Comparing News Coverage of Immigration by a Local Newspaper in the United States with a Local Newspaper in Mexico*

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Abstract

This is a comparative study of a local newspaper in Pennsylvania, USA, with a local newspaper in Mazatlan, Mexico, in terms of how the subject of immigration was covered during the final 10 weeks of the 2008 presidential campaign. Using a content analysis, the study attempted to capture data on a number of content items that were generated from a literature review of how immigration has been covered in the past by media in the US and in Mexico, and by English-speaking versus Spanish-speaking media. Among the more important findings, the study found that the US newspaper used the term "illegal" alongside the word "immigrant" less than was expected, and that the Mexican newspaper reported both on Mexican immigrants in the US, as well as US immigrants in Mexico, whereas the US newspaper only reported on immigrants in the US. The findings have long-term implications for new horizons of bi-lateral relations between the governments and peoples of both countries.

Keywords: Media Coverage, Migration, International Relations.

Resumen

Este es un estudio comparado de la cobertura del tema de la inmigración entre un periódico local en Pensilvana, Estados Unidos, y un periódico local en Mazatlán, México, durante las 10 últimas semanas de la campaña presidencial del 2008 en Norteamérica. Usando análisis de contenido, el estudio pretende recolectar datos en un número de categorías de contenido generados por una revisión de la literatura sobre cómo la inmigración ha sido cubierta en el pasad por medios en Estados Unidos y en México, y por medios anglo parlantes versus hispano parlantes. Entre los hallazgos más importantes, el estudio encontró que el término utilizado por el diario norteamericano "ilegal" es usado junto con el término "emigrante" menos de lo que se esperaba, y que el diario mexicano reportó tanto de los emigrantes mexicanos en Estados Unidos, así como los emigrantes americanos en México, mientras que el diario norteamericano solamente reportó de emigrantes en Estados Unidos. Los hallazgos tienen implicaciones a largo plazo para nuevos horizontes en las relaciones bilaterales entre los gobiernos y sociedades de ambos países.

Palabras clave: cobertura de medios, migración, relaciones internacionales.

1. Introduction

When it comes to bi-lateral relations between the United States and Mexico, one of the longest-running and most controversial issues has been immigration. For each of these two countries, the volume of immigrants crossing the border between them far surpasses the volume of immigrants they receive from other surrounding countries such as Canada or Guatemala. In the US, there are about 12 million Mexican immigrants (documented and undocumented combined), with approximately 400,000 crossing the border into the US every year (Sandoval, 2007). It is estimated that in Mexico, there are up to 1 million immigrants from the US, comprising roughly 1% of Mexico's total population (Davis, 2006).

The respective political and economic histories of these two countries have presented a bi-lateral relationship that is fundamentally built on large populations of each country living in the other country. Going back to 1835 when the then-Mexican state of Texas broke away from the Republic to declare independence, an armed conflict of the Mexican-American war ensued from 1846-1848. One consequence of the war, as stipulated by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, was the ceding of a vast swath of territory from Mexico to the US, including Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, California, and parts of Nevada, Colorado and Wyoming. As a result, millions of former Mexican nationals became residents of, and some eventually citizens of, the United States.

However, modern-day history has presented very different circumstances leading to immigration between the two countries. With the average Mexican laborer earning just over 21 dollars per day,[1] millions have sought a bet-

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[1] Levine, E., *La migración y los latinos en Estados Unidos: visiones y conexiones,* México, UNAM, 2008.

ter pay scale in the US working mostly in manual-labor jobs in agriculture, tourism (hotels and restaurants), and custodial service. Many of these workers have crossed the border illegally because of the expense and the protracted timeline and requirements involved in applying for a visa, which Mexicans must have in order to enter the US. Once Mexicans have found employment in the US, they often send between 200 and 300 dollars a month (Lozano, 2003) of their earnings back to their families in Mexico, ranking Mexico as the third most-active country (behind China and India) for income generated abroad and then sent back home.

The history of US immigrants moving to Mexico is quite different. Beginning mainly in the 1950s after the Korean War, prospective US retirees began seeking places to live in Mexico that offered lower costs for food, housing, and medical care, and a climate that is less extreme in terms of rain and cold temperatures. These retirees have since been joined in more recent times by younger US citizens seeking the same advantages of Mexico. Often, the search process for eventual US immigrants to Mexico begins as a vacation that then turns into a house-hunting exercise.

The strong connection between Mexico and the US that has been formed by the historical immigration between the two countries has been the subject of regular media coverage. For residents of each country who have never traveled to the other country or who have little firsthand experience with residents of the other country, the media coverage they are exposed to can have a profound impact on their perceptions of immigration. Particularly for similarly inclined politicians and policy makers who make decisions regarding bi-lateral relations between the two countries, media coverage of the issue of immigration has the potential to affect the laws that govern immigration between the two nations. Therefore, it is clear that as our two countries become more economically interdependent,

new horizons of media coverage and policy making will be broached, debated, and implemented.

This paper presents the results of a study that seeks to compare newspaper coverage of immigration by a local newspaper in the US (*The Pocono Record*) with a local newspaper in Mexico (*Noroeste*). The study was designed to cover a time period beginning at the end of the Republican convention until the election of President Obama in November of 2008. The general objective of the study was to determine how important, in the context of a national presidential campaign, the issue of immigration was, as it was portrayed in two local newspapers. The specific goal of the study was to determine how the news coverage differed or was similar between the two newspapers, in an effort to understand how public opinion is likely to be affected.

