for the father of U.S. Rep. Dan Glickman, D-Kan., in September 1983.¹⁵ Milton Glickman said he was not aware that the workers were in the United States illegally, and his congressman son cited the incident as proof that the nation's immigration laws must be reformed. An INS agent echoed the sentiment, saying it was impossible to detect illegal job applicants. Earlier that year, Congressman Glickman voted with the majority when the House Judiciary Committee approved a bill to overhaul immigration regulations that ultimately became the Immigration Reform and Control Act.¹⁶

Congressional debate and talks leading to passage of the IRCA nearly went unnoticed by the *Telegram* until the bill reached a conference committee to reconcile the House and Senate versions of immigration reform, at which point it became front-page news.¹⁷

Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986

If there were any doubts whether there were foreign-born Hispanics in Garden City, they were erased in the late 1980s, but the *Telegram* was slow in picking up on radical changes to immigration laws that were in the works in Congress. Buried on page 8 on June 26, 1986, the paper carried an Associated Press report that the House Judiciary Committee approved a measure designed to reduce the flow of illegal immigrants — here the terminology was “illegal aliens” — and improve conditions for those already in the United States.¹⁸ Assuming the editors were aware of illegal immigrants in the community, the article would have had two main audiences: Residents with acquaintances or relatives who were illegal immigrants, or employers with workers who were in the country illegally. Then the story disappeared for three and a half months when, seemingly out of nowhere, news of possible immigration legislation popped up on the front page. The lead headline on the front page of the *Telegram* on October 10, 1986, blared, “Immigration bill revived.”¹⁹ The headline seems misleading, given that the bill was never killed; it was just making its way from the House Judiciary Committee to the House-Senate conference committee, a path that can be long for any legislation, let alone the first overhaul of immigration enforcement in decades. The bill, known upon passage as the Immigration Reform and Control Act, was referred to as “the immigration bill” or “immigration

reform legislation” throughout the legislative process.²⁰ The banner headline October 15 announced, “Immigration bill nears compromise.”²¹ The lead emphasizes the reason for the flow of immigrants: “After years of failure, Congress is within a whisker of approving a bill designed to shut down the stream of illegal aliens crossing the border *for new job opportunities* in the United States [emphasis added]. Compromise legislation was approved Tuesday by House-Senate conferees, who took a cue from successful tax bill writers earlier in the session: They locked out the lobbyists and negotiated in secret.” The phrase “for new job opportunities” is significant in that it fits the story frame of illegal immigrants as participant in the American dream — that is, people seeking opportunity in the United States that they cannot find in their home countries. The article details the bill’s provisions: “an amnesty program for long-term illegal aliens and a system of fines against employers who knowingly hire undocumented workers. The amnesty would apply to those who came to this country before 1982.”²²

The Associated Press story was accompanied by a local sidebar noting the complications that might be posed by amnesty, the first produced by the *Telegram* since immigration reform appeared in its pages in 1986. The main concern for the regional Immigration and Naturalization Service office was a black market in false documentation. The sidebar included rare comment by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. According to former *Telegram* editor and publisher Jim Bloom, “INS never sought out media attention, and if you found an instance where the *Telegram* covered an INS sweep in a packing plant, that was a rare occurrence.”²³ In addition, it provided the first estimate to appear in the *Telegram* of how many illegal immigrants of

any nationality might be in the region: 5,000 to 8,000 in southwest Kansas, and 35,000 total in the state. Although Garden City had an INS field office at the time, its officers referred questions to William Skidmore, deputy district director for the INS office in Kansas City, Mo. Its territory was Kansas and Missouri. Skidmore said that during the previous year, INS concentrated on identifying and deporting illegals who were criminals or who were holding jobs that could be held by U.S. citizens or foreigners who were in the country legally. Only 1,750 had been taken into custody in both states combined. That such a small percentage of illegals were detained and deported suggests that the rest were not entirely unwelcome. Story framing can be defined as much by what is left out as by what is included. In this case, the only sources were from federal officials, whereas the reporter could have sought comment from immigrant or minority advocacy groups such as United Methodist Mexican American Ministries, the G.I. Forum or the Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Society. Instead, the *Telegram* let a bureaucracy story remain a bureaucracy story rather than humanizing it with the voices of immigrants or their advocates. Businesses that might be affected by the new rules for employing immigrants also were ignored.

Although the *Telegram* carried a story on House approval²⁴ and how the bill awaited final approval in the Senate with the endorsement of President Ronald Reagan,²⁵ it did not run anything about Reagan signing it into law. Instead, the story went dormant until just before the IRCA was to be implemented. But the Roman Catholic Diocese of Dodge City made a point of sending a letter to the editor on the topic of immigration just before Christmas. Bishop Stanley Schlarman wrote:

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops will be observing national migration week, Jan. 5-10.

Over the past few years, thousands have left their homelands for political, religious and economic reasons and have migrated to our area of Southwest Kansas in search of a better life. These newly arriving immigrants, representing many nationalities, whose religious and cultural backgrounds are very different, form an impressive mosaic of people. They help form our one nation under God. They bring special gifts that enrich our communities and our lives, and should be seen as blessings from God.

This week will offer us an opportunity to deepen our awareness of these people and their contributions. Let us take to our heart the words of the Divine Immigrant, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me." (Mt. 25:35)²⁶

Although a letter about a controversy sometimes triggered a series of others in response, this one did not. Between the bishop's letter and implementation of immigration reform in May, the topic came up four more times. Dolores Hope wrote in her column:

Garden City now embraces a diverse population. While many who have roots here are still around, many others have moved in ... some of them, perhaps, to live here for a long time and others very briefly. The experiences of the newcomers must vary greatly, depending on both their circumstances and their personalities. Some may prefer anonymity while others seek inclusion in the life of the community. You may not know them personally, but maybe that won't matter if you need help ... or if they do.²⁷

Asked about her connection to Latino and immigration issues, Hope seemed unaware of how much she had written about them or the empathy and sensitivity with which she wrote.²⁸ The Hopes were, however, members of the Roman Catholic Church, and church teachings on social justice, including that it should not be considered illegal to cross a border in flight from poverty and the value of human life, seem to be reflected in her writing.²⁹ The Catholic Church, along with the United Methodist Church, took the most active role in helping immigrants relocate in southwest Kansas. While Penney

Schwab directed United Methodist Mexican American Ministries, which provided health care and translation for immigrants, the Catholic Agency for Migration and Refugee Service in Elkhart, southwest of Garden City and just north of the Oklahoma state line, publicized help for those seeking amnesty. An article about how to apply directs those in need to the agency.³⁰ And the *Telegram* publicized a public meeting in nearby Leoti about the new immigration law where an immigration lawyer from Kansas City would be available to explain the law. Employers were encouraged to attend, and information was to be provided in both English and Spanish.³¹

Not all in Garden City were so welcoming of immigrants. A letter to the editor complains that illegal immigrants were keeping the writer from getting work:

I have a complaint with the businesses in Garden City. I have lived here for two years and have 100 job applications out to which no one has had the courtesy to answer. But I keep seeing their help wanted ads in The Telegram. IBP, The Hilton, K-Bobs Steakhouse, Val Agri and the list goes on. The joke about it all is that they claim to be Equal Opportunity Employers.

The only way I have been able to survive in Garden City is that a man and his wife asked me to take care of their rentals, and in return my family and I get our rent and utilities. But a man can't support a family this way. I want to take care of my family and have pride in doing so. Why won't anyone give me a chance? If more personnel managers were in my place they might understand how I feel.

People that are citizens of the United States are not being given a chance because employers would rather hire non-citizens with no experience just because they will work for a cheaper rate or because they feel sorry for them. Well it's time that you take a look at our community and feel sorry for the citizens of the U.S. We need work too!³²

“Both sides of the story” vs. “all sides of the story”

While the *Telegram* showed it was aware of immigration issues, federal officials responsible for implementing the bill seemed to be taken by surprise when it was implemented in the spring of 1987. So were employers. The Associated Press wrote:

WASHINGTON (AP) — Even before historic immigration reforms take effect next week, critics are saying the government has botched the law so badly that extensions may be necessary to accommodate a flood of illegal aliens applying for amnesty.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service's final rules governing the immigration were published today in the Federal Register, just two business days before the opening of the amnesty program and a month before the start of employer sanctions. There were few changes from draft regulations issued early this year.³³

Only two sources were cited: U.S. Rep. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., one of the immigration bill's principal writers, suggested that the deadline for amnesty applications be extended because of disarray at INS offices. INS Commissioner Alan C. Nelson countered Schumer, saying:

We're starting next Tuesday. We've got a year. ... Any idea of an extension or delay is premature. There are shrill voices who say we are not ready and cannot handle the task we have been given. Obviously in the startup of a program as massive as this one in which the preparation time has been short, there will be some problems. I am convinced they will be few.³⁴

An AP sidebar beneath that article warns that employers were unprepared for the change:

Many employers, ranging from farmers to restaurateurs, are not ready for the new immigration law a little more than a month before it bars the hiring of illegal aliens, business and worker representatives say.³⁵

The sidebar cited the concerns of business and labor leaders. "You've got a lot of employers out there who, despite all the publicity, don't know," said Frederick Krebs of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. "Others are aware and want to do something, but they're not sure what they want to do." Muzaffar Chishti of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union and Rose Briceno of the National Council of La Raza are then

quoted bemoaning employers' pre-emptive efforts to fire or lay off workers suspected of being in the country illegally.³⁶

A comparison of Associated Press and *Telegram* coverage yields a notable contrast. The Associated Press portrays stories with a frame of conflict, a natural byproduct of the journalistic saw to "always tell *both* sides of the story." This approach can preclude viewpoints other than the extremes from being covered; reporting becomes a game of opposites without middle ground. Quote one Democrat for every Republican. Quote one labor source for every employer source. Where does the *Telegram* differ? It seems to frame its coverage in terms of stakeholders, not opponents, thus providing a continuum of points of view rather than opposites. The sources were Mike Heston of the Immigration and Naturalization Service's amnesty office in Garden City; Jim Bennett, an INS enforcement agent in Garden City; Luisa Galeano, manager of Harvest America, a nonprofit organization that provides social services for migrant and seasonal farmworkers and poor Hispanics in rural areas; and Schwab of United Methodist Care Center, which provides health care and social services for poor Hispanics. The accent here was not to show conflict, but to tell about the procedures and potential difficulties in applying for amnesty. Adding to this pragmatic approach was a sidebar telling amnesty applicants and employers about their rights and responsibilities under the new law, including a bulleted list of things one must do to apply. At the end of the article is a paragraph in somewhat shaky Spanish:

En Garden City, existen tres agencias (QDE) de servicios sociales que han sido autorizadas por el Servicio de Inmigración y Naturalización (INS) para prestar ayuda a los diferentes aplicantes, en el proceso de legalizar su status como residents. Estas son: St. Mary Church, 275-4204; Mexican-

American Ministries (United Methodist Care Center), 275-5634; Harvest America, 275-1619. Para mayor informacion, favor ponerse en contacto con una de estas agencias para concertar una cita.³⁷

Its choice of terminology is also significantly different. The lead of the *Telegram*'s first local story on the new amnesty avoids the label "illegal aliens" in favor of a more descriptive phrase: "Thousands of *people* — perhaps millions — who have lived and worked illegally in the United States now have the chance to live legally and openly."³⁸ The offensive "illegal aliens," however, does not disappear from the *Telegram* until the early 1990s after the arrival of reporter Sarah Kessinger, who became the first editor of *La Semana*. An exemplar of her approach appeared in a September 1991 reporting that under a new federal law, annual immigration would be increased by 100,000 a year. The terms she used were "local immigrants," "people," "immigrants," "residents who had been in the United States since before 1982," "foreigners" and "personnel from a Canadian or Mexican branch."³⁹

The first wave of amnesty applicants was more like a trickle. The *Telegram* devoted a quarter of the front page May 6 to a photo of one staffer sitting alone at a table next to rows of empty chairs in a waiting area in the Garden City immigration legalization office, another photo of two INS officials examining an immigration legalization form, and a story on the first day of the amnesty. Again, the lead avoided using "illegal aliens" as its subject. Rather, it read, "Sixteen people showed up Tuesday on the first day of business at Garden City's immigration legalization office, but an official expects activity to pick up as people gain confidence in the amnesty process."⁴⁰ An Associated Press article tells a similar story nationwide at legalization offices in

Connecticut, New Jersey, Boston and Los Angeles, but unlike all of the AP's previous articles, its lead uses "illegal immigrants" instead of "illegal aliens."⁴¹

A month later, and with 11 months remaining, the *Telegram* reported that applications were still slow, with a misleading headline that read, "Chances are running out for amnesty."⁴² Either the headline intentionally overstated the story or mistakenly took its cue from INS district director Ron Sanders, who said, "We can't overemphasize that the clock's running and time's running out on the program." The article provides some reasons for the lack of applicants, including office hours of 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Such hours would be difficult for working people to fit into their schedules, particularly when many worked at IBP, where strict work rules made it tough to get time off for any reason.⁴³ The law required a physical exam by a physician to qualify for amnesty, but the nearest one certified by INS was in Elkhart. And although INS set up the Garden City office because it expected there would be many agricultural workers who might apply, it discovered that people who worked in the production of wheat, the main crop in western Kansas, did not fall under the auspices of the special agriculture worker section of the amnesty. Finally, the report reveals that although the Garden City office has a phone, INS decided to set it up with an unlisted number as a way to "protect confidentiality." The *Telegram* listed the toll-free number.

