English- and Spanish-Language Media Coverage of Immigration: A Comparative Analysis*

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Objective. We apply economic theories of news to explain differences between English- and Spanish-language newspaper coverage of immigration. Methods. Using content analysis and contextual data, we examine newspaper coverage of immigration as a function of economic incentives of news organizations and the language of the newspaper outlet. Results. The results indicate that Spanish-language news outlets generate a larger volume of coverage and more positive coverage of immigration when compared to English-language news outlets. Conclusions. This specific topic is important and politically relevant because of the potential implications variability in media coverage of this issue hold for public opinion on immigration.

Increasingly, scholars studying the news media are focusing on demand-side explanations of news content (Hamilton, 2004; Mullainathan and Shleifer, 2005; Baron, 2006; Gentzkow and Shapiro, 2006). This literature examines whether news content is market driven, whereby news coverage of certain issues is influenced by consumer preferences in media markets. Evidence is mounting to suggest that economic theories of news can explain much of what we see in news content (Zaller, 1999; Arnold, 2004; Hamilton, 2004; Gentzkow and Shapiro, 2006). Interestingly, even though market-driven news is economically motivated, the market-driven news product has important political consequences. For example, existing research indicates news coverage of issues can influence political opinions (e.g., Iyengar and Kinder, 1987; Kahn and Kenney, 2002; McCombs and Shaw, 1972). News media portrayals of policy issues have an agenda-setting effect whereby issues highlighted most in the news become most important in the minds of news audiences (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993; Iyengar and Kinder, 1987). Furthermore, the manner in which the media frames issues influences the way the public thinks about issues and how it evaluates issues (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987; Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley, 1997).

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In this study, we utilize economic theories of news to explain differences between English- and Spanish-language newspaper coverage of immigration. This area of public policy is critically important to many groups, including legal and illegal immigrants currently residing in the United States, industries relying on migrant labor, groups concerned with border security, and low-wage workers fearing competition from migrant workers. In April 2006, nationwide protests erupted over the issue. In 2007, the demand for congressional action on immigration policy resulted in the largest attempt at immigration policy reform in over a decade. With so much at stake for various groups, we argue that it is important to understand variation in news coverage regarding the issue of immigration. Specifically, we want to understand whether there are significant differences in the way English- and Spanish-language media in the United States portray the issue of immigration.

Two key assumptions regarding the behavior of newspaper organizations and newspaper readers inform our expectations about immigration news coverage. First, based on information-processing research (e.g., Severin and Tankard, 1992; Fiske, 1995; Graber, 2007) and following Mullainathan and Shleifer (2005), we suggest that newspaper audiences prefer to read news that is consistent with their views. Second, we argue that because they are economically motivated, news organizations are mindful of the preferences of their audiences and try to cater to those preferences whenever possible (Baron, 2006; Hamilton, 2004). Specifically, we suggest that in order to appeal to certain audiences (Baron, 2006), newspapers are able (and willing) to slant their news accordingly (Gentzkow and Shapiro, 2006). Focusing specifically on audience preferences toward immigration and newspaper profit motives, we argue that consumer preferences determine the volume and nature of immigration news coverage.

Building on previous research (e.g., Abrajano and Singh, 2007; Rodriguez, 1999), we argue that the economic motives of Spanish-language and English-language news organizations are likely to produce significant differences in their news coverage of immigration. Specifically, we argue that economic motivations yield differences in the quantity and nature of stories published by English- and Spanish-language news organizations. The results indicate that Spanish-language news outlets generate a larger volume of coverage on immigration when compared to English-language news outlets. Further, English-language media outlets are more likely to focus on negative aspects of immigration and produce negatively slanted news stories when compared to their Spanish-language counterparts. We believe this study is important and politically relevant because of the potential implications of variability in media coverage for public opinion on immigration.

