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Where We Get our News: A Multilevel Analysis of the Media Framing of Immigration and Crime

Cody Robert Tuttle

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

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Where We Get Our News:
A Multilevel Analysis of The Media Framing of Immigration and Crime

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Sociology

by

Cody R. Tuttle
University of Arkansas
Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, and Criminal Justice, 2015

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University of Arkansas

This thesis is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.

Dr. Casey T. Harris
Thesis Director

Dr. Mindy S. Bradley
Committee Member

Dr. Rodney L. Engen
Committee Member

Dr. William A. Schwab
Committee Member

Abstract

Despite an abundance of literature demonstrating that immigration and crime are unassociated, public opinion often reflects the contrary. I examine a source that could contribute to this disconnect between research and public opinion – media framing – particularly, how the specific way that news outlets talk about immigration and crime, along with where they are located geographically, influence how prominently these stories are covered. I employ content analysis of newspaper articles from 2008-2012, which I geo-locate and pair with structural covariates gathered from several other data sources. I use multilevel models to analyze the effect of article-level framing and county-level contextual characteristics on article prominence in newspapers. Findings reveal that newspapers in counties with less immigrants and less crime are more likely to prominently feature articles discussing immigration and crime. Furthermore, articles with negative frame of immigration-crime are more likely to be put on the front page, regardless of contextual characteristics. I discuss implications for literature and policy, along with limitations of my study and suggestions for future research.

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Dedications

I dedicate this project to my wife, Mariana Katharine. She is the best of my life, and I owe her so much more than I could even begin to know.

Table of Contents

I. Introduction	1
II. Literature Review	4
Immigration and Crime.....	4
Media and Crime.....	5
Empirical Disconnect.....	7
III. Theoretical Frameworks	9
Moral Panic.....	9
Racial/Ethnic Threat Perspectives and Contact Hypothesis.....	10
IV. Current Study	16
Data.....	16
Unit of Analysis.....	18
Dependent Variables.....	18
Article-Level Independent Variables.....	19
County-Level Independent Variables.....	23
Analytic Strategy.....	24
V. Findings	27
VI. Discussion	36
Limitations and Future Research.....	40
Conclusion.....	41
VII. Appendices	43
Tables from Findings Section and Supplemental Tables.....	43
References.....	55

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, immigrants – primarily from Asia and Latin America – have arrived in the United States in nearly unprecedented numbers. Today, foreign-born individuals constitute a sizeable share of the US population (US Department of Homeland Security 2012), with over 41 million first-generation, and an estimated 37 million second-generation immigrants residing in the US. In total, immigrants comprise approximately a quarter of the entire American population (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine 2015), and their settlement has reshaped American communities.

In turn, the impact of immigration and foreign-born residential settlement has been felt throughout the political, social, and economic realms. Because of the magnitude and scope of immigration’s impact on such a multitude of issues, the chief concern among the public and governmental agencies is whether and how these most recent foreign-born individuals are assimilating into mainstream American society. Such concerns represent a key aspect of the platforms of many politicians, as well as rhetoric among the general public.

Not surprisingly, specific attention has been devoted toward whether immigration undermines the social fabric of the country (Batalova 2009; Sutherland 1927). Sentiment among the general public continues to be, on average, either apprehensive or outright negative toward immigration, especially with regard to crime. This perception often forms the basis for public policy reform (Lee 2003; Martinez and Valenzuela 2006): for example, Arizona’s 2010 Senate Bill 1070 implies greater criminality among the foreign-born population and explicitly targets the “criminal immigrant” (Rumbaut and Ewing 2007). Perhaps unsurprisingly, there is a long-standing, deeply-rooted perception among Americans that foreign-born residents are responsible

for a disproportionate share of crime (Rumbaut 2008), or that the process of immigration somehow destabilizes communities in ways that elevate crime rates (see Martinez et al. 2010).

This belief that immigrants are criminogenic, however, has consistently been invalidated by empirical research in the social sciences. Rather, immigration is often found to be unassociated (or even negatively associated) with crime (see Lee, Martinez, and Rosenfeld 2001; Stowell 2007). In short, foreign-born individuals are no more likely to commit crime than native-born citizens (Greenman and Xie 2008) and “in the regions where immigrants have settled in the past two decades, crime has gone down” (MacDonald and Sampson 2012:1). Thus, there remains a negative perception of foreign-born individuals in the United States as highly crime-prone, despite an abundance of research that suggests the contrary.

This gap between public opinion and the empirical reality raises questions as to the processes that could be contributing to such a disconnect. One key social institution thought to influence public perception that has received little empirical attention is the news media (Rumbaut 2008). Indeed, sociological research over the last century has found the media to be one of the most important social institutions driving (and reflecting) public opinion on a range of issues, including in regard to the criminal justice system (Lippman 1922; Zaller 1991; Klite, Bardwell, and Sizeman 1997). Despite a wealth of literature examining the intersection of media and crime or criminal justice issues in general, there is a lack of research devoted to how media treat the immigration-crime nexus – that is, how a news media outlet talks about the specific intersection of immigration and crime. Furthermore, within the broader media and crime literature, there is a shortage of empirical research regarding how geographic context impacts the news media presentations of these issues. While much is known about the variation of

immigration and crime by place, little is known about how the news media in different contexts addresses this discussion.

It is in this dearth of empirical literature that I make my contribution with this project. I examine how the specific ways that local news outlets talk about immigration and crime impacts how prominently these stories are covered, especially in the context of where these outlets appear geographically. Article-prominence in newspapers – being on the front page or having a larger number of words devoted to it – is a salient issue, as more prominently-featured articles are more likely to be read and perceived by the public to be important. As such, I employ a multi-level framework to focus on the following overarching questions: (1) *How does the media framing of immigration and crime impact how prominently these articles are featured in local newspapers?*; (2) *What are the community-level structural characteristics that predict the prominence of immigration-crime articles?*; and (3) *How does article-level framing interact with community (contextual) characteristics to further impact article prominence?* Exploring these questions is critical to understanding the reproduction of the anti-immigrant sentiment as it bears on the receptivity of communities toward foreign-born settlement.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Immigration and Crime

The study of immigrants, and both their criminal offending and victimization, as well as immigration's impact on community crime rates, has grown tremendously in the past two decades. Comparatively, there is less literature surrounding the macro-level relationship between immigration and crime than the individual-level association of immigrants and crime (Ousey and Kubrin 2009), though this gap has lessened considerably over the past decade, perhaps sparked by prominent outreach among scholars, such as Robert Sampson's (2006) *New York Times* op-ed piece that links increased immigration in the 1990s to declining violence rates. Studies at the macro-level consistently find a null or a negative association between immigration and crime. Indeed, as far back as Butcher and Piehl's (1998) study in which changes in immigration were unassociated with changes in crime rates across a sample US metropolitan areas, this finding of a null relationship is consistently validated by a host of studies in the almost two decades since (see Lee, Martinez, and Rosenfeld 2001; Reid et al. 2005; Feldmeyer 2009).

Still others observe a negative relationship between immigration and crime at the macro-level (see Feldmeyer 2009; Martinez, Stowell, and Lee 2010; Stowell et al. 2009; Ousey and Kubrin 2009). For example, Feldmeyer (2009) finds that immigration actually decreased rates of robbery in some of his New York and California census places, while Martinez and colleagues (2010) employ a longitudinal study exploring the effect of changes in immigration on changes in homicide over time in San Diego, finding that an increase in the proportion of the population that are immigrants in San Diego neighborhoods is associated with decreased levels of lethal violence over time (see also Desmond and Kubrin 2009; Martinez et al. 2004, 2008;

Ousey and Kubrin 2009; Sampson, Morenoff, and Raudenbush 2005; Stowell and Martinez 2007; Stowell et al. 2009).

Though consensus has emerged that immigration has a null or negative association with crime, the literature has gained increasing nuance in finding exceptions to the general null/negative effect (Harris and Feldmeyer 2013; Shihadeh and Barranco 2010, 2012; Stowell 2007) and focusing greater attention to the indirect mechanisms through which immigration may operate to impact crime rates. For example, a growing number of studies highlight segregation, language ability, and religious contextual characteristics as key mediating mechanisms (Feldmeyer, Harris, and Scoggins 2015; Harris and Feldmeyer 2015; Ousey and Kubrin 2009).

At the individual-level, there is also increasing consensus among scholars that immigrants are less crime-prone than native-born citizens. Indeed, studies repeatedly show that immigrants are less likely to be involved in crime, and less likely to be institutionalized than their native counterparts (Ousey and Kubrin 2014). This finding has been so consistent that Martinez and Lee (2000:496) conclude that “the major finding of a century of research on immigration and crime is that... immigrants nearly always exhibit lower crime rates than native groups.”

Media and Crime

Crime has historically been, and continues to be, an important topic in the news media. Research shows that it takes up a substantial amount of time in the television news media, and a substantial amount of space in print news sources. According to Graber (1980), at least 25% of available daily news space is occupied by crime stories. Moreover, empirical research demonstrates that the news media is not especially adept at presenting issues of crime and justice: there is little to no relationship with crime as it is presented in the news media and crime

as it occurs in reality, as captured by official crime statistics and other sources (Chermak and Chapman 2007). For example, news sources overemphasize violence and often included greater detail on such crimes as compared to non-violent offenses (Chermak and Chapman 2007). As the famous observation by Pooley (1989) goes, “if it bleeds, it leads.” This theme is similarly observed in other studies (Skogan and Maxfield 1981; Humphries 1981; Smith 1984)

Other empirical research suggests that the news media tend to cover stories in ways that vary by socio-demographic characteristics of the victims and perpetrators themselves, including gender, socioeconomic class, and race. For example, research finds that juveniles and the elderly are more likely to be covered as victims than as offenders (Boulahanis and Heltsley 2004; Sorensen et al. 1998) and that half of the juvenile crime stories involve murder (Yanich 2005). In addition, Sorensen et al. (1998) find that homicides involving females are more likely to be covered, as well as stories where the victim is white, and/or living in a wealthier neighborhood (see also Brown 1984; Chermak 1995; Johnstone et al. 1994; Mawby and Brown 1984). In the same vein, Meyers (2004) finds that there is also a tendency for news stories to blame females (specifically black females) for their own victimization, and to label them as “promiscuous” or “oversexed,” mirroring a general trend in which minorities are more likely to be covered in news media as suspects or offenders than as victims and to be associated with violence as compared to whites (Campbell 1995; Chiricos and Escholz 2002; Entman and Rojecki 2000; Dixon, Azocar, and Casas 2003). Meanwhile, others find evidence that white victims in homicides are more likely to be covered than black or Hispanic victims (Peelo et al. 2004), while Gruenewald, Pizarro, and Chermak (2009) observe that homicides involving Hispanic offenders are considered newsworthy, but that homicides involving Hispanic victims are not.