In retrospect, Schwab wasn't puzzled by the initial lack of applicants: "We were processing paperwork during the amnesty, and Immigration set up this office. They had an unlisted phone number — they wouldn't run it in the phone book, and they never had anybody come to the office and they had to close the office because of it." Why didn't

they list the number? Schwab said it was because the INS office didn't want to be inundated with calls.⁴⁴

Regardless of the reasons, the article notes the most pragmatic and common reason in favor of the amnesty — immigrant labor was needed, regardless of nativist opposition:

Recent news reports have said cherry, strawberry and other perishable crops are rotting in California and Oregon because there aren't enough immigrant workers — legal or illegal — to pick them. Sanders said a set number of immigrants are allowed under the new law to come to the United States to pick the crops. But he also mentioned a program in the 1960s in which aliens were allowed into the United States as a labor force. There was an outcry from unions and other people, who claimed the INS was taking jobs away from other people, who claimed the INS was taking jobs away from the American worker. No law will ever satisfy everyone, Sanders said.⁴⁵

The scenario brings an interesting turnabout in the framing of immigration. Whereas “illegal alien as troublemaker” or “illegal alien as drag on society” are the most common frames for immigrants, it is the INS that gets labeled as such in the *Telegram*. The headline on Fred Brooks' June 16, 1987, editorial read, “INS red tape,” and it noted:

Red tape is killing the federal government's illegal alien amnesty program. Much of the red tape is needless. Most of it is wasteful. All of it is frustrating. ... Frustrating are the bureaucratic explanations and the excuses for problems. That's to be expected with any new government program, but the illegal alien amnesty program has been particularly blessed with a good number of bureaucratic gremlins. There's still time for the INS to salvage things, if it's willing to cut the red tape.⁴⁶

Two years later, after the INS closed the Garden City enforcement office, Bloom wrote, “Closing the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service's Garden City office is a foolish decision. But foolish decisions are the norm from the knucklehead higher-ups in

the INS.”⁴⁷ Acknowledging that Garden City and the other southwest Kansas meatpacking towns of Dodge City and Liberal attract immigrants to the region, he concludes, “It is difficult to believe the INS, by retreating to Wichita, will do a better job of enforcing immigration laws on the frontlines in southwestern Kansas.”

The Telegram also lays blame on companies that hire illegal immigrants. A June 26, 1987, article notes the paperwork employers were required to check to verify workers’ identity and work eligibility.⁴⁸ It’s notable that in news articles, it is frequently workers who are labeled “illegal,” not their scofflaw employers. But that’s not the case in that day’s house editorial, which calls the required I-9 employment eligibility form “the backbone of the Immigration Control and Reform Act of 1986.” The editorial at long last provided acknowledgment of the companies that hire illegal workers as lawbreakers:

In many ways, this law is like a speed limit and the INS is like an undermanned state police force patrolling miles of highways. When the police aren’t around, compliance with speed limits varies from driver to driver. And compliance with the immigration law will vary from employer to employer. There will, of course, be a few “speed traps” set by the INS every so often. Fines will be stiff, from \$100 to \$1,000 for each ineligible employee. That threat should catch the attention of most employers. We hope it does, because the only way for the U.S. to regain control of its borders is to eliminate the economic incentive for companies to hire, and thus implicitly recruit, illegal aliens.⁴⁹

The frame of “scofflaw employers” resurfaces in an editorial responding to a *New York Times* report headlined “Vast fraud by migrants found in amnesty plan.” Bloom wrote:

Alas, in the face of considerable lobbying by fruit and vegetable growers in Texas and California, Congress created a loophole. The growers wanted to protect their cheap labor force. So instead of having to prove nearly five years of continuous residence, most agricultural worker applicants had to show only that they had done 90 days of farm work between May 1, 1985,

and May 1, 1986. ... Now the Immigration and Naturalization Service has identified 398,000 possible fraud cases among the farm program applications. One case, for example, involves a 30-acre farm owned by a Newark, N.J., couple which reportedly employed 1,000 workers for at least 90 days each during one year. ... To sum up, the amnesty program and the stiffer immigration laws outlined in the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 are as open today as they were when the act was passed.⁵⁰

Not all of the *Telegram's* attention to immigration matters went to undocumented workers. "New citizens: Doctor and Mrs. Arroyo make it official" read the headline on December 10, 1987. Zefarino and Violeta Arroyo, immigrants from the Philippines who came to Garden City in 1968, became legal residents in 1972 and were sworn in as naturalized citizens with about 140 others from western Kansas, mostly Vietnamese, Cambodians and Laotians. Reinforcing the story's immigrant-as-exemplar frame, Violeta Arroyo noted that although many people think noncitizens don't have to pay taxes, "We're been paying our share."⁵¹

Little on the amnesty program appeared again until April 1988 with a week left for people to apply. The front-page article reminded prospective applicants of what documents were necessary and informed readers that INS would accept incomplete applications and file supporting documents later.⁵² It also noted that INS closed the Garden City legalization office because it wasn't processing many applications, although social service agencies continued to assist with them. A total of 2,200 people applied during the general amnesty period in Kansas City, 1,975 in Wichita, 967 in Garden City and 490 in St. Louis.⁵³ In southwest Kansas, about 500 applied under the special agriculture worker amnesty at the United Methodist Mexican American Ministries office in Garden City and the Harvest America office in Leoti.⁵⁴ Nationally, an Associated Press

story quoted INS spokesman Greg Leo on the eve of the May 5, 1988, general amnesty deadline: “At this time, it appears we will break 2 million” for the combined programs.⁵⁵ The AP story uses the term “illegal immigrants” in the lead, although “illegal aliens” and “aliens” appear further down in the story, an indicator that the wire service was making strides toward more inclusive language although it was sometimes inconsistent.

Immigration reform in the 1990s

As the *Telegram* became more aware of Hispanic immigrants in Garden City, its interest in immigration legislation from the wire services seems to have increased. An October 1990 article on the front page reports that the U.S. House was prepared to approve a measure designed to reunite families kept apart by previous immigration law and ending 25-year-old barriers against would-be immigrants from northern European nations and others that sent immigrants to the United States in the past.⁵⁶ The measure also was intended to increase the number of “highly skilled and otherwise needed foreign workers who would be allowed into the U.S.”

Immigration legislation received little further mention until Molly Ivins wrote in October 1994 about Proposition 187, California’s initiative aimed at reducing illegal immigration:

Prop. 187, which is goin’ like a house afire in the polls, would deny health, education and welfare benefits to illegal immigrants. Sounds good, right? One of those simple solutions to a complex problem guaranteed to make everything worse. ... Now, we’re all used to our politicians blamin’ “Messakins” when times get bad ’cause politicians are just natural liars, hypocrites and fools. It’s fine to let them carry on, but who in the world would have imagined the people of California would be dumb enough to believe ’em?⁵⁷

Telegram editors deemed interest in 187 to be high enough that they included a brief on the front page about 70,000 protesters marching on Los Angeles City Hall to protest the proposition.⁵⁸ The lead on an in-depth explanation of it takes a narrative approach:

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Mary Sanchez is fed up with illegal immigrants soliciting work from street corners in her suburb, then getting paid under the table and paying no income taxes. On Nov. 8 she will vote for Proposition 187, one of the most incendiary ballot measures to hit California since the English-only initiative passed in 1986.⁵⁹

The article notes that Sanchez was “not Hispanic but is married to a man of Mexican descent.” When the proposition passed on Election Day with 59 percent of the vote, the *Telegram* carried an AP story that framed the story as anti-crime, not anti-minority. Although there are few instances where the *Telegram* localized national stories, immigration is an exception. Given the transnational nature of Garden City’s Latino immigrants and their habit of maintaining social networks over vast distances, the California vote was played much like a local issue. Itzel Stewart’s local sidebar quoted Garden Citians who opposed the measure because they said that children should not be deprived of an education and that it is cruel to deny medical and educational services.⁶⁰ Nobody in the story spoke in favor of 187, and one source pointed out that contrary to Sanchez’s assertion in the AP story, income tax is deducted from illegals’ pay and illegals pay sales tax every time they make a purchase.⁶¹ Stewart’s sources were given reason to applaud when a federal judge temporarily blocked enforcement of 187 on constitutional grounds.⁶²

Given that story selection and placement are among the elements of framing, the decision to give front-page, above-the-fold play to Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari's November 1994 invitation for Mexicans in the United States to come home indicates that editors perceived it as important and highly interesting to their readers. The article carries the frame of "immigrant as hard worker":

Salinas said Mexicans go to the United States in search of jobs — not the public services that California would deny to illegal immigrants under the state's newly passed Proposition 187.⁶³

That would be just fine with Rob Andrews of nearby Pierceville, whose letter to the editor blames immigration for overcrowded Garden City public schools:

An elementary school teacher told me a story about six girls in her third grade class talking about impending births in their families. Becoming curious, she asked how many of them were expecting another baby in their families soon. Five out of six. I asked her how many were Hispanic? "Oh — all of them." Ross Perot might say "it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out what the problem is." California and Texas have both passed initiatives restricting the freebies provided by the state and community to illegal aliens. The fate of these laws is still in question, but with the recent election reflecting a strong shift to the right in American thinking, proposition such as 187 are raising a lot of eyebrows. If you were an illegal alien in California or Texas, what would you be thinking? Colorado? Kansas? Garden City? ... If we had enacted something like Proposition 187 four years ago, we might not need new schools now. ... The ultimate victim of this cancerous sort of growth will be the community itself. We need to do all we can to remove the incentives that lure economic refugees from Third World nations.⁶⁴

Bloom didn't miss the opportunity to respond with an editorial cartoon labeled "California: The Nation's Trendsetter." The Golden State is depicted on a map of the Western United States with a huge "Yes on 187" yard sign sticking out of the San Joaquin Valley and a voice balloon stating, "I saw we blame our problems on poor kids."⁶⁵ Norma DeLaO didn't miss the opportunity either, writing in a letter to the editor,

“We should be addressing this problem with education instead of trying to find someone to blame.”⁶⁶ Her response evokes the “immigrant seeking opportunity” frame:

The United States is seen as a land of opportunity. People come here for a better life. We are so lucky to live in a democratic society where life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are so much valued. The immigrants who come here are fleeing persecution, poverty or war. ... We should be proud of the way Garden City has embraced immigrants. The community has grown both in size and in cultural diversity that has gained nationwide recognition. Our immigrants have worked hard and have made their home here. We have many businesses that are owned by Third World immigrants. I am proud to be a member of this group.⁶⁷

And in a strong signal of his stance on 187, Bloom selected an editorial from the *Statesman-Journal* in Salem, Ore., to run in place of the house editorial. It asked, “Are Americans so callous that we would take from the lowest economic rung of our population just to give the rest of us a few more pennies? What we spend on the poorest of our citizens would hardly pay for a stealth bomber.”⁶⁸ Congress turned out to be “that callous” in 1996, when it passed the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, creating harsher penalties for illegal immigration, restricting welfare benefits to recent immigrants, and making the deportation process easier for U.S. administrators. The *Telegram* provided details of the legislation:

WASHINGTON (AP) — Gloomy notices will be arriving in hundreds of thousands of mailboxes in the next few weeks: The government is cutting off disability benefits for up to half a million elderly and disabled legal immigrants.⁶⁹

On the advocate side was Muriel Heiberger of the Massachusetts Immigration and Refugee Advocacy Coalition in Boston, who said, “People are going to be in absolutely desperate straits. This is the money they have to pay rent, to buy prescription medication to buy the basics for survival.”⁷⁰ Other advocates pointed to hardship cases that included

Cuban and Vietnamese refugees with no family to care for them. The Republican leadership that created the legislation is represented by U.S. Rep. Clay Shaw, who said, “It shows how the immigrants are really coming here and using the U.S. as a retirement program.”⁷¹ The story employs a sympathetic frame that juxtaposes pitifully helpless people versus heartless bureaucrats; the examples likely to evoke sympathy get three times the space of the explanation of why the bill was deemed necessary.

The stance of the *Telegram* seems clear after a review of its editorials: While illegal entry into the United States was not something to praise, it was something necessary to fuel the local, state and national economies. And although the newspaper respects the traditional firewall between the opinion page and the news pages as demanded by the journalistic orthodoxy of objectivity, its approaches to covering immigration seem subtly tilted in favor of immigrants. Its shift to more inclusive language and away from dehumanizing terms such as “illegal alien” provides evidence of this at the level of word usage. But at the narrative level it is evidenced by *Telegram* articles’ inclusion of defenses of immigrants. At the reporting level, it is evidenced by journalists’ selection of sources, which seem intended to provide more than just the point of view of INS and law enforcement officials and reach out to social services providers and the immigrants themselves. Further, when IRCA was implemented, the *Telegram* sought to reveal problems in INS bureaucracy and offer solutions. And last, by including information on how an illegal immigrant could apply for amnesty, it was not speaking about immigrants in the third person; it was speaking directly to them. These aspects of reporting and editorializing might not reflect just sympathy so much as pragmatism:

There is work to do, and there aren't enough people in the United States to do it, so what's the matter with bringing in help from south of the border? All of these factors combine in a strain of journalism that seeks to be inclusive of foreign newcomers, and in doing so promotes a positive context of reception for immigrants.

Although anti-immigrant backlash bubbled up mainly on the wire pages, by the mid-1990s it crept onto the Kansas scene as legislators attempted to shut Spanish and other immigrant languages out of the public sphere with proposals to designate English as the state's official language. Language as a weapon in the hands of nativist newsmakers, and as a tool in the hands of journalists at the *Telegram*, will be addressed in Chapter 6.

References

¹ "On to Senate: Immigration bill approved," The Associated Press, *GCT*, page 1, October 16, 1986.

² Author's telephone interview with Penney Schwab, Aug. 10, 2006.

³ The telegram was sent May 10, 1979, by President Jimmy Carter to Gov. John Carlin after Carter's meeting with Mexican President Jose Lopez Portillo, and came from Carlin's archives at the Kansas State Historical Society library in Topeka. 58-06-02-14 Records of the Governor's Office (Administration of John Carlin), Main Office (sub-subgroup IV) Subject Files (series p) 1979-87, Hoiz-Kan, Box 7 of 15, Accession No. 1987-360. File: Carlin IV p.: Immigration.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Author's interview with the Rev. Dave Sweley in his office at Garden City Presbyterian Church, August 10, 2006. The Ministerial Alliance is a consortium of local ministers who coordinate services that the churches provide for the community, such as temporary housing for the homeless and assistance with translation and navigating through immigration policies. *Telegram* reporters did not make a point of contacting anyone with the alliance on a regular basis as they covered their beats, Sweley said.

⁶ "City hears Hispanics' complaints," by Dwight Jurgens, *GCT*, page 1, August 22, 1990.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ "City hopes to form ethnic issues board," by Jane Neufeld, *GCT*, page 1, August 29, 1990.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ "Name changed to 'Hispanic,'" Associated Press, *GCT*, page 7, March 18, 1986. Some critics of the umbrella term "Hispanic" say it implies a homogeneity that does not match reality; falling under the umbrella are Peruvians as well as Puerto Ricans (technically U.S. citizens), Cubans as well as Colombians, Chileans as well as Chicanos. UCLA demographer Leobardo Estrada notes in Earl Shorris' *Latinos: A Biography of the People* that the U.S. Census nearly chose "Latino" as the correct umbrella word, but somebody pointed out that it sounded too much like "Ladino," the Castilian language now spoken only by descendants of the Spanish Jews who went into exile in the fifteenth century. "Latino was replaced by Hispanic in the census," Shorris wrote. "The battle was joined immediately on all sides. Political, racial,

linguistic and historical arguments were advanced; some were serious, a few were petulant, and at least one was offered as a joke.”