**Demand-Side Economic Theories of News**

As noted, many scholars have demonstrated that market conditions and audience preferences influence news coverage. Much of this work focuses on
how market competition and audience preferences influence the quality or substance of political news content. For instance, Hamilton (2004) demonstrates that when news programs target certain demographic groups, the substance in news content varies according to the preferences of those groups. Additionally, Zaller (1999) and Arnold (2004) find that heightened media market competition creates pressure to retain and attract audiences, which leads to a decrease in the quality of the news content. Because audiences prefer low-information news, media outlets’ efforts to maximize profit decrease the overall quality of news content (McManus, 1994).

An emerging body of research demonstrates that audience preferences can also lead to politically slanted news coverage. Baron (2006) argues that since news organizations seek to maximize profit, they may produce biased news coverage in an effort to appeal to a certain clientele in the market. Gentzkow and Shapiro (2006) demonstrate that news firms respond strongly to consumer preferences and that consumer preferences often constitute a demand for slanted news. Finally, Mullainathan and Shleifer (2005) contend that news organizations cater to reader beliefs and that heterogeneity in a market will determine the degree to which newspapers offer biased accounts of the news.

**English- Versus Spanish-Audience Demand for Coverage of Immigration News**

Demand-side economic theories of news suggest two reasons to expect that news coverage of immigration may vary according to the language in which it is offered. First, given that the Spanish-language news audience is relatively more homogeneous when compared to the English-language news audience,\(^1\) it is plausible that Spanish-language news coverage of immigration may differ from English-language coverage of immigration. Rodriguez (1999) notes that the Spanish-speaking audience is relatively homogeneous in terms of language, cultural ties to home countries, acculturation, and socioeconomic status. Indeed, the relative homogeneity of the Spanish-language audience is appealing to advertisers because they are an easily targeted and growing audience (Rodriguez, 1999).

As noted, recent work investigates the relationship between market homogeneity and politically slanted news coverage. Mullainathan and Shleifer (2005) argue that reader heterogeneity plays a role in determining news bias. Specifically, in politically diverse markets, media bias is less likely to occur, whereas in markets where most audiences share the same views, news

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\(^1\)We do not suggest the Latino population is homogeneous; indeed, there are notable behavioral subgroup differences among Latinos (Branton, 2007). Instead, we argue that Spanish-language media audiences have relatively more in common than English-language media audiences.
organizations will cater to those preferences and exhibit bias in news coverage. When no clear political preference dominates a newspaper audience, newspapers present both sides of the news to cater to heterogeneous political preferences in their market. However, when there is a clear majority of a certain preference, appealing to the majority in the market offers a chance to appeal to (and not alienate) a wider audience. Therefore, the more homogeneous political preferences are, the more likely we are to see slanted news coverage. Given that Spanish-speaking audiences are likely to be relatively homogeneous when compared to typical English-speaking audiences, we expect Spanish-language news organizations to “narrowcast” and appeal to the preferences of Spanish-speaking audiences when choosing how to cover immigration in the news.

Second, we expect coverage of immigration to vary according to the language in which it is offered because the Spanish-speaking audience is likely to have a special interest and unique perspective on immigration when compared to a typical English-language audience. Rodriguez (1999) notes that Mexican migrants are the largest consumers of Spanish-language media. This makes migrants a valued and targeted audience. Given that people prefer to read news that is consistent with their own views, the preferences of the target audience and the news product are inexorably linked (Mullainathan and Shleifer, 2005; Gentzkow and Shapiro, 2006). If Spanish-language news media want to continue to appeal to their target audience, they may consistently portray immigration-related issues in a favorable way. Immigration coverage favorable to a Mexican migrant audience would entail positive and frequent coverage of immigration policy. In fact, a handful of content-based studies show that Spanish-language media typically offer more coverage of issues relevant to Latinos and more positive coverage of both immigrants and immigrant-friendly immigration policies (Abrajano and Singh, 2007; Rodriguez, 1999).

Additionally, Spanish-language media outlets are motivated to provide frequent and positive immigration news coverage due to the economic incentive to keep their audience in the United States. Moreover, immigration reform may directly affect many of those who use Spanish-language news media. As a result, many Spanish-language media organizations follow the civic journalism model and are likely to offer “advocate style” news coverage that promotes immigrant interests and encourages political participation by their audience and legalization of their migrant audience (Rodriguez, 1999). For example, Spanish-language news media are more likely to include things such as contact information for immigration lawyers and toll-free hotlines than English-language news media (Rodriguez, 1999).

