Bad Hombres? How News Depictions of Latinos as Criminals Influence Public Opinion on Immigration

by

Morgan Cullen

Advised by: Nicholas A. Valentino

The Department of Political Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree with honors
of Bachelor of Arts
The University of Michigan
March 2017

BAD HOMBRES?

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

These past two years were filled with immense learning, continuous growth, and seemingly insurmountable challenges. It is the result of those mentioned below and countless others who turned these apparent impossibilities into concrete actualities.

First, I express sincere gratitude to the Gerstein Family for providing research funding that transformed a theoretical set of ideas into a real project. Your generosity will continue to enable young scholars, like myself, to realize their research goals.

It has been a privilege to receive guidance from some of the many distinguished scholars from the University of Michigan. Thank you to Fabian Neuner, Professor Donald Kinder, Professor Mariah Zeisberg, and Professor Mika LaVaque-Manty for their insight and continuous support.

Thank you to my advisor, Professor Nicholas A. Valentino, for teaching me what students learn in the classroom extends far beyond a final exam. I am eternally grateful I found myself in his classroom so early in my undergraduate career and he agreed to work with me. His encouragement—like the knowledge he shared with me—will also extend far beyond this experience.

Lastly, thank you to my incredible friends, family, and God who provided the necessary strength and love to complete this project.

Abstract

_____

Although immigrants are among the least crime-prone groups in the United States,

public opposition to immigration seems linked to the misperception that immigrants

place native communities at risk of crime and drugs. Where do such misperceptions

come from? Previous research suggests there is a cognitive association between Latinos

and immigration driven by depictions in the news. I explore the possibility that Latinos

are also associated with crime in the minds of many citizens, and that association leads

to the false assumption that immigrants are also crime prone. I perform a content

analysis and a controlled experiment to examine the influence of news coverage of crime

featuring Latinos on public opinion about immigration. My results suggest that the link

between Latinos and crime probably is not forged in biased news coverage. Further,

exposure to _any_ crime news leads to increased opposition to immigration, regardless of

whether the perpetrator is Latino or white. Finally, the effect of exposure to crime news

on opposition to immigration is largest among respondents from states with few

Latinos. In the conclusion I discuss the possibility that the linkage between immigrants

and crime might be forged much more directly by strategic politicians who are unafraid

to traffic false information for political benefit.

_____

Introduction and Literature Review

Immigrants are less prone to violence and crime than native U.S. citizens regardless of age, socioeconomic status, education, and income (Ewing, Martínez, & Rumbaut, 2015). This is surprising given their relative poverty, since there is a powerful negative association between income and crime in general. However, public concern about immigration in the United States seems to be driven by a misperception that immigrants are more likely to commit crime (especially involving drugs and violence) compared to natives. Where do such misperceptions come from? This thesis explores the possibility that racial biases in news coverage about crime cultivate the false impression that immigrant crime rates are higher than they are in reality. Since the public's dominant schema for immigrants is a working-class Latino, crime news that references Latinos may prime negative attitudes about immigrants even when the perpetrator's immigrant status is not mentioned. If this is the case, exposure to typical news coverage about crime might heighten concerns about immigration, generating stronger opposition to inclusive immigration policies. To explore these hypotheses I use content analyses and a controlled experiment.

My results suggest the puzzle is probably not simply a function of biases in the news. It is also possible that the linkage between immigration and crime may be propagated more directly by elected officials. Strategic politicians may traffic false information for political gain. It is important to note that even when political leaders accurately present the connection between immigrants and

crime, routine news effects continue to operate among the public. These two forces could work in tandem to shape public political behavior. I discuss this possibility in the conclusion.

Drivers of Public Opinion on Immigration in the United States

Immigration is an increasingly popular topic in United States political discourse. News discussion of immigration emphasizes the potential economic and cultural damage accepting new immigrants will cause for the United States, as opposed to the economic benefits of introducing more low-wage workers to stimulate economic activity (Valentino, Brader, & Jardina, 2013).

There are three primary explanations for the public's opposition to immigration. The first is the potential economic burden immigrants place on the United States. During periods of national economic distress, support for immigration typically decreases (Espenshade & Calhoun, 1993; Gimpel, Berns, & Edwards, 1999). There is also some evidence suggesting personal economic troubles are correlated with opposition to immigration (Abowd & Freeman, 1991; Borjas & Freeman, 1992). Some findings indicate personal economic situations play a smaller role in forming opinions about immigration compared to perceptions of the state of the national economy, worries about taxes, and general opinions about major immigrant groups such as Hispanics and Asians (Citrin, Green, Muste, & Wong, 1997).

A second factor shown to influence opposition to immigration is ethnocentrism— the preference for one's own culture and ethnic group relative to

others. Kinder and Kam (2009) find a positive correlation between ethnocentrism and support for stringent immigration policies among Americans in the 1990s. However, they do not find significant differences in support for more restrictive immigration policies for some minority groups compared to others.

A third factor shown to influence public opinion on immigration is the misperception that immigrants are more likely to commit crime than those native to the United States. A recent study of the 2010 Census' American Community Survey indicated about 1.6 percent of immigrant males (the Census does not state legal status) between 18 and 39 years of age were incarcerated compared to the 3.3 percent of the male, native-born population in the same age group. This study also found that the incarceration rates among the section of the population who comprise much of the undocumented immigrant population in the United States—young, less educated Salvadoran, Guatemalan, and Mexican men—to be significantly lower than incarceration rates among young, native-born, men without high-school diplomas. More specifically, the incarceration rate for 18 to 29 year old Mexican men in 2010 was 2.8 percent compared to 10.7 percent incarceration rate among 18 to 29 year old native United States men (Ewing, Martínez, & Rumbaut, 2015). Immigrants are also underrepresented in California prisons relative to their share of the population (Butcher & Phiel, 2008). Census data and numerous empirical studies reveal incarceration rates of young men for every ethnic group are lowest for immigrants. This remains true even among the

least educated as well as those who make up the majority of the undocumented immigrant population—Mexicans, Salvadorans, and Guatemalans as referenced above (Rumbaut, 2008). According to an article published by Northwestern University Professor Jörg Spenkuch, "there's essentially no correlation between immigrants and violent crime" (Spenkuch, 2014).