There are two factors that led to our assumption that the Mexican newspaper would robustly cover immigration in the context of the US presidential election and elections of other national, state and local officials. One factor is the historical ties that exist between the two countries resulting in migrations of Mexicans to the US, as well as Mexicans who became Americans when formerly Mexican territory was ceded to the US after the Mexican American War of 1846-1848 (see Shah, 2008; and Castles, 2004).[2] The second factor is the economic dependence of Mexico on the US, its greatest trading partner. In general, as the US economy goes, so goes the Mexican economy. The economic relationship between the two countries leads to regular coverage of US affairs in the Mexican media (McKenzie, 2006). Based on these two factors, therefore, it is our assumption that the US presidential election (and

[2]   Shah, Paromita, *National Immigration Project*, 2008, *http://www.nation alimmigrationproject.org/Press.html*; Castles, S., "The Factors that Make and Unmake Migration Policies", *International Migration Review*, 38(3), 2004, pp. 825-885.

concurrent Congressional elections) would be regularly covered not only by the US newspaper in this study, but also by the Mexican newspaper.

In the next section, we describe some background information on the two newspapers as well as the geographic areas they cover. Then we provide a review of literature of media coverage of immigration in Mexico and the US. After that, we describe the methodology that we used to collect our data and analyze it. Then, we present our analysis and discussion of the data. Finally, we close out the study with concluding remarks.

2. Background on the *Pocono* Record and *Noroeste*

The two newspapers chosen for this study, as well as the geographic areas they cover, present many similarities that have allowed us to conduct comparisons based on roughly equal parameters. Both newspapers are local/regional in their coverage, and both are considered to be the most important (if not the only) daily newspaper covering their respective geographies. The *Pocono Record* is based in Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, in the Pocono Mountain region, and covers a territory comprised mainly of three counties—Monroe, Pike, and Carbon. *Noroeste* is based in Culiacan and Mazatlan, Sinaloa, in the Pacific West region, and covers a territory comprised mainly of 18 counties. Both newspapers have their own reporting staffs, but also print stories from newswires, from syndicated services, and from syndicated columnists. And both newspapers have web pages that distribute their news stories.

The regions served by both newspapers have two fundamental similarities. First, both regions are heavily reliant on tourism. The Pocono Mountain region also has become a year-around destination for primarily urban residents from New York City and surrounding New Jersey suburbs, as well as Philadelphia. Tourism is the number 1 industry

in the Pocono Mountains, accounting for approximately 2.1 billion dollars of economic activity in the area (Carl Wilgus, Pocono Mountains Vacation Bureau; Longwoods International, 2007). The main attractions for the Pocono Mountains in the winter months include outdoor activities such as snow skiing and snowboarding, and in warmer months include hiking, boating, and camping. Other year-round activities include gambling, resort stays, and jazz music. The tourist industries in the Pocono Mountains have led to two kinds of immigration. One is by the urban US citizens who have vacationed in the region and have become attracted to lower-cost housing and taxes, and less-dense populations. The other type of immigrant has been foreign nationals living both in the US as well as outside of the US, who have been attracted to employment to serve the tourism industry. The only data available on immigrants living in Monroe County, one county out of several within the Pocono Region, comes from the 2000 Census and is therefore quite dated. These data show that in the year 2000, 5.8% of the population in Monroe County was comprised of immigrants, with Mexicans comprising .002% of the population—a population that is the second largest immigrant population after Puerto Ricans.

The Pacific West region of Sinaloa is centered in the coastal city of Mazatlan, which has become a tourist destination primarily for two sets of vacationers. One set includes US and Canadian nationals. The majority of these are retirees escaping cold-weather conditions during the months ranging from November through March. These vacationers often initially visit Mazatlan for a two-week to four-week stay, and then end up buying a condominium or house that they can live in for longer periods (typically 3-5 months) during future cold-weather months. During Winter months, approximately 150,000 thousand Americans come to stay in Mazatlán; many of these are "circular vacationers," in that they go to Mazatlan almost every year.

Approximately 5% of these vacationers end up retiring permanently in Mazatlan (Lizarraga, 2009); and 91% of foreign residents first came to Mazatlan as tourists. The second set of vacationers is Mexicans from neighboring cities of Culiacan (the capital city), Guadalajara, and Durango, who come to the beach during the summer months. Like the Poconos, Tourism is the number 1 industry in Mazatlan, and accounts for 9% of economic activity for the state of Sinaloa. The main attractions of Mazatlan include the beach, seafood, warm and sunny weather, friendly people, and resort activities.

3. Literature Review

The research on newspaper coverage of immigration is fairly scant. Therefore, what follows is a survey of best literature available that can be related to a comparative study of newspaper coverage of immigration. In terms of worldwide trends in media coverage of immigration, Shah's (2008) study found that in the last 50 years, immigration has almost doubled; and that 20% of immigrants worldwide live in the US, making up 13% of its population. Shah examined literature on immigration, and did a content analysis of three UK newspapers, including one that is right-wing, one that is center, and one that is left-wing. His results confirmed conclusions in the literature that press coverage of immigration is dominated by political opinions and press opinions, and not by NGOs or immigrants; that causes of immigration (such as global inequity, conflict, or poverty) are rarely focused on; and that negative effects of immigration are instead reported (such as crime, brain drain, usurping social services, and invasion).