Alternatively, efforts to appeal to English-language audiences often lead to very different portrayals of immigrants and immigration-related issues (Abrajano and Singh, 2007; Larson, 2006). Efforts to appeal to broad audiences often result in a reliance on the “crime news script” and other negative and sensational types of coverage (Gilliam and Iyengar, 2000;
Gilliam, Valentino, and Beckmann, 2002). This means that when immigration-related issues are covered in the English-language news, the primary focus is likely to be on the illegalities associated with the issue (i.e., border arrests, human smuggling, drug trafficking, and illegal border crossing). Research has demonstrated that most English-language coverage of immigration does in fact focus disproportionately on these aspects of immigration (Larson, 2006). Furthermore, several studies demonstrate the existing tendency of English-language media to portray Latinos, immigrants, and non-whites in general as outsiders and as problem people prone to violence and crime (Iyengar, Peters, and Kinder, 1982; Gilliam and Iyengar, 2000; Gilliam, Valentino, and Beckmann, 2002; Subervi et al., 2005).

In sum, given that Spanish-language and English-language media organizations cater to different audiences, we should expect significant differences in the volume and nature of their immigration news coverage. The rationale outlined above leads to two testable hypotheses, which will serve as the focus of the analysis presented in the following section.

**H1:** The news offered by Spanish-language media organizations is expected to contain more frequent coverage of immigration issues than news offered by English-language media organizations.

**H2:** The news offered by Spanish-language media organizations is less likely to contain negative coverage of immigration than news offered by English-language media organizations.

**Data and Methods**

To evaluate media coverage of immigration, we conducted content analysis of English- and Spanish-language newspapers in California. We utilized America’s Newspapers online archive to construct the data set of newspaper coverage of immigration between March 1, 2004 and March 1, 2005. The completed data set includes comprehensive information on 1,712 news stories that focus on the issue of immigration.² The content analysis was conducted by a trained team of paid research assistants. The coders first identified every newspaper article on immigration and coded articles to evaluate variability in the volume of coverage between English- and Spanish-language newspapers. Next, the team of coders coded each article for a number of characteristics, including the subject and tone.³ Our coding scheme is theoretically driven, as the economic motives of English-language and Spanish-language media could influence both the subject matter related

²The data set includes articles from 46 English-language and two Spanish-language newspapers. Of the 10 major Spanish-language newspapers in California, only two Spanish-language newspapers are archived online, *La Opinión* and *El Latino*.

³The codebook and a graph of coverage of immigration is available at (www.ruf.rice.edu/~branton/immigration_ssq.doc).
to immigration and the tone toward immigration in news stories. For example, we expect that English-language outlets are more likely to cover more negative aspects of immigration, including legal immigration, because this coverage appeals to broader audiences (Hamilton, 2004). Alternatively, we would expect emphasis on positive or neutral topics from Spanish-language media (Rodriguez, 1999).

The analysis focuses on two aspects of media coverage of immigration: the volume of coverage and the nature of the coverage. First, to examine the volume (or quantity) of newspaper coverage of immigration, we rely on a measure of the number of articles published per news organization per month that focus on immigration. This variable (GENERAL IMMIGRATION) ranges from 0 to 49 stories per month with a mean value of 3 articles per month. Additionally, to examine if there is a difference in the quantity of coverage regarding Latino immigration between English- and Spanish-language media, we rely on a measure of the number of articles published per news organization per month that focus on Latino immigration specifically. Again, this is a count variable reflecting the number of articles on Latino immigration published per month by news organization. This measure (LATINO IMMIGRATION) ranges from 0 to 48 with a mean of 2 stories published per newspaper per month.