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ “Immigration bill revived,” Associated Press, *GCT*, page 1, October 10, 1986.

¹⁸ “Immigration policy faces major changes,” Associated Press, *GCT*, page 8, June 26, 1986.

¹⁹ “Immigration bill revived,” Associated Press, *GCT*, page 1, October 10, 1986.

²⁰ Not until the following spring did articles in the *Telegram* refer to the Immigration Reform and Control Act by its proper name in the article “Rush for amnesty as new immigration rules begin,” page 2, May 1, 1987.

²¹ “Immigration bill nears compromise,” Associated Press, *GCT*, page 1, October 15, 1986. Two aspects stick out about this story: that Senate conservatives balked at the bill as too expensive, and that although the article notes that the House Hispanic caucus voted 6-5 against the bill, it did not explain why caucus members came down against it. An Associated Press sidebar, “Major provisions of immigration bill,” details the most significant parts of the bill, including sanctions on employers who hire illegal immigrants; provisions to prevent employers from discriminating against workers on the basis of citizenship or alien status if the alleged victim is a U.S. citizen, permanent resident alien, refugee, asylee, or newly legalized alien who has filed intent to become a U.S. citizen; increased money for enforcement; legal immigration for seasonal farm workers; and legalization of illegal immigrants who had been in the United States since 1982.

²² Ibid.

²³ Author’s interview with Jim Bloom in his office at the *Hutchinson News*, August 7, 2006.

²⁴ “Immigration bill approved: On to Senate,” Associated Press, *GCT*, page 1, October 16, 1986.

²⁵ “Immigration bill awaits budget debate,” Associated Press, *GCT*, page 3, October 17, 1986.

²⁶ “Immigrants have brought special gifts, talents,” letter to the editor by Bishop Stanley Schlarman of the Diocese of Dodge City, *GCT*, page 4, December 20, 1986.

²⁷ “Distaff Side,” column by Dolores Hope, *GCT*, page 4, March 4, 1987.

²⁸ Author’s interview with Dolores Hope in her Garden City home, August 8, 2006.

²⁹ Dolores Hope’s daughter Holly writes about her Catholic upbringing in a history of her hometown based on her doctoral dissertation, *Garden City: Dreams in a Kansas Town*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988.

³⁰ “Service for aliens available,” no byline, *GCT*, page 3, March 11, 1987.

³¹ “Immigration law meeting Friday,” no byline, *GCT*, page 3, April 1, 1987.

³² “Local businesses don’t hire fairly,” letter to the editor by Robert Todd, *GCT*, page 4, March 23, 1987.

³³ “Rush for amnesty as new immigration rules begin,” Associated Press, *GCT*, page 2, May 1, 1987.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ “Many employers unprepared,” Associated Press, *GCT*, page 2, May 1, 1987.

³⁶ The Immigration Reform and Control Act required employers to demand passports, birth certificates or other documents from newly hired workers to prove that they had U.S. citizenship or federal approval to be in the country and thus could be legally employed.

³⁷ “Amnesty: Chance of a lifetime begins today,” by Jane Neufeld, *GCT*, page 1, May 5, 1987. In English, it reads: In Garden City, there are three social service agencies that have been authorized by the INS to give help to different kinds of applicants, in the process of legalizing their status as residents. They are: St. Mary Church, Mexican-American Ministries (United Methodist Care Center) and Harvest America. For better (the *Telegram* probably meant “more”) information, please get in contact with one of these agencies to arrange an appointment.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ “Immigrants may have second chance,” by Sarah Kessinger, *GCT*, page A1, September 28, 1991. It should be noted that because of the addition of sections, the page numbering system changed so the front page became A1, the first page of the second section became B1, etc.

⁴⁰ “Sixteen seek amnesty,” no byline, *GCT*, page 1, May 6, 1987.

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- ⁴¹ “Low turnout for amnesty,” by Barbara Metzler of The Associated Press, *GCT*, page 10, May 6, 1987.
- ⁴² “Chances are running out for amnesty,” by Jane Neufeld, *GCT*, page 1, June 11, 1987.
- ⁴³ Donald D. Stull and Michael J. Broadway detail the lives of meatpacking workers in *Slaughterhouse Blues: The Meat and Poultry Industry in North America*, Belmont: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2003.
- ⁴⁴ Schwab interview.
- ⁴⁵ “Chances are running out for amnesty.”
- ⁴⁶ “INS red tape,” editorial by Fred Brooks, *GCT*, page 4, June 16, 1987.
- ⁴⁷ “INS knuckleleads,” editorial by Jim Bloom, *GCT*, page 4, November 29, 1989.
- ⁴⁸ “Immigration piles on paper,” by Jane Neufeld, *GCT*, page 1, June 26, 1987.
- ⁴⁹ “I-9: a little form,” editorial by Fred Brooks, *GCT*, page 4, June 26, 1987.
- ⁵⁰ “Open borders,” editorial by Jim Bloom, *GCT*, page 4, November 22, 1989.
- ⁵¹ “New citizens: Doctor and Mrs. Arroyo make it official,” by R.J. Post, *GCT*, page 2, December 10, 1987.
- ⁵² “Late rush is on for amnesty,” by Jane Neufeld, *GCT*, page 1, April 27, 1988.
- ⁵³ “Hugoton woman among last to gain amnesty,” Harris News Service, *GCT*, page 3, May 5, 1988.
- ⁵⁴ “Amnesty plan offered home for hundreds,” by Jane Neufeld, *GCT*, page 1, December 2, 1988.
- ⁵⁵ “Thousands jam INS centers as amnesty deadline expires,” by Larry Rickman of The Associated Press, *GCT*, page 9, May 5, 1988. The article’s placement so far back in the newspaper suggests its selection was an afterthought.
- ⁵⁶ “House appears set to pass immigration bill,” Associated Press, *GCT*, page 1, October 3, 1990.
- ⁵⁷ “Proposition aims to curb illegal immigration: California’s plan a simple solution to difficult problem,” column by Molly Ivins, *GCT*, page 4, October 14, 1994.
- ⁵⁸ “70,000 protest immigration bill,” Associated Press, *GCT*, page 1, October 17, 1994.
- ⁵⁹ “Illegal immigrants on ballot,” Associated Press, *GCT*, page 8, October 26, 1994.
- ⁶⁰ “California vote brings disappointment here,” by Itzel Stewart, *GCT*, page 1, November 10, 1994. “Stewart” is the former last name of Itzel Rodriguez, who remarried.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁶² “U.S. judge temporarily blocks immigration law,” Associated Press, *GCT*, page 5, November 17, 1994. Ultimately, a federal judge who decided Proposition 187 was indeed unconstitutional blocked it permanently.
- ⁶³ “Mexico: ‘Come home,’” Associated Press, *GCT*, page 1, November 14, 1994. The subhead reads, “De Gortari asks immigrants to return from United States.”
- ⁶⁴ “Immigration, birthrate fuels enrollment growth,” letter to the editor by Rob Andrews, *GCT*, page 4, November 11, 1994.
- ⁶⁵ “California: The nation’s trendsetter,” editorial cartoon by Joel Pett, *GCT*, page 4, November 21, 1994.
- ⁶⁶ “Don’t blame immigrants for every local problem,” letter to the editor by Norma DeLaO, *GCT*, page 4, November 22, 1994.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁸ “Anti-immigrant fever,” editorial from the *Statesman-Journal* of Salem, Ore., *GCT*, page 4, December 1, 1994.
- ⁶⁹ “Elderly, disabled immigrants get news of aid cutoff,” Associated Press, *GCT*, page A7, February 15, 1997.
- ⁷⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 7
VOICES OF BACKLASH, VOICES OF WELCOME:
OFFICIAL ENGLISH, LA SEMANA
AND THE SEGREGATED CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY

“Nationally, *La Semana* was one of the first to see the potential of the
Hispanic market.”
— Sarah Kessinger, on the fifth birthday of *La Semana*, the Garden City
*Telegram’s Spanish-language weekly*¹

“Twenty-two Senate Republicans want to add a page of xenophobic
balderdash to the statute books. They should be stopped before the Kansas
reputation for good sense is ruined.”
— Mike Shields, *Harris News Service columnist*, on the 1997 effort
to introduce a law to make English the official language of the state
of Kansas²

A growing number of non-English-speakers generated concern among Garden City and Finney County officials, and although they put rules on the books to push some immigrants toward learning English, they did not try to impose a blanket requirement. The language barrier was one contributing factor in brushes with the law in Garden City. The Finney County attorney’s office instituted mandatory English-as-a-second-language classes in 1988 for people who spoke little or no English.³ The program came when the county recognized that recent immigrants sometimes broke the law because they did not know enough English to understand the law. Most cases falling under the ESL diversion involved driving under the influence of alcohol and required, in addition to English classes, that defendants undergo evaluation at the Crossroads alcohol and drug treatment center, an alcohol rehabilitation program, and 20 hours of community service.⁴

University of Kansas anthropologist Don Stull, leader of the Ford Foundation Changing Relations team examining how Garden City Anglos, Asians and Hispanics got

along with each other, noted that the language barrier posed a significant problem for both newcomers and the community receiving them.

It is the single most important element in interaction with people. (The immigrants') acceptance depends on it. If they don't speak English well, there is a barrier. Racial barriers come down with improvement of language.⁵

The options receiving communities have for dealing with the language problem in the context of immigration can be separated into three categories: neglect, resistance, and accommodation. Chapters 5 and 6 addressed the first of these in terms of the school district, which ignored the problem until Hispanic civic leaders brought it to light and the state and federal governments intervened to enforce guidelines calling for English as a second language and bilingual instruction. At the *Telegram*, neglect seems also to have been the first response, although it seems clear that this was a byproduct of its unawareness of the prevalence of Spanish-speakers who did not know English. This chapter will examine how the *Telegram* took an accommodationist approach through its introduction of the Spanish-language weekly *La Semana* and through its coverage of nativist resistance to immigrants in the form of the drive to make English the official language of the state of Kansas.

The impact of *La Semana* seems to have been mostly positive through the 1990s in that it provided a forum for Spanish-speakers and a resource for those who wanted to use it as a tool to learn Spanish. But a degree of information segregation occurred, with local Hispanic voices and wire news about Latin America decreasing in the daily *Telegram* and showing up instead in *La Semana*. The effect of this is a segregated construction of reality, wherein the intellectual raw materials for non-Hispanics to gain knowledge and form attitudes about Hispanics and Hispanic issues is shunted into a

lower-circulation publication in which non-Hispanics are less likely to look for such knowledge. At the start of *La Semana*'s run, the newspaper's 600 weekly copies were bilingual, but after six months it converted to Spanish-only, raising a language barrier between monolingual English-speakers and Hispanic viewpoints generated by local writers and syndicated columnists.⁶

Voices of backlash: the drive for Official English

Although educating non-English-speaking children was the main issue confronted by Garden City, debates about language came up in other areas. For the November 1986 election, an article noted that no ballots in Spanish or Vietnamese were used in Finney County. The county clerk contended that the law did not require counties to use ballots in languages other than English, although they are recommended in communities where Spanish-speakers make up more than 5 percent of the population.⁷ The county clerk said she had received no requests for ballots in Spanish or Vietnamese. Interestingly, the story was packaged directly beneath an article about an Occupational Safety and Health Administration fine against IBP, which relied heavily on immigrant labor.⁸

As Garden City tried to figure out just how much was too much in accommodating non-English-speakers, Republican legislators in 1997 introduced Senate Bill 179, which sought to require that "all official proceedings, records and publications" printed and spoken only in English.⁹ Noting that fewer than 1 percent of Kansas' 2.4 million residents spoke something other than English, columnist Mike Shields asked why anybody thought English was in trouble in the Sunflower State. He identified U.S. English, a California group that hired the largest contract lobbying firm in Kansas to push for English Only in 1995 on the strength of just one person's testimony in favor of it —

and that person was a non-Kansan who worked for U.S. English. That wasn't enough to get the bill out of committee, but it was introduced and rejected again in 1996. And in 1997, conservative Republican state Sen. Tim Huelskamp, who represented two counties with a less-inclusive approach to immigration than Garden City, took up the cause. To Huelskamp's statement that "There's a high level of immigration in my district, and there is concern about keeping the (English) language intact," Shields answered: "If the Mexicans take over the culture in Dodge City, what will happen to the Taco Bell? Would English speakers be forced to order tacos and nachos in Spanish?" Shields pointed out the racist and nativist appeal of English Only, quoting Huelskamp as saying his constituents complain about "how quickly illegal immigrants receive welfare" and that Official English is "one way of addressing that."¹⁰ Not only is the statement xenophobic, but it's also inaccurate. According to Penney Schwab, director of United Methodist Mexican American Ministries, "Kansas has not granted access to illegals — and I think rightly — the fact that they don't grant cash assistance, as California and Florida do, so resentment here is lower than you'll find out there."¹¹

Shields reported on a hearing of the Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee that overflowed with witnesses. Huelskamp commented, "We must empower immigrants by encouraging them to learn English. To do otherwise, to lower our expectations, to send the message we will indulge you in your native tongue, is detrimental to non-English speakers."¹² To which 14-year-old middle-school student Monica Guevara of Topeka responded, "My grandfather and his brothers did not fight in World War II in North Africa, Italy and France to make the world safe for English, but rather to make the world safe for democracy."¹³ Other arguments in favor that were included in the article

came from state Sen. Nancy Harrington of Wichita, who said, “We’re not trying to tell you what language to speak in your homes, your churches, or your businesses. We’re just streamlining and simplifying operations,” while University of Kansas law professor Phillip DeLaTorre remarked, “The Republican battle cry has always been to get government off our backs and out of our lives. It would be most ironic if the government, in the form of a Republican legislature here in Topeka, were now to tell us what language to speak.”