Castles'[3] study took a look at policies that governments put into place to deal with such worldwide immigration

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3   *Cit.*, preview.

trends. He debunks the common theory that immigration is derived from one-sided market-condition models, which seek to explain migration as a process where immigrants travel to another country to seek work. He cites undocumented Mexicans in the US as an example of how the host country has been reluctant to pass immigration policies that would take workers out of a vital industry (agriculture) and drive prices upwards. He finds that immigration is influenced more by non-migration policies than by immigration policies. In other words, policies that have been designed to curtail immigration or limit it to certain economic or ethnic groups have been ineffective, and have often had the opposite effect. He also makes note that despite measures adopted by countries to control migration, the American public generally believes that immigration is out of control. This notation becomes an important piece later in this study for understanding how American newspaper readers respond to newspaper stories about immigration.

Branton and Dunaway (2007) compared news coverage of immigration in California English-language newspapers versus California Spanish-language newspapers. The researchers sought to test an economic demand-based model for generating news coverage, or a model in which newspaper organizations try to cater news content to existing preferences of their newspaper audiences, in the hopes that it will contribute to greater newspaper sales and profitability. Based on this assumption, the researchers found in favor of the following hypotheses: that the Spanish-language newspapers carried far more stories on immigration than the English-language newspapers; that the Spanish-language newspapers focused less on "illegal" immigration than the English-language newspapers; and that the Spanish-language newspapers did not cover immigration with as much of a negative slant as the English-language newspapers.

In two other related studies, Branton and Dunaway (2009) examined news coverage in California newspapers to determine if proximity to the border leads both to greater coverage and more negative coverage, while Zhang (2004) studied the coverage of immigration in a selection of US newspapers. Branton and Dunaway found that corporate-owned newspapers gave more coverage to immigration, and that the coverage was more negative, often focusing on a "crime script" depicting Latino immigrants as being associated with, or responsible for, drug trafficking, human trafficking, and other crimes. Branton and Dunaway found that the further away from the border a newspaper is, the less negative the coverage of immigration. Meanwhile, Zhang found that common themes in US newspaper coverage of immigration are "frustration" and "confrontation".

In terms of immigration specifically between Mexico and US, Massey and Capoferro's study (2004) found that standard sources of data —including census, registration systems, and specialized surveys— on migration are flawed and have produced a spurious understanding of immigrants in the US. The main set of problems with the methodology of these standard sources of data has to do with posing questions to immigrants without any baseline knowledge about them before they entered the US, then posing questions only to immigrants that are tracked according to fixed domiciles, then posing questions about their legality that end up scaring them away from answering truthfully. Massey and Capoferro argue that the "ethnosurvey" —a combined multilevel quantitative (survey) and qualitative (anthropological) instrument —is a more accurate tool for assessing Mexican immigrants in the US. The ethnosurvey relies heavily on compiling life histories of respondents. Massey and Capoferro's data indicate the following about Mexican immigrants: the number of Mexicans in the US increased 450% between 1980 and 2000; that Mexican immigrants constitute 60% of all legal immi-

grants from Latin America; and that 50% of immigrants had fewer than 6 years of schooling. These attributes ostensibly feed in to perceptions about Mexicans as automatically illegal and uneducated (Craig, 2008), which influence both the newspaper coverage of Mexicans and the reactions of readers to stories about Mexican immigrants.

McKenzie's book, *Comparing Media from Around the World* (2006),[4] compared news reporting on US affairs by Mexican media, with news reporting on Mexican affairs by US media. US media tend to provide scant coverage of Mexican affairs in comparison to other countries. The US coverage of Mexico that does exist tends to focus on the illegality of immigration to the US, and on criminal (usually drug-related) activity within Mexico. In comparison, Mexican media cover US affairs on an almost daily basis. The main subjects that are covered include US politics, the US economy, and US immigration policy towards Mexicans.

Akdenizli's study (2007) examined US newspaper coverage for the year 2007. He found that immigration coverage was inconsistent and episodic—though it was the fourth biggest story overall for 2007. On average, immigration stories account for about 2% of all news stories. But during the period of May 17-Jun2 28, when Congress was considering an immigration reform bill that eventually failed, immigration coverage spiked to 8% of all news coverage. Akdenizli concludes that immigration receives more coverage when it is political. Akdenizli found that newspaper coverage of immigration is fairly continuous but that when comparing English-language newspapers to Spanish-language newspapers, there are more immigration stories in English-language newspapers but they are not as prominent (they are not on the front pages). A relevant finding

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4 Mckenzie, R., *Comparing Media from Around the World*, Boston, Allyn and Bacon, 2006.

to this study is that smaller newspapers often devote their own staff to covering immigration.