Second, to examine the nature of newspaper coverage of immigration, we utilize three dependent variables that deal with the framing or tone of each newspaper article. The first measure is a dichotomous variable (NEGATIVE ASPECT), which is coded 1 if the primary focus of a story is on a negative aspect of immigration and 0 if not. The second measure (ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION) is a dichotomous variable, which is coded 1 if the main focus of an article is on illegal immigration and 0 otherwise. Finally, to examine the negative slant in newspaper coverage of immigration, we rely on a three-category variable (TONE) in which each article is coded as 0 if the story is positive in tone, 1 if the story is neutral in tone, and 2 if negative in tone.

The primary independent variable of interest in each model is an indicator of whether an article is published in a Spanish- or English-language newspaper. This indicator, SPANISH-LANGUAGE, is coded 1 if an article appears in a Spanish-language newspaper and 0 if an article appears in an English-lang-

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4To assess the reliability of the coding, a sample of 10 percent of the articles was drawn at random and coded independently by two trained undergraduate coders. Cohen’s kappa is computed: $K = \frac{P_A - P_C}{1 - P_C}$. $P_A$ is the proportion of units on which coders agree, and $P_C$ is the proportion of units for which agreement is expected by chance. Our coders’ range of agreement on story coding was between 0.67 (substantial agreement) and 0.88 (almost perfect agreement), depending on the coding unit in question. All scores above 0.60 are considered acceptable (Landis and Koch, 1977; Stemler, 2001).

5A story is coded as negative if the article focuses on an illegal immigrant or undocumented person, illegal immigration, drug trafficking, crime, or border patrol arrests.

6Each story was coded positive if the story was generally favorable toward immigration, neutral if the neither positive nor negative in tone, and negative if the story was deemed less favorable toward immigration.
guage newspaper. In accordance with the hypotheses outlined previously, we expect Spanish-language newspapers to produce more articles on immigration than English-language newspapers. Further, we expect that Spanish-language newspaper articles are less likely to focus on negative aspects of immigration than English-language newspaper articles.

Each model includes two additional newspaper attributes: ownership and circulation size. The models include an indicator of the ownership of each newspaper (CORPORATE), coded 1 if a newspaper is owned by a publicly traded corporation and 0 if a newspaper is privately owned. Publicly traded media corporations are primarily motivated by profit maximization; thus, corporately owned newspapers may generate a larger volume of immigration coverage and may be more likely to generate more negative coverage of immigration. Though both privately owned and publicly traded media organizations are concerned with profits, private owners are much more likely to maintain some stake in journalistic quality (Dunaway, 2008). Publicly traded media outlets are owned by heterogeneous shareholders whose sole motivation is profit making (Hamilton, 2004). Additionally, each model includes an indicator of a newspaper’s circulation size to control for potential variability in capability and resources of newspaper organizations. This variable (CIRCULATION SIZE) is included to account for differences in the sheer volume of news stories published by a newspaper.

In addition to the newspaper-level data, we also compiled county-level demographic data. The demographic data of interest include the socioeconomic climate, partisan makeup, ethnic context, and regional location of each county in California. The newspaper-level content analysis data and the aggregate-level data are merged to account for the contextual environment in which a news organization operates. Socioeconomic context is measured as the percentage of the county’s college-educated population. This measure (COLLEGE EDUCATED) is included to control for variability in the type of coverage in response to the affluence of the audience. Less-educated audiences are known to prefer more entertainment-laden news (Hamilton, 2004). Crime coverage is heavily relied on by local news outlets for its entertainment value (Hamilton, 1998). Ethnic context (LATINO) is measured as the percentage of the Latino population within each county. Ethnic context is incorporated into the model to account for the impact of the size of the Latino population on the coverage of immigration and immigration-related issues. The model also includes the quadratic of the Latino population (LATINO SQ.) to account for newspaper organizations’ response to a growing consumer base. As the Latino population approaches a sizable proportion of the potential consumer market, news coverage may not reflect this pattern because newspapers do not want to risk alienating this growing