Overall then, how crime is presented in the media is in many ways inconsistent with the empirical reality of crime. Instead, news media focus heavily on violence (homicide and other serious offenses), even in places with relatively low levels of actual crime. At the same time, media tend to misrepresent both victims and offenders in terms of their age, race, gender, and socioeconomic status (Jewkes 2011; Peelo et al. 2004; Pizarro, Chermak, and Gruenewald 2007; Dowler, Fleming, and Muzzatti 2006). Therefore, though scholars have paid little attention to this issue, there is reason to expect that the media would misrepresent immigration and crime in much the same manner as has occurred with other criminological topics.

In the current study, I focus on an important strategy media use that may be critical in understanding public opinion of immigration and crime in local contexts. Specifically, media reflect and influence public opinion by *framing* issues in ways that suggest to audiences how to think about them (Kim, Scheufele, and Shanahan 2002). Frames serve as outlines for quickly transforming issues into news stories by “selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution” (Entman 2004:5). For example, local media transform multifaceted and complex stories of immigrant assimilation, victimization, offending, and experiences with the justice system into shortened, simplified, and familiar narratives (Fishman 1980; Goffman 1974).

Empirical Disconnect

Despite an abundance of separate research on the media-crime and immigration-crime intersections, there is little scholarly work integrating both lines of inquiry. For example, there are select studies examining media coverage of Hispanic participants in crime that find it is typically ignored by news media (Mendez-Mendez and Alverio 2003) or linked to topics such as

illegal immigration and terrorism when it is covered (Entman 1990). Yet, none of this research examines media and immigration, and especially media coverage of immigration as it is linked to crime. At the same time, a voluminous literature on immigration and crime (especially at the macro-level) finds little statistical association between the two but doesn't engage issues surrounding media coverage. Finally, several studies examine the media discourse on immigration policy and legislation. For example, Estrada, Ebert, and Halla-Lore (2016) study the news media rhetoric regarding immigration policy, and find that news outlets are more likely to support restrictive policy; however, studies like this one fail to capture the broader issue of variation across places in coverage and framing of immigration and crime in general. Put simply, the intersection of immigration, crime, and media across places is empirically unsettled.

That is not to say, however, that prior research has not contributed some suggestive evidence that the manner in which media engage the immigration-crime debate varies across context. Most closely related to the current study, Branton and Dunaway (2009) examine whether geographic proximity to the US-Mexico border influenced California newspapers' coverage of immigration issues. Their findings reveal that news organizations more spatially-proximate to the border produce more articles covering immigration, especially those including reference to the negative aspects of Latino immigration in general and illegal immigration specifically. Though it is limited only to California newspapers, this study highlights how geographic context differentially impacts media representations of immigration, and/or whether they talk about it at all.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Moral Panic

In general, the notion that media play an important role in shaping and reflecting public opinion, including on the issue of immigration and crime, dovetails with the larger sociological literature on social constructionism and moral panic. The “moral panic” and “folk devil” literatures emphasize the ability of the media to socially construct a problem. The term “moral panic” was coined by Cohen (1972) to describe society’s establishment of and reaction to social problems like crime and deviance, and, most relevant to the current study, how media plays an important role in shaping this reaction. Cohen claims that when media merely cover a specific social issue, it is enough to raise public concern about it. He introduces the idea of the “folk devil” as the individual or group that the media frames as criminal or deviant. Cohen posits that this motivates society to react in a “moral panic” when they feel that social norms and values are threatened. Hall et al. (1978) further argues that the media used these moral panics to extend state control and power, which can result in increased social punishment and public policy changes. Crucially for my purposes here, the media is not the sole driver of moral panics; individual actors and other social institutions also play a significant role in their creation. Indeed, Becker (1963) highlights the importance of “moral entrepreneurs” in defining what and who is deviant, whereby the mass media most often perpetuates the positions of these moral entrepreneurs through disproportionately covering related elements, and exciting ardent societal response.

Though I don’t explicitly test this perspective (or any others presented in this study), the moral panic framework has major implications in the discussion of the media framing of immigration and crime. Public opinion polls show that the majority of the US populace has a

long-held negative perception of immigrants in regard to social problems in general, and especially with regard to crime. Some argue that this prejudice has resulted in the creation of legislation that increases the criminalization of immigrants, such as the Secure Communities acts and local 287(g) programs (Martinez and Iwama 2014; Akins 2013) as well as state bills like Arizona Senate Bill 1070 (Diaz, Saenz, and Kwan 2011). That is, immigrants emerge as “folk devils” around which the media can construct a moral panic and the over-representation of immigrants as criminals can effectively cast immigrants as the folk devils, regardless of community context. Public perceptions of immigrants as dangerous or violent, in turn, gives rise to calls for formal responses, such as policies and practices targeting immigrant populations. Thus, drawing from the prior literature on the media distortion of crime in conjunction with the moral panic framework, the broadest expectation is that immigration and crime articles with a negative frame are more likely to be prominently featured in local news publications, either on the front page or with more words devoted to them.

H1: Articles with a negative immigration-crime frame will have a greater likelihood of appearing on the front page or have more words devoted to them.

Racial/Ethnic Threat Perspectives and Contact Hypothesis

While the moral panic perspective is important in highlighting why the media might discuss immigration and crime in a specifically negative way, it does not necessarily speak to why different geographic communities may differentially frame immigration and crime in the news. To understand the importance of context, I turn to two competing perspectives on intergroup relations: racial threat perspectives and social contact theory.

Threat perspectives originate from the tradition of critical or conflict sociology, which, in general, comes from the position that group inequality - whether by race, gender, or social class

– is at the root of all social problems. Threat theories direct attention to the social control of minority groups in society by the dominant majority. Relevant for the current study, racial threat perspective argues that as the concentration of minority groups grows in size, they come to be seen as a threat to the political and socioeconomic advantage that the dominant white majority hold, especially in the competition for scarce resources (Blalock 1967). In turn, the majority group attempts to neutralize the perceived threat that the minority group poses and protect their social advantage, including through increased prejudice, discrimination, and both informal and formal social control (Bobo and Hutchings 1996; Steffensmeier and Demuth 2000; Eitle, D’Alessio, and Stolzenburg 2002; Feldmeyer et al. 2015). Theorists posit that this can result in higher arrest rates, incarceration, or more severe sentences for the minority group in question among communities with a growing population of minorities, as well as increased racialized stereotype concerning “criminal threat” and fear of victimization (Spohn and Holleran 2000; Barkan and Cohn 2005).

There is now an extensive body of literature empirically testing this theoretical perspective. Evidence shows significant associations between large (or growing) non-white populations and a host of measures of social control, including a larger police force and more spending on law enforcement agencies (Kent and Jacobs 2005; Stults and Baumer 2007), increased rates of white-on-black crime (D’Alessio, Stolzenburg, and Eitle 2002), and increased racial disparities in incarceration (Myers and Talarico 1987; Weidner, Frase, and Schultz 2005). Other research observes large minority populations to be linked to greater voting limitations of convicted felons (Manza and Uggen 2006).

One of the key limitations of this research, as noted by Feldmeyer and colleagues (2015) is the disproportionate focus on black populations to the neglect of other demographic sub-

groups that also might engender feelings of threat. One of the clear extensions of the original threat perspective then is to immigrant groups, especially considering the new wave of immigrants that has produced sizeable Asian and Latino populations over the last several decades. Indeed, the threat perspective has been applied to Hispanics with some evidence that growing Latino/Hispanic populations are linked to decreased likelihood of downward sentence departures for Latinos (Feldmeyer and Ulmer 2011), though there remains a paucity of literature examining the influence of immigration on the social control of minorities more generally (Feldmeyer et al. 2015).

For the purposes of this study, racial threat theory provides key insight into to why the media framing of immigration and crime may vary across different contexts. Communities with more immigrants may feel that their political or cultural privilege is being encroached upon and, as a result, endeavor to neutralize such “threat” by prominently featuring news articles about immigration and crime, especially those that frame immigrants in a negative way.

H₂: Counties with a larger foreign-born population will have a greater likelihood of having newspaper articles on the front page or articles with more words devoted to them.

Building on Blalock’s (1967) original conception of racial/ethnic threat, the defended neighborhoods theory (Suttles 1972) extends threat perspectives by positing that homogenous *wealthy* neighborhoods are especially resistant to influxes of racial/ethnic minority groups into their communities. In this perspective, residents in wealthier communities may resort to violence against these minorities upon such intrusions into their “territory.” Indeed, studies of hate crime have documented an increased likelihood of racial violence in affluent white communities

experiencing residential racial transitions (Grattet 2009; Green, Strolovitch, and Wong 1998; Lyons 2007).

Pertinent to the current study, the “defended neighborhood effect” may play out similarly toward negative media portrayals of immigrant groups. I propose this effect would operate much in the same manner as the traditional racial threat hypothesis would expect, with the distinguishing factor between racial threat and defended neighborhoods being levels of affluence. In other words, communities with *higher average income* will be more likely to have immigration and crime articles on the front page, and especially articles with a negative frame, because established wealthy residents of these communities may view immigrants as a threat to their hegemony, especially if they perceive immigration to be a sudden issue for their specific community, thus leading them to cover the issue via their local media outlets.