In summary, the literature review reveals several themes of importance to a comparative study on Mexican and US newspaper coverage of immigration. Theme 1 is that immigration at an international level has greatly accelerated in the last 50 years. Theme 2 is that historical relationship between the US and Mexico has led to a sizable population of Mexicans living in the US, with a newer trend of American retirees relocating to Mexico. Theme 3 is that coverage of immigration in English-language newspapers tends to focus more on the illegality of immigration than Spanish-language newspapers. And Theme 4 is that US media provide minimal and usually negative coverage of Mexican affairs, while Mexican media provide frequent and wide-ranging coverage of US affairs.

4. Methodology

This study uses the methodology of a basic and descriptive content-analysis to compare the US newspaper's coverage of immigration with the Mexican newspaper's coverage during a national campaign in the US. Krippendorf[5] discusses how content analysis should categorize data according to a system that breaks the data down into discrete variables. The design of the content-analysis methodology in this study consists of drawing on the literature to develop key words, themes, potential journalistic leanings, and other discrete data to look for and interpret from the newspaper coverage. Because this is primarily a descriptive study drawing on a relatively small sample of data, simple percentages are used to express the comparisons.

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[5] Krippendorff, Klaus, *Content Analysis: an Introduction to Its Methodology,* 2nd edition. Thousand Oalks, Sage Publications, 2004.

When it came time to code the data, the researchers worked independently according to mutually agreed-upon definitions of categories of information presented below. After the data were coded, the researchers met to compare data and to resolve any discrepancies in the placement of newspaper data or in the interpretations of whether a selection of newspaper copy represented data to be collected for the study.

The interpretations of data are informed by two main theoretical backgrounds. One is the theories and findings raised in the literature review. The other is the background of the researchers. The Mexican researcher is a Professor of Sociology at a Mexican university. He is also a weekly columnist for *Noroeste*. He is also the ombudsman for *Noroeste*—a position responsible for resolving differences between writers and readers; and a position that requires impeccable integrity as an impartial judge. As such he is able to offer a unique and detached perspective on trends in the coverage of immigration. The US researcher is a Professor of Communication Studies at a US university. He is also a teacher of journalism. And he has written columns for the *Record* in the Opinion section. As such he is able to offer a perspective on the *Record* that contextualizes it within the tradition of American journalism.

Below are the variables that were generated from the literature review and then analyzed for this study:

1. The total number of articles on immigration. This variable will present a total picture of the volume of each newspaper's coverage of immigration. The assumption is that because of the context of presidential and Congressional elections, the total number of immigration-related articles would be high—i.e. in the neighborhood of 70 articles, or 1 article per day across a period of 10 weeks.

2. The number of immigration-related articles per week. Similar to the variable above, this variable will present the frequency of each newspaper's coverage of immigration. The expectation is that because of the presidential election, articles on immigration would appear every day or every other day.

3. Placement of immigration-related articles. This variable is defined as where the immigration articles are placed in the sections of the newspapers. The sections were divided into "front page," "opinion pages," and "other" (local, sports, etc.). These three sub-categories will present the emphasis of each newspapers' coverage of immigration. Stories appearing on the front page will indicate national and more factual coverage. Stories appearing in the opinion pages will indicate opinionated coverage. And stories in other sections will indicate local coverage that can either be mostly factual or mostly opinionated. The expectation is that the majority of articles would appear on the front pages because of the context of a national presidential election.

4. Number of immigration-related articles covering politics. This variable was defined as whether the gist of the immigration-related story was on policies, positions, or statements by elected or appointed officials serving in government. The expectation is that the majority of articles would have a political focus, given the context of a presidential election, and Congressional elections.

5. Number of immigration-related articles on non-political coverage. This variable is designed as a catch-all variable for any coverage in immigration-related articles that is not political. The main purpose of collecting this variable is to provide another means of assessing the expectation that political coverage would be the predominant coverage in each newspaper. Another

purpose, however, was to identify additional areas of coverage that the literature review did not predict.

6. Topics of immigration-related articles. This variable is defined as the gist of the immigration-related article. The gist is identified either by the headline of the article, or by the overall theme of the article, as determined by the researchers. In order to coordinate the researchers' identification of themes, the researchers focused on themes that took up the most space in the given article, and themes that came early in the given article. Owing to Branton and Dunaway's (2007) research, the expectation was that immigration-related articles in the *Record* would have more of a negative focus than articles in *Noroeste*.

7. Identification of Ethnicity/Nationality in immigration-related articles. This variable is designed to capture the ethnicity's that are covered the most versus the least in immigration-related articles in both newspapers. Owing to the economic and historical ties between both countries identified earlier, the expectation is that Americans would be covered more than any other nationality in the Mexican newspaper, and Mexicans wwould be covered more than any other Ethnicity/Nationality in the US newspaper.

8. Sources cited in immigration-related articles. This variable is defined as any sources of information cited in immigration-related articles. After these data are collected, the sources can then be grouped into broader categories that are meant to be helpful at understanding the type of institution or person in terms of expertise that has been consulted to write the story. This information would indicate how first-hand the reporting is, and how homogenous the sources of information are if they are external to the newspapers.

9. Number of stories about crime versus stories not about crime in immigration-related articles. This variable is designed to capture any immigration-related coverage that reports on events that have been determined to be criminal by a court of law, or events that have potential criminality as determined by police. Owing to Shah's study,[6] the expectation is that stories that are not political would have a negative tilt to them involving criminal activity related to immigrants. Thus, stories that were categorized for this variable include any allegations of criminal activity on the part of immigrants.