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7Corporate news organizations are owned by publicly traded corporations. The term “publicly traded corporate media organization” refers to media firms owned by publicly held corporations, in which ownership is shared among numerous persons.
consumer base (Branton and Dunaway, forthcoming). County-level partisan makeup is measured by the percent of the vote share within a county cast in support of the Republican presidential candidate (PRES. VOTE). The county-level partisan makeup is included to control for the influence of audience partisan preferences on newspaper coverage of immigration. The models also include two dichotomous variables reflecting the regional location of a newspaper: southern county and central county. These regional dummy variables (SOUTHERN COUNTY and CENTRAL COUNTY) are included to control for variability in the volume and nature of immigration coverage that may be attributable to proximity to the U.S.-Mexico border (Branton and Dunaway, 2008, forthcoming). Specifically, newspapers serving counties closer to the U.S.-Mexico border may offer a larger volume of coverage on immigration and more negative coverage of immigration than newspapers serving counties further removed from the border. Finally, the models include month dummy variables to control for variability in factors unaccounted for in the model that may influence media coverage (Beck, Katz, and Tucker, 1998).

### English- and Spanish-Language Newspaper Coverage of Immigration

#### Volume of Media Coverage

To examine the volume of immigration coverage generated by English- and Spanish-language newspapers, we use a negative binomial regression. This technique addresses two issues that characterize these data: (1) count dependent variables and (2) overdispersion of these variables. This estimator is appropriate as it accounts for the structure of the data and the fact that the dependent variable is truncated at 0 (i.e., there are no negative values for the number of articles).

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8 We normalized this measure by subtracting the state-level percent of the vote share for the Republican presidential candidate. The county-level partisan makeup ranges from $-30$ to $22$ percent, with a mean value of $-3$ and a median value of $-9$.

9 The southern counties are: Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernadino, and San Diego. The central counties are: San Luis Obispo, Mendocino, Ventura, and Tulare. The omitted baseline category for regional location is northern county, which includes: Alameda, Contra Costa, Fresno, Lake, Marin, Merced, Monterey, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, Sonoma, and Stanislaus.

10 Due to space constraints and a lack of substantive importance, the temporal dummy variable parameter estimates are not presented in the tables.

11 We estimated the models using Poisson regression, negative binomial panel regression with random effects, and zero-inflated regression. After a series of diagnostic tests, including likelihood ratio tests and the Vuong test, we determined that the pooled negative binomial regression with fixed month effects is preferred. Regardless of the estimation approach and control variables included, the results regarding the variable of interest (Spanish-language media) are significant and in the same direction. These results are available on request.

12 We cluster our data by newspaper, which adjusts the variance-covariance matrix to correct for heteroscedasticity and serial dependency (Huber, 1967).
Table 1 presents the negative binomial regression estimates regarding the volume of newspaper coverage of immigration and Latino immigration, as well as the corresponding predicted rates of change in volume. First, we consider the volume of coverage regarding immigration, which is presented in the first column of estimates. The results indicate that the Spanish-language covariate is positively and significantly related to the volume of coverage. The rate of change estimates for Percent Latino and Latino squared are not directly interpretable. The estimate of change for Percent Latino is calculated with Latino squared held at its mean, while the rate of change estimate for Latino squared is calculated with Percent Latino held at its mean. To estimate the impact of the quadratic is it necessary to account for Percent Latino and Latino squared simultaneously; therefore, we do not present the separate estimates for Latino and Latino squared. The point estimates presented in the text offer an accurate estimate of the impact of the quadratic on the news coverage of immigration.

### TABLE 1
Volume of Newspaper Coverage of Immigration (Negative Binomial Regression Estimates)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paper Attributes</th>
<th>General Immigration</th>
<th>Δ Volume</th>
<th>Latino Immigration</th>
<th>Δ Volume</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spanish-language</td>
<td>2.40*** (0.372)</td>
<td>12.17</td>
<td>2.92*** (0.341)</td>
<td>5.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>0.660* (0.397)</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>0.737* (0.433)</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circulation</td>
<td>0.003** (0.001)</td>
<td>25.17</td>
<td>0.003*** (0.001)</td>
<td>3.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextual Factors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College educated</td>
<td>– 0.020 (0.024)</td>
<td>– 0.89</td>
<td>– 0.015 (0.023)</td>
<td>– 0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Latino</td>
<td>0.372*** (0.079)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>0.331*** (0.105)</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino sq.</td>
<td>– 0.006*** (0.001)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>– 0.005*** (0.002)</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partisanship</td>
<td>– 0.038** (0.016)</td>
<td>– 2.96</td>
<td>– 0.035** (0.017)</td>
<td>– 0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern county</td>
<td>0.213 (0.452)</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.437 (0.500)</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central county</td>
<td>0.012 (0.354)</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.280 (0.365)</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>– 4.78*** (1.12)</td>
<td>– 5.75***</td>
<td>(1.46)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wald χ²</td>
<td>163.64*** 562</td>
<td>230.29***562</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** = p < 0.01; ** = p < 0.05; * = p < 0.10.

