ABSTRACT

Title of Document: UNVEILING ANTI-IMMIGRANT
DISCOURSE IN POPULAR ONLINE NEWS
REPORTING OF IMMIGRATION REFORM

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Immigration reform in the United States has often been contentious, with

public policy mirroring public discourse, which typically constructed new waves of

immigrants as the subordinate Other. In the past, public discourse has been explicitly

racist. Recent genre constraints make overt racism less acceptable to today's online

news audiences; yet, implicit racism survives in anti-immigrant discourse. In this

dissertation I present a critical study of anti-immigrant discourse surrounding the

latest attempt at immigration reform. Using genre analysis to evaluate the

expectations, conventions and constraints of the online news medium in its reporting,

I analyze the articles published by four online news outlets: Univision, MSNBC, Fox

News, and CNN during the time frame of March 1, 2013 to June 1, 2013. In doing so,

I reveal the ways in which the seemingly neutral language of online news constructs

and subordinates immigrants.