The pattern of episodic wire coverage vs. thematic local coverage of English Only echoes the treatment of immigration reforms in Chapter 5. For developments in Topeka, the *Telegram* relied on The Associated Press and Harris News Service. Local stories provide greater context that went beyond the incrementalism of wire articles covering step-by-step developments in the Legislature. Two *Telegram* staff stories on March 10, 1997, compare Kansas legislation with similar laws in other states and trace how arguments over whether to make English the official language have evolved since the 18th century. One notes that two of the proposed Kansas Constitutions in 1857, one pro-slavery and the other Free Soil, included provisions to have official documents published in English. It also notes that in 1915, the state required jurors to understand English, a backlash against Germans resulting from World War I.¹⁴

Three days later, the Garden City Commission got into the act, passing a resolution opposing the legislation on a 3-1 vote that encouraged all residents of Garden City to know more than just English.¹⁵ City Commissioner Dennis Mesa, a Hispanic, was among those voting in favor of the resolution; his presence on the commission provides evidence of the growing institutionalization of ethnic diversity in Garden City. That

diversity showed up in letters to the editor, as well. Jose J. Flores had enough of the English Only effort when he wrote in to the *Telegram* to say:

How much of the taxpayers' money will be spent on these two bills, regardless if they pass or not? What a waste of time and money! I did not know of English not being used by our government. I always thought that former Gov. Joan Finney, Marion Reynolds and Don Smith spoke only English in their meetings. Furthermore, I do not know of Gove. Bill Graves, Sen. Tim Huelskamp, Rep. Melvin Neufeld, or Rep. Ethel Peterson conducting or being subject to conduct meetings in Spanish. If they are, I'm sorry for my ignorance. These two bills are obviously directed to the Hispanics, and are nothing more than plain racism. Wake up, taxpayers, we do not need any more bills that waste our money and separate us even more. We do not need any more bills created as a diversion from the real problems that our society is confronting today. Like crime, poverty, welfare, health care, programs for the elderly. ... And again, I wonder whose interests are these two bills actually protecting? Or is it just miedo porque hablo español? [Translated: "is it just fear because I speak Spanish?"]¹⁶

Another reader, a Dodge Citian who disagreed with her senator, Huelskamp, wrote in a letter to the editor:

If the official language should be English Only, then all Latin, German, Spanish, Gaelic, French, Italian, Polish and Hungarian should be eliminated. English as it was spoken before the conquistadors should be the official language and a pure English language should be decided upon because it has been in a state of constant flux since 1066 in the battle of Hastings. ... And, of course, we would have to change the names of our cities ... Los Angeles would be changed to City of Angels, Santa Rosa to Saint Rose, Colorado would be changed to Red, Salina would be changed to little salt, Amarillo Texas would be Yellow Texas, El Dorado would be called Burnt, Kansas, which brings us back to the real reason for this legislation and that is to prohibit what has never been mandated, to prevent what has never been compelled, to reject what has never been accepted, and that is that additions to English from any foreign source corrupts and demeans the English language and its culture because Germans are not as good as Englishmen, French are not as good as Englishmen, Mexicans are not as good as Americans. Where does that bring us? It brings us to superiority, pride and, ultimately, hatred for other people.¹⁷

Representing the voice of Anglos in favor of Official English, another wrote:

It's not an issue of racism, it does not require the giving up of other cultural influences in our society. It doesn't ask one to give up their language.

What it will encourage is the fact that a person needs to have a working functioning knowledge of the predominate (sic) language where they have chosen to work and live. When traveling to Portugal, France, Mexico or China they certainly make no effort to accommodate my language. All they'll say is "no speak English." If I were to move there, I'd make the assumption, using my own common sense, that I'd have to learn the language to a certain degree.¹⁸

Stull noted that a community is historically not tolerant of those who speak a different language or do not learn English, although he said he thought Garden City might be more tolerant than other Kansas towns with less ethnic diversity.¹⁹ But nativist backlash did pop up in the *Telegram's* letters to the editor, even among those who have ethnicity in common with more recent Hispanic immigrants. Paco "Bell" Atuya, a Garden Citian, revealed his own bigotry against Mexican migrants even while writing to comment on an Anglo's prejudice:

I am proud to be a Mexican. But I feel rather than being labeled as an old-timer, Texican (Mexicans born in Texas that have moved to Garden City), or wetback, there are a lot of Mexicans who would rather be labeled as Kansans or Americans. ... As far as wetbacks, they can hardly speak English and they can say "green card" better than "wet." Maybe that is the reason rent is so high in Garden City because landlords ... know they can charge higher rent to minorities.²⁰

Brett Riggs, who served as the *Telegram's* city editor and sports editor in the late 1990s and has been managing editor since 2003, said the newspaper's practice was to print all of the letters that readers send with a couple of exceptions: "Epithets, no. But political points, yes, we would never screen out different points of view just because we don't agree with them. We let them put their opinion out there and see what it gets them, as long as it doesn't contain libel or character attacks."²¹

Ultimately, the Kansas Senate declined to take up the English Only proposals. “It just doesn’t have the votes,” said Senate Majority Leader Tim Emert, a Republican from Independence.²² But the bill’s death did not kill the conversation about it in Garden City. In the house editorial for *La Semana* on March 26, 1997, publisher Jim Bloom wrote, “The English Only proposal reflects only the unhealthiness of ignorance and intolerance. The real problem is ignorance and intolerance that bring discrimination in every society.”²³ And *Telegram* columnist Patrick Murphy countered the nativists’ “when in Rome, do as a Roman” case for English Only:

If I went to another country and could not communicate, could not go to a government office to learn how to become part of the mainstream, I would not feel welcomed. I would not feel like I was given a fair chance to better myself; to become a productive member of that society. I know if I couldn’t communicate with the majority, I would retreat to that group with whom I shared a common language and never learn anything more and never better myself and never strive for anything outside my limited world. ...
Any money saved or other benefits from not having to translate documents into other languages would be minimal compared to the hard feelings this proposal has created.²⁴

And six months after English Only was scuttled, Republican Kansas Gov. Bill Graves wrote in a guest column, “I stand with members of the Kansas Hispanic community in opposition to such legislation and disagree with its underlying premise. In my mind, it is subtly, if not overtly racist.”²⁵ The column, distributed across the state, corresponded with his visit to Garden City Fiesta. He appeals to the state mythology of good vs. evil, Free State vs. Slave State: “Kansas was born amidst a bloody struggle over tolerance. One hundred thirty-six years later, that foundation of fairness and equity for all is as strong as ever.”

What fuels the nativist impulse among those who oppose immigration? Schwab, the director of United Methodist Mexican American Ministries, suspects it is a matter of cultural identity: “There is some fear — and you should understand, I’m in a mixed-race family — they’re afraid their heritage will disappear.”²⁶

When nativism arose, the *Telegram* balanced it with the voices of Mexican immigrant columnists who were well-established in the community. These columnists were edited by two strong advocates of Hispanic immigrants. “It’s been pretty even-handed, but quality is related to the people who are working for the paper. Sara Kessinger and Itzel Stewart both had a similar perspective — they were both sympathetic to Latino issues,” according to Schwab.²⁷

A weekly voice for southwest Kansas Hispanics: *La Semana*

The introduction of *La Semana* in 1991 was in the works since 1986. Former editor and publisher Jim Bloom recalls:

We considered both Spanish and Vietnamese publications. With the Vietnamese, there were too many languages — some spoke Vietnamese, Cambodian, Thai, some Hmong. So not all used the same language. But Spanish ... 15 percent of Southwest Kansas is native Spanish speakers and readers. Out of a population of 100,000, that’s 15,000 people, so it’s a substantial market. When I got there as editor and publisher, we planned out our strategies, and a Spanish-language publication was part of what we wanted to do.²⁸

Who would run this publication? With bachelor’s degrees in journalism and Spanish from Kansas State University, and a master’s degree in Latin American studies from the University of Kansas, Sarah Kessinger brought a rare mix of professional training and bilingual aptitude to the *Telegram* in 1989.²⁹ “Sarah Kessinger was an example of the kind of people who came as good journalists and had a knowledge of

other cultures,” columnist Dolores Hope recalled.³⁰ It was pure serendipity for the *Telegram*. “We didn’t recruit her; she found us,” Bloom recalled.³¹

Kessinger, who came from a newspaper family that published the *Marysville Advocate*, began as a reporter at the *Telegram*.³² Soon she brought up the idea of a separate paper to serve Hispanics. “When Sarah came in 1989, she said, ‘You know, we really need to do a Spanish-language section,’” Bloom recalled. “I said, ‘I know; we’re planning one. Want to hear about it?’ And she became the editor of it.”³³

The *Telegram* announced plans to launch the publication in a front-page story the day before Garden City’s 65th annual Mexican-American Fiesta. Kessinger, who researched the project and produced a prototype for distribution at Fiesta, explained, “Our goal is to serve the growing Latino and Mexican-American populations of southwest Kansas. We also hope that printing news stories in Spanish and English will help encourage greater literacy in both languages.”³⁴ In addition to providing free samples at Fiesta, the *Telegram* promoted the new publication with house ads, some in English, others in Spanish.³⁵

It was clear to the *Telegram* that there would be plenty of demand for the product. Although the *Telegram* reported that Census did not count the number of Spanish speakers and that nobody knew how many Spanish-speakers were overlooked by the Census, Kessinger said about 1,000 Spanish-speakers were in ESL programs in southwest Kansas school districts.³⁶ In addition, 850 to 900 area residents regularly attended Spanish-language services at St. Mary Catholic Church and La Santa Cruz Lutheran Mission, with four other churches establishing services or lay programs to serve Mexican-Americans and Latinos.³⁷

The front-page of *La Semana*'s inaugural edition on Nov. 7, 1991, led with side-by-side stories in Spanish and English about Hispanic Heritage Month and about grocers stocking authentic Mexican foods such as chile pods, chorizo, menudo, corn husks and cactus leaves. In addition, a Spanish-only wire story about North American Free Trade Agreement negotiations.³⁸ Inside, the publication is packed with local articles. A briefs package, labeled "Que Pasa," contained items that announced the school district's alternative education program for high school students who need a more flexible schedule because they must work to support their families; vocational training classes at Mexican-American Ministries in Liberal; a parents fund drive at Buffalo Jones Elementary School; and an item about Mexican-American Ministries receiving a grant for a family planning project.³⁹ Another item, which appeared only in Spanish, announced the names of newly elected leaders of the Hispanic American Leadership Organization.⁴⁰

More interestingly, *La Semana* provided a full page of opinion writing by and for Hispanics. Pedro "Pete" Sandoval, long a writer of letters to the editor and an outspoken champion of Garden City's Hispanic community, wrote a lengthy piece about his miserable youth as he struggled to learn English while teachers and classmates belittled him and other Hispanics for their language and customs.⁴¹ In a follow-up, he wrote passionately about the pressure his parents put on him to learn English and act as family translator and tutor as a child:

As we were getting along in school and starting to learn, our parents felt proud that we could speak English now. They thought they could depend on us to help them. Wrong. They would take us to interpret for them and we would freeze. We didn't even try and we felt so embarrassed that they used Spanish. ... There were times that they would ask us how to you say something in English. We would tell them, they would repeat it and it came out mispronounced or heavily accented, so we would laugh at them (which was so wrong of us). In due time, they had to resort to other means

like taking a sample such as a coffee can, container of baking powder, etc.⁴²

In comparing English and Spanish versions, it is sometimes unclear what the writer intended to say. From the same column, Sandoval wrote in Spanish: “Las maestras nos decían que eso no se permitía, ‘Uds. son americanos. Hablen como americanos.’” Literally translated, it is “The teachers told us that it was not permitted. ‘You are Americans. Speak *like Americans* (emphasis added).” The accompanying English translation, however, reads, “The teachers told us that it was not permitted: ‘You are in America, speak American (emphasis added).’”⁴³ To get the complete meaning, then, it was sometimes necessary to understand both languages. Still, Sandoval makes clear the pain of being a first-wave immigrant from Mexico. Further down, he wrote:

With these stories in mind, it is easier to understand why the later generations began to lose the language and culture. Our parents did not want us to go through what they had. We were now living in Garden City, America, and we must try to be Americans.

Many of us tried, but the fact that we were brown, dark-eyed, and of Spanish surnames, we just couldn’t blend in. Society wouldn’t allow it because we were different.

Some of us who were lighter with green or blue eyes would try to blend, to be accepted. But as soon as they heard your last name — “Oh, Mexican?” “No, I’m Spanish.”

People answered like that because of the bad image and stereotypes in the names given us — spics, greasers, pepper bellies and dirty Mexicans.

This, in my opinion, was most degrading.

“Spic” was given to us because those who didn’t speak English would say, “Me no spic inglés.”

In the early covered wagon years, many wagonmasters would hire Mexican peons for their long trips to grease the wagon wheels. Thus came the name “greasers.”

“Pepper bellies” came about because of all the chile we ate. But now we are no longer alone. Some white folks outdo us, which is great.

And the last one, “dirty Mexican,” for the most part was a name for the agricultural and railroad workers who came into town for provisions and didn’t take the time after work to walk home to change and then walk back into town again.

Lack of hygiene? Oh come on, it’s there in all groups of people.⁴⁴

Locally written columns in future editions covered other social topics, including proper behavior for girls celebrating their quinceañera, a coming-out party in honor of a girl's 15th birthday.⁴⁵ And the opening editorial in the bilingual publication explained the mission of the new publication:

We hope to receive ideas, inspirations, opinions, comments and more from the residents of this corner of the state. The main focus will be local coverage varying from social news, sports and education to features on local people and the latest issues facing Hispanics.

Also, we will carry national news and stories from Mexico, Central Mexico and occasionally the rest of Latin America. Because it is a bilingual newspaper, some news will run in English as well as Spanish in order to inform as many people as possible. Other stories may be only in Spanish, translated from *The Telegram*.

The Telegram initially studied the possibility of a bilingual newspaper three years ago. With increasing interest and a desire to serve the growing Spanish-speaking population of the area, final approval for the newspaper came this month. ...

In studies of the various cultures represented in Garden City, there has been mention of a need for more informational services for Hispanics. We intend for this newspaper to assist with that need. But this goal won't be possible without the participation of Latinos throughout the area.⁴⁶

The centerpiece cover story in the second edition, a profile of Dodge City radio personality Johnny Canales, examined growing demand for Tejano, norteño and tropical music from Latin America. Other front-page stories covered the Garden City library's growing collection of books in Spanish for adults and children, and an article about the lack of channels to inform non-English-speaking parents about school closings and delays.⁴⁷

The opinion page provided a venue to oppose the nativist drive for English as the official language of the federal government:

What these reactionary groups seem to forget is the right of all U.S. citizens to freely express themselves, whatever their language may be. While this has not been an issue of great interest in the Kansas Legislature, we hope it never is. Limited-English speakers continue to grow in our

state and their languages should be a welcomed addition to our cultural diversity. English is the accepted language of business nationwide and not state law needs to declare that. Such legislation can only infringe upon the rights of people to speak out as they please.⁴⁸

Another editorial called on readers to pressure the Census Bureau to refine its methods for counting Hispanics.