10. Number of mentions of "immigrant" as a stand-alone word versus a word preceded by adjectives. The purpose of studying this variable is to determine whether immigrants are depicted in a neutral way versus whether they are in effect stigmatized by negative adjectives. The expectation is that, owing to Branton and Dunaway's study,[7] there would be more negative adjectives (e.g. "illegal immigrant") used in the American newspaper than the Mexican newspaper.

5. Findings and Discussion

What now follows is a comparison of the categories of news identified above. In terms of the total number of articles on immigration, the coverage differed greatly between the two newspapers. The *Record* printed 18 articles across a 10-week period, while *Noroeste* printed more than twice as many—38 articles. In terms of the frequency of articles printed per week, the *Record* was more consistent than

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6 Shah, Paromita, *cit.*, note 2.

7 Dunaway, J. and Branton, R., "Targeting Audiences: Media Attributes and Biased Coverage of Immigration", in Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Southern Political Science Association, Hotel InterContinental, New Orleans, LA Online, 2007. <Not Available>. 2009-02-04 from *http://www.al laca-demic.com/meta/p142860_index.html.*

Noroeste, printing at least one article on immigration in 9 out of 10 weeks; in 8 out of the 10 weeks, the *Record* printed 0-3 articles per week. Though *Noroeste* also printed articles on immigration 9 out of 10 weeks, the number of articles per week varied from a low of 1, to a high of 11, and various numbers in between during other weeks.

This finding supports Branton and Dunaway's[8] study of an "economic-demand" model for immigration news, in that Spanish-language newspapers cover more immigration news than English-language newspapers in order to cater to a greater audience interest. This finding also supports Branton and Dunaway's[9] study that the farther away from the border that a media market is, the less likely it will be for immigration to be covered. Since *Noroeste* in Mazatlan, Sinaloa is some 500 miles from the US border, while the *Record* in Stroudsburg is some 2500 miles from the Mexican border, according to Branton and Dunaway's study we would expect to find more stories on immigration in *Noreste*.

In terms of the placement of articles, there was a fair amount of similarity between the two newspapers. Both newspapers only printed 1 story on immigration on their front pages. However, the *Record* printed 5 articles in the opinion pages section, versus 18 other articles in other sections, while *Noroeste* printed 9 articles in the opinion-pages section, versus 23 articles in other sections. This difference highlights that, proportion-wise, more of the articles on immigration in the *Record* were authored by individual citizens or by syndicated writers offering opinions on immigration, whereas in *Noroeste*, proportion-wise, more articles were written as feature stories or sports sto-

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8   *Cit.*, preview.

9   Branton, R. and Dunaway, J. "Geographic Media Agenda Setting: Spatial Proximity to the US-Mexico Border and Newspaper Coverage of Immigration Issues", *Political Research Quarterly*, Forthcoming, 2009.

ries than articles written as opinions. One theory for this difference follows Shah's (2008) research—namely, that for Americans, the subject of immigration triggers almost an automatic necessity to take a stance on the rightness or wrongness of certain aspects of immigration policies and trends, while for Mexicans, there is a more of an interest in following the activities of immigrants and policies towards immigrants. This theory is based on the assumption that, generally speaking, Americans are concerned about immigrants coming to the US because of perceptions documented by Branton and Dunaway (2007) that Latino immigrants bring crime and take American jobs, whereas Mexicans generally perceive of North American immigrants coming to Mexico as bringing wealth to the country and creating more jobs for Mexicans.

In terms of the number of articles covering politics related to immigration, the *Record* printed only 6 articles while *Noroeste* printed 23 articles. This finding was surprising, given the context of the newspaper coverage occurring during the final weeks of a US Presidential campaign. One theory for the lack of articles on immigration politics in the *Record* is in line with Akdenizli's[10] research finding that coverage of immigration by American media is episodic and inconsistent. In American politics, immigration traditionally has been an issue that is more hotly debated in election primaries. But once each political party has selected a nominee, the primary focus of domestic policy in a campaign platform becomes the economy, while the primary focus of foreign policy becomes national security. A theory for the more frequent coverage of immigration in *Noroeste*, is that since the passing of the United States Immigration Reform and Control Act in 1986—which granted amnesty

10   Akdenizli, B., "News Coverage of Immigration 2007: A Political Story, Not an Issue, Covered Episodically", 2007. *http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2008/~/media/Files/rc/reports/2008/0925_immigration_dionne/0925_immigration_banu.pdf*.

to certain illegal immigrants but also prohibited employers from knowingly hiring illegal immigrants—news coverage of Mexican immigrants increased in Mexican media. At the same time, the importance of remittances from Mexican nationals grew so much that this money became the second leading source of currency for Mexico at the beginning of the 21st century. Subsequently, the number one issue in the coverage of the US has been migration, though as of late the subject of drugs has drawn even with immigration. In this context, *Noroeste*, ostensibly gives space and frequency to news involving Mexican immigrants. For the specific period of our study, *Noroeste* conceivably focused news on Mexican immigrants because it was expected that the presidential candidates were going to promise laws and policies that would benefit Mexican immigrants.