Despite all these facts, public perception of the size of the undocumented immigrant population in the United States is positively associated with perception of undocumented immigrants as criminal threats (Wang, 2012). Some have therefore suggested that the American public's perception that immigrants are crime prone is driven by stereotypic depictions of immigrants as criminals in the media (Martinez & Lee, 2000; Rumbaut & Ewing, 2007). Research confirming this explanation, however, remains scarce.

Recent evidence suggests group-specific media cues are influential in shaping public opinion (Brader, Valentino, & Suhay, 2008) about immigration. Media coverage frequently ties the discussion of immigration to Latinos in particular (Valentino, Brader, & Jardina, 2013). Latinos are often featured in news about undocumented immigration and overrepresented as illegal immigrants compared to reality (Wilson, Gutiérrez, & Chao, 2003; Dixon & Williams, 2015). These biases began around 1994, with the passage of legislation like California Proposition 187. Proposition 187 restricted illegal immigrants from educational resources and social welfare assistance. It mandated a citizenship screening process for many state programs to prevent illegal immigrants from

using nonemergency health care, public education, and many other services. The prominence of such restrictive policies in California, and the backlash against them, was accompanied by a surge of news coverage juxtaposing Latinos with the issue of immigration broadly. These observations lead to the central hypothesis of the current work: since immigration is linked to Latinos in news coverage and viewers' primary schema for thinking about immigrants is working-class Latinos, crime news that depicts Latinos may boost negative attitudes about immigrants. If the pre-existing cognitive link between crime and Latinos is strong enough, this may happen even when the individual's immigrant status is unknown.

Racialized Crime News Influences Public Opinion

Since most people only experience the political world through what they hear, see, and read in the media, news depictions can influence the viewing public's opinions, behaviors, and understanding of the world around them (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). If Latinos are overrepresented as perpetrators of crime in news compared to reality, those exposed to such news may begin to associate the entire ethnic group with crime. The issue in the news, crime, becomes "racialized" (Valentino, 1999). The racialization of crime among African Americans has been well documented. Once crime becomes racialized, exposure to crime news even absent African Americans can prime racial attitudes as a criterion for forming political opinions (Valentino, 1999; Gilliam and Iyengar, 2000).

Martin Gilens' *Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and the Politics of Antipoverty Policy* (1999) outlines how this works in the area of poverty policy. Americans' negative attitudes about African Americans became linked to poverty via biased news coverage that systematically overrepresented the group as poor and in need of government assistance. These perceptions then drove white Americans to oppose efforts to address poverty even though their own group remained the biggest beneficiary. In an experiment by Gilliam and Iyengar (2000), viewers shown a black perpetrator of crime in news coverage were more likely to support harsh punitive policies—the race of the perpetrator had the most significant impact on support for punitive policies. Respondents were also more successful at recalling the race of the perpetrator when they were shown a black perpetrator. When no perpetrator was shown, many respondents falsely recalled they had seen a black perpetrator (Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000). Since immigration is cognitively associated with Latinos in the minds of Americans, I suspect a similar process may be occurring in the contemporary period.

Importantly, a key linkage in my argument has not received much empirical support to date. Evidence from the late 1990s and early 2000s found no overrepresentation of Latinos as criminals in the local evening news (Dixon & Linz, 2000). In fact, Dixon and Linz find Latinos were slightly underrepresented as perpetrators of crime compared to official statistics. Given the rise in the salience of illegal immigration as a national issue, I want to revisit this link in the

contemporary period. I suspect the linkage between Latinos and crime may have

grown as a result of increases in Latino population growth in the inner city and

the continued reliance of local news on crime as a staple of their evening coverage

(Roper-Starch, 1994; Papper & Gerhard, 1997; Hess, 1991). The content analysis

in this study will examine whether this link is present in current local crime news.

Though new social media technologies multiply citizens' opportunities to

disseminate and consume news, interest in local television coverage and local

newspapers remains strong. Local news remains a prominent source of public

affairs information in American life (Roper-Starch, 1994; Papper & Gerhard,

1997; Hess, 1991). The fragmentation of news sources increases competition,

leading to pandering to business incentives and adoption of the exciting "action-

news" format (Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000; Shoemaker & Reese, 2014). This

standard script is easy for viewers to understand (Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000).

Violent crime stories featuring a clear perpetrator and victim fit neatly into this

format.

Consistent with media effects discussed above, coverage of crime can alter

the public's perception of the prevalence of crime in society (Gans, 1979; Gilliam

& Iyengar, 2000; Elias, 1994; Crispin-Miller, 1998). If a viewer is frequently

exposed to local news that features a lot of violent crime news, it can cultivate the

perception of a violent world (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorelli, 2002;

Romer, 2003 Shrum, Burroughs, & Rindfleisch, 2005). This phenomenon is

particularly interesting given only 20% of people have experienced violent

interpersonal crime yet the media can distort viewers' understanding of their

likelihood to be a victim of violent crime (Beirne & Messerschmidt, 2014).

Since the media can cultivate viewer misperceptions of a violent world,

evidence suggests it can lead the public to misattribute blame for such violence

through framing (Iyengar, 2011). The way a story is framed can alter who or what

the viewer perceives to be responsible for a problem presented in a story. If a

story is framed episodically, viewers will blame an individual as the cause of the

problem. Conversely, if a story is framed thematically, viewers will attribute

blame to society or broad institutions like the government (Iyengar, 2011). To

illustrate, if a crime news story is framed episodically—discussed a single incident

of violent crime and mentions a suspect—the viewer will blame the suspect. If

this same news story was framed thematically—focusing on local crime statistics

and trends over time—the viewer will attribute blame to the government. Since

the media can lead the public to misattribute blame for problems,

disproportionate coverage of Latinos as criminals in articles framed episodically

may influence viewers to blame Latinos for crime in the United States.