H3: Counties with higher median household income will have a greater likelihood of having immigration and crime articles on the front page or of having articles with more words devoted to them.

Contrary to the threat perspective, the social contact hypothesis implies that places with more immigrants might actually be less likely to both cover immigration and crime in general and/or more likely to frame immigration and crime in non-negative (even positive) ways. This perspective originates from Allport (1954), who argues that increasing diversity in an area will lead to more exposure between different racial/ethnic groups, therefore creating opportunity for better understanding. In turn, such contact will reduce the stereotypes and prejudice that often lies at the base of much discriminatory behavior toward minorities.

Research finds strong empirical support of contact hypothesis. For example, greater inter-racial/ethnic group contact (diversity) in communities is associated with decreases in intergroup

prejudice (Pettigrew and Tropp 2006). Several other studies examining the contact hypothesis regarding attitudes toward Latino groups find that contact with Latinos in fact decreases negative attitudes toward Latinos (Dixon and Rosenbaum 2004). Likewise, Ellison et al. (2001) report that individuals with more social ties to Latinos have a lower likelihood of believing that immigration leads to more crime.

Per this perspective, an influx of immigrants into communities can foster the opportunity for greater understanding of and sensitivity to the issues that immigrants face. In turn, media in these communities will cover immigration and crime in more supportive ways (i.e., have a greater concentration of articles with frames that depict immigrants as victims of crime or refugees, rather than immigration increasing crime). Thus, for the purposes of the current study, the contact hypothesis suggests that a higher concentration of immigrants in a community decreases the likelihood of prominent coverage of immigration and crime articles in local newspapers. Alternatively, more immigrants in a community may lead to *more* prominent coverage of articles with frames more supportive of immigration, such as those portraying immigrants as *victims* or *refugees* of crime.

H4: Counties with higher percent foreign born have a lesser likelihood of having newspaper articles on the front page or articles with more words devoted to them.

H5: Counties with higher percent foreign born will have a greater likelihood of having newspaper articles with immigrants as victims or refugees frames on the front page or more words devoted to articles with these frames.

To summarize, the moral panic perspective provides an explanation as to why the news media would frame immigrants in specific ways regarding crime, especially in a negative way.

The media is a key institution that both reflects and drives public opinion. Given the common public perception that immigrants increase crime, the media has reason to negatively cover immigrants as “folk devils”, that, in turn, both reflects and informs public opinion, leading to a moral panic surrounding immigration and crime. Furthermore, racial threat theories (and related defended neighborhood theory) and the social contact hypothesis provide theoretical leverage for understanding why context matters in how local news media talk about immigration and crime. Communities with more immigrants might either espouse a perception of cultural and political threat to the white majority, thereby leading to more prominent media coverage of negative portrayals of immigrants intended to neutralize the threat. Conversely, they might be pushed to greater understanding and sensitivity to the minority group, thereby leading to less prominent coverage of immigration and crime or more supportive framing of the issue.

IV. CURRENT STUDY

To reiterate, the primary objective of the current study is to examine how news outlets talk about immigration and crime. In particular, the focus here is on the prominence of these articles within their publication, especially as it interacts with the community structural features in which the publication is located. I ask three related questions: (1) *How does the media framing of immigration and crime impact how prominently these articles are featured in local newspapers?*; (2) *What are the community-level structural characteristics that predict the prominence of immigration-crime articles?*; and (3) *How does article-level framing interact with community (contextual) characteristics to further impact article prominence?*

Data

Data for the current study are taken from several sources. First, all information on media framing of immigration and crime is constructed as part of an original database of newspaper articles drawn from Lexis Nexis' repository. Specifically, I employed ethnographic content analysis (see Altheide and Schneider 2012) on all the available newspaper articles from 2008-2012 appearing under a search for the words "immigrant" or "immigration" within five words of "crime" or "violence" (e.g. "immigrants and crime", "immigration and violence", "immigrants and violence", "immigration and crime"). This process resulted in 4914 articles, excluding moderately similar duplicates eliminated by Lexis Nexis's internal filter system. Each of these articles I then read, coded for multiple variables (see below), and culled for any additional duplicates. Completion of the coding scheme and further elimination of redundant and non-applicable pieces resulted in a final sample size of 3815.¹

¹ The reliability of the coding scheme was checked using an alternate coder on a subsample of 50 articles. Agreement for all coded variables exceeded 90 percent.

The Lexis Nexis search query returns articles from both print and online newspaper formats. One notable trend of the last several decades especially pertinent to this study is the decrease in print newspaper readership. For example, a 2008 Pew Research Center study finds that the proportion of Americans who read a newspaper on any given day has declined by around 40 percent since the 1990s (Pew Research Center 2008). This documented decline in print newspaper readership leads to valid concern regarding the usefulness of contemporary studies that evaluate newspaper content. If members of the general public aren't reading local papers, it stands to reason that newspaper articles may not serve as a proxy for the reflection of or driving of public opinion. However, in the light of decreasing print newspaper readership, and the resulting increase in online news readership, many local newspaper outlets have created online formats in addition to their traditional printed editions (Greer and Yan 2011; Kaufhold 2014). Moreover, Hoffman (2006) finds that there is little discrepancy between the quality and amount of news presented between the online and print versions of a sample of national and regional publications. Therefore, because of the availability of articles from most newspapers online, there is little reason to suspect the use of newspaper articles as the unit of observation is systematically biased.

As additional data sources, macro-social contextual characteristics are constructed from the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates (2005-2009) and US decennial Census for 2010, along with the total index violent offenses known in 2010 as recorded by the Uniform Crime Report (UCR). These data are combined with the media framing data using federal information processing standard (FIPS) codes at the county-level.

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis for the current study is the article. This carries several advantages in examining the research questions asked here. First, as reviewed above, prior research shows that key structural features of an article – how prominently it is featured and how much space is devoted to it – are closely related with how a topic is covered. Second, by focusing on articles (rather than on summing their characteristics across geographic areas), I can nest them and their features into the specific geographic contexts where they are produced and disseminated without losing variation across articles that appear in the same places. For example, if a news outlet publishes five different articles using different frames and of different lengths, aggregating these articles and creating a summary measure at a higher level of analysis risks obscuring the specific features unique to each article.

In order to pair each article with the geographic context and macro-structural characteristics drawn from the additional data, I determined each article's approximate geographic context from the publishing company's primary address. As such, I then merged each article with these data using the FIPS codes assigned to each county in which the article was published and disseminated. Upon completion of this process, the 3815 articles were nested within the 220 unique counties.

Dependent Variables

To determine how prominently an article discussing immigration and crime is featured within its publication, I use two distinct dependent variables. First, I assess whether an article appeared on the *front page*, which is a dichotomous measure (1=front page). This measure is consistent with prior media framing literature that examines how prominently newspaper articles

are situated (see Brennan and Vandenburg 2009). Out of the 3815 articles included in the analysis, 326 (8.5%) were featured on the front page.

Second, I use a measure of the total *word count*, which is a continuous variable intended to capture the overall amount of space devoted to immigration and crime. Because the distribution of this variable is highly skewed, I calculate the natural log of the word count for each article to normalize the distribution. This is also consistent with prior literature examining newspaper article salience (see Gruenewald, Chermak, and Pizarro 2013).

Article-Level Independent Variables

The primary independent variables at the article-level are the specific immigration-crime frames, coded as dummy variables (1 = frame was employed). Each frame is derived using ethnographic content analysis on each of the 3815 articles. As outlined by Altheide and Schneider (2012), ethnographic content analysis (ECA) is a reflexive and interactive process involving a theoretical sampling of documents from various information outlets, the development of a protocol for systematic qualitative and quantitative content analysis, and the use of the grounded theory approach to continually compare content and clarify emerging frames (see Glaser and Strauss 1967).

For the current study, I draw upon the literature reviewed above to *a priori* define several frames that were expected to be particularly common (e.g. immigration as criminogenic, immigration as protective against crime, immigrants as victims of crime, and immigration as a crime itself) and establish a preliminary protocol for coding. Subsequently, I allow additional frames to emerge from the articles themselves before finalizing the coding scheme and completing the procedure for all 3816 articles. Because of the multifaceted ways that immigration and crime can be discussed even within the same article, I do not restrict the number

of frames that can be coded for each article, and therefore, articles can have more than one frame present.

First, consistent with expectations drawn from sociological literature on immigrant reception, many articles describe immigrants as crime-prone, cover particular incidents of crime by foreign persons, or link immigration as a process to higher crime rates. I refer to this as the *criminogenic* frame. A large proportion of the articles that use this framing strategy discuss undocumented immigrants specifically, as typified by the following excerpt from an Arizona Capitol Times article: "...as she has done for years, Brewer said Arizona bears the brunt of crime and other costs associated with illegal immigration, and asserted that Arizona was forced into action on SB1070 because of the federal government's failure to secure the border" (Duda 2012).

Second, I observe a number of articles employing a *protective* frame. The common theme across these articles is the contention that immigrants are less crime-prone than domestic citizens and/or that immigration is associated with lower rates of crime and violence. Many of the articles that employ a protective frame use scholarly research as the focal point of the claim they make. For example, an article from the Daily Camera in Boulder, Colorado reports on immigration as protective of the crime rate, using the following excerpt:

"Increases in immigration are linked to decreases in the crime rate. That was the finding of a study by University of Colorado sociologist Tim Wadsworth published in the June issue of Social Science Quarterly. 'It really flies in the face of every argument you hear around immigration,' Wadsworth said. 'When you look at what's going on in Arizona now or California 10 years ago, one of the main arguments for restricting immigration is the supposed increase in crime'" (Meltzer 2010).