In terms of the general topics of articles in the two newspapers, one theme dominated coverage in the *Record*, and a different theme dominated coverage in *Noroeste*. In the *Record*, almost every article (14 out of 18 articles) dealt with government policies on immigration. Several articles highlighted the Mayor of Hazelton's proposal of local ordinances to punish landlords who rented to illegal immigrants or homeowners who sold homes to illegal immigrants. During the time period in which this study was conducted, Barletta, a Republican, was running for a federal House Representative seat, and his campaign platform prominently featured his positions on immigration. The other articles in the *Record* included Presidential candidate John McCain having a hard time winning over Hispanic voters; the plight of Latin American immigrants lap dancing to earn extra money; police endorsing candidate Barletta because of his immigration stances; and Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan addressing immigration in a speech. Aside from the article on Hispanic women lap dancing for money, there were no articles that delved into immigration from an immigrants' point of view. Nor did any articles focus exclu-

sively on Mexican immigrants. And strikingly, the *Record* did not carry any articles on American immigrants in other countries. All articles in the *Record* dealt with immigrants in the US.

In *Noroeste*, roughly 80% of the articles dealt with living and working conditions of Mexican immigrants. Examples included: an article on police raids of Mexicans in the USA and human rights; discrimination against Mexican immigrants in the USA; Hispanic voting blocks in the US elections; Mexican students in the USA; and insecurity felt by Mexican immigrants in the USA. Articles in *Noroeste* covered US immigrants in Mexico, as well as Mexican immigrants in the US.

The differences between the two newspapers' coverage of immigration follows Akdenizli's[11] research showing immigration receives more news coverage in US media when the news item involves politics. In the US, the basis for this orientation is a concern that illegal immigrants are taking jobs that US nationals might otherwise have, and that illegal immigrants are undesirable because of perceptions that they commit more crimes and place inappropriate stress on social services. Whereas in Mexico, the predominant orientation is a concern for the treatment of Mexican immigrants in particular, and immigrants in general, by citizens and agencies in the US. Thus, the *Record* coverage seems to focus more on immigration policy, while *Noroeste*'s coverage seems to focus more on human rights of immigrants, regardless of whether the immigrants are legal or illegal immigrants.

In terms of ethnicities or nationalities identified by the coverage of both newspapers, more countries were mentioned in the *Record*, but *Noroeste* spread its mentions more evenly. In the *Record*, 11 ethnicities/nationalities were mentioned, while in *Noroeste* only 8 ethnicities/na-

11 Akdenizli, B., *cit.*, preview.

tionalities were mentioned. However, the *Record* identified Mexicans 7 times across all articles on immigration, Latin Americans 2 times, and Columbians 2 times. All other ethnicities/nationalities that were mentioned in the *Record* (Kenyan, Hondurans, Albanians, Yugoslavians, Jamaican, Ecuadorans, Dominican Republicans) were only mentioned once. Of the 18 mentions of ethnicities/nationalities in the *Record*, 15 of the mentions were Hispanic peoples. In *Noroeste*, Mexicans were mentioned 15 times, followed by Americans 12 times, followed by Hispanics 9 times, followed by Cubans 3 times, and Salvadorans 2 times. Other ethnicities mentioned —but only once— included British and Chinese.

This finding supports Akdenizli's conclusion that coverage of immigration in American media is sporadic. The finding also lends support to Castles'[12] and Zhang's (2004)[13] thesis that public opinion coalesces around a concern that immigration is out of control, despite relatively strong governmental measures to regulate immigration. Support of this thesis is borne out by the more even split between mentioning Mexicans and Americans in *Noroeste* articles versus the *Record*'s exclusive focus on immigrants in the US, absent any coverage of American immigrants in other countries. The finding is surprising, however, from the point of view that though Puerto Ricans comprise the largest population of immigrants in Monroe county, Mexican immigrants are mentioned far more than Puerto Rican immigrants. This could be due to an American media convention not to classify Puerto Ricans as immigrants because Puerto Rico is a commonwealth territory of the US.

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12   Castles, S., "The Factors that Make and Unmake Migration Policies", *cit.*, note 2.

13   Zhang, Jing. *U.S. newspaper coverage of immigration in 2004: a content analysis*, Master's thesis, Texas A&M University, 2005. Available electronically from *http://handle.tamu.edu/1969* , 1/2464.

In terms of sources cited in the immigration articles in each newspaper, there were some major differences. In the *Record*, most of the sources cited are public figures and officials. Examples included: candidate Lou Barletta; a US Immigrants and Customs Enforcement spokesperson; Mexican consulates in California and Chicago; the US Border Patrol; the Director of the University of California; San Diego Center for Comparative Immigration Studies; and the US Immigration Board of Appeals. Only two syndicated columnists were sourced in the *Record* by virtue of their stand-alone columns. Similarly, only two citizens were sourced in the *Record*, by virtue of their letters to the editor. And though 6 immigrants were sourced in the Pocono *Record*, all of these were in the article on lap dancing by Hispanic immigrants.