Note: The data set is constructed based on the number of articles newspapers published by month. As such, the cases are generated based on the month-by-month analysis of newspapers articles by newspaper. Standard errors are presented in parenthesis. The Δ Volume estimates reflect the rate of change in volume of newspaper coverage by changing each variable from the minimum to maximum value while holding circulation, partisanship, percent Latino, Latino squared, and percent college educated at their means and all other variables at 0. The rate of change estimates for Percent Latino and Latino squared are not directly interpretable. The estimate of change for Percent Latino is calculated with Latino squared held at its mean, while the rate of change estimate for Latino squared is calculated with Percent Latino held at its mean. To estimate the impact of the quadratic is it necessary to account for Percent Latino and Latino squared simultaneously; therefore, we do not present the separate estimates for Latino and Latino squared. The point estimates presented in the text offer an accurate estimate of the impact of the quadratic on the news coverage of immigration.
newspaper coverage of immigration. Substantively, this indicates that Spanish-language media outlets print more articles regarding immigration than English-language media outlets, which supports H1. In fact, Spanish-language newspapers produce 1,000 percent more coverage on immigration per month than English-language newspapers. More specifically, the expected number of articles dealing with immigration published by Spanish-language newspapers is approximately 28 per month. Alternatively, the expected number of immigration articles published by English-language newspapers is approximately three per month. These point estimates clearly demonstrate the difference in the volume of immigration coverage generated by Spanish-language and English-language newspapers. Based on the economic rationale outlined above, the higher volume of coverage generated by Spanish-language media reflects the preferences of the Spanish-speaking audience.

Second, we consider the volume of coverage regarding Latino immigration. The estimates are presented in the third column of Table 1. The results indicate that the Spanish-language covariate is positively and significantly related to newspaper coverage of Latino immigration. Substantively, this indicates that Spanish-language newspapers print more articles specifically addressing Latino immigration than English-language newspapers, lending evidence in support of H1. In fact, Spanish-language newspapers produce 1,800 percent more coverage on Latino immigration per month when compared to English-language newspapers. To put this into context, the expected number of articles that specifically address Latino immigration published by Spanish-language newspapers is approximately 17 per month, while the expected number of Latino immigration articles published by English-language newspapers is approximately one per month. Again, this finding conforms to our argument that Spanish-speaking audiences are naturally more interested in issues related to Latino immigration.

**Nature of Media Coverage**

Next, we shift away from the quantity of coverage and instead focus on the nature of the coverage on immigration provided by English- and Spanish-language news outlets. The NEGATIVE ASPECT and ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION measures are both dichotomous variables; thus, we estimate these models using logistic regression. The TONE measure is a three-category ordinal vari-

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13 The percentage change in the volume of coverage is calculated by: \(100 \times (\exp(\beta) \times X - 1)\).

14 The estimates were calculated by taking the exponent of the intercept, each parameter estimate times some value for the respective covariates, and the Spanish-language times 1. For example, to estimate the expected number of articles among Spanish-language newspapers, the equation is: \(\exp(\alpha + \beta X + [\beta_{\text{Spanish-language}}] \times 1)\). The following scenario is utilized: a corporately owned newspaper, located in central California, with college education, partisan context, ethnic context, and circulation all set to their mean.
able; thus, we use ordered logistic regression to estimate this model. The estimates for each of these models and the corresponding changes in probabilities are presented in Table 2. Column 1 contains the estimates regarding coverage of negative aspects of immigration; Column 3 offers the results for coverage on illegal immigration; and Column 5 presents the estimates regarding the tone of newspaper coverage on immigration.