Third, a multitude of additional articles describe *immigrants as victims of crime*. Across these articles, media describe either the direct victimization of particular immigrants or discuss the general vulnerability of the foreign-born population to crime and violence. A common theme among articles that use this frame is the idea that undocumented immigrants are likely to be

victimized, because they are less likely to report crime to the police. This frame is seen clearly in the following article from the New Haven Register:

“City officials believe the card can reduce crimes against illegal immigrants, as it can be used to open bank accounts or to show police in the event of a crime. Illegal immigrants often are targets of thieves because some carry cash in lieu of using bank accounts, and are often hesitant to report the crimes because of their illegal status” (Zaretsky 2008).

Fourth, despite an important legal distinction, many articles frame their narrative in terms of *immigration as a crime*. As legal scholars have long noted, improper entry into the country is a misdemeanor criminal offense, whereas simply being in the country without proper documentation is a civil offense. Indeed, demographers estimate that between 30 and 60 percent of the undocumented immigrants in the country arrive through legal channels and are, therefore, not subject to criminal penalties (General Accounting Office 2004). Nevertheless, examples of this frame tend to overlook such distinctions, as shown in the following article from The Monitor in McAllen, TX:

“The so-called sanctuary cities bill prohibits cities, counties and school districts from stopping their law enforcement officers from enforcing federal immigration laws... But proponents of the measure say police officers should have the discretion to investigate any crime, including immigration” (Janes 2011).

Fifth, several articles describe immigrants as *refugees from crime*. That is, immigration often entails an escape from a violence-torn or crime-ridden country of origin. Given the long-standing view internationally of the United States as an ideal locale within which asylum seekers may settle, such a frame is unsurprising. One example of this frame is found in an article published by the El Paso Times:

“Last week, Pacheco became the second Mexican journalist to receive political asylum since his home country's current wave of drug violence began. Immigration judges in El Paso have mostly denied requests for asylum. A report in July showed that 83.3 percent of all such cases were denied.

Besides Pacheco, Spector is also handling legal processes for two other Mexican journalists -- Ricardo Chavez and Emilio Gutierrez -- seeking asylum in the U.S” (Bergfeldt 2011).

Finally, sixth, many articles are framed as a broader discussion of the *civil/legal rights of immigrants* in the United States justice system. Here, the common thread is the reduced focus on the process of immigration and the types of offending/victimization incurred by immigrants, both here and in their countries of origin. Rather, articles employing this frame focus considerably more on either the ambiguity in immigrant rights within our criminal justice system or on new policies designed to alter the rights of foreign-born persons to utilize and work with that same set of institutions. For example, the Arizona Senate Bill 1070 was passed in 2010, and garnered much media attention, often appearing in newspaper articles such as this: “A lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund has challenged the Arizona law that denies bail to illegal immigrants accused of serious crimes.” (Denny 2008).²

In order to simplify application of these specific frames, I further classify them into two categories, based on their underlying sentiment toward immigrants. First, the *criminogenic* and *immigration as a crime* frames are together treated as critical or negative of immigrants/immigration regarding crime (negative frame). Second, I consider the *protective*, *immigrants as victims*, and *immigrants as refugees* frames are inherently more supportive of

² I found that some articles do not clearly employ one of the frames described above. For example, some articles described immigration and crime alongside a host of other potential social forces (e.g. concern over immigration, crime, and rising healthcare costs) without pointing to a specific direction of association (criminogenic or protective). When we could not with a strong degree of certainty code an article as employing one of the six primary frames, and when new frames were not clearly defined, we coded them as having an *ambiguous* frame. In this manner, we view our ECA analysis as conservative in that we used strict criteria for inclusion into each of the most substantively meaningful framing categories.

immigrants (supportive frame). The *civil/legal rights* frame is treated as neutral.³ Given prior literature discussing the media distortion of crime issues and the insight from moral panic frameworks, I expect a disproportionate amount of the coverage of immigration and crime to be negative, linking immigrants or immigration with increased crime, as stated in hypothesis 1.

Additionally, I note here that while they are also treated as dependent variables, *front page* and *word count* are included as article-level predictors in models where they are not being used as outcomes. In other words, in models predicting whether an article appears on the front page, I use the logged word count as an independent variable, and vice versa. This is important in being able to more accurately examine the impact of the various immigration-crime frames, net of whether it is on the front page and how many words are devoted to it.

County-Level Independent Variables

Regarding county-level predictors, I focus in particular on two measures that are the lynchpins of this issue – immigration and crime – that may be most salient for understanding how media framing is driven across different communities. First, *immigrant concentration* is measured as the percentage of the population of the county that is foreign-born. As alternatives to this specific operationalization, I also collect measures of *recent immigration*, measured by the percentage of the county that are immigrants that came to the US during the period from 2000 to 2010, and the percentage of the county that are *Hispanic foreign-born*. Second, I capture crime using the *known index violent crime rate* per 100,000 individuals in the county. The violent

³ The criteria for inclusion of this frame was only that articles discuss the rights of immigrants within the legal system in the US, such as policies and legislation especially created for them. This frame could be critical (such as an article praising harsh immigration policy, but not necessarily linking immigrants with crime), supportive (such as an article supporting more progressive policies that broaden immigrant protection), or neutral (an article giving news that a city or state has been voting on a new immigration policy, with no bias in either direction).

crime index includes the most serious forms of violence (homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) for which the general public expresses the greatest concern. To account for the skewed distribution of this measure, I transform values by taking the natural log.

Additionally, I include a multitude of control variables that may also impact media framing, in ways consistent with my theoretical frameworks (racial/ethnic threat, defended neighborhoods, and social contact). To that end, I include *racial/ethnic diversity*, calculated using an entropy score, *percent urban*, and a measure of the natural log of the county *median household income*.

Analytic Strategy

The analysis unfolds in three stages. First, I provide descriptive statistics to illustrate variation across the sample of articles, as well as describe the geographic contexts (counties) in which these articles are published (Table 1). Because many of the counties in the sample contain more than one immigration-crime article, they necessarily appear in the nested dataset more than once. To correct for this issue, I create a separate dataset aggregated to the county-level using means of level-1 and level-2 variables. This returns observations for only the 220 unique counties, allowing for accurate calculation of means for county-level variables.

Second, I run bivariate correlations (Pearson's r) for my article-level and county-level variables, to examine baseline relationships between different frames and contextual characteristics (Table 2). I use the same aggregated county-level database described above in the descriptive statistics. Thus, the level-1 variables represent averages of those article-level features for each county, denoting the percentage of articles in the county that are on the front page, that contain a specific immigration-crime frame, or the average number of logged words that appear in articles in each county. The measures in this aggregate dataset allow me to examine

correlations between article features and contextual characteristics without encountering the problem of repeated county observations presented in the nested article database.

Third, I employ multi-level modeling techniques to examine how the article-level and county-level covariates of immigration and crime are associated with my two measures of article-prominence (front page and word count). Newspaper coverage does not happen in a vacuum; both the types of places where local newspapers address social issues, as well as how specific articles frame these issues, likely impact how prominently media outlets feature articles about immigration and crime. By extension, the goal here is to examine how specific frames (article-level) and contextual features (aggregate-level) both predict and interact with each other to effect article prominence. Therefore, it is necessary to simultaneously control for article-level and county-level characteristics in my statistical analysis, eliminating bias resulting from shared variance across articles within the same context (Raudenbush and Bryk 2002). In other words, with hierarchical modeling techniques I can model the dependence of one level of observation (articles) on a higher level of observation (counties) to help explain variation in the lower level, without violating the assumptions of independence in traditional linear regression models (O’Connell and Reed 2012).

To do so, I estimate (a) mixed effects logistic regression models via the *melogit* command in Stata 14.1 to predict front page coverage, while (b) I use mixed effects linear regression models via the *mixed* command to predict variation in the logged number of words devoted to articles. For each dependent variable, I specify a series of models analyzing the impact of different immigration-crime frames net of other article-level and county-level features, beginning with the effect of the broader “negative frame” on each outcome (Tables 3 & 4). Each table displays four separate models in turn: (1) an intercept-only model, (2) article-level only, (3)

county-level only, and (4) full model with article-level and county-level covariates. This allows me to examine each level individually and observe any differences in effects with the inclusion of the other level of variables (i.e., the effect of a negative frame before and after controlling for contextual characteristics). I then run full multi-level models for each specific frame (criminogenic, immigration as a crime, protective, immigrants as victims, immigrants as refugees, and civil/legal rights) predicting both outcomes (Tables 5 & 6).

In these multi-level models, I center both level-1 and level-2 variables on the grand mean. This technique transforms the model intercept to represent the expected value of the dependent variable when the predictors included are set to the sample mean (rather than zero, as is the case in a model with uncentered variables). Centering on the grand mean also adjusts for compositional differences within individual counties by recognizing that how a level-1 variable influences the outcome may be contingent upon the context in which it happens. In other words, these grand mean centered models allow me to interpret level-2 effects as controlling for level-1 variables, and thus as true “contextual” effects.

V. FINDINGS

Beginning with Table 1, I note findings from the descriptive statistics for my article-level and county-level variables. First, across the sample of 3815 articles, immigration-crime stories are covered on the front page of publications 8.5 percent of the time and have an average length of 6.5 logged words (665 words) devoted to them. Second, the most frequently-appearing frame in the sample is the civil/legal rights of immigrants, which appears in 44 percent of the articles. The negative frame is the second most used frame in the sample, appearing in 34 percent of the articles. The criminogenic frame, the first of the two frames combined to create the negative frame category, appears in 33 percent of the articles, while immigration as a crime, the second component of the negative frame, appears in only 2.6 percent of the articles. This suggests that the negative frame variable is disproportionately driven by the discussion of immigrants as criminogenic, as compared to immigration as a crime in and of itself.

