



FRAMING AGRICULTURAL LABOR ISSUES: AN ANALYSIS OF FLORIDA AND CALIFORNIA H-2A PROGRAM NEWS COVERAGE

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01. INTRODUCTION / NEED FOR RESEARCH

- The H-2A visa program was created in 1986 to allow temporary agricultural workers to legally enter the U.S. (Guan et al., 2018)
- Using temporary agricultural workers can be useful for seasonal work or during labor shortages (Luckstead & Devadoss, 2019)
- There is a lack of studies concerning how farm labor or H-2A coverage is framed in the media

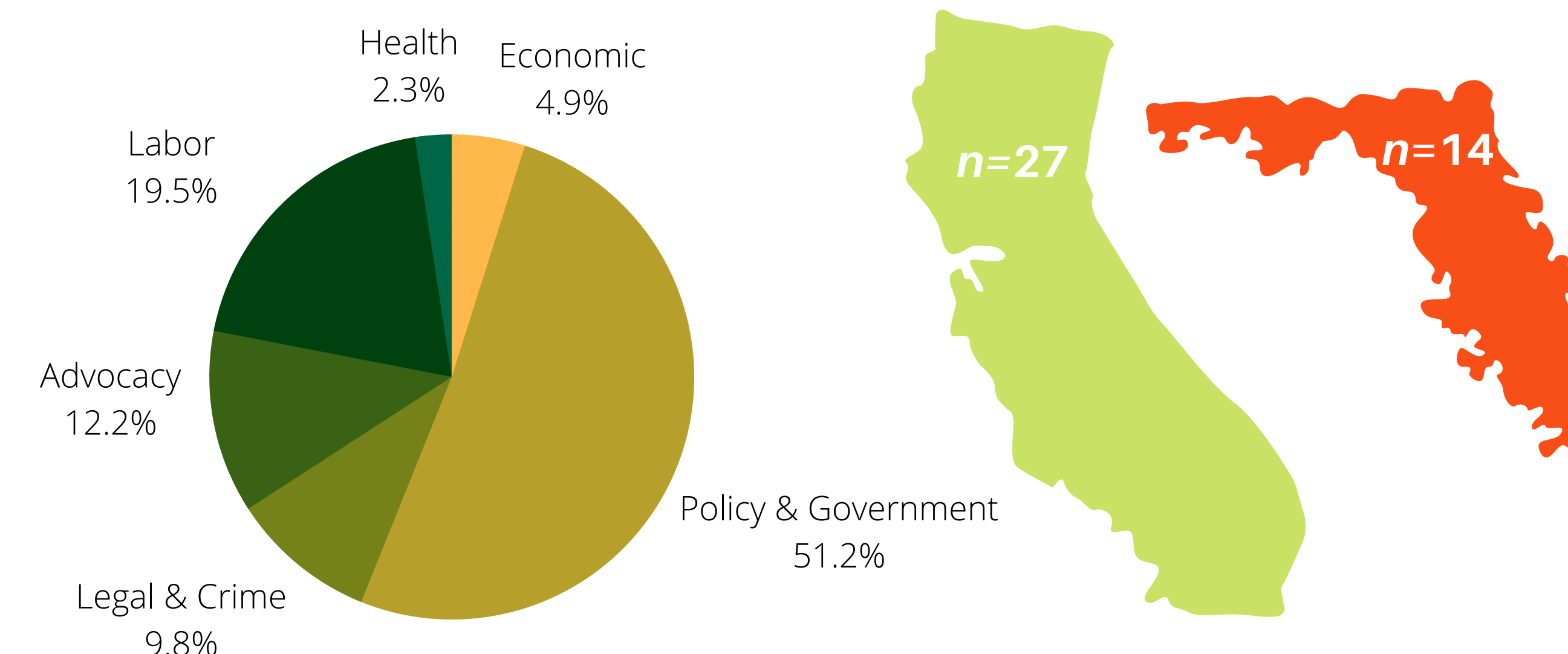
02. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



- The media employ frames to share details with their audiences by simplifying complicated issues and making them easier to understand (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007)
- Framing theory suggests placing emphasis on certain elements of an issue over others can affect how the issue is perceived by the public (Chong & Druckman, 2007) and can also influence policy (Pan & Kosicki, 1993)

04. RESULTS/FINDINGS

- The most common frame in the dataset was "policy & government" (n = 21), which related to government or elected official involvement in the issue
- Example articles that employed this top frame covered topics such as immigration reform and proposed policy changes
- The most common source was "non-government organization"
- No H-2A workers were used as sources in the dataset



TOP FRAMES



03. METHODOLOGY

Quantitative content analysis was applied to determine how the H-2A program was framed in the *Orlando Sentinel* and *The Fresno Bee*.

- Sample size: 41 articles
- Articles for both newspapers collected via NewsBank Database
- Search term "H-2A" was used
- Time period: Jan. 1, 2008-Dec. 31, 2020
- A researcher-developed codebook was the primary instrument
- Articles were coded for date, newspaper, and frame



05. CONCLUSIONS / IMPLICATIONS

- The common use of the "policy & government" frame was not unusual since the H-2A program is first and foremost the result of governmental policy (Guan et al., 2018)
- The similar use of frames between newspapers suggests that the issues associated with H-2A may be more national than regional
- The media hold the potential to influence policy (Pan & Kosicki, 1993), so it is reasonable to assume that framing articles in this way may have implications for future policy decisions on this issue
- The H-2A program was created to help address farm labor needs, which helps to explain why the "labor" frame was also common in the dataset



06. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Given the role of H-2A programs throughout the U.S., future studies should **explore the use of frames in other newspapers**
- Future studies should also **investigate sources** relied upon by the media when communicating about the H-2A program
- Based on the lack of H-2A workers themselves as sources, the **news media should attempt to focus more on their voices and perspectives** related to the issue



References

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