Note that the Spanish-language measure is significantly and negatively related to each of the dependent variables. This suggests that Spanish-language newspapers are less likely to focus on negative aspects of immigration when compared to English-language newspapers. Further, Spanish-language news outlets are less likely to focus on illegal immigration than English-language newspapers. Finally, Spanish-language newspapers are less likely to publish negatively slanted news articles on immigration than English-language newspapers. All three sets of estimates lend clear evidence in support of H2. The findings indicate that Spanish-language media outlets offer more positive coverage of immigration, which implicitly suggests that they are attempting to conform to the preferences of their target audience.

Given that logit and ordered logit coefficients are difficult to directly interpret, we calculated point estimates to highlight the variability in the nature of immigration coverage between English- and Spanish-language newspapers. The findings indicate that the probability that a Spanish-language newspaper publishes articles on negative aspects of immigration is 0.39, while the probability that an English-language newspaper produces articles that focus on negative aspects of immigration is 0.49. Further, the probability of a Spanish-language newspaper publishing articles that focus primarily on illegal immigration is 0.51, while the probability of an English-language newspaper publishing articles on illegal immigration is 0.58. Finally, these results demonstrate that a Spanish-language newspaper has a 0.17 probability of printing negatively slanted news stories on immigration, while an English-language newspaper has a 0.31 probability.

Together, the estimates regarding the volume of coverage and nature of coverage strongly indicate that Spanish-language newspaper coverage of immigration is distinctly different when compared to English-language newspaper coverage. As outlined previously, Spanish-language news outlets are economically motivated to cater to their target audience, resulting in a larger volume of coverage on immigration. Furthermore, English-language media outlets cater to their audience by producing coverage that focuses on negative aspects of immigration and tend to produce negatively slanted news stories when compared to their Spanish-language counterparts.

Before concluding, we would like to briefly discuss some of the other covariates in the models. First, the findings indicate that corporate ownership is significantly and positively related to the volume and tone of immigration coverage. Substantively, the findings suggest that corporately owned newspapers offer more frequent coverage of immigration and more negative coverage of immigration than privately owned media organizations.
TABLE 2
Print Media Biased Coverage of Immigration (Logit and Ordered Logit Estimates)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paper Attributes</th>
<th>Negative Aspects</th>
<th>% Δ Prob</th>
<th>Illegal Immigration</th>
<th>% Δ Prob</th>
<th>Article Tone</th>
<th>% Δ Prob</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spanish-language</td>
<td>−0.416***</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>−0.308***</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>−0.769***</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>0.056</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>−0.031</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>−0.001**</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circulation</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>1.05***</td>
<td>−0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextual Factors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College educated</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>−0.042***</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>−0.005</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Latino</td>
<td>−0.016</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>−0.038***</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>−0.284*</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino sq.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partisanship</td>
<td>−0.008</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>−0.029***</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.026*</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern county</td>
<td>0.681**</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.564**</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>1.65***</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central county</td>
<td>0.520***</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.911***</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.419</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative Aspects</td>
<td>% Δ Prob</td>
<td>Illegal Immigration</td>
<td>% Δ Prob</td>
<td>Article Tone</td>
<td>% Δ Prob</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Cutpoint 1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-0.201 (0.834)</td>
<td>1.84***</td>
<td>-4.912** (1.93)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cutpoint 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wald χ²</td>
<td>1100.23***</td>
<td>2216.08***</td>
<td>1673.16***</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1,712</td>
<td>1,712</td>
<td>1,694</td>
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*** = p < 0.01; ** = p < 0.05; * = p < 0.10.