After the civil/legal rights and negative frames, the other specific frames decrease in prominence. The immigrants as victims frame appears in 13 percent of the sample, followed by the protective frame, which is used in just under 7 percent of the articles. Immigrants as refugees is the least common frames in the sample, used in only 1 percent of the articles. Clearly, it is uncommon for local newspapers to portray immigrants as having lower likelihood of committing crime or immigration as protective of crime rates across places. Similarly, articles rarely discuss immigrants as refugees from crime or violence in their countries of origin.

In short, local news media tend to rely heavily on two specific characterizations of the link between immigration and crime: the civil or legal rights of immigrants, especially in the criminal justice system and immigration as criminogenic. Such findings make sense in light of the fact that the temporal span of the articles included in the sample marked a period of

increasing concern over immigration reform, resulting in numerous policy initiatives at the federal, state, and local levels. As is clear from my descriptive statistics, this dialogue and concern was captured heavily in local news outlets. At the same time, though immigrants commit less crime than native citizens and immigration is not related to crime in most places, it is extremely common for the news media to portray immigrants and immigration as causing more crime in communities. In contrast, it is not especially common for articles discussing immigration and crime to be put on the front page of newspapers: only 8 percent of the sample appeared on the front page.

The second panel in table 1 gives means and standard deviations for the county-level variables. I note the following. First, counties that contain an article covering immigration and crime have an average logged violent crime rate of 7.09 (1199 per 100,000), with the foreign born constituting an average of 10 percent of the population. For reference, in the entire United States, the average logged violent crime rate is 6.81 (906 per 100,000) and the average percent foreign born is just over 5 percent per county, suggesting that while crime rates are nearly identical for coverage counties and non-coverage counties, the average size of the foreign-born population is much greater in coverage counties. The mean logged median household income for the sample of counties is 11.26 (\$77,652) compared to 9.31 (\$11,047) for all counties in the United States, while counties with an immigration-crime article were also 77 percent urban and had a racial/ethnic diversity (entropy) score of .560, compared to national averages of 40 percent and .370, respectively. In sum, counties that have a local newspaper that publish an article on immigration and crime are more urban, more racially/ethnically diverse, more affluent, and have a comparable rate of crime but more immigrants.

(TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE)

In Table 2, I present findings from the bivariate Pearson's correlations for each level-1 and level-2 variable drawn from the aggregate county-level database described above. Beginning with the first column in Table 2, I find that the percentage of articles on the front page in a county is negatively correlated with county violent crime rates ($r=-.137$, $p<.05$), but positively related to county median household income ($r=.276$, $p<.05$) and urbanity ($r=.225$, $p<.05$). In other words, without controlling for other factors, affluent counties are more likely to have front page immigration-crime articles, as are those with lower crime rates and those that are more urban. The second column reveals that the average logged word count of articles in a county is positively related to the percentage of articles with a civil/legal rights frame ($r=.238$, $p<.05$), and negatively related to county entropy ($r=-.023$, $p<.05$). This suggests that the civil/legal rights frame may represent a more complex discussion of the issue of immigration and crime, and therefore may require more words to convey that complexity. Also, interestingly, counties with more racial/ethnic diversity tend to devote fewer words to immigration-crime articles, indicating that perhaps communities with more diversity are more sensitive to the issues of minorities, including immigrants, and therefore likely to give less space to topics such as immigration and crime in local media.

In the third column, I find that the percentage of articles in a county with negative frame is almost perfectly correlated with the percentage of articles in a county with a criminogenic frame ($r=.966$, $p<.05$) and moderately correlated with the usage of the immigration as a crime frame ($r=.186$, $p<.05$). This supports the finding from the previous table that the negative frame is mainly comprised of the criminogenic frame, but less so of the immigration as a crime frame. The percentage of articles in a county containing a negative frame is also negatively correlated with the protective and civil/legal rights frame ($r=-.224$ [$p<.05$] and $r=-.220$ [$p<.05$]),

respectively). A county's usage of a negative frame is also negatively related to the county violent crime rate ($r=-.173$, $p<.05$), indicating that, at least at the bivariate level, counties in which local media frame immigration as a crime or as criminogenic are the counties that tend to have lower crime rates in the first place. In the fourth column, the criminogenic frame exhibits many of the same correlations as the overall negative frame; it is negatively related to a county's use of the protective frame ($r=-.208$, $p<.05$), civil/legal rights frame ($r=-.209$, $p<.05$), and the county logged violent crime rate ($r=-.162$, $p<.05$).

Columns five through nine reveal no significant correlations. Moving to the tenth column, I find that county violent crime is positively related to urbanity and entropy ($r=.198$ [$p<.05$] and $r=.250$ [$p<.05$], respectively). This follows the common finding that more racially diverse urban communities tend to have higher crime rates. Column eleven reveals that county immigrant concentration is positively correlated with median household income ($r=.599$, $p<.05$), percent urban ($r=.502$, $p<.05$), and entropy ($r=.584$, $p<.05$). These findings reflect the fact that counties that immigrants settle in tend to be more affluent, urban, and racially diverse. In columns twelve and thirteen, I find strong positive correlations between county median household income, urbanity, and entropy, reflecting that urban communities are more affluent and more diverse racially and ethnically, on average, than more rural communities.

(TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE)

While instructive, both Table 1 and Table 2 merely describe broad patterns across articles and counties in key characteristics or one-to-one relationships between those same key variables (both independent and dependent). Moving on to the multivariate analyses, Table 3 displays the results of mixed effects logistic regression models predicting front page (dummy variable) using both article (level-1) and county (level-2) characteristics. Model 1 displays the null model

without any predictors, in order to decompose the baseline variance at each level. The intraclass correlation of .452 tells us that, at the baseline level, almost half of the variation in whether an article appears on the front page is due to the publication county. Moving to model 2 that includes only article-level variables, a one-unit increase in the logged word count increases the odds of an article appearing on the front page by over six-fold ($p < .001$). That is, longer articles have higher odds of being on the front page. Additionally, a negative frame is associated with a statistically significant 40 percent increase in the odds of front page coverage ($p < .05$). Notably, after controlling for these two article-level predictors, the intraclass correlation increases by 8 percent, which means that, net of a critical frame of immigration-crime and how many words are devoted to articles, over 50 percent of the variation in front page coverage can be explained by county context.

(TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE)

Moving on to model 3 in which only county-level predictors are included in the model, there are three statistically significant predictors of front page articles. Both violent crime (O.R.=.378, $p < .01$) and percent foreign-born (O.R.=.891, $p < .001$) are negatively associated with the odds of front page coverage. In other words, counties with higher crime rates and immigrant populations have lower odds of an article in that county being on the front page. In contrast, median household income is positively associated with front page coverage such that a one-unit increase in the logged median household income of a county results in almost twice the odds of having an immigration-crime article on the front page ($p < .05$). Finally, model 4 includes the full multi-level analysis. The effects of each predictor are largely unchanged when controlling for both article- and county-level factors. Net of other article- and county-level characteristics, articles with a negative frame have 39 percent greater odds of being on the front page than

articles without a negative frame ($p < .05$), and a one-logged word increase in an article results in 6.53 times greater odds of front-page coverage ($p < .001$). At the county-level, a one-unit increase in the logged violent crime rate decreases the odds of front page coverage by 68.1 percent ($p < .01$), a percent increase in foreign-born concentration results in a 12.2 percent decrease in the odds of being on the front page ($p < .001$), and a one-unit increase in the logged median household income almost doubles the odds of front page coverage (O.R.=1.98, $p < .05$). These findings suggest that both article features and contextual characteristics are impactful in influencing front page prominence of immigration-crime articles, independent of one another.^{4,5}

As a complement to the results shown in Table 3, Table 4 displays the results of the mixed effects linear regression models predicting logged word count using the negative frame variable and a full set of county-level and article-level controls. From the null model 1, it's clear that much less of the variation in (logged) word count can be explained by county-level contextual characteristics than when predicting front page (6 percent as opposed to 45 percent). Clearly, the amount of words devoted to immigration-crime articles is not a function of where the newspaper is located geographically. Across models 2, 3, and 4, the only statistically significant predictor of word count is whether an article is on the front page. Front page immigration-crime articles, on average, have .49 more logged words devoted to them than articles not on the front page (6.94 logged words compared to the intercept of 6.45, net of a

⁴ I tested for random effects of all frames across counties, and none were statistically significant. Evidently, article-level factors and county contextual features operate separately in impacting front page coverage.

⁵ I also test for the effects of disadvantage, % recent foreign-born, and % Hispanic foreign-born, and none are statistically significant. Supplemental tables including these models are available upon request.

negative frame and county structural features, translating to approximately 400 more words devoted to them than articles appearing in the rest of the paper).

County structural features do not appear to impact word count at all, in fact. None of the county-level variables included in the model significantly predict variation in article word count. Though violent crime, immigrant concentration, and median household income all significantly predicted front page coverage, they do not have the same explanatory power over word count, the other measure of article prominence. This indicates that while front page coverage of immigration and crime may vary by characteristics of the publication county, there may be a relatively fixed amount of words that can be devoted to articles, determined more heavily by publication editorial decisions rather than other contextual characteristics of the geographic location of the publication.

(TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE)

As a means of disentangling the negative frame effect noted above (especially in table 3), tables 5 and 6 display the results of multilevel logistic regression models predicting front page coverage and logged word count using each of the remaining individual article-level frames. The first notable finding is that, controlling for each specific frame and county-level features, word count remains a significant predictor of front page coverage. Across all models, a one-unit increase in the logged word count of an article increases the odds of front page coverage by approximately 6.5 times. Coupled with the finding from table 3, it is evident that longer immigration-crime articles are more likely to be featured on the front page.