It is also possible media effects will be conditioned by the real context in

which people live. Evidence on varying reactions to racial stereotypes of blacks in

news from white respondents living in homogenously white neighborhoods and

white respondents from diverse neighborhoods indicates whites from

homogenous neighborhoods support more punitive crime policies, report more

negative stereotypic perceptions of blacks, and feel more detached from blacks as

a group than respondents from diverse neighborhoods (Gilliam, Valentino, Beckmann, 2002). My study examines the respondent's ethnic context as a moderating effect on the linkage between Latinos and crime. It is possible respondents from states with few Latino residents only receive exposure to Latinos via the media. Thus, local news coverage that disproportionately features Latinos as criminals may cultivate a stronger perception of Latinos as criminals for respondents from states with few Latinos than respondents from states with many Latinos, as they may interact with Latinos less frequently.

Depictions of minorities as perpetrators in crime news may lead to public opposition to immigration. If a causal link can be identified between exposure to news media that features portrayals of Latinos as perpetrators of crime and beliefs about immigrant criminality, this might explain one important driver of opposition to immigration openness. Moreover, if local news is popular, and it overemphasizes racialized crime stories, viewers who are exposed to the racialized local crime news develop harsher judgments on policies that affect not only the groups depicted, but a variety of stigmatized minority groups. This type of news may cultivate a general ethnic blame discourse (Romer, Jamieson, & de Coteau, 1998) that leads viewers support more punitive policies that affect Latinos, even if they are not the primary targets of the stories.

Hypotheses

I have two main theoretical goals for this thesis. The first theoretical goal is to examine the influence of a Latino criminal in news on public opinion regarding immigration. The second is to investigate the cognitive association between Latinos and crime in both news and the mind of the typical citizen. Based on the existing literature, this thesis examines the following seven hypotheses:

H1: Latinos are disproportionately depicted as crime perpetrators in local news relative to their actual incarceration rates.

This hypothesis is examined via a content analysis. If the percentage of Latinos as perpetrators of crime in local news is higher than the percentage of incarcerated Latinos in reality, this hypothesis is supported. If the percentage of Latinos as perpetrators of crime in local news is lower than the percentage of incarcerated Latinos in corresponding state reports, this hypothesis is not supported.

The next 6 hypotheses were tested through an experiment. Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 3 predict respondents' abilities' to recall racial information from the news article they were assigned to.

H2: Respondents are more successful at recalling the race of the perpetrator when they are shown a Latino perpetrator than respondents shown a white perpetrator.

H3: When no perpetrator race shown, respondents will claim to recall the race of the perpetrator as Latino.

These hypotheses serve two main purposes. First, it is a manipulation check to ensure respondents correctly recalled the perpetrator from their treatment conditions. If respondents accurately recall the race of the perpetrator, we would not expect an effect. Second, these results illuminate the baseline association between Latinos and crime. If respondents falsely report seeing a Latino when they were not shown a perpetrator, this would support the argument that people automatically associate Latinos and crime. If respondents given news articles with Latino perpetrators of crime more correctly recall the race of the perpetrator than those assigned an article with a white perpetrator, H2 is supported. If respondents given news articles with Latino perpetrators of crime do not recall the race of the perpetrator more correctly than those assigned an article with a white perpetrator, H2 is not supported. If respondents claim to recall a race of the perpetrator as Latino when no perpetrator race shown, H3 is supported. If respondents do not claim to recall a race of the perpetrator as Latino when no perpetrator race shown, H3 is not supported.

Hypothesis 4 and Hypothesis 5 predict how differences in the race of the perpetrator included in the news article respondents were exposed to alters their perception of immigration and immigrants. These hypotheses examine the core claims that exposure to Latino perpetrators of crime in news increases opposition to immigration.

H4: Respondents are more opposed to immigration when exposed to an article featuring a Latino perpetrator than respondents exposed to an article featuring a white perpetrator.

H5: Respondents report stronger perception of immigrants as criminals and a personal threat when exposed to an article featuring a Latino perpetrator than respondents exposed to an article featuring a white perpetrator.

If respondents are more opposed to immigration when assigned an article featuring a Latino perpetrator than respondents assigned a white perpetrator, H4 is supported. If respondents are not more opposed to inclusive immigration policies when assigned an article featuring a Latino perpetrator than respondents assigned a white perpetrator, H4 is not supported. If respondents report stronger perceptions of immigrants as threatening criminals when assigned an article featuring a Latino perpetrator than respondents assigned a white perpetrator, H5

is supported. If respondents do not report stronger perception of immigrants as threatening criminals when assigned an article featuring a Latino perpetrator than respondents assigned a white perpetrator, H5 is not supported.

Additionally, I predict respondents who live in places without many Latinos might be more significantly impacted by news depictions of Latinos as criminals. This is because such respondents may have fewer experiences with the Latinos in daily life that could mitigate the effects of disproportionately negative news depictions of the Latinos. In H6 and H7, the state a respondent resides in (a method to identify which respondents interact with Latinos more frequently) moderates the effect of exposure to crime news on support for immigration. For H6 and H7, states considered to have a hi Latino population in this study are California, Texas, Florida, New York, Illinois, Arizona, New Jersey, New Mexico, Georgia, Nevada, and Colorado (Brown & Lopez, 2013).

> **H6:** Respondents from states with low Latino populations are more opposed to inclusive immigration policies when shown a news article with a Latino perpetrator of crime than other respondents shown a news article with a Latino perpetrator of crime.

If respondents from states with low Latino populations are more opposed to inclusive immigration policies when shown a news article with a Latino perpetrator compared to those shown a news article with a white perpetrator of

crime, H6 is supported. If respondents from states with low Latino populations are not more opposed to inclusive immigration policies when shown a news article with a Latino perpetrator of crime than other respondents shown a news article with a Latino perpetrator of crime, H6 is not supported.

H7: Respondents from states with low Latino density report stronger perception of immigrants as criminals and personal threat immigration when exposed to an article featuring a Latino perpetrator.