In *Noroeste*, sources were roughly split between public figures and syndicated columnists. Public figures that were sourced include Barack Obama; John McCain; Mexican President Felipe Calderon; the US Immigration Service; the International Organization of Migration; the National institute of Migration; the Mexican Police Academy; the Arizona Governor; the New Mexico Governor; a Mexican University professor; and a Mexican university Ph.D. student. Columnists that were sourced included 6 columnists from *Noroeste* and 2 from the Mexico City newspaper *Universal*. In addition to these sources, four Mexican immigrants living in the USA were also sourced.

This finding support's Shah's[14] research conclusion that press coverage of immigration in the US is biased towards sourcing political opinions and press opinions, rather than average citizens. The finding also draws us back to Akdenizli's research[15] referred to already in this discussion that stories on immigration in US media tend to be framed

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14   Shah, Paromita, *cit.*, note 2.
15   Akdenizli, B., *cit.*, note 8.

within a political context. Thus, when immigration is covered in the *Record*, it typically is a result of being covered by a newswire story carried on the *Record*, or, in the case of the local House Representative election, as a result of covering the two candidates and their policy positions. This finding also supports the theory advanced by Massey and Copoferro (2004) that immigrants living in the US (in this case, Monroe County, Pennsylvania) would be unlikely to be sourced in a *Record* article because of the language-translation problems, and because of a fear that if they were in the US illegally, they could be deported by being identified in a newspaper article.

In terms of stories about crime versus stories not about crime, the newspapers had close parity. Most of the stories about immigration in both newspapers were not about crime. In *Noroeste*, 83% of the stories did not involve criminal allegations, while in the *Record*, 77% of stories did not involve criminal allegations. This finding surprisingly did not support Branton and Dunaway's (2009) "crime script" thesis: that Latino immigrants in particular are depicted in the US media as being responsible for drug trafficking, human trafficking, and other crimes. The finding that there is parity between the two newspapers in terms of crime coverage is also somewhat surprising, because historically, US English-language media coverage of immigration has been more negative and has included potential criminal wrongdoing in comparison with Mexican media coverage of immigration (Branton and Dunaway, 2007). A theory of explanation for this unexpected finding is that the *Record*'s news coverage during the period of this study was either an anomaly or contradicts the thesis that US media are more neutral in the coverage of negative immigrant news than has previously been concluded.

In terms of the number of mentions of "immigrant" as a stand alone word, versus a word accompanied by adjectives, some themes surfaced in the comparisons that

showed major differences between the two newspapers. For *Noroeste*, the most common mention of the word immigrant or immigration also included the adjective "illegal." Of 42 mentions of the word immigrant, 22 of those mentions included the word "illegal." Only on 7 mentions of the word immigrant or immigration did the word stand alone. Other designations included immigrant "officials" (2 mentions), "judge" (2 mentions), and "neighborhoods," "women," "workers," and "program" (1 mention each). For the *Record*, of the 52 mentions of "immigrant," the word immigrant was mentioned as a stand-alone term 26 times, by far the largest number of mentions. Use of the adjective "illegal" occurred in 7 mentions. Other mentions included "women" (3 mentions), "program" (3 mentions), "workers" (2 mentions), "judge" (2 mentions), and "law." Thus, for *Noroeste*, the predominant theme was to associate the word immigrant with the word illegal, while for the *Record*, the predominant theme was to associate the word immigrant with more value-neutral adjectives. This finding contradicts the expectation, set up by the literature review, that US media coverage would more commonly depict immigrants as illegal than *Noroeste*. One explanation for Noreste's liberal use of the term "illegal" is that Mexico never underwent the transformation that the US underwent in the 1970s through Chicano movement wherein aspirations towards "politically correct" speech began to correct undesirable descriptors of human beings such as "illegal." As a result, the word "illegal" does not have the demeaning punch that it has for many in the US.

In terms of the number of stories accompanied by a photograph, the *Record* was far more visual than *Noroeste*. While the *Record* printed 10 stories that also included photos, *Noroeste* only printed 4 stories with photographs. The *Record*'s photographs included a photo of Barack Obama's Aunt; an immigrant; police officers endorsing candidate Lou Barletta: Lou Barletta; two immigrants getting a tem-

porary stay from deportation; candidates Lou Barletta and Paul Kanjorski; campaign signs supporting John McCain; and a lap dancer. *Noroeste*'s photographs included Barack Obama; people voting; John McCain; and Bill Richardson. The disparity in photographs can be explained as follows. Since most of the coverage of immigration, by both newspapers, focused on immigrants in the US, the US newspaper reporters had greater opportunity to snap photos because the news events took place in close proximity to where the *Record* is located.

In terms of policy positions advocated, the coverage in the *Record* was more disapproving of immigration, while *Noroeste* was more empathetic towards immigrants. The positions advocated in the *Record* included: Barletta's crackdown on immigration is good; if Barletta's policities against illegal immigration had been followed, the mortgage crisis could have been avoided; Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi's proposal for a tax on the stock markets will wrongly help illegal immigrants; the GOP panders to its base with anti-immigrant sentiment; and local county commissioners should not have supported a tax shelter for a business that employed illegal immigrants. *Noroeste*'s policy positions were much fewer and more encouraging: Latino political opinion is important to the election; the government of Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano is helping immigrants; Barack Obama favors human rights for immigrants; and John McCain and Barack Obama vie for Hispanic votes. The difference in the more disapproving policy positions covered in the *Record* versus the sympathetic policy positions in *Noroeste* is explainable according to Shah's (2008) research, which concluded that Western English-language media default to opinions by officials, which, when reflective of public opinion that perceives of immigration as out of control, tends to emphasize the negatives of immigration trends—such as crime, usurping social services, and cultural invasion (Simon, 1993). Thus