Also at the article-level, two specific frames have higher odds of front page coverage. First, having a *criminogenic* frame (one of the components in the negative frame container) increases the odds of an article being displayed on the front page by 42 percent ($p < .05$), net of

word count and publication county characteristics. This finding mirrors a similar observation from table 3 that a negative frame increased the odds of being on the front page by approximately 40 percent, providing further evidence that discussion of immigration as criminogenic is the primary way in which local news media negatively frame stories of immigration and crime. Second, the *civil/legal rights* frame increased the odds of front page coverage by 49 percent ($p < .01$). I note in Table 1 that these two individual frames – *criminogenic* and *civil/legal rights* – are the two most frequently appearing frames in the entire sample of articles. As is clear from the current table, not only are local newspapers more likely to use these two frames than others when discussing immigration and crime, but articles containing these frames also have statistically significantly higher odds of being prominently featured (on the front page) of publications than articles not containing them. No other individual frames influence the odds of front page coverage. The *protective* and *immigrants as victims* frames are associated with lower odds of front page prominence, though neither of these coefficients reach statistical significance at traditional levels ($p < .10$).

Among the county-level predictors, the same pattern emerges that was clear in table 3. Both violence and immigrant concentration are associated with significantly lower odds of an article appearing on the front page across all models, decreasing the odds of being of the front page by approximately 68 percent ($p < .01$) and 12 percent ($p < .001$), respectively. Also, a one-unit increase in the logged median household income doubles or nearly doubles the odds of front page coverage across all models. Also as with table 3, no other county-level predictors impact front page coverage of immigration-crime articles.

(TABLES 5 AND 6 ABOUT HERE)

The mixed effects linear regression models predicting logged word count using the remaining frames in Table 6 again show a similarly clear pattern. Front page articles are, on average, .477 to .489 logged words longer than articles not on the front page ($p < .001$). Notably, two individual frames significantly increase the amount of logged words devoted to immigration-crime articles, net of other article and county-level characteristics. On the one hand, articles containing the *immigrants as refugees* have .18 more logged words devoted to them than articles without ($p < .05$), controlling for all else. Second, a *civil/legal rights* frame results in .09 logged word increase ($p < .001$). Translated to actual words, an article containing *refugees* frame has approximately 120 words more than an article without it, and an article with a *civil/legal rights* frame has approximately 60 words more. At the county-level, the same pattern emerges as with Table 4: none of the included county structural features significantly impact word count, offering further evidence of word count being more a publication decision than of contextual nuance.

VI. DISCUSSION

The objective of this study is to examine the specific manner in which news outlets talk about immigration and crime and, in turn, how both features of the articles themselves and the context in which they're written impacts how prominently those articles are featured within publications. I find in my mixed effects logistic regression models that articles with a negative frame of immigration and crime – i.e. those that frame immigration as criminogenic or as a crime itself – are more likely to appear on the front page than articles without a negative frame. The negative frame, along with the specific *criminogenic* and *civil/legal rights* frames, are the only frames that significantly impact the odds of front page coverage. Contextually, counties with higher violent crime rates and immigrant concentrations are less likely to have an article appearing on the front page discussing immigration and crime. In contrast, median household income is associated with an increase in the odds of front page coverage.

I also specify mixed effects linear regression models to evaluate the predictors of how many (logged) words are devoted to articles. The main finding from these analyses is that immigration-crime article word count does not substantially vary by place, nor by the specific way they discuss immigration and crime. The only two variables that significantly predict word count, aside from being on the front page, are a civil/legal rights or immigrants as refugee frame (both of which increase the number of words an article uses).

Overall then, even though immigration is unassociated or negatively associated with violence in most communities (Ousey and Kubrin 2009), news media outlets tend to negatively frame immigrants with regard to crime, and those negative article portrayals are more likely to end up on the front page in local newspapers than other more supportive frames. Recall that 34 percent of the articles in the sample include a negative frame in their discussion of immigration

and crime. In other words, over a third of the articles portray immigrants as causing more crime in communities or immigration as a crime itself. In turn, the presence of this negative frame increases the odds of an article being featured on the front page by 40 percent, net of the immigrant concentration and crime rate in the publication county. I find no evidence of a cross-level interaction between a negative frame and percent foreign-born or crime rate, which further indicates that the likelihood of an article with a negative frame being featured on the front page is not a function of being situated in a county with a lot of crime or a lot of immigrants.

On the contrary, results from my multi-level analyses suggest that publications in affluent counties with *less* violence and *less* immigrants are more likely to put immigration-crime articles on the front page. Though tests for a random effect of the negative frame across counties are insignificant, there is, however, indirect evidence that, regardless of contextual characteristics, articles with a negative frame are more likely to be featured on the front page. In other words, privileged places with the least exposure to the issues of immigration or crime are more likely to prominently feature newspaper articles covering immigration and crime, and there is a high likelihood that those articles will portray immigrants in a negative light.

In terms of the hypotheses that I delineate for the study, my findings do not support hypotheses two or five, but I do find partial support for hypotheses one, three, and four regarding front page coverage. However, given that few predictors influence word count, and none at the contextual level, I find no support for the second part my hypotheses. My first hypothesis is the general expectation for media framing of immigration and crime drawn from prior literature on media and crime, and the moral panic framework, that predicts that articles employing a negative frame will be more likely to be prominently featured in local news publications. Results from my analyses support this prediction. This corroborates past studies that find evidence that news

outlets often portray issues of crime and justice in a way that is not consistent with the reality of those issues (particularly in ways that over-represent crime, especially among minorities), and furthermore suggests that local media may be portraying immigrants as “folk devils”, reflecting and perpetuating negative public opinion.

Hypothesis two is informed by racial threat perspectives, and predicts that counties with higher percentage foreign-born are more likely to prominently feature immigration-crime newspaper articles, either with front page coverage or by devoting more words to them. My analyses do not support this expectation. Rather, they provide evidence to the contrary. Counties with a larger immigrant concentration have statistically significantly *lower* odds of featuring immigration-crime articles on the front page. This suggests to me that counties more exposed to immigrants and other minority groups may in fact be more sensitive to their plight, and therefore less likely to cover them (especially negatively) in local media, which provides support for contact hypothesis (see below).

My third hypothesis is drawn from the defended neighborhoods perspective, which posits that affluent communities are more likely to see minorities as a threat, and may go to lengths to neutralize that perceived threat. Defended neighborhoods is akin to racial threat theory, with the main difference lying in the addition of community affluence, compared with only community racial composition. While I don't find any evidence of racial threat in my findings, my analyses do provide partial support for hypothesis three: county median household income does significantly increase the odds of front page coverage of immigration and crime articles, net of other article and county characteristics. In other words, affluent communities are more likely to put immigration and crime articles on the front page of publications.

I interpret this finding to mean that though these communities may not be experiencing an influx of immigrants (much less an influx of immigrants that are committing a disproportionate amount of crime), they may perceive immigrants to be a threat economically based on the popular perception nationally. As a result, local media in these places would have reason to perpetuate the belief that immigration is a threat to their “territory.” This situation is not necessarily the original formulation of defended neighborhoods (which also postulates a racial/ethnic diversity component), but it nonetheless fits the narrative of a wealthy, most likely homogenous community galvanizing against a perceived minority threat. That I find evidence of defended neighborhoods but not racial threat suggests that the primary threat communities perceive in immigrants may be economic, and not necessarily cultural or political. Thus, only more affluent counties feel threatened enough by this group to resort to increased local media coverage that may result in increased negative attitudes toward immigrants.

I also find partial support for hypothesis four, which draws from social contact theory in predicting that counties with a larger foreign-born percentage have lower odds of front page coverage of immigration-crime articles. Social contact theory posits that an influx of racial/ethnic minorities in a community will lead to opportunities for increased understanding and sensitivity between the White majority and the minority group, and therefore less prejudice and discriminatory behavior toward minorities. One of the main stories from my results is that counties with more immigrants and more crime are less likely to cover immigration and crime articles on the front page. Put another way, the places with the most exposure to the issues of immigration and crime are the least likely to talk about it prominently in the local media, as if it is no longer a sensitive issue. This may indicate that these types of communities recognize that immigrants do not cause more crime and that they comprise an integral portion of the

community, and are, therefore, more hesitant to perpetuate negative stereotypes by sensationalizing the issue in the media.

Hypothesis five also draws from social contact theory to predict that counties with a larger immigrant concentration have greater odds of prominently featuring articles with frames more sensitive to immigration and crime, such as immigrants as victims or refugees. While my findings do support hypothesis four, the same cannot be said for hypothesis five. I do find that articles with the *immigrants as refugees* frame have more words devoted to them on average than those without. However, this relationship is true regardless of contextual characteristics of the county, such as immigrant concentration, suggesting that this frame may just be more complex and thus require more words to fully articulate, rather than a reflection of prominence or of a community more sensitive to the issue of immigration and crime.

Limitations and Future Research

Like all research, my study is not without its limitations. First, I use data only from newspapers, rather than all Internet and TV news. Newspapers are only one of the ways that citizens access local news. As such, my study doesn't capture all of the sources that could reflect or inform public opinion on immigration and crime. Future research should explore the way that different types of media frame immigrants with regard to crime, and how that may vary across various communities. This could provide key insight into how different types of media vary in how they talk about issues, and begin to tap into those sources most influential in reflecting and informing public opinion for those issues. Similarly, the Lexis Nexis repository from which I gather my data may not contain every single article about immigration and crime published from 2008-2012, especially in smaller and more remote counties.

Second, the temporal span of the articles included in my study, 2008-2012, is slightly limited, especially given all the current renewal of the debate on immigration in the Presidential campaign and election of Donald Trump. His rhetoric and policy proposals regarding immigrants has most certainly sparked increased media coverage of the issue. Future research would do well to examine how the media framing of immigration and crime has changed since the start of the Trump era, especially as communities around the nation (many without large immigrant populations or high rates of crime), draw on national rhetoric and debate in their local papers.

It would also be fruitful for future studies to examine the people who are perpetuating different immigration-crime frames in local media. By studying these “claims-makers”, future research could give insight into where news sources get information regarding immigration and crime, which is important for understanding how different actors influence public opinion in different locales.