If respondents from states with low Latino populations report stronger perception of immigrants as threatening criminals when assigned an article featuring a Latino perpetrator than respondents assigned a white perpetrator, H7 is supported. If respondents from states with low Latino populations do not report stronger perception of immigrants as threatening criminals when assigned an article featuring a Latino perpetrator than respondents assigned a white perpetrator, H7 is not supported.

Methods

Content Analysis

The theoretical population for my news content analysis is local news that features crime in the United States. The unit of analysis is a complete local news article. The sample includes local news articles from online newspapers in the

Southwest region of the United States. I focus on the Southwest region to hone in on where the target population is concentrated. When selecting online newspapers for inclusion, high readership was an important factor. For a population to be affected by media, they must be exposed to the media content. The Arizona Republic and Houston Chronicle were selected because of the high readership and high Latino populations in their respective states.

To select the individual articles for inclusion in the sample, I entered the search terms "violent crime victim" into each online newspaper's database. The term "victim" was important to avoid thematic coverage of national crime trends and retrieve the standard script of episodic, violent crime (Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000). Thematically framed articles that did not feature individual episodes of crime were not included in the sample in order to focus on the standard, local, violent crime script that mirrors the experimental news article for a more precise comparison. Violent crime news was used because public interest in violent, local, crime news remains strong in the evolving media landscape (Roper-Starch, 1994; Papper & Gerhard, 1997; Hess, 1991). I assigned a number to each search result that appeared sorted by date (from most recent to least recent). From there I utilized a random number generator to randomly sample 170 numbers total—85 for the Arizona Republic and 85 for the Houston Chronicle. The randomly selected numbers correspond to the numbers assigned to articles in each newspaper's database. 85 articles were coded for the Houston Chronicle sample.

Since only 79 articles were listed for the Arizona Republic search results, all were coded. These 164 articles comprised the sample.

A random number generator was used to ensure that each unit in the sampling frame had an equal opportunity to be selected. By selecting articles randomly, the sample is representative of a population that included these two newspapers and maybe the region in which they are circulated. To attain a sample representative of the national population, one would need to sample a much broader range of newspapers.

As mentioned, articles randomly selected for inclusion in the sample were maintained if they featured a violent crime covered episodically. This study utilized the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) definition of violent crime, which includes four types of offenses: murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. These articles were coded for the race of the perpetrator of a crime, race of the victim of the crime, type of violent crime committed, if the legal status of the individuals was included or not, and other characteristics of individuals featured in the articles. When identifying race of the perpetrators in the news articles, certain indicators of race were utilized. These identifiers included: visual assessment when shown in an image or video, artist's sketch, mug shot, or race explicitly stated in the articles. When such indicators of race were not available, two variables were used to infer race: surname with clear racial association (Sanchez is associated with Latino) and direct family member shown (white mother implies white perpetrator). Many of

these definitions were derived from replicating the content analysis of Dixon and

Linz (2000).

While inferring race in this way may not always produce an accurate

judgment of a perpetrator's racial or ethnic identity, the general news watching

public does not expend exorbitant effort to accurately deduce the race of

individuals featured in news. These initial assumptions about the racial and

ethnic identity shape the public's opinions that follow. To more closely adhere to

the experimental population's news watching habits (often through incidental

exposure or during multi-tasking), I relied on initial assumptions about the race

of those involved in the crime story unless the article explicitly stated racial or

ethnic identity of the perpetrators. The frequencies of Latinos and other groups

featured as perpetrators of crime in the selected articles were compared to

incarceration data corresponding to the state each online newspaper covers. The

crime data came from 2010 Census data on incarceration by race in Arizona and

in Texas. I can provide these data upon request.

Experiment

This experiment examined a causal relationship between exposure to

racialized crime news featuring a Latino criminal and opposition to immigration.

The two dependent variables to measure public opinion on immigration were

opposition to inclusive immigration policies and perception of immigrants as

criminals who pose a personal threat to respondents. Components that may

moderate the impact exposure to racialized crime news are whether or not a

respondent lives in a state with many Latinos and respondent ability to recall the race of the perpetrator in the article.

The experiment was embedded in a survey of U.S. adults distributed through Amazon Mechanical Turk. The theoretical population was all voting-age adults in the United States. The sample included 614 United States adults from Amazon Mechanical Turk. Amazon Mechanical Turk users determined if they wanted to participate in the study. After users agreed to participate, the 614 respondents were each randomly assigned to one of three treatment groups. The sample was diverse and mirrors the adult population of the United States (according to 2010 Census data) in terms of age ($\bar{X}$ = 36.3, SD = 11.7), gender (56% male, 44% female), race (79% white, 9% black, and 12% other), and education (12.5% high school or less, 36.5% 4-year college degree, and 11.4% postgraduate). In terms of respondent affiliation with a political party, the sample was more democratic than the U.S. voting-age population according Pew Research Center (2015) (58% Democrat or leaning, 29% Republican or leaning, and 12% Independent).

The experimental sample is not representative of the entire voting age population in the United States because respondents from Amazon Mechanical Turk chose to participate; they were not randomly selected for inclusion. The characteristics of this sample may influence the estimates of the effect in multiple ways. First, respondents were compensated for their participation. This enhances motivation to participate and think critically about answers, which may inflate

correct responses compared to what might happen in the real world (Prior &

Lupia, 2008). Additionally, this sample includes more Democratic respondents

than Republican respondents. This may artificially inflate reported support for

inclusive immigration policies compared to the United States voting age

population since Democrats tend to support inclusive immigration more than

Republicans. Despite these potential deviations from the real world, the sample is

appropriate for testing the causal hypothesis of interest. If there is some effect in

this sample, I can be confident that an effect exists for some citizens under some

circumstances. Replicating my experiment with different samples—preferably

representative ones—is an important future step in this research.

      The experiment had three components. The first component was an initial

survey of respondents to establish a pre-exposure baseline understanding of each

respondent's political affiliation, typical news consumption habits, and other

demographic information. The second component allowed respondents a

maximum of 60 seconds to read an approximately 200-word news article that

manipulated the race of the perpetrator of a crime. A time limitation was added

to provide respondents with sufficient time to read the article and prohibit

respondents from spending excess time memorizing the article. Prior to exposing

respondents to the article, a message informed them the purpose of the study was

to evaluate the quality of news coverage in the article. Respondents were also told

they were presented with an article randomly chosen from a variety of topics so

as to not reveal the study's focus on racial attitudes, crime, and immigration.