Applause to the December issue of Hispanic magazine for picking up on the U.S. Census Bureau's wild, crazy and useless arithmetic to top their "worst of 1991" list. ... Here in Kansas, the "count" was 92,000, which the Kansas Advisory Commission on Hispanic Affairs has stated is low. City officials have noted that the census count of southwest Kansas' ethnic groups is inaccurate.

Obviously, the census figures skew the reality of a population that merits much more attention. As a result, opportunities are unfairly limited.

Now it's time for Hispanics to show they do count.

By showing up in voter booths, by holding public officials accountable, by urging others to do the same, people can make the government aware of the mistake.⁴⁹

Advertising in the first edition consumed about 75 percent of space in the first 12-page edition, and clients included carpet stores, traditional Mexican bakeries, Mexican restaurants, a music store, clothing stores, a pharmacy, an appliance store, a liquor store and a tortilla factory. The mix was typical for *La Semana*, and in subsequent issues auto dealers and furniture stores joined the lineup.

Hispanics found a regular sounding board of opinion in *La Semana*, and civic leaders took notice. Kessinger cultivated such local columnists as Irene Garcia and Pedro "Pete" Sandoval, but occasionally a guest column appeared for special events. That was the case when Gov. Bill Graves' column on the contributions of Latinos in Kansas appeared in both the Telegram and *La Semana* the week that he visited town for Fiesta. The column was a public relations outreach masterminded by a Cuban assistant in the Graves administration.⁵⁰

All of this, Bloom said, added up to an extremely successful product.

It was very well-received. We started out with a circulation of 700 to 900, and very quickly it got up to 2,000 to 2,500 a week. It's still a viable publication, and it was very much in demand from advertisers who wanted to get their word out to its readers.⁵¹

When its editors recognized a gap in knowledge among immigrants, *La Semana* sought to fill it. Just as the *Telegram* tried to inform Mexican immigrants about how to apply for the amnesty of 1986, *La Semana* ran stories about the variety of forms green cards came in with a sidebar about how the Immigration and Naturalization Service extended the period for re-applying for green cards.⁵² When the articles ran, in 1994, the weekly had shifted to Spanish exclusively. Although *La Semana* carried articles from the *Telegram* that were deemed to be of interest to Hispanics, not all Spanish articles about immigration were picked up by the *Telegram*, adding to information segregation. Asked about whether this was a matter of concern, former *La Semana* journalist Itzel Stewart said that *La Semana*'s mission was to serve Hispanics and immigrants and that given space limitations imposed by the low advertiser support for a bilingual publication, dropping English versions of articles provided the news hole necessary to properly serve the immigrant population. Information segregation, then, was the byproduct of scarce resources in a news organization trying to balance the need to serve readers with the need for profit.

The fledgling publication evolved with time, and its staff changed, too. Within months of its launch, founding editor Kessinger was promoted to assistant managing editor of the *Telegram*, and she was succeeded by Stewart.⁵³ Bloom recalls, "Well, Itzel Stewart, who was from Panama, had been a bank teller in Manuel Noriega's corrupt banking system, BCP, Banco Commercial de Panama, I think it was. And she came out to

Southwest Kansas with her husband and their children. She's done a great job with *La Semana*." First she worked in advertising, and *La Semana*, needing bilingual reporters, turned to her.

Little by little, English articles dropped out of the weekly as it broke more original local stories. Although *La Semana*'s banner included the words "Un periódico bilingüe" and "A bilingual newspaper" since its introduction in December 1991, it changed to "Un periódico en español" and "A Spanish newspaper" on May 13, 1993.⁵⁴ There was no explanation for two more editions, when the headline on the house editorial announced, "La Semana será sólo en español."⁵⁵ Here is the rationale, translated into English, given by the editorial:

After various surveys and studies, the publisher of the Telegram, who directs and edits *La Semana*, has decided to convert the newspaper that had been bilingual to Spanish. Our main market is the Hispanic who speak and read Spanish. The secondary market is composed of a small number of bilingual people whose main language is English. A small percentage of that are people who are studying Spanish. Since the start of the publication in November 1991, we have been fighting to establish the publication in Hispanic homes. In that period, it was not free and its circulation was low. So this June we began to distribute it for free, and its circulation didn't just double, it tripled. A great problem that faces a newspaper after its introduction is advertising sales. Hispanic businesses have not supported it to the extent that was expected. Actually, Anglo businesses have given it better advertising support and single-copy distribution. The number of ads sold determines the number of pages in the newspaper. It is for this reason that our editions consist of six pages. Consequently, the number of photos and stories are limited by the lack of space. To serve you, our readers, with local stories and international reports, with local interviews of Hispanics who have triumphed in the land of opportunity, we at *La Semana* are proud to present our publication completely in Spanish. Columns written at our invitation and the best letters to the editor that are in both languages will be published in English and Spanish. All the rest of the stories, interviews and commentaries will be only in Spanish. We hope that in the near future we can offer a bigger publication with more coverage, not without remembering that success depends on the unity and effort of all of us Hispanics.⁵⁶

In an interview for this study, Stewart outlined the reasoning behind and the benefits of changing the weekly to Spanish-only:

Because *La Semana* was a very small newspaper — it was eight pages most of the time — and the fact that we were running both English and Spanish versions of the stories was really limiting the amount of news we were able to publish. Spanish is longer than English. So I brought the idea to Jim Bloom and his staff, which were supervising each department, and they voted on that, and this newspaper was created for Spanish-speaking people, and it was changed over to Spanish. And people were very happy with that. Because the amount of news was better. We also introduced comics, we introduced the horoscope. The Latino people love the horoscope; they are always looking at what the stars say today. It was a really, really good project. We expanded it throughout the years. There were holidays, Latino holidays, Cinco de Mayo, Mexican Fiesta, and the newspaper was at times twenty-plus pages because we were covering the celebration.⁵⁷

The quest to expand its advertising reach continued in 1994, when the *Telegram* began distributing *La Semana* not just in the Garden City area and southwest Kansas, but to other Hispanic population centers in Wichita, El Dorado, and Hutchinson in the central part of the state and as far east as Topeka⁵⁸ At the time, circulation was 2,400 in southwest Kansas.

On *La Semana*'s fifth birthday, editor Stewart noted two principal missions for the weekly. The first was to draw more readers into the English-language *Telegram* by helping immigrants to learn English. The second was to give immigrants the information they needed to achieve the American Dream.⁵⁹ That she put creating English-proficient readers first in that column suggests that business was the overriding reason; combine that with the decision to convert to Spanish-only to appeal to advertisers, and you have an example of media economics driving editorial decision-making. The notion of helping immigrants, then, is a happy byproduct, and the fact that it is mentioned in print suggests intent to promote a positive context of reception for Spanish-speaking immigrants. The

creation of media in Spanish was one of the recommendations of the Ford Foundation Changing Relations team.⁶⁰

La Semana's frame of immigrant as seeker of opportunity carries on through the 1990s. Writing in the publication's first edition in a tabloid format, Stewart paints a picture of prosperity:

The meatpacking industry in this area, with its growing economy and good-paying jobs, has attracted many Latinos who have found stability, bought houses and gotten to become productive citizens.⁶¹

An inadvertent linguistic divide

One side-effect of *La Semana*'s introduction was a segregated construction of reality for readers who knew only English and for readers who knew only Spanish.

Throughout the 1980s, leaders of Garden City's Hispanic community celebrated their triumphs and made their concerns known via letters to the editor in the *Telegram*. Pedro "Pete" Sandoval was one such frequent letter writer, and a 1988 note of congratulations for an award received by a fellow Hispanic represents the former, offering praise while keeping alive the memory of hardships faced by the first generation of Mexican immigrants to Garden:

Congratulations, Rita Munoz, on your recent recognition as one of the helpers to the Garden City Federation of Paraprofessionals. You've come a long way baby!

I know, because we both go back many years. Years of enduring tremendous hardships and life's struggles. Years that we wouldn't care to go back to, let alone remember. Those were the years when it was hard to distinguish the boys from the girls, when it came time to enter the farm labor fields, especially when the sugar beet industry was thriving. Who can forget the backbreaking jobs done with the short handled hoes with the temperatures in the summer well into the 100s. Then came the topping of the sugar beets in the winter months, with temperatures so cold that we had to make several stabs at the frozen beets to get the job done. Even though we wore extra gloves and clothing, we still felt half frozen, our fingers and hands numb from the cold. We would dance and stomp around

to keep warm or put our hands under our armpits to generate a little heat, not to mention our constantly runny frozen noses.

Yes, Rita, you are one of the many who wanted an opportunity, (Sal si puedes). Get out if you can and you did! No one knows better than yourself the tremendous sacrifice this played on your role as homemaker and mother. Seeing to it that your children would get a proper education so they could excel and, by golly, they're doing it, and you're doing it. A good example of (Si se puede). Yes, it can be done!

To our Hispanic youth I say look, look up to this woman in admiration for her outstanding accomplishments and use her as a role model. She can be and is your inspiration. Educacion es nuestra savacion! Education is our salvation!⁶²

When Sandoval was brought on board *La Semana* as a columnist, his writing disappeared from the *Telegram*, removing a strong Hispanic voice from general discourse and therefore removing a representative perspective from the supply of intellectual raw material from which reality is socially constructed. Anglo readers could still turn to *La Semana* to get such perspectives, but to do so they had to pay 50 cents per copy from vendors or subscribe at a cost of \$11.52 plus tax for six months of \$21.94 for a year. But those who understood English but not Spanish did not have long to read what Sandoval and other Hispanic leaders had to say. Within six months of launch, *La Semana* switched to Spanish-only.

Rodriguez, who succeeded Kessinger as *La Semana* editor when Kessinger became assistant managing editor of the *Telegram*, gives these reasons for *La Semana's* switch from both Spanish and English to Spanish-only: News about Garden City's Hispanics was getting crowded out of the paper because of the space it took to run versions in both languages. In addition, Spanish-language stories take more space because it takes more words to express the same concepts in Spanish as do stories in English. And because it takes longer to tell a story in Spanish than in English, that meant fewer stories got told. To make room for those stories, the logical solution was to cut

English versions out altogether. This, she said, made *La Semana* better, allowing it to provide more original content for the Spanish-speaking readers it was designed to serve.⁶³ The Spanish weekly typically picked up stories that had already run in the *Telegram*, but sometimes it broke stories if they happened on *La Semana*'s production cycle. At times, though, when *La Semana* picked up a *Telegram* story it had different information. When the *Telegram* reported on a census report that found growing ethnic diversity in Finney County, it did not mention Hispanics until late enough in the story that it did not appear before the story continued onto a page inside. In *La Semana*, it was recast to turn Hispanic growth into the article's main focus and headline.

In another example of segregated reality, Mike Shields' column opposing the English Only bill in the Kansas Legislature ran in both the *Telegram* opinion page and in *La Semana*. The *Telegram* version omitted four paragraphs that skewered the stereotypical fears ostensibly held by the measure's sponsors. Among them: "Those Mexicans probably want to change the name of Wyatt Earp Boulevard in Dodge City to honor one of their famous gunslingers. Via Pancho Villa?"⁶⁴

Hispanics, Mejicanos and ethnic identity

To Anglos in Garden City, the language barrier made it easy to overlook the differences among the town's Hispanic subgroups. Whether Latinos in the area were deeply rooted in the community or were recent arrivals from Mexico or other parts of Latin America, the common term was "Hispanic." But University of Colorado anthropologist Art Campa, a member of Don Stull's Ford Foundation Changing Relations team, pointed out that Hispanics referred to themselves by different terms depending on whether they were speaking English or Spanish.⁶⁵ While they used "Hispanic" while speaking English, the term "Mejicano" was used in Spanish. "The language you use

makes a difference in the label you choose,” Campa said. “Sometimes the meaning of a term changes from one language to another.”⁶⁶ Reporter Dolores Hope quoted Campa extensively in providing a primer for readers in her “Distaff side” column. The terms, as described by Campa:⁶⁷

- Mexican (used by Hispanics to identify themselves to others).
- Mexicano (used in Spanish to identify someone who is both Hispanic and speaks Spanish, though when used in English it implies a newcomer).
- Mexican-American (used by established Hispanics to identify themselves).
- Hispanic (neutral descriptor for anyone of Hispanic descent).
- mojado (literally “wet one,” a derogatory term used by established Hispanics to describe undocumented Mexican and Central American immigrants and frequently used by Anglos).
- Chino (non-derogatory term for Asians).
- Gringo, bolillo and gabacho (used mostly by Hispanic immigrants for Anglos, “gringo” being used mostly by recent arrivals and “gabacho” being used throughout the Borderlands states).
- Chicano (used by more recent Mexican-Americans in reference to themselves, it suggests a high self-awareness of Hispanic ethnicity and is a more political term than others); and
- Latino (used mostly by non-Mexican Central American immigrants or refugees in Garden City).

Though this list seems comprehensive, it omits terms for people of mixed Hispanic heritage such as “coyote,” which Spanish dictionaries define as a person of both

Anglo and Hispanic descent commonly,⁶⁸ although in slang the term refers to those who smuggle migrants across the border into the United States; “Mestizo,” which expresses the same idea and is common throughout the Borderlands states⁶⁹; and “güero,” a term commonly used in Mexico for fair-complected Anglo-Hispanics.⁷⁰ These omissions may be due to lack of knowledge of them, but it seems more likely that Campa did not include them because he did not think they were relevant to Garden City. Lack of terms for such people implies that they either must identify with one of their ethnic heritages to the exclusion of the other, that mixed heritage was taboo; or that they were simply so rare in a given community that no terms are used for them.

Regardless of this oversight, it is clear that *La Semana* sought to transmit Hispanic cultural and ethnic identity through its pages. On the day after Christmas 1991, the front-page centerpiece recounts how St. Mary’s Catholic parishioners celebrated the Mexican tradition of Las Posadas, the nine-night re-enactment of Mary and Joseph’s search for shelter before the Nativity. The article’s explanation of the tradition, here translated into English:

During each evening, one of the homes is opened to the visitors and the statues are placed in a stable scene in the house. The evening’s festivities then begin, with a piñata and dancing. The same scenario takes place until the last posada, on Dec. 24. Then, at midnight, the figure of the baby Jesus is placed in the cradle of the manger scene.⁷¹

What made Las Posadas significant to the parishioners quoted was the way it focused them on the reason for Advent — to prepare them for the birth of Jesus Christ — in the face of commercialism in their new home in the United States. “This tradition, principally in the United States, has been lost. Now it is all about selling things,” said Jorge Caro, one of the parishioners. Another, Toni Lopez, said she was teaching it to her

children; the article implied doing so was a way of connecting them with their heritage, quoting her as saying, “My mom always told us how Las Posadas was in Mexico.”