Conclusion

The current study adds to sociological literature on media, immigration, and crime by providing evidence that when local news sources discuss immigration and crime, they tend to frame immigrants as criminogenic, and they are more likely to put these negative frames on the front page. Not only do these findings further corroborate prior research on the media misrepresentation of crime and justice, they point to the larger issue of the social construction of crime. My analyses reveal a situation in which news outlets push a narrative of immigrants as criminogenic or immigration as a crime, even though the narrative has no grounding in reality. Not only that, but it is the places with the least exposure to these issues that are more likely to push this narrative. Though it does not necessarily indicate group threat, this picture suggests some element of moral panic, wherein wealthy communities negatively frame immigrants as

criminals in prominent news coverage, even though violence – especially committed by immigrants – is not especially problematic. This would indeed help to explain why the myth of immigrant criminality (see Rumbaut and Ewing 2007) is so pervasive amid a reality where immigrants and immigration are often protective against crime.

This study represents only one facet in understanding the media framing of immigration and crime. Future research would do well to examine additional aspects of this line of inquiry, such as different media platforms, primary claims-makers in these articles, and how the media framing of this issue has changed over time. Understanding media framing is crucial in gaining insight concerning the discrepancy between public opinion about immigrants and crime, and scholarly research.

VII. APPENDICES

Tables from Findings Section and Supplemental Tables

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for All Dependent and Independent Variables

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.
<i>Article-Level (n=3815)</i>		
Front Page	.085	(.280)
Word Count (ln)	6.50	(.605)
Negative Frame	.344	(.475)
Criminogenic	.331	(.470)
Immigration as Crime	.026	(.159)
Protective	.067	(.250)
Immigrants as Victims	.137	(.344)
Immigrants as Refugees	.011	(.103)
Civil/Legal Rights	.442	(.497)
<i>County-Level (n=220)</i>		
Violent Crime Rate (ln)	7.09	(.560)
% Foreign-Born	10.72	(8.56)
Med. Household Inc. (ln)	11.26	(1.37)
Urban	77.17	(22.11)
Entropy	.560	(.240)

Table 2. Bivariate Pearson's Correlations Between All Dependent and Independent Variables

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)
(1) Front Page	-												
(2) Word Count (ln)	.030	-											
(3) Negative Frame	.069	-.116	-										
(4) Criminogenic	.055	-.110	.966*	-									
(5) Immigration as Crime	.100	-.030	.186*	-.060	-								
(6) Protective	.020	.026	-.004	.002	-.017	-							
(7) Immigrants as Victims	-.009	-.007	-.224*	-.208*	-.068	-.041	-						
(8) Immigrants as Refugees	-.007	-.062	.116	.110	.017	-.038	-.027	-					
(9) Civil/Legal	-.011	.238*	-.220*	-.209*	-.046	.069	-.073	-.078	-				
(10) Violent Crime Rate (ln)	-.137*	.033	-.173*	-.162*	-.131	-.108	.010	-.100	.050	-			
(11) % Foreign-Born	.059	-.039	.027	.038	-.017	.017	.067	.011	-.016	-.117	-		
(12) Med. Household Inc. (ln)	.276*	.084	.022	.044	-.041	-.034	.105	-.035	.075	-.000	.599*	-	
(13) Urban	.225*	.082	-.024	-.016	.010	-.070	.122	-.006	.101	.198*	.502*	.792*	-
(14) Entropy	.068	-.023*	-.001	.022	-.048	-.055	.016	-.030	.018	.250*	.584*	.415*	.446*

Note: All coefficients represent Pearson's r values.

* p<.05

Table 3. Odds Ratios for Mixed Effects Logistic Regression Models Predicting Front Page Coverage

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<i>Level 1:</i>				
Negative Frame	-	1.41*	-	1.39*
	-	(.196)	-	(.194)
Word Count (ln)	-	6.46***	-	6.53***
	-	(.895)	-	(.909)
<i>Level 2:</i>				
Violent Crime Rate (ln)	-	-	.378**	.319**
	-	-	(.135)	(.131)
% Foreign Born	-	-	.891***	.878***
	-	-	(.028)	(.032)
Med. Household Inc. (ln)	-	-	1.85*	1.98*
	-	-	(.521)	(.639)
% Urban	-	-	1.03	1.03
	-	-	(.021)	(.023)
Entropy	-	-	3.51	3.01
	-	-	(4.05)	(4.00)
Constant	-3.65	.014	.011	.007
	(.277)	(.005)	(.090)	(.006)
Intraclass Correlation	.452	.532	.405	.486
	(.067)	(.067)	(.067)	(.068)

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. The "Negative Frame" records whether an article employs either the "criminogenic" or "immigration as crime" frame. Level 1 and 2 variables are grand-mean centered.

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

Table 4. Unstandardized Coefficients for Mixed Effects Linear Regression Models Predicting Logged Word Count

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<i>Level 1:</i>				
Negative Frame	-	-.027	-	-.027
	-	(.020)	-	(.020)
Front Page	-	.490***	-	.489***
	-	(.035)	-	(.035)
<i>Level 2:</i>				
Violent Crime Rate (ln)	-	-	-.008	.014
	-	-	(.038)	(.038)
% Foreign Born	-	-	-.004	-.002
	-	-	(.003)	(.003)
Med. Household Inc. (ln)	-	-	.022	.011
	-	-	(.024)	(.024)
% Urban	-	-	.000	-.000
	-	-	(.002)	(.002)
Entropy	-	-	.121	.074
	-	-	(.112)	(.112)
Constant	6.49	6.45	6.41	6.45
	(.019)	(.081)	(.081)	(.081)
Intraclass Correlation	.066	.070	.062	.069
	(.014)	(.015)	(.014)	(.015)

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. The "Negative Frame" records whether an article employs either the "criminogenic" or "immigration as crime" frame. Level 1 and 2 variables are grand-mean centered.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 5. Odds Ratios for Mixed Effects Logistic Regression Models Predicting Front Page Coverage Using Specific Frames

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
<i>Level 1:</i>						
Criminogenic Frame	1.42*	-	-	-	-	-
	(.200)	-	-	-	-	-
Immigration As Crime Frame	-	.817	-	-	-	-
	-	(.301)	-	-	-	-
Protective Frame	-	-	.730	-	-	-
	-	-	(.217)	-	-	-
Victims Frame	-	-	-	.783	-	-
	-	-	-	(.164)	-	-
Refugee Frame	-	-	-	-	1.14	-
	-	-	-	-	(.668)	-
Civil/Legal Rights Frame	-	-	-	-	-	1.49**
	-	-	-	-	-	(.204)
Word Count (ln)	6.53***	6.47***	6.47***	6.51***	6.45***	6.47***
	(.909)	(.899)	(.898)	(.906)	(.896)	(.905)
<i>Level 2:</i>						
Violent Crime Rate (ln)	.319**	.317**	.316**	.315**	.317**	.315**
	(.131)	(.131)	(.131)	(.130)	(.131)	(.131)
% Foreign Born	.878***	.878***	.878***	.878***	.878***	.878***
	(.032)	(.032)	(.032)	(.032)	(.032)	(.032)
Med. Household Inc. (ln)	1.98*	2.00*	2.00*	2.01*	2.00*	2.00*
	(.639)	(.647)	(.646)	(.651)	(.645)	(.653)
% Urban	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.03
	(.023)	(.024)	(.023)	(.024)	(.023)	(.024)
Entropy	2.99	2.98	2.92	3.02	3.00	3.08
	(3.98)	(3.96)	(3.88)	(4.02)	(3.98)	(4.12)
Constant	.007	.007	.007	.007	.007	.006
	(.007)	(.007)	(.007)	(.007)	(.007)	(.006)
Intraclass Correlation	.487	.487	.486	.487	.486	.490
	(.068)	(.069)	(.069)	(.068)	(.069)	(.069)

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. Level 1 and 2 variables are grand-mean centered.

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

Table 6. Unstandardized Coefficients for Mixed Effects Linear Regression Models Predicting Logged Word Count

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
<i>Level 1:</i>						
Criminogenic Frame	-.027 (.020)	-	-	-	-	-
Immigration As Crime Frame	-	.046 (.059)	-	-	-	-
Protective Frame	-	-	.057 (.037)	-	-	-
Victims Frame	-	-	-	-.019 (.028)	-	-
Refugee Frame	-	-	-	-	.181* (.090)	-
Civil/Legal Rights Frame	-	-	-	-	-	.090*** (.019)
Front Page	.489*** (.035)	.487*** (.035)	.488*** (.035)	.487*** (.035)	.486*** (.035)	.477*** (.035)
<i>Level 2:</i>						
Violent Crime Rate (ln)	.014 (.038)	.014 (.038)	.015 (.038)	.014 (.038)	.015 (.038)	.014 (.037)
% Foreign Born	-.002 (.003)	-.002 (.003)	-.002 (.003)	-.002 (.003)	-.002 (.003)	-.002 (.003)
Med. Household Inc. (ln)	.011 (.024)	.010 (.025)	.010 (.025)	.011 (.024)	.011 (.024)	.012 (.024)
% Urban	-.000 (.002)	-.000 (.002)	-.000 (.002)	-.000 (.002)	-.000 (.002)	-.000 (.002)
Entropy	.074 (.112)	.073 (.113)	.076 (.113)	.073 (.112)	.076 (.112)	.073 (.110)
Constant	6.45 (.081)	6.45 (.081)	6.45 (.081)	6.45 (.081)	6.45 (.081)	6.45 (.080)
Intraclass Correlation	.069 (.016)	.070 (.016)	.070 (.016)	.069 (.015)	.069 (.016)	.065 (.015)

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. Level 1 and 2 variables are grand-mean centered.