**NOTE:** Standard errors are presented in parenthesis. The % Δ Prob estimates for the logit models reflect the percentage change in probability by changing each variable from the minimum to maximum value while holding circulation, partisanship, percent Latino, Latino squared, and percent college educated at their means and all other variables at 0. The % Δ Prob estimates for the ordered logit models reflect the percentage change in probability of printing negatively slanted news stories on immigration by changing each variable from the minimum to maximum value while holding circulation, partisanship, percent Latino, Latino squared, and percent college educated at their means and all other variables at 0. As noted in Table 1, the % Δ Prob estimates for Percent Latino and Latino squared in the ordered logit model are not directly interpretable; thus, these are not included in the table above. The point estimates presented in the text offer an accurate estimate of the impact of the quadratic on the news coverage of immigration.
Second, the findings indicate that ethnic context is significantly related to newspaper coverage of immigration. The estimates suggest that as the county-level percent Latino increases, the volume of coverage regarding immigration increases to some point, after which coverage begins to decline. For example, the volume of coverage on immigration increases as the Latino population increases to approximately 31 percent, yet as county-level percent Latino exceeds 31 percent, the volume of coverage on Latino immigration begins to decline. A similar nonlinear pattern emerges with regard to the tone of immigration coverage. Ethnic context is linearly related to media coverage of illegal immigration, which suggests that as the Latino population increases, the likelihood of news organizations covering illegal immigration increases. Finally, the estimates suggest that regional location is associated with the nature of immigration coverage. Media organizations located in counties more proximal to the U.S.-Mexico border are more likely to publish articles that are negatively slanted, focus on the negative aspects of immigration, and focus on illegal immigration than are newspapers located in counties located in northern California.

Conclusion

This study relies on demand-side economic theories of the news to explain variation in news coverage of immigration. We argue that audience preferences and newspaper profit motives result in differences in English- and Spanish-language media coverage of immigration. Indeed, the findings indicate Spanish-language news outlets generate a larger volume of coverage on immigration when compared to English-language news outlets. Additionally, English-language media outlets are more likely to focus on negative aspects of immigration and produce negatively slanted news stories than are Spanish-language media outlets.

We believe this study is important and relevant for several reasons. First, the findings lend support to the emerging literature on demand-side explanations of news content. Although English- and Spanish-language media organizations are both motivated by profit, they have very different target audiences, which we argue results in differences in news content on immigration. Our findings provide evidence that demand-side explanations do hold up in this particular policy area. Furthermore, they demonstrate that economic theories of news and demand-side explanations go beyond traditional English-language media outlets and extend to Spanish-language media outlets in the United States.

Second, given that media messages have known effects on public opinion and political behavior, the variability in English- and Spanish-language

15The “tipping-point” on the Latino quadratic is calculated by: $-\beta_1/(2 \times \beta_2)$, where $\beta_1$ is the coefficient for percent Latino and $\beta_2$ is the coefficient for percent Latino squared.
coverage may have important consequences for our understanding of public opinion on immigration. The variability in English- and Spanish-language media coverage of immigration may contribute to the differences in immigration attitudes between Anglos and Latinos. Additionally, the differences in English- and Spanish-language media coverage may explain some of the variability in Latino attitudes toward immigration. It is plausible that reliance on English-language media for information on immigration may reinforce negative perceptions of immigration and immigration-related issues. Furthermore, reliance on Spanish-language media outlets may serve to heighten the perceived salience of immigration as Spanish-language media outlets tend to offer a higher volume of coverage on this issue.

Third, this study offers one of the few comparative analyses of English- and Spanish-language news. Given the dramatic growth of the Latino population in recent decades and the corresponding explosion of Spanish-language media organizations in the United States (Rodriguez, 1999), it seems important to consider whether and how the news content produced by these organizations is distinct. Thus, this study serves as a stepping stone to gaining a better understanding of Spanish-language media and how it differs from mainstream media.

Finally, this study can naturally be extended by broadening the focus to include Spanish-language television news. Future research might consider whether and how Spanish-language television news coverage of immigration differs from mainstream media coverage of this topic. Because English-language television outlets typically face more competition in their markets than newspapers, in the case of television news we might expect even more distinct differences between Spanish-language and English-language news coverage of immigration.

REFERENCES