Sociologist Tomás R. Jiménez argued that a constant flow of Mexican immigrants into Garden City replenished the ethnic identity of Mexican-Americans whose families have been in the United States for multiple generations.⁷² Jiménez asserts that desire to retain or learn Spanish is among the cultural aspects that are strengthened when Mexican immigrants come into the community.⁷³ The presence of Spanish-language media serves to amplify that desire.

Between their emphasis on preservation of Hispanic culture, their efforts to give immigrants the information they needed to become part of the community and strive for citizenship and prosperity, the *Telegram* and *La Semana* contributed to making immigrants feel at home in Garden City. Coverage of Hispanics continued, and even increased, in the English paper. But the papers reduced English-only readers’ access to Hispanic perspectives by shifting columns from the *Telegram* to *La Semana* — and not just local Hispanic leaders such as Sandoval. The syndicated Hispanic Link column also disappeared from the *Telegram*, which introduced it in 1980. In addition, the inclusion of articles about Latin America in *La Semana* occurred at the same time their frequency dropped in the *Telegram*, with the exception of articles about immigration from Latin America.

The purpose of this study is to tell how coverage of Hispanics changed at the *Telegram*, not the effect of the segregated construction of reality that resulted from the way the language barrier was handled. Segregated construction of reality poses an opportunity for experimental research to ascertain its effects. But assuming the validity of

the ethnic affinity hypothesis, which states that good feelings grow as heterogeneous groups get more exposure to one another, segregated construction of reality could impede understanding between groups, and stunted understanding could translate into stunted cooperation among groups.

References

- ¹ “La Semana está celebrando su ‘Quinto Aniversario,’ (La Semana is celebrating its fifth anniversary), by Patrick Murphy, *La Semana*, page 4, November 27, 1996. Quotation translated from Spanish.
- ² “English Only law needless rhetoric by paranoid senators,” by Mike Shields, page A4, *GCT*, February 20, 1997.
- ³ “English stipulation added to diversion,” by R.J. Post, *GCT*, page 1, March 4, 1988. Under such diversions, the defendant agreed to certain conditions in exchange for having charges dropped after successful completion of the diversion program.
- ⁴ “English stipulation added to diversion,” by R.J. Post.
- ⁵ “Distaff side,” column by Dolores Hope, *GCT*, page 4, October 27, 1989.
- ⁶ “Changing Relations: Newcomers and Established Residents in Garden City, Kansas, 1990-2000,” unpublished document by the Cultural Relations Board for the City of Garden City, 2001. The document came in response to City Manager Robert Halloran’s request for a review of the community’s progress in improving the environment, business, government and social relationships, educational, housing, health, services for immigrants, migrant workers and their families. The report reviewed progress on fifteen recommendations, one of which involved media: “1990 Recommendation 13: Expand the use of local and regional media to reach non-English speakers. Service institutions including city and state government, should learn of and use existing media to communicate with language-minority immigrants. Hispanics and Southeast Asians regularly read several regional magazines and newspaper (sic). These publications should be put to use by established institutions. Local radio and television are constrained by their audience composition — changes in programming are very difficult. But for public broadcasting, continued outreach to Hispanics and Southeast Asians is needed to build interest in locally produced, possibly bilingual programs.” The 2000 follow-up notes the launch of *La Semana*, which grew from a circulation of 600 in 1991 to 2,700 and growing in 2000. Competition sprang up in the wake of its success in other southwest Kansas communities. The *Dodge City Daily Globe* introduced the weekly *La Estrella* in 1993, while shopkeeper Guadalupe Contreras introduced the monthly *El Amanecer*. In addition, according to the report, “Liberal at the present time has no Spanish newspaper. Attempts have been made to start a Spanish newspaper during the past ten years, but none have enjoyed success. None of these attempts were in association with the newspaper.” In broadcast media, a locally produced Spanish radio show went off the air after 20 years on High Plains Public Radio, based in nearby Pierceville. KSSA 105.9 FM Radio Tricolor, based in San Jose, Calif., went on the air in June 1999, and cable subscribers are served by the Univision and Telemundo channels, according to the report. The report does not address Spanish satellite television programming available on DirectTV or The Dish Network or Spanish radio on satellite providers Sirius or XM Radio.
- ⁷ “Ballots in English only,” no byline, *GCT*, page 2, November 5, 1986.
- ⁸ *GCT*, page 2, November 5, 1986.
- ⁹ “English Only law needless rhetoric by paranoid senators.”
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹ Author’s telephone interview with Penney Schwab, August 18, 2006.
- ¹² “English Only provokes much area comment,” by Mike Shields, *GCT*, page A1, March 7, 1997.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ “English debated through the years,” by Scott Schudy, *GCT*, page A3, March 10, 1997, and “Legislative bills tackle English as official language: Provisions similar to laws in other states,” by Scott Schudy, *GCT*, page A1, March 10, 1997..

¹⁵ “Commission opposes English-only bill,” by Scott Schudy, *GCT*, page A1, March 13, 1997.

¹⁶ “Racism motive behind ‘English Only’ bills,” letter to the editor by Jose J. Flores, *GCT*, page A4, March 17, 1997. The last sentence means, “Or is it just fear of speaking Spanish?”

¹⁷ “Can’t take other cultures out of English language,” letter to the editor by Rebecca Escalante, *GCT*, page A4, March 17, 1997.

¹⁸ “Dominant language must be learned,” letter to the editor by Karen Livingston, *GCT*, page A4, March 20, 1997.

¹⁹ “Distaff side,” column by Dolores Hope, *GCT*, page 4, October 27, 1989.

²⁰ “Some still have racist feelings,” letter to the editor by Paco “Bell” Atuya, *GCT*, page 4, September 7, 1991. Unlike in other episodes when writers revealed their prejudice in letters to the editor of the *Telegram*, no letter writers responded to Atuya.

²¹ Author’s interview with Brett Riggs in his office at the *Garden City Telegram*, August 8, 2006.

²² “Senate passes over English-only bill,” Associate Press, *GCT*, page A3, March 26, 1997.

²³ “Propuesta de ley inicia más que una discusión,” editorial by Jim Bloom, *La Semana*, page 2, March 26, 1997.

²⁴ “Official language unnecessary: No reason for laws that alienate people,” by *Telegram* columnist Patrick Murphy, *GCT*, page A4, March 29, 1997.

²⁵ “Hispanic population helps make Kansas strong, proud,” guest column by Gov. Bill Graves, *GCT*, page A4, September 20, 1997. The column was reprinted in *La Semana* with the headline “La herencia hispana es parte de Kansas,” page 2, September 24, 1997. The headline means “Hispanic heritage is part of Kansas.”

²⁶ Schwab interview.

²⁷ Schwab interview.

²⁸ Author’s interview with Jim Bloom in his office at the *Hutchinson News*, August 7, 2006.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Author’s interview with Dolores Hope at her home in Garden City, Aug. 8, 2006.

³¹ Bloom interview.

³² “Telegram to launch bilingual weekly newspaper Nov. 6,” no byline, *GCT*, page A1, September 13, 1991.

³³ Bloom interview.

³⁴ “Telegram to launch bilingual weekly newspaper Nov. 6,” no byline, *GCT*, page A1, September 13, 1991.

³⁵ One display ad in English and one in Spanish appeared on page A8 of the *Telegram* on October 8, 1991. One was not a mere transcription of the other. Although identical in size and typographical style, the English version has a line that reads, “A unique publication . . .” while the Spanish version, translated into English, reads, “A newspaper for you.” The implication is that the publication is targeted to Spanish-speakers and not English-speakers.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ “Creciente población inicia más variedad” (Growing population brings more variety), by Dolores Hope, “Niños opinan de las ventajas de ser bilingües” (Children give opinions on the advantages of being bilingual), by Sarah Kessinger, and “Medio ambiente será tema para tratado” (Fair conditions is theme of treaty), by Eduardo Molina, IPS, all in *La Semana en el suroeste de Kansas*, page 1, November 7, 1991. Hope and Kessinger were *Telegram* reporters. Molina wrote for Inter Press Service News Agency.

³⁹ “Que Pasa” column included “Agencia recibe ayuda,” (Agency gets help), “Burritos y pizza” (Burritos and pizza), “Clases en Liberal” (Classes in Liberal), and “Centro abre” (Center opens), *La Semana*, page 8, November 7, 1991.

⁴⁰ “HALO elije nuevos oficiales, asiste a conferencias” (HALO elects new officials, attends conferences), no byline, page 8, *La Semana*, page 8, November 7, 1991.

⁴¹ “El español no siempre aceptado,” by Pedro Sandoval, *La Semana*, page 4, November 7, 1991. The headline on the English is slightly different in meaning, probably because of the length and size of the

headline. It reads “Speaking Spanish not always accepted,” whereas the Spanish version, translated directly, means “Spanish not always accepted.”

⁴² “Difficulties reign when learning another language” and “Hay dificultad en aprender otro idioma,” by Pedro Sandoval, *La Semana*, page 3, December 5, 1991.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ “Take care, mi hija, when you dance,” and “No vayas a bailar con el diablo,” by Louis Mendoza, *La Semana*, page 4, November 14, 1991. Like the supernatural cautionary tale of La Llorona, the supernatural wailing woman with whom parents warned their misbehaving children would visit if they didn’t straighten up, this column warns that a girl at her Quinceañera might literally find herself dancing with the devil if she isn’t careful. La Llorona is a complex folk character, regarded either as harlot or betrayed woman of virtue depending on the version told. She stands in as the Latin American equivalent of the Bogeyman.

⁴⁶ “Welcome,” by Sarah Kessinger, *La Semana*, page 4, November 7, 1991.

⁴⁷ “Hay pocos recursos disponibles cuando haga mal tiempo” (Few avenues are available when the weather gets bad), no byline, “Johnny Canales — ‘You Got It,’” by Sarah Kessinger, and “Bibliotecas aumentan su selección de libros en español para niños y adultos” (Libraries add to selection of books in Spanish for children and adults,” by Dolores Hope, *La Semana*, page 1, November 14, 1991.

⁴⁸ “Diversity our right” and “Si a la diversidad” (Yes to diversity), by Sarah Kessinger, *La Semana*, page 4,

⁴⁹ “Census far from accurate” and “Que aprendan a contar,” editorial by Sarah Kessinger, *La Semana*, page 4, December 19, 1991.

⁵⁰ Rodriguez interview.

⁵¹ Bloom interview.

⁵² “Las tarjetas verdes vienen de diferentes formas y colores” and “INS hace extensión,” which in English mean “Green cards come in different forms and colors” and “INS makes extension,” no byline, *La Semana*, September 8, 1994.

⁵³ Ultimately, Kessinger left the *Telegram* for another job at a bilingual paper in McAllen, Texas, in 1994. Subsequently, she returned to Kansas and became a reporter for Harris News Service, Harris Enterprises’ wire service.

⁵⁴ *La Semana* page 1, June 13, 1993.

⁵⁵ “La Semana será sólo en español,” editorial by Itzel Stewart, *La Semana*, page 2, May 27, 1993.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Author’s interview with Itzel Rodriguez in her office at Garden City Community College, Aug. 9, 2006. “Stewart” is her former last name.

⁵⁸ “Hay cambios en La Semana,” editorial by Itzel Stewart, page 2, *La Semana*, September 8, 1994.

⁵⁹ “5-años sirviéndole a los hispanos,”

⁶⁰ “Changing Relations in Garden City, 1991-2000: Follow-Up Report,” by Don Stull. Unpublished report to the City of Garden City, 2000.

⁶¹ “Los latinos han enriquecido el área,” by Itzel Stewart, *La Semana*, page 1, September 15, 1999.

⁶² “Happy to see you’ve made it, Rita Munoz,” by Pedro “Pete” Sandoval, letter to the editor, *GCT*, page 4, March 12, 1988.

⁶³ Rodriguez interview.

⁶⁴ “La ley de ‘Ingles Solamente’ es innecesaria en el estado de Kansas,” by Mike Shields, *La Semana*, page 4, February 26, 1997.

⁶⁵ “What’s in a label? Hispanic or Mexico or ...?” by Dolores Hope, *GCT*, page 1, May 16, 1988.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ “Distaff side,” by Dolores Hope, *GCT*, page 4, November 11, 1989.

⁶⁸ The term is found in both *A Dictionary of New Mexico and Southern Colorado Spanish*, by Rubén Cobos, 1983, Santa Fe: University of New Mexico Press, and *El Diccionario del Español Chicano*, by Roberto A. Galván and Richard V. Teschner, 1991, Lincolnwood: National Textbook Co. Cobos gives a neutral definition, saying the Mexican Spanish-derived word means “offspring of a mixed Anglo-American Indo-Hispanic marriage. Galván and Teschner are blunter, defining a *coyote* as a “halfbreed.”

⁶⁹ *Mexican Americans/American Mexicans: From Conquistadors to Chicanos*, Matt S. Meier and Feliciano Ribera, 1993, New York: Hill and Wang.

⁷⁰ Ibid. Cobos' definition includes a more positive connotation: "light-complexioned; blond; foreign; *m.* and *f.*, darling. Galván and Teschner's definition is "blond, fair-complexioned; *mf.* Anglo-Saxon.

⁷¹ ""¿Quién les de posada a estos peregrinos?" no byline, *La Semana*, page 1, December 26, 1991.

⁷² *Replenished Identity: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants and Ethnic Identity*, doctoral thesis by Tomás R. Jiménez, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. December 2004.

⁷³ Ibid.

CHAPTER 8
LESSONS FROM THE GARDEN:
STRATEGIES FOR NEWSROOMS IN THE NEW IMMIGRATION STATES

“You can say, ‘This place is changing, and that’s bad,’ or you can make the most of things and try to make it a better place.”

—*Jim Bloom, editor and publisher of the Garden City Telegram from 1989 to 1995, on how news organizations and communities can confront immigration*

“By the year 2100, the face of America will have changed drastically. Anglo-Americans will be less than a majority population; Hispanics will be the largest and blacks and Asians will be large proportions. Toward the end of this century, America is experiencing a new wave of immigrants just as it did at the beginning of the century.

The difference is they are coming from a different part of the world.

This is making America more pluralistic, and Garden City is a window into that more diverse community of the future.”