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

Table 7. Odds Ratios for Mixed Effects Logistic Regression Models Predicting Front Page Coverage Using Specific Frames

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
<i>Level 1:</i>							
Negative Frame	1.39* (.194)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Criminogenic Frame	-	1.42* (.200)	-	-	-	-	-
Immigration As Crime Frame	-	-	.817 (.301)	-	-	-	-
Protective Frame	-	-	-	.730 (.217)	-	-	-
Victims Frame	-	-	-	-	.783 (.164)	-	-
Refugee Frame	-	-	-	-	-	1.14 (.668)	-
Civil/Legal Rights Frame	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.49** (.204)
Word Count (ln)	6.53*** (.909)	6.53*** (.909)	6.47*** (.899)	6.47*** (.898)	6.51*** (.906)	6.45*** (.896)	6.47*** (.905)
<i>Level 2:</i>							
Violent Crime Rate (ln)	.319** (.131)	.319** (.131)	.317** (.131)	.316** (.131)	.315** (.130)	.317** (.131)	.315** (.131)
% Foreign Born	.878*** (.032)	.878*** (.032)	.878*** (.032)	.878*** (.032)	.878*** (.032)	.878*** (.032)	.878*** (.032)
Med. Household Inc. (ln)	1.98* (.639)	1.98* (.639)	2.00* (.647)	2.00* (.646)	2.01* (.651)	2.00* (.645)	2.00* (.653)
% Urban	1.03 (.023)	1.03 (.023)	1.03 (.024)	1.03 (.023)	1.03 (.024)	1.03 (.023)	1.03 (.024)
Entropy	3.01 (4.00)	2.99 (3.98)	2.98 (3.96)	2.92 (3.88)	3.02 (4.02)	3.00 (3.98)	3.08 (4.12)
Constant	.000 (.000)	.000 (.000)	.000 (.000)	.000 (.000)	.000 (.000)	.000 (.000)	.000 (.000)
Intraclass Correlation	.486 (.068)	.487 (.068)	.487 (.069)	.486 (.069)	.487 (.068)	.486 (.069)	.490 (.069)

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. Level 1 variables are uncentered, Level 2 variables are grand-mean centered. * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

Table 8. Unstandardized Coefficients for Mixed Effects Linear Regression Models Predicting Logged Word Count

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
<i>Level 1:</i>							
Negative Frame	-.027 (.020)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Criminogenic Frame	-	-.027 (.020)	-	-	-	-	-
Immigration As Crime Frame	-	-	.046 (.059)	-	-	-	-
Protective Frame	-	-	-	.057 (.037)	-	-	-
Victims Frame	-	-	-	-	.019 (.028)	-	-
Refugee Frame	-	-	-	-	-	.181* (.090)	-
Civil/Legal Rights Frame	-	-	-	-	-	-	.090*** (.019)
Front Page	.489*** (.035)	.489*** (.035)	.487*** (.035)	.488*** (.035)	.487*** (.035)	.486*** (.035)	.477*** (.035)
<i>Level 2:</i>							
Violent Crime Rate (ln)	.014 (.038)	.014 (.038)	.014 (.038)	.015 (.038)	.014 (.038)	.015 (.038)	.014 (.037)
% Foreign Born	-.002 (.003)	-.002 (.003)	-.002 (.003)	-.002 (.003)	-.002 (.003)	-.002 (.003)	-.002 (.003)
Med. Household Inc. (ln)	.011 (.024)	.011 (.024)	.010 (.025)	.010 (.025)	.011 (.024)	.011 (.024)	.012 (.024)
% Urban	-.000 (.002)	-.000 (.002)	-.000 (.002)	-.000 (.002)	-.000 (.002)	-.000 (.002)	-.000 (.002)
Entropy	.074 (.112)	.074 (.112)	.073 (.113)	.076 (.113)	.073 (.112)	.076 (.112)	.073 (.110)
Constant	6.41 (.081)	6.41 (.082)	6.41 (.081)	6.40 (.081)	6.40 (.081)	6.40 (.081)	6.40 (.080)
Intraclass Correlation	.069 (.015)	.069 (.016)	.070 (.016)	.070 (.016)	.069 (.015)	.069 (.016)	.065 (.015)

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. Level 1 variables are uncentered, Level 2 variables are grand-mean centered. * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

Table 9. Odds Ratios for Mixed Effects Logistic Regression Models Predicting Front Page Coverage Using Specific Frames

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
<i>Level 1:</i>							
Negative Frame	1.38* (.195)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Criminogenic Frame	-	1.43* (.203)	-	-	-	-	-
Immigration As Crime Frame	-	-	.751 (.282)	-	-	-	-
Protective Frame	-	-	-	.720 (.216)	-	-	-
Victims Frame	-	-	-	-	.796 (.168)	-	-
Refugee Frame	-	-	-	-	-	1.14 (.668)	-
Civil/Legal Rights Frame	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.53** (.204)
Word Count (ln)	6.95*** (.985)	6.95*** (.984)	6.90*** * (.976)	6.89*** (.974)	6.93*** (.983)	6.87*** (.972)	6.92*** * (.985)
<i>Level 2:</i>							
Violent Crime Rate (ln)	.335** (.132)	.335** (.132)	.334** (.132)	.334** (.132)	.334** (.132)	.335** (.132)	.336** (.133)
% Foreign Born	.875*** (.030)	.875*** (.030)	.875*** * (.030)	.875*** (.030)	.875*** (.030)	.875*** (.030)	.875*** * (.030)
Med. Household Inc. (ln)	2.04* (.633)	2.04* (.632)	2.03* (.631)	2.03* (.630)	2.04* (.635)	2.03* (.630)	2.02* (.624)
% Urban	1.03 (.023)	1.03 (.023)	1.03 (.023)	1.03 (.023)	1.03 (.023)	1.03 (.023)	1.03 (.023)
Entropy	4.16 (5.29)	4.17 (5.31)	4.18 (5.32)	4.15 (5.28)	4.17 (5.32)	4.17 (5.30)	4.38 (5.57)
Constant	.006 (.005)	.006 (.005)	.006 (.005)	.006 (.005)	.006 (.005)	.006 (.005)	.005 (.005)
Intraclass Correlation	.459 (.067)	.459 (.067)	.458 (.067)	.458 (.067)	.459 (.067)	.458 (.067)	.458 (.067)

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. Level 1 variables are group-mean centered, Level 2 variables are grand-mean centered. * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

Table 10. Unstandardized Coefficients for Mixed Effects Linear Regression Models Predicting Logged Word Count

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
<i>Level 1:</i>							
Negative Frame	-.024 (.020)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Criminogenic Frame	-	-.025 (.021)	-	-	-	-	-
Immigration As Crime Frame	-	-	.063 (.060)	-	-	-	-
Protective Frame	-	-	-	.060 (.038)	-	-	-
Victims Frame	-	-	-	-	-.015 (.028)	-	-
Refugee Frame	-	-	-	-	-	.191* (.092)	-
Civil/Legal Rights Frame	-	-	-	-	-	-	.076*** (.020)
Front Page	.503** * (.035)	.504** * (.036)	.502*** (.035)	.503*** (.035)	.502*** (.035)	.501** * (.035)	.494*** (.035)
<i>Level 2:</i>							
Violent Crime Rate (ln)	-.006 (.038)	-.007 (.038)	-.007 (.038)	-.007 (.038)	-.007 (.038)	-.007 (.038)	-.007 (.038)
% Foreign Born	-.004 (.003)	-.004 (.003)	-.004 (.003)	-.004 (.003)	-.004 (.003)	-.004 (.003)	-.004 (.003)
Med. Household Inc. (ln)	.022 (.024)	.022 (.024)	.022 (.024)	.022 (.024)	.022 (.024)	.022 (.024)	.022 (.024)
% Urban	.000 (.002)	.000 (.002)	.000 (.002)	.000 (.002)	.000 (.002)	.000 (.002)	.000 (.002)
Entropy	.115 (.112)	.116 (.112)	.116 (.112)	.116 (.112)	.116 (.112)	.116 (.112)	.116 (.112)
Constant	6.41 (.081)	6.41 (.081)	6.41 (.081)	6.41 (.081)	6.41 (.081)	6.41 (.081)	6.41 (.081)
Intraclass Correlation	.068 (.015)	.068 (.015)	.068 (.015)	.068 (.015)	.068 (.015)	.068 (.015)	.068 (.015)

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. Level 1 variables are group-mean centered, Level 2 variables are grand-mean centered. * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

Table 11. Mixed Effects Logistic Regression Level 2 Only: County Covariates Predicting Front Page Coverage

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<i>Level 2:</i>				
Violent Crime Rate (logged)	.378** (.135)	.375** .139 (.176)	.459* (.170)	.498* (.169)
Disadvantage Index	-	1.02 (.176)	-	-
% Foreign Born	.891*** (.028)	.890*** (.028)	-	-
% Recent Foreign Born	-	-	.774* (.087)	-
% Hispanic Foreign Born	-	-	-	.850*** (.042)
Median Household Income (logged)	1.85* (.521)	1.86* (.528)	1.52 (.426)	1.55 (.412)
% Urban	1.03 (.021)	1.03 (.021)	1.03 (.022)	1.02 (.020)
Entropy	3.51 (4.05)	3.32 (4.32)	1.66 (2.06)	2.75 (3.18)

Note: Standard errors in parantheses.

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

Table 12. Mixed Effects Linear Regression Level 2 Only: County Covariates Predicting Logged Word Count

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<i>Level 2:</i>				
Violent Crime Rate (logged)	-.008 (.038)	.000 (.040)	.009 (.038)	.003 (.035)
Disadvantage Index	-	-.010 (.016)	-	-
% Foreign Born	-.004 (.003)	-.004 (.003)	-	-
% Recent Foreign Born	-	-	-.001 (.010)	-
% Hispanic Foreign Born	-	-	-	-.007* (.003)
Median Household Income (logged)	.022 (.024)	.020 (.024)	.014 (.024)	.016 (.023)
% Urban	.000 (.002)	.000 (.002)	-.000 (.002)	.000 (.002)
Entropy	.121 (.112)	.148 (.119)	.044 (.117)	.126 (.105)

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

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