Amazon Mechanical Turk randomly assigned each of the 614 respondents to one of three treatment groups. Treatment group 1 (the Latino perpetrator) had 204 respondents. Treatment group 2 (the white perpetrator) had 206 respondents. Treatment group 3 (no human perpetrator depicted) had 204 respondents. Random assignment ensures all the factors that might influence this study's dependent variables (opposition to immigration and perceptions of immigrants as threatening criminals) are balanced across the groups. Random assignment is crucial to ensure any differences on these dependent variables detected across treatment groups are the result of exposure to the stimulus in the new story and not any other factor.

The three treatment groups received the same text in each article. The article included the same local, violent crime story from a fictitious town. The title of the article read, "Cedar Ridge man charged with shooting a resident in a vehicle." The article outlined how a 48-year-old man allegedly approached a vehicle stopped at a stoplight, shot the driver of the vehicle, and drove away in the victim's car. The car was specified as a "blue, Toyota Camry" to check respondents' attentiveness to the article in the follow-up questionnaire. Toyota Camry was chosen because it was the most commonly sold car in the United States in the past several years (Toyota Camry popularity determined by manufacturer estimates for sales from 1997-2015). I chose the most common car to not influence respondents' recall of this detail from the story—a unique vehicle may stand out in their memories and artificially inflate recall. The rest of the

article included quotes from police department officials from the fictitious town describing the act as "cold blooded murder" and explaining how the perpetrator was apprehended in his home a week later. To heighten the drama, the article mentioned witness descriptions of screams and gunshots when the incident occurred. The article also included a quote from a resident of the fictional town (name not specified to focus on the perpetrator of crime as the key individual in the story) discussing how "terrible" these events are. A statement explaining, "no further details are currently available" concluded the article.

I strove to hold all characteristics of the article constant except the race of the perpetrator in the image and the name of the perpetrator included in the news article. As explained, all treatment groups were presented with a news article with the same text. To enhance control, the names and images used in the articles were based on a study by Brader, Valentino, and Suhay (2008) which carefully pretested the manipulation of race. Each of their images was identical except the heads of the individuals featured (the bodies, clothing, background were exactly the same). The two heads included in the images were selected after a panel of eight independent judges rated 40 images of males on how ethnically Hispanic or European each appeared among other factors like perceived wealth, friendliness, and obedience to the law. The two heads selected were statistically distinct on perceived ethnicity but statistically indistinct on the other tested traits (Brader, Valentino, & Suhay 2008). In this experiment, Treatment group 1's article included an image of a Latino man paired with the name "Jose Sanchez."

Treatment group 2's article included an image of a white, European man paired with the name "Nikolai Vandinsky." Treatment group 3's article—the control group—included a generic crime story image of caution tape and referred to the perpetrator as "the perpetrator." These names were also utilized in the study by Brader, Valentino, & Suhay (2008). Refer to figures one through three below.

Figure 1: Image and Text from Treatment

Cedar Ridge man charged with shooting a resident in a vehicle

Jose Sanchez, 48-year-old Cedar Ridge resident, after he was arrested in his home.

CEDAR RIDGE — A 48-year-old man, Jose Sanchez, was charged with shooting a Cedar Ridge resident last week.

According to the recently released police statement, Jose Sanchez walked up to a car stopped at a stoplight at 10:30PM. He then allegedly shot the driver in the face, dragged the victim out of the car, and drove away in the victim's blue, Toyota Camry.

"The department received a call detailing the cold blooded murder right after the shooting took place," Deputy Davidson of the Cedar Ridge Police department recounted. "When the officers arrived on the scene, the car was gone."

Witnesses heard screams and gunshots, police said. Just two hours later, the police located the vehicle a short distance from the scene of the shooting. Although no perpetrator was found with the vehicle, Sanchez was arrested in his Cedar Ridge home a week later.

"It is terrible when these things happen in our neighborhood" a Cedar Ridge resident reported. "It's just awful."

No further details are currently available.

The image and text appeared to respondents randomly assigned to Treatment 1 featuring a Latino perpetrator. This image is "Jose Sanchez" from Treatment Group 1.

Figure 2: Image and Text from Treatment 2

Cedar Ridge man charged with shooting a resident in a vehicle

Nikolai Vandinsky, 48-year-old Cedar Ridge resident, after he was arrested in his home.

CEDAR RIDGE — A 48-year-old man, Nikolai Vandinsky, was charged with shooting a Cedar Ridge resident last week.

According to the recently released police statement, Nikolai Vandinsky walked up to a car stopped at a stoplight at 10:30PM. He then allegedly shot the driver in the face, dragged the victim out of the car, and drove away in the victim's blue, Toyota Camry.

"The department received a call detailing the cold blooded murder right after the shooting took place," Deputy Davidson of the Cedar Ridge Police department recounted. "When the officers arrived on the scene, the car was gone."

Witnesses heard screams and gunshots, police said. Just two hours later, the police located the vehicle a short distance from the scene of the shooting. Although no perpetrator was found with the vehicle, Vandinsky was arrested in his Cedar Ridge home a week later.

"It is terrible when these things happen in our neighborhood" a Cedar Ridge resident reported. "It's just awful."

No further details are currently available.

The image and text appeared to respondents randomly assigned to Treatment 2 featuring a white perpetrator. This image is "Nikolai Vandinsky" from Treatment Group 2.

Figure 3: Image and Text from Treatment 3

Cedar Ridge man charged with shooting a resident in a vehicle

A 48-year-old Cedar Ridge resident was arrested in his home.

CEDAR RIDGE — A 48-year-old man was charged with shooting a Cedar Ridge resident last week.

According to the recently released police statement, the perpetrator walked up to a car stopped at a stoplight at 10:30PM. The perpetrator then allegedly shot the driver in the face, dragged the victim out of the car, and drove away in the victim's blue, Toyota Camry.