— *Don Stull, University of Kansas anthropologist, who led the Ford Foundation “Changing Relations” team’s study of Garden City’s multi-ethnic population¹*

A Chinese proverb states, “To know the road ahead, ask those coming back.” The *Telegram*’s reporters and editors have seen the road ahead when it comes to Hispanic immigration into the nation’s interior. In her column, Dolores Hope remarked on Don Stull’s quotation above: “The anthropologist said Garden City offers a place to learn about things that will be happening. It is in a position to teach others how to adjust to changes. I think that’s exciting.”² News organizations in the Midwest and Southeast would do well to heed the example of the *Garden City Telegram* and learn from its experience. The U.S. Census Bureau projects that by 2050, Hispanics will be 24.4 percent of the American population, up from 12.6 percent in 2000.³ If reporters, editors and executives want a taste of what is coming their way, they need to look at how Garden City and its newspaper evolved in their coverage and inclusion of Hispanics. News media will have to embrace this change if they hope to remain socially relevant, but they also

must pay attention to Hispanics to remain economically viable. Wilson et al. elaborate on this point:

More than population growth and technological advances, however, it is the economic mechanisms of support that control the development of media in the United States. Corporate advertisers largely support print and broadcast media. When advertising is increased for a particular segment of the population, the media that reach and influence that segment gain increased advertising dollars. These dollars also make it more economically profitable for managers of existing media to consider changes to formats and content to try to attract that segment and the advertising dollars that will follow.⁴

La Semana's adjustment from bilingual to Spanish-only, discussed in the previous chapter, illustrates this. And Hispanic immigrants' value, both as humans and as an audience, are clear to former editor and publisher Jim Bloom, who remarked, "We have to remember that these are people — and consumers — and we can take the approach of 'why are they here' or we can be open and welcoming. I've always preferred the latter approach. It's all a matter of attitude."⁵

Speaking at the Finney County Historical Society, Stull remarked, "While Garden City has undoubtedly experienced many of the problems of rapid-growth communities, it has gained a reputation for successful adjustment to the rapid influx of new immigrants. Early and concerted efforts on the part of the clergy, news media, school system, police and social service agencies appear to have kept negative consequences to a minimum, making Garden City an important laboratory in which to investigate changing ethnic relations."⁶

Asked what lessons he thought the *Telegram* held for newspapers in markets experiencing an influx of immigrants, Bloom said, "Be aware that change is occurring in the community, and know that attitude means a lot."⁷ Staff diversity can play a critical

role in increasing a news organization's awareness of community change. "It is important to have a Latino presence on advisory boards or a contact person in the newsroom for Spanish-speakers to provide tips to. That's very important," said Itzel Rodriguez, former editor of *La Semana*.⁸

Without bilingual journalists, it could be difficult for newsrooms to learn more about the diversity of Hispanics in their communities — of both established residents and newcomers. Managing Editor Brett Riggs of the *Telegram* said there is a distinct advantage to having reporters who can speak Spanish.⁹ He cited the example of Kursten Phelps, an education reporter who left the newspaper in early 2006. Phelps could translate for herself and could find things out just by sidling up to a source at a public event and striking up conversations with Spanish-speakers in their own language.¹⁰ Breaking down that language barrier translated to more thorough coverage of the community, Riggs said. For small community newspapers, where the demand for basic reporting and writing skills takes priority over other factors such as bilingual ability or diversity, recruiting can be more difficult than at larger publications. "When I'm hiring, I want the best journalist I can get," Riggs said, with bilingual ability or ethnicity playing but a part of the overall package. Bilingual ability was not the main factor, or even a major one, in hiring decisions at the *Telegram* in 2006 in part because of the paper's competitive disadvantage in the labor market. Riggs said a bigger newspaper in a more cosmopolitan place is more likely to win out over a newspaper like the *Telegram*, which can't offer the same kind of pay or resources for bilingual journalists who are in high demand. But in a community with a Hispanic and Spanish-speaking population that continues to outstrip the Anglo/English-speaking majority, unwillingness to compete with

metro papers for talent could constitute a false economy by sacrificing the long-term future of the journalistic enterprise for sake of a higher short-term profit.

The quality and success of the introduction of Hispanic-oriented niche publications seems connected to the commitment of the news organization's top management, including top editors' willingness to spend money on staff and business office support. The example of *La Semana* exemplifies this. With Bloom, Kessinger and Stewart leading *La Semana*, the publication blossomed. Absent their leadership, however, the tabloid waned, and it seems likely that without the three aforementioned key editors, it might never have come into existence.

Had *La Semana* not come into being, eventually other publications would fill the Hispanic and Spanish news vacuum. Numerous other outlets have sprung up in southwest Kansas to exploit the Spanish media market first served by the *Telegram: La Estrella*, the Spanish-language weekly publication of the *Dodge City Daily Globe* in nearby Ford County; *El Amenecar*, a monthly publication produced by the keeper of a Mexican store in Dodge City; Spanish-language radio station KSSA; national cable networks Telemundo and Univision; and Spanish channels on XMRadio and Sirius satellite radio networks. All constitute competition for the *Telegram*, and all increase the likelihood that the *Telegram* will shrink in relevance to Spanish-speakers and Hispanics in southwest Kansas as their population increases, opening the likelihood that in a generation or two, the *Telegram* could be a niche media company and not a mainstream one to Garden Citians, a majority of whom will be Hispanic. The *Telegram* responded to the presence of Spanish-speakers in the late 1980s by devoting staff and capital resources to the creation

of its own Spanish publication. And given demographic change in the early twentieth century, the *Telegram* need only look to its past to see a strategy for continued vitality.

Bloom seems to have found the most practical solution for a news organization that cannot or will not pay more to attract bilingual journalists: Hire good, smart people with bilingual ability who can be trained to be reporters. That's the way Rodriguez came to be on the staff of *La Semana*, and she grew into the editor in chief of that publication, editing, writing, translating and laying out the section. Riggs said it was a big loss when Rodriguez left *La Semana* to become the coordinator of Garden City Community College's Title III program, where she helps adults who know little English or are learning English as a second language to earn their General Educational Equivalency diplomas and make the transition from high school to college.¹¹ From her farewell column in late 2000, translated into English here:

This job also will give me the opportunity to pursue knowledge and my educational objectives while I help others catch up. It has been almost nine years of experience in journalism where I learned and grew in a demanding and hard industry. I also have had the opportunity to get to know many people from various countries in the world who have enriched my cultural understanding. With this, I take leave of the Hispanic media hoping that this newspapers continues to cultivate success and showing the positives of our Latina community.¹²

The position of *La Semana* editor continued to go unfilled in 2006. Riggs said he had no explanation for why the *Telegram* had not found a replacement since Rodriguez's resignation at the end of 2000; the paper's publisher and managing editor at that time are now gone. But he said he heard that they had trouble finding anybody with the skills to lead *La Semana*.

In the final weeks of Rodriguez's tenure at the paper, however, two ads seeking *Telegram* and *La Semana* newsroom applicants appeared in the two papers, neither of

them for an editor in chief of *La Semana*. The one that appeared in *La Semana* sought a copy editor to supervise production of *La Semana* in addition to duties as a copy editor on the *Telegram*'s news desk. The other sought a general assignment reporter for the *Telegram*.¹³ To Rodriguez, the lack of a *La Semana* editor and lack of Hispanic staffers and reporters who know Spanish has hurt the publication.¹⁴

As for whether it has declined, he seemed to agree with that assessment to a point:

For the most part, it hasn't meant a lot when you look at the quality of the editing — it's a clean publication. We have two translators we rely on in town and an excellent proofreader who makes sure that it reads well. What it has meant is that we don't have someone out in the Hispanic community who knows what is going on there and tells their stories. That's the real difference of not having somebody who takes *La Semana* under their wing.¹⁵

Editions of the publication in summer 2006, at that point converted to a tabloid format, had sparse advertising — the economic engine that drives the amount of space that can be devoted to news in a news enterprise that intends to be profitable — and no content exclusive to *La Semana*, leaving an opening for competing Spanish-language publications in Dodge City and Liberal to exploit, although the bulk of it was originally produced by the *Telegram* and translated into Spanish.¹⁶ That contrasts with *La Semana* under the editorship of Rodriguez and Sarah Kessinger, who routinely broke stories about the Hispanic community in Garden City and Finney County that subsequently were picked up by the *Telegram*. The lineup of Spanish-speaking columnists cultivated by Kessinger and Rodriguez is now gone. And a sampling of issues in Winter and Fall 2001 showed that although Hispanic Link ran in Spanish in *La Semana*, it was absent from the *Telegram* opinion page. In addition, articles in *La Semana* after Rodriguez left don't appear to have been selected or assigned particularly with Hispanic readers in mind. And

although Kessinger and Stewart typically celebrated *La Semana*'s anniversaries with columns recounting the paper's history, similar to the way it kept alive Hispanic cultural holidays such as Cinco de Mayo, Las Posadas and Fiesta, the tenth anniversary edition carried no such acknowledgment. Rodriguez points to money, or at least the way financial affairs were managed, as one weakness of the weekly:

The problem I always faced as the editor of a bilingual or a minority newspaper, is the fact that, in the way it was set up at the *Telegram*, the sales reps were making more money selling *Telegram* ads than they would make selling ads for *La Semana*, in terms of percentage. So they would always focus on where the money is, so they would not sell *La Semana*, they would sell the *Telegram* because that is where their major income was coming from. And those that would buy *La Semana* ads were people from our community who were interested in attracting the Latino public to their business. It wasn't necessarily because the sale rep would go there and sell it. Some of them were really good — I had a sales rep, her name was Helen Lucero, excellent lady, she was married to guy who was a Mexican-American from New Mexico. And she was really good about selling *La Semana*. But not everyone was good like that. So that was one of the major challenges we had. It would limit the amount of pages that you would have, and that limits the amount of content that you could publish. So you have to pick and choose which ones of the local content you will publish. So being a local newspaper, too, you would have to pick what local story according to what was really interesting, or what was really important for the Latino public to know or to read about. Every Friday that I would be given the number of pages to produce it was very limited. I feel like I was not able to make progress. People would be calling from all over southwest Kansas with tips and stories, things that the *Telegram* would not otherwise be able to print.¹⁷

In the same way that the economics of advertising sales dictated the size of the newshole for *La Semana*, Rodriguez said she thought that despite the importance of having staffers with a Hispanic perspective working for the paper, the economics of the newspaper as a whole dictated what the paper did with her position once she resigned:

It is a window of opportunity to have a strong Latino presence, especially in this area. And I am very disappointed that the paper does not have that now. When I resigned, they just decided, financially, they would be better off to take that money and do something else. So now they have two or

three people scattered around town making translations for them, whoever is putting it together now. ... Nobody would be able to do that very well without speaking the language. What are the chances, for example, now that immigration is such a hot topic, that an undocumented family is going to talk to a white person? How do they translate? And if you don't speak the language, how do you even know the family is there? I mentioned to the new publisher, well, she's not that new anymore, that she needed to have somebody in charge of *La Semana* because it's going down the drain. I mean, you grab all of the local southwest Kansas newspapers, and *La Semana* is the worst one. And it was the pioneer in southwest Kansas (among Spanish publications). Take a look. Go to the bakery on Main Street, because they have all the newspapers from the area. Colors, pictures, the layout are better than what *La Semana* is doing. Every town has its own.¹⁸

Without an editor devoted exclusively to directing and producing *La Semana*, Rodriguez said, the weekly has suffered drastically:

I quit looking at it because I was so disappointed in it. Another thing: The news that you find in it, because they have to take it around to three people around town (to get it translated), it's nearly a month old. The news is old news.¹⁹

The rise and decline of *La Semana* offer an opportunity for historical examination — and for the *Telegram*, an opportunity to make itself more relevant to the growing Spanish-speaking population that prompted the weekly's creation. The *Telegram* seems to have recognized the decline of *La Semana* in the last several years since Rodriguez left as editor at the end of 2000 and, as of early 2007, has plans to shore it up. Riggs acknowledged that the Spanish-speaking population is on the rise in Garden City, saying, “Spanish-language continues to be a growth market in Garden City and I think that's true anywhere that you see an increase in that (Hispanic) demographic, even in a place like Garden City. We're still learning how to take advantage of that demographic.”²⁰ Asked what the future held for *La Semana*, Riggs said:

Just this year, we're putting together a focus group to look at *La Semana* to see what we can do to improve it in terms of content and features that

those readers would like to see in the future. And that focus group will include the translators we use to produce it, and Hispanic community leaders, and it would probably include Itzel and others who have been involved with it and have an interest. And we'll use that to ask them how to give people what they would like to see in *La Semana* by tapping into their knowledge of that demographic. Based on that focus group, we would like to find out everything, pie in the sky, what they would ideally see in *La Semana* and use that to tailor it to our readers.²¹

What Rodriguez described is a sharp contrast to the *Telegram* and *La Semana* of the 1980s and 1990s. Then, the two publications provided a two-way mirror of each community: Once the *Telegram* recognized the Hispanic newcomers in the area, it informed the dominant white population while giving the immigrants the information they needed to adjust to their new home, gain legalized status, and eventually assimilate, although the extent to which Hispanic newcomers did assimilate is unclear.

The *Telegram* under Bloom exemplified how a news organization can strive to promote harmony between whites and Hispanic immigrants, and communities with both a newcomer generation of Hispanics and an older generation of Hispanics that has lived alongside Anglos for many generations can learn from the Garden City experience, too. There can be hard feelings between the different generations of Hispanics, Riggs said. "The older crowd feels unappreciated for the sacrifices and the push they made for respect in the community and their struggle against segregation," he said. By telling the story of the older generation, with profiles and other stories that tell about their struggle, the newcomers can obtain the information from which understanding may be formed.

It would be simplistic, however, to conclude that the *Telegram's* efforts were the sole reason for smooth relations among whites and Hispanics in and around Garden City. As is outlined in previous chapters, part of the lack of intergroup tension could come from de facto segregation in the community, as the Ford Foundation team led by

Stull discovered. Accommodation of those who do not speak English can play a part in that.

“There’s less of a need (for Spanish-speaking immigrants from Latin America) to assimilate now as the Hispanic population grows,” Riggs said. “...You could go through a whole day without even thinking about speaking English. If you work at Tyson (beef processing plant in Finney County), you could speak Spanish there. When you come home, you’ve got Spanish on the satellite dish, and there are enough places to shop where you don’t need to know any English. Business can be done with the city in Spanish.”²²

Curiously, the segregation that social scientists and journalists report in Garden City may have been exacerbated by information segregation in the *Telegram* and *La Semana*. Notices for funerals, weddings, engagements and births that ran in Spanish in *La Semana* did not regularly appear in the *Telegram*. And at present, *La Semana* lacks its own Web site, although its articles can be found mixed in with English articles in the online archive of the *Telegram*.