US news reports tend to focus disapprovingly on the illegality of immigrants and any policies that tend to reaffirm the illegality. So, even though as we discovered earlier, not many stories in the *Record* actually identified immigrants as illegal, the coverage still implies that illegality is taking place by virtue of immigrants —especially Mexican immigrants— living in the US. In *Noroeste*, by contrast, the policy positions that were reported seemed to contain a hopeful tone that immigrants were gaining clout in the political process —even though, as we earlier discovered, the vast majority of stories in *Noroeste* associated the word "illegal" with the word "immigrant"—. This is explained by the earlier thesis that Mexican media tend to focus more on the human rights of immigrants, and on the hopeful possibility that policies geared to immigration reform will provide for an increase in legalizing Mexican immigrants.

Finally, in terms of the number of newswire stories versus non-newswire stories versus syndicated stories, two themes surfaced. One theme was that more than half of the stories (21) printed in *Noreste* were extracted from either the primary Mexican newswire (18 stories from Notimex), or from the primary US newswire (3 stories from Associated Press). In contrast, the *Record* did not print any stories from any newswire other than Associated Press (9 stories). The second theme was that both newspapers sourced roughly half of the stories to newspaper staff, and half to newswires. One smaller difference was that in *Noroeste*, of the stories that were sourced to newspaper staff, 17 were sourced to *Noroeste* staff, and 5 were sourced to Universal (a Mexico City newspaper) staff. This finding is in line with McKenzie's work, which showed that American media tend to be more parochial than Mexican media by generating the bulk of media content from within the US, whereas Mexican media import media content from outside of Mexico to go along with Mexican-generated content. The perceived danger with parochial media content

in the US is a framing of international issues such as immigration from a exclusively nationalistic point of view. The perceived danger from Mexico importing too much media content is a subjugation of Mexican culture to US culture.

6. Conclusion

In this final section, we draw conclusions about differences in media coverage of immigration between the US and Mexico, and about the study itself. First, in regards to the study, because the sample size of stories was relatively small, and because the data were presented in terms of basic descriptive differences, we do not claim that our study is necessarily representative of US newspapers or Mexican newspapers, or that the findings are statistically significant. However, as Krippendorf points out, the lack of countable data within a category of media content can provide important information also, because it points to mechanisms within an organizational structure that work against the manifestation of that data. Therefore, taken within the snapshot of the articles on immigration that were printed by the *Record* and *Noroeste* during the 10-week period of a presidential election, the content is real and the interpretations, based on the literature review and the researcher's experiences with both newspapers, are still valid. Nevertheless, a larger sample size of articles, taken during a time in which policymakers are actively considering immigration legislation, would provide much greater insight into the application of previous research findings on media coverage of immigration. Replicating this study by selecting a newspaper from a state that borders Mexico (e.g. Arizona) might prove more fruitful and relevant in this regard.

In terms of the actual findings of this study, there are two major implications. One implication is related to the absence of regular immigration coverage in the US news-

paper during an intensified period of campaigning during a national election cycle. The absence of regular coverage in the US newspaper fails to provide a badly needed layer of background information on the very basics of immigration—such as how many immigrants are living in a given area; how many are illegal; and what contributions they are making to the community other than taking jobs, committing crimes, and leaning on public services. This information is critical to a nuanced understanding of the impact of immigration on a domestic culture. Similarly, this implication also speaks to an apparent advocacy-journalism approach in Mexican media, which remains hopeful in its outlook that immigrants will receive legal status and will have their living and working conditions improved. Such an outlook can result in an automatic disappointment with the US capacity for formulating immigration policy. This outlook can also continue to encourage illegal Mexican migration to the US.

A second implication is the dichotomy that emerged in the use and the non-use of the word "illegal" alongside the word "immigrant." If it is the case that American media do not associate the word immigrant with illegality as much as is expected, then opinion and policy makers should provide more balanced public statements that focus less on the negatives of immigration, and more on the contributions of immigrants. This conceivably would impact media coverage in such a way as to create a public perception that does not automatically perceive of immigration as something to be concerned about. Such concerns, while still valid, would then be couched within a wider swath of knowledge that some aspects of immigration are productive to the domestic culture. Similarly, American media would do a greater service to understanding immigration if it sourced more immigrants and common citizens in the published media content. If it is the case that Mexican media associate the word "illegal" with immigrant more than

is in concert with the content of the news stories (content that may be discussing human rights rather than illegality), then increasing the negative impacts of immigration on a foreign culture would have provided a more realistic understanding of the problems that immigration is causing the US. If the media in both countries are able to balance their news coverage on the respective areas discussed in this paragraph, then public perceptions of bi-lateral relations would be less reactive and disappointing, and more introspective and philosophical—traits that foster more reasoned discourse for new horizons of long-term bi-lateral relations between the US and Mexico, and ultimately between Americans and Mexicans living in the US, as well as Mexicans and Americans living in Mexico.

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