"The department received a call detailing the cold blooded murder right after the shooting took place," Deputy Davidson of the Cedar Ridge Police department recounted. "When the officers arrived on the scene, the car was gone."

Witnesses heard screams and gunshots, police said. Just two hours later, the police located the vehicle a short distance from the scene of the shooting. Although no perpetrator was found with the vehicle, he was arrested in his Cedar Ridge home a week later.

"It is terrible when these things happen in our neighborhood" a Cedar Ridge resident reported. "It's just awful."

No further details are currently available.

The image and text appeared to respondents randomly assigned to Treatment 3 featuring a no specific perpetrator. This image is a common stock photo associated with crime from Treatment Group 3.

The final component of the experiment was a questionnaire after exposure

to the article. This questionnaire asked the respondents' opinions on the quality

of news coverage so they did not detect the study's focus on racial attitudes,

crime, and immigration. If the respondents suspected this, the norm of racial

equality may intervene and alter their expressed opinions (Valentino, Hutchings,

White, 2008). The survey also asked respondents to recall information from the

article, specifically the race of the perpetrator of crime (even if no race was

shown) and their opinions on political issues including specific immigration

policies. These data can be provided upon request.

To examine respondent opposition toward immigration, I created a

multifaceted measure that combined 4 questions. One item asked respondents if

they believed state and local police should be required to investigate an

individual's legal status if there was "reasonable suspicion he or she is an

undocumented immigrant," measured on a 5-point scale. Another item asked

respondents whether "the number of immigrants from foreign countries who are

permitted to come to the United States should be increased, decreased or kept

about the same." The third item asked respondents' opinions on a policy to allow

people who "illegally entered the U.S. before age 16, who have lived in the U.S. 5

years or longer, and who graduated high school" to be permitted to stay in the

U.S. permanently "if they attend college or serve in the military." This was also

measured on a 5-point scale. Lastly, an item inquired about respondents' general

views on what "government policy should be toward unauthorized immigrants

now living in the United States." I added these items to build a reliable scale of opposition to immigration (Cronbach's alpha = .79).

To measure if exposure to news coverage with a Latino criminal influences respondents' perceptions of immigration as a personal threat and immigrants as criminals, I created another aggregate variable. This variable included two items from the questionnaire. The first item asked, "do you believe immigrants commit more crime than citizens born in the United States?" This was measured on a 5-point scale from "strongly do not believe immigrants commit more crime than U.S. born citizens" to "strongly believe immigrants commit more crime than U.S. born citizens." The other item asked, "how likely is it that immigrants will take jobs away from people already here?" This question was measured on a 5-point scale ranging from "very unlikely" to "very likely." I added these items to build a scale of opposition to immigrants (Cronbach's alpha = .70). Note this reliability measure is lower than I would prefer, but is still acceptable.

Results

Content Analysis

The purpose of this content analysis is to examine local crime news and compare these news representations to reality. I compare the proportion of Latinos depicted as violent criminals in news to the amount of Latinos that are incarcerated in reality. To examine news coverage, I utilized online news articles from the Arizona Republic and the Houston Chronicle. To compare news

coverage to reality, I utilized data from the 2010 Census on state incarceration by race.

Since framing can influence how readers attribute blame for a problem, framing was analyzed as well. The conventional understanding is that the vast majority of local crime news is framed episodically (which leads viewers to attribute blame to individuals like a perpetrator of a crime) and not thematically (which leads viewers to blame broader institutions like the government or society) (Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000). For this study, I attempted to focus on episodically framed articles to correspond to the episodically framed article used in the experiment.

Despite attempts to minimize the amount of thematic coverage in the sample by narrowing search results, an analysis of local news from both the Arizona Republic and Houston Chronicle produced more thematic coverage than the conventional wisdom suggests. Since databases like Lexis Nexis omit the images, I had to rely on individual archives from the online news sources. Since local news organizations have fewer resources than mainstream national news organizations, this limited the amount of articles I could sample from. Due to the increased thematic coverage in the sample of randomly selected articles, numerous articles did not meet the episodically framed crime story requirement for inclusion in the sample. Of the 85 articles from the Houston Chronicle, 23 were omitted. Of the 79 articles from the Arizona Republic, 21 were omitted. As a result, the sample of 120 articles was smaller than I desired.

Table 1 compares the amount of articles framed episodically and articles framed thematically from the Arizona Republic and Houston Chronicle sample prior to omission. While the majority of articles were episodically framed, a substantial number of articles were framed thematically. This diverges from the standard script of local, crime news that necessitates episodic coverage and suggests a potential shift in journalistic practices, at least on this issue. Since framing affects viewer attribution of blame, this shift may lead to increased blame of larger institutions (like the government or society as a whole) rather than blaming individuals (like perpetrators of crime) for problems like crime.

Table 1: Arizona Republic and Houston Chronicle Framing Breakdown

	Arizona Republic	Houston Chronicle
Thematically Framed	27%	27%
Episodically Framed	73%	73%
Total Articles	100%	100%

Table 1 displays the percentage of sample crime news articles from the Arizona Republic and Houston Chronicle that are thematically framed and episodically framed. There are 164 articles represented in the table: 79 from the Arizona Republic and 85 from the Houston Chronicle.

Another trend in the coverage from both the Arizona Republic and the Houston Chronicle was more victim-centric coverage with less focus on the perpetrator. This includes fewer visual images of perpetrators (mug shots, artist sketches, etc.). Table 2 displays a comparison of the percentage of Arizona

Republic and Houston Chronicle articles from the sample that included images of

or mentioned the race perpetrator and those that did not. While most articles did

include perpetrator-centric discussion and imagery, there is a substantial

proportion that did not. This change may be a reflection of the shift toward more

thematically framed articles. Focusing on a suspect or perpetrator is an integral

component of the standard local news crime script (Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000). If

more thematic coverage is included, it is logical that there is less of a focus on the

perpetrator and more emphasis on trends over time. Again, this may shift

viewers' attribution of blame from individuals to broader institutions.