On whether other Spanish-language media in the area constitute a threat to *La Semana*, and whether that threat is behind the plan to bolster it, Riggs said:

Well, it’s a free publication, and we don’t make any money on it now off of circulation, so any revenue from it comes from advertising, so the biggest competition comes in the area of advertising. We definitely see a need to stay competitive in terms of advertising, and that means being competitive with the content of *La Semana*. The first step in doing that is hearing from people like Itzel and the focus group. What do they want to see in the paper? What are their pie-in-the-sky ideas for what they want it to be?²³

Credibility with readers and sources also plays a role in the vitality of a publication, and credibility can be strained when neophyte reporters retell the same

stories that have already been told and conduct interviews with longtime residents who have seen those stories before or when journalists report stories that have long been accepted as common knowledge by established residents. Developing and maintaining institutional memory can help avoid these journalistic gaffes. At the time she was interviewed for this study, Rodriguez said that *Telegram* reporters who had only just arrived in Garden City and weren't familiar with the community were writing stories that everybody already knew about. Part of that might just come from the mistake of not checking what the *Telegram* had already run. That in turn is hindered by disorganization in the newsroom morgue, which both Rodriguez and Riggs confirmed.²⁴ Without veteran reporters to turn to for explanations of how things work in town, a newsroom needs a well-organized library to make it easier for reporters to become experts on their topics on deadline.²⁵ At a smaller newspaper like the *Telegram*, turnover can be frequent. That is reflected in the lack of experience of some of the *Telegram's* reporters, according to one of its frequent sources, Penney Schwab of United Methodist Mexican American

Ministries:

A lot of it goes to the quality of individuals. Southwest Kansas gets a lot of people with less experience. Anyone who is knowledgeable about Southwest Kansas comes from a different perspective and tells more. A lot of the new people reporting for the *Telegram*, though, some have no human knowledge about what people and organizations do, or about what services are offered.²⁶

Where Schwab saw weakness in neophyte newcomers, Bloom saw some advantage in fresh blood:

Many of the people, like me, came out to Western Kansas as a career step, at a bank, or at the community college, or at IBP or Monfort. And there's a churn, a cycle in SW Kansas, where there's a core of people who run the businesses and the farms over generations, and the rest bring in changes in attitudes.²⁷

At news organizations with high turnover, asking reporters to write beat memos to pass down to new hires could help create a base of institutional knowledge. Doing so can keep new staff members from writing stories that have already been told and keep them from needlessly asking sources background questions that eat into interview time, thereby giving them time to talk about matters that have not yet been covered.

Riggs counseled that newspapers that have developed Spanish-language content should remember that such content can be used to connect recent immigrants to the immigrants who came before them.

La Semana was a huge step in connecting people to the community in a way they hadn't felt before. Publications in Spanish can be used to educate newcomers on the laws, and in the way we live here. Remember: They're readers just like anyone else. Give them what they want. Go where the news is, where people are. Reporting about them can make them more devoted to your paper and more connected to the community. And in the process, you can give the rest of the readership an education in racial harmony.²⁸

A factor that can interfere with journalists' attempts to bridge the multi-cultural divide is sources' distrust of reporters. Among Latin American immigrants, the tendency is to not say anything to the news media, according to Rodriguez.²⁹ Because people in one group may tend to distrust members of another group with whom they have little experience, the presence of Spanish-speaking and Hispanic journalists can play an important role in developing trust. Similarly, such journalists have an advantage in their understanding of minority communities that have not been served well by the mass media in the past.³⁰

Framing awareness

Framing is built on the micro and macro levels. At the micro level is the choice of words as labels and descriptors that journalists choose. At the macro level is the way those words combine into sentences, paragraphs and whole stories to provide a story narrative. As Bloom points out, a news media leader's attitude about immigration plays a crucial role in the way immigration is depicted. Fear, contempt, hatred, respect, openness, acceptance, etc., all can subconsciously creep into the narrative conveyed by a story, as well as the word choices journalists make. As evidenced by debates over other controversies such as abortion, terrorism and war, a uniform guide to usage in the form of a stylebook can prevent journalists from having the same debate over and over about what terminology will convey the story in as neutral a manner as is possible.³¹

At the *Telegram*, however, there was no stylebook entry on which terms to use concerning race. That is because there was no local stylebook, though Riggs said he recalled someone had started compiling one years ago and apparently never completed it. Bloom said that there was no formal style committee at the *Telegram* and that in general, such decisions didn't come from the top down. He saw his role as setting the tone for how the *Telegram* did the day-to-day work of covering Garden City, as well as feeding tips and ideas to reporters and editors to check out, but he said he did not dictate matters of usage.³²

In forming a narrative about immigration, it is important to remember the distinction between thematic and episodic coverage. In episodic coverage, each incident is a standalone event. In relations between the dominant social group and immigrants, Hispanics, or other groups generally represented as "other" in the mainstream news

media, episodic framing encourages the audience to assign responsibility to individuals, while thematic coverage reports a phenomenon in terms of “collective outcomes, public policy debates, or historical trends” and thus leads audiences to put responsibility on the government or on social institutions.³³ In the case of the *Garden City Telegram*, episodic coverage tended to appear primarily in Associated Press reports, while local coverage took a more thematic tack. The result was that in the *Telegram’s* construction of reality, it was the government and businesses that were framed, sometimes intentionally and sometimes inadvertently, as being at fault for immigration problems, while individuals figured mainly in profiles as neighbors who have earned their place as citizens or in news stories as champions for the rights of ethnic minorities and other historically underrepresented groups.

And as news organizations recognize the potential to create outlets to target Hispanic immigrants, they must not make the mistake of shifting all Hispanic coverage into the niche publication. To do so is to cut off the flow of information from monolingual English readers, and thus limit the intellectual raw material from which understanding among groups can be forged, resulting in a segregated construction of reality.

But will the audiences for whom they are designed actually read Spanish-only niche publications? Bloom seems to think so: “Among Latin Americans, there is a very high esteem for the printed word.”³⁴ A growing body of academic and industry research confirms Bloom’s suspicion. In May 2004, *Advertising Age* reported, “The thriving Hispanic market is exploding with print launches as rival newspaper groups develop national strategies to take advantage of the only real growth in their market.”³⁵ The

groups include Tribune Co., Hearst Corp., Meximerica Media, Recoletos Grupo de Comunicacion. The growth of Hispanic media extends beyond newspapers. A *Publishing Research Quarterly* report from 2004 notes that 59 percent of Hispanics read magazines regularly, and that in 2003, Hispanic newspaper revenue rose to \$854 million from \$785 million in 2002.³⁶

Despite the newspaper industry's longstanding inertia concerning staff diversity and despite the challenges of recruiting bilingual and Hispanic journalists, some newspaper companies put in extra effort to diversify their staffs. The *San Antonio Express-News* in Texas has increased its staff from 17 percent minority in 1993 to 33 percent minority in 2003.³⁷ *San Antonio Express-News* Editor Robert Rivard offers this advice on how to adapt a publication so it will appeal to minority populations: "The first big step is to get people in the staff who can speak to (Hispanics). Once you diversify your staff, changes follow."³⁸

Limitations and possibilities for future research

One limitation of this study is lack of generalizability, and a factor that limits this is Garden City's unique social history. Unlike communities in the Upper Midwest and the South, Finney County's experience with Hispanic immigrants stretches back for a century. In that time, Anglos, Mexican-Americans and Vietnamese have been able to reach a peaceful equilibrium in their relations. Riggs, who grew up in Finney County, said Garden City's first wave of Mexican immigrants, going back to the early 20th century, were largely assimilated into mainstream culture. Intermarriage among Anglos and Hispanics, the ultimate in integration, is now common. Riggs cited the example of Juana "Janie" Perkins, a city commissioner, former Garden City mayor and recently

appointed member of the board of regents of Kansas' state university system. Her family came to the United States from Mexico in the 1970s, and they earned their place in the community as naturalized U.S. citizens. As for intergroup tensions, Riggs said that in the Garden City of 2006, they have faded with subsequent generations. "Racial tensions among ethnic groups are low because kids are more comfortable reaching out and making friends with people who aren't just like them," he said.

That's not to say that tensions don't boil over sometimes, according to Bloom:

There will always be some flare-ups, particularly with teenagers in the high schools who might reflect the attitudes of their parents without really thinking about it. In the community, there is no true mixing of the groups, so if I wanted to take part in a Hispanic event, it would be something that I had to actively seek out.³⁹

So other communities that lack this deep inter-ethnic history will have a different context of reception for Hispanic immigrants. Still, the *Telegram* holds lessons in how to serve the community and recent newcomers. Riggs said that for the second wave of Mexican and other Latin American newcomers, those who came with the packing plants in the 1980s, a language barrier still stands.⁴⁰ He saw educating these newcomers on the culture of their new home as a central mission for *La Semana*, and introducing the weekly played a key part in educating that community of Hispanic immigrants.

This study cannot be taken as a comprehensive history of immigration coverage in the *Telegram*, which celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2006. For that, a bigger sample of its coverage must be researched and analyzed, a task better suited to a dissertation than a thesis. This is because the sampling used here focuses on watershed events in immigration from 1980 to 2000. The limitations of the study, however, are not the only aspects of this study that present possibilities for future research.

Garden City's diversity extends beyond Hispanics and Anglos, although they are the groups that this study set out to examine. Vietnamese and other Southeast Asian refugees received extensive coverage in the *Telegram* and drew attention from social researchers from across the Midwest. An examination of coverage of the Vietnamese could focus on how the *Telegram*'s portrayal of them as people who were fleeing communist oppression gave them ideological commonalities with the area's American residents and created a positive context of immigrant reception.

United Methodist Mexican American Ministries director Penney Schwab noted that although Mexican and Vietnamese immigrants get most of the attention, there are other immigrant groups as well.⁴¹ They include the curious case of Low German-speaking, Mennonite immigrants who moved to southwest Kansas when drought and economic upheaval forced them to leave their farms in Mexico in 2001.⁴² In addition, she said, a number of Kenyans and Somalis have moved to Garden City. To what extent were they depicted as "other" in the news media? For that matter, to what extent are Anglos depicted as "other" in Hispanic-targeted publications?

An area that the author intends to pursue is a comparison of the evolution of the framing of Mexican immigrants in the *Telegram*, which has a years-long head start on the rest of country in adjusting to the phenomenon of Mexican immigration in the American interior, with the experience of other news organizations in the American interior. What are the similarities and differences between the *Telegram*, five years into the immigrant boom of the 1980s, and news organizations in Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri, or the Carolinas five years into the immigrant boom at the beginning of the 21st century? From this

comparison, it might be possible to generalize some things about the way news organizations grow in their understanding and coverage of immigrants.

Finally, Chapter 7 touched upon the segregated construction of reality between Spanish-language supplements and their English-language parent publications. Experience as a writer and editor at American newspapers suggests that Garden City is not the only place where the tendency to move most, if not all, Hispanic-oriented articles into a weekly or monthly supplement soon after that supplement comes into existence. Although this may be motivated by the desire to better serve Hispanic readers of the niche publication and fill newshole, it can have the effect of driving consumers away from the main publication and into the Spanish-only publication. Future research could address the extent to which this phenomenon is common in other communities where newspapers print supplements targeted at Hispanics.

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- ⁵ Author's interview with Jim Bloom in his office at the *Hutchinson News* in Hutchinson, Kan., August 7, 2006.
- ⁶ "Distaff side," by columnist Dolores Hope, *GCT*, page 4, October 25, 1989.
- ⁷ Bloom interview.
- ⁸ Author's interview with Itzel Rodriguez in her office at Garden City Community College, August 9, 2006. When she worked for the *Telegram* and as *La Semana* editor, her last name was Stewart.
- ⁹ Author's interview with Brett Riggs in his office at the *Garden City Telegram*, August 10, 2006
- ¹⁰ Riggs interview.
- ¹¹ "Aniversario marca despedida," column by Itzel Stewart in *La Semana*, page 4, November 15, 2000.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ "Do you know what this means?" Display advertisement with English headline and Spanish text seeking a copy editor to produce *La Semana*, and a display advertisement with Spanish headline and English text seeking the same with the headline "¿Sabe lo que esto significa?" *GCT*, page C4, December 7, 2000.
- ¹⁴ Rodriguez interview.
- ¹⁵ Second Riggs interview.
- ¹⁶ Rodriguez interview.
- ¹⁷ Rodriguez interview.
- ¹⁸ Rodriguez interview.
- ¹⁹ Rodriguez interview.

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- ²⁰ Author's telephone interview with Brett Riggs, Feb. 1, 2007.
- ²¹ Second Riggs interview.
- ²² First Riggs interview.
- ²³ Second Riggs interview.
- ²⁴ First Riggs interview.
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- ²⁶ Author's telephone interview with Penney Schwab, August 19, 2006.
- ²⁷ Bloom interview.
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- ²⁹ Rodriguez interview.
- ³⁰ Wilson et al, 2003.
- ³¹ For an in-depth discussion of how stylebook entries evolve over time and their role in the construction of reality, see Fred Vultee's "How Media Frames of the Middle East are Built, Maintained and Contested," M.A. thesis, University of Missouri. 2004.
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- ³⁹ Bloom interview.
- ⁴⁰ First Riggs interview.
- ⁴¹ Schwab interview.
- ⁴² One of the books available in the Finney County Historical Society archives in Garden City was a German-language children's picture book titled *Mennoniten en Kansas*, by Sarah Unger de Peters, Kismet, Kan.: Cornelius und Sarah Peters. It tells the story of the hardscrabble life of the German-speaking, nearly Luddite Mennonite immigrants and how they moved their colony from Mexico to southwest Kansas.

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The author is grateful to these Garden City community leaders and current and former journalists for their generosity with both time and information in e-mail correspondence and during in-person or telephone interviews in July and August 2006 and February 2007:

Jim Bloom, former editor and publisher of the *Garden City Telegram*
 Fred Brooks, former editor and publisher of the *Garden City Telegram*
 Dolores Hope, columnist and reporter with the *Garden City Telegram*
 Brett Riggs, managing editor of the *Garden City Telegram*
 Itzel Rodriguez (formerly Stewart), former reporter and editor of *La Semana*
 Penney Schwab, director, United Methodist Mexican American Ministries in Garden City
 The Rev. Dave Sweley, pastor at Garden City Presbyterian Church

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