Table 2: Arizona Republic and Houston Chronicle Race Coverage Breakdown

	Arizona Republic	Houston Chronicle
Race Shown or Mentioned	79%	64%
No Race Shown or Mentioned	21%	36%
Total Perpetrators	100%	100%

Table 2 displays the percentage of sample crime news articles from the Arizona
Republic and Houston Chronicle that include the race of a perpetrator and do not
include the race of the perpetrator. There are 215 perpetrators represented in the
table: 87 from the Arizona Republic and 128 from the Houston Chronicle.

Hypothesis 1 predicted the amount of Latinos featured as perpetrators of

crime in local news will be higher than the percentage of Latino incarcerations in

each corresponding local area. An analysis of local, crime news coverage from the

Arizona Republic and the Houston Chronicle compared to 2010 Census data on

incarceration by state did not support Hypothesis 1 and suggest wide variability

in representations of racial and ethnic groups as criminals in local crime news coverage.

Table 3 presents data from the 2010 United States Census about incarceration in Arizona. The percent refers to the amount of incarcerated people in each racial or ethnic group out of the total number of incarcerated people in Arizona. Figure 4 compares the Arizona Republic representation of various racial and ethnic groups as perpetrators and the actual percentage of people from each group incarcerated in Arizona. In this sample of the Arizona Republic, whites are overrepresented as perpetrators of crime (56% of the articles included a white criminal) compared to their actual incarceration rate in Arizona (35% of incarcerated people in Arizona are white). Latinos are underrepresented as perpetrators of crime in the Arizona Republic (17% of the articles included a Latino criminal) compared to their actual incarceration rate in Arizona (41% of incarcerated people in Arizona are Latino). The findings about Latino perpetrators are consistent with Dixon and Linz's (2000) findings. Black perpetrators are underrepresented in the Arizona Republic (4.6% of the articles included a black criminal) compared to reality (12% of incarcerated people in Arizona are black). Asian perpetrators are overrepresented in the Arizona Republic coverage (1.4% of the articles included an Asian criminal) compared to reality (0% of incarcerated people in Arizona are Asian). Overall, the content analysis of local, violent, crime coverage from the Arizona Republic compared to Arizona incarceration rates contradicts Hypothesis 1. This initial result makes the

group priming effects I predicted less likely, since the news is not inflating the

linkage between Latinos and crime in these newspapers. This might mean that

people do not hold very strong cognitive associations between Latinos and crime

in general, and so exposure to Latino criminality might not affect opinions about

immigration.

Table 3: Arizona Incarceration

Racial Group	Percent
Black	12%
Latino	41%
White	35%
American Native/Alaska Native	10%
Other	2%
Total	100%

Table 3 displays the amount of perpetrators from different racial groups the
Arizona Incarceration data from the U.S. 2010 Census. The percent column
indicates the percent of each racial group in the Arizona incarcerated population
calculated from 2010 United States Census Data.

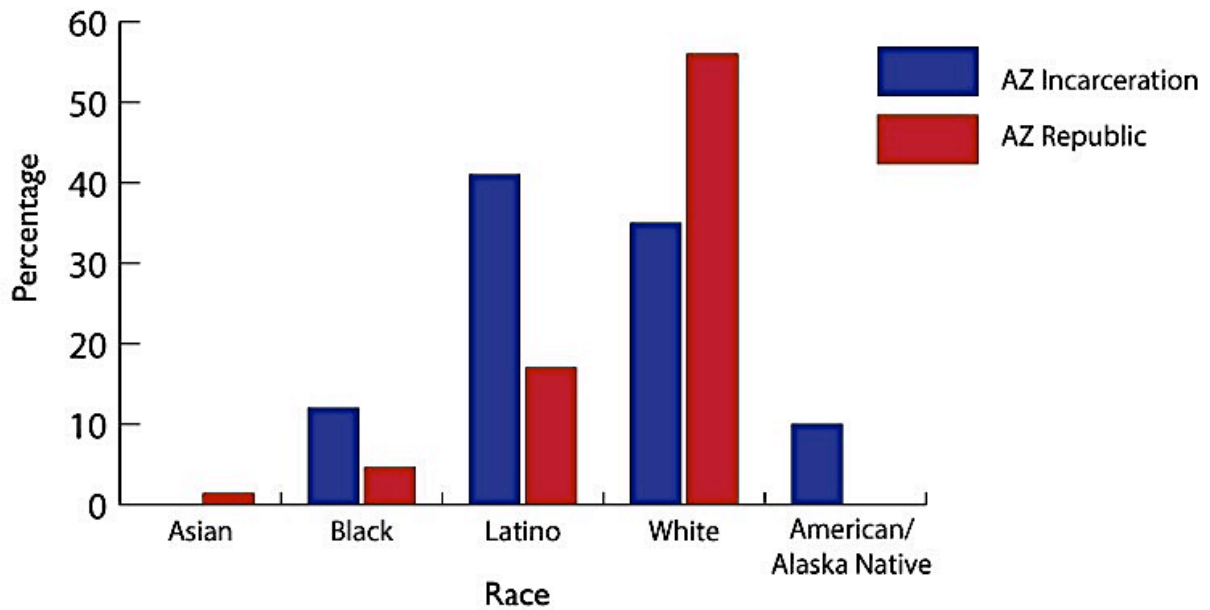Figure 4: Arizona Incarceration vs. Arizona Republic

Figure 4 displays a comparison of Arizona Incarceration and the Arizona Republic crime coverage. For incarceration, the percentage indicates the percent of each racial group in the Arizona incarcerated population calculated from 2010 United States Census Data. For the Arizona Republic, the percentage refers to the percent of perpetrators of crime from each racial group in the sample.

Table 4 presents data from the 2010 United States Census about incarceration in Texas. The percent refers to the amount of incarcerated people in each racial or ethnic group out of the total number of incarcerated people in Texas. Figure 5 compares the Houston Chronicle representation of various racial and ethnic groups as perpetrators and the actual percentage of people from each group incarcerated in Texas. Whites are underrepresented as perpetrators of crime (27% of the articles included a white criminal) compared to their actual incarceration rate in Texas (33% of incarcerated people in Arizona are white). These findings differ from those of the Arizona Republic, which demonstrate the

converse. Latinos are underrepresented as perpetrators of crime in the Houston

Chronicle (15% of the articles included a Latino criminal compared to their actual

incarceration rate in Texas (34% of incarcerated people in Texas are Latino).

Asian perpetrators are overrepresented in the sample (2.3% of the articles

included an Asian criminal) compared to their actual incarceration rate in Texas

(0% of incarcerated people in Texas are Asian)—the Arizona Republic slightly

overrepresented Asian perpetrators as well. Black perpetrators are

underrepresented in the sample (18% of the articles included a black criminal)

compared to reality (32% of incarcerated people in Texas are black). Middle

Eastern perpetrators are overrepresented in the sample (1.7% of the articles

included a Middle Eastern criminal compared to their actual incarceration rate in

Texas (0% of incarcerated people in Texas are Middle Eastern). Overall, the

content analysis of local, violent, crime coverage from the Houston Chronicle

compared to Texas incarceration rates contradicts Hypothesis 1, but is consistent

with Dixon and Linz's (2000) findings.

Table 4: Texas Incarceration

Racial Group	Percent
Black	33%
Latino	34%
White	32%
American Native/Alaska Native	0%
Other	1%
Total	100%

Table 4 displays the amount of perpetrators from different racial groups the Texas Incarceration data from the U.S. 2010 Census. The percent column indicates the percent of each racial group in the Texas incarcerated population calculated from 2010 United States Census Data.

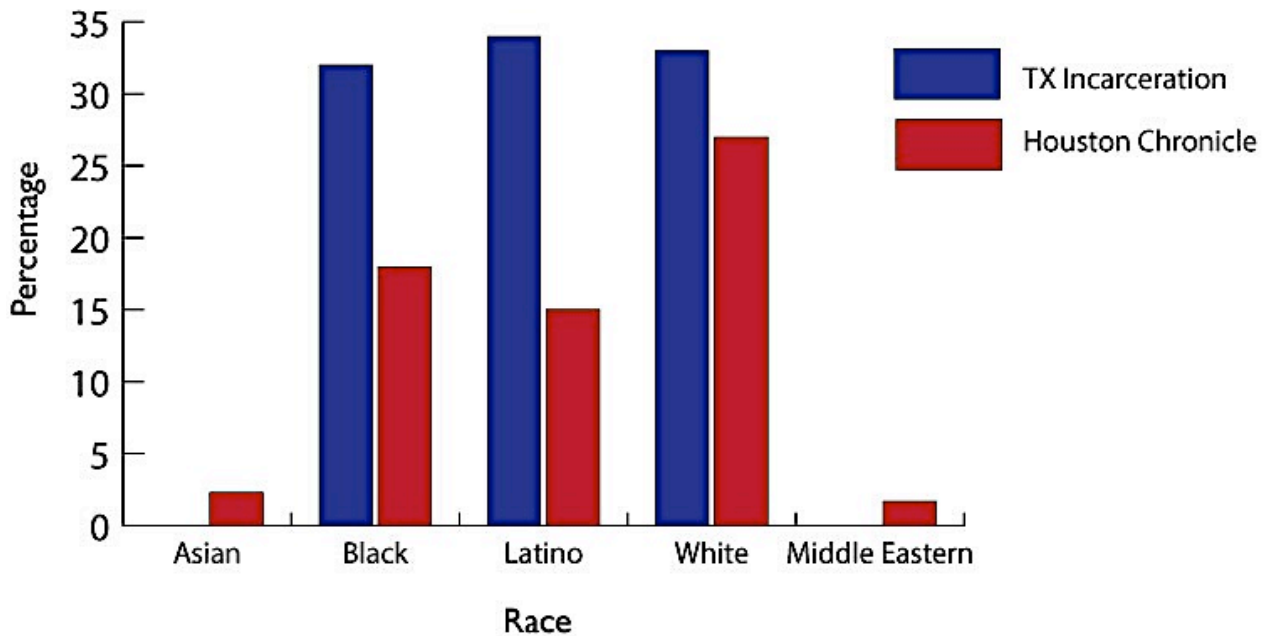Figure 5: Texas Incarceration vs. Houston Chronicle

Figure 5 displays a comparison of Texas Incarceration and the Houston Chronicle crime coverage. For incarceration, the percentage indicates the percent of each racial group in the Texas incarcerated population calculated from 2010 United States Census Data. For the Houston Chronicle, the percentage refers to the percent of perpetrators of crime from each racial group in the sample.

Experiment

The experiment investigated a causal relationship between exposure to racialized crime news featuring a Latino criminal and public opposition to immigration. The two dependent variables to measure public opinion on immigration are opposition to inclusive immigration policies and perception of immigrants as criminals who pose a threat to respondents.

The regression model used to evaluate the hypotheses is below:

$$\hat{Y} = \beta_1 \chi_1 + \beta_2 \chi_2 + \beta_3 \chi_3$$

$$\beta_4(\chi_1 * \chi_3) + \beta_5(\chi_2 * \chi_3) + c + e$$

In this model, $\hat{Y}$ refers to opposition to immigration. The subsequent Bs refer to the coefficients that indicate the slope for each independent effect of the variables in the model. χ, and χ_2, refer to the Latino perpetrator of crime treatment group and the white perpetrator of crime treatment group respectively. χ_3 represents the moderating variable, a dummy for states with Latino share of the state populations above 16%. These states are California, Texas, Florida, New York, Illinois, Arizona, New Jersey, New Mexico, Georgia, Nevada, and Colorado. In this study, 45.5% of respondents reside in one of these states and 55.5% do not. The next part of the model is the interaction between treatment group and states respondents are from with a high population of Latino residents. The constant "c" and error "e" coefficients are added for completeness. This model is used to examine the hypotheses outlined in this study.

Respondent Capacity to Recall Information

Hypotheses 2 and 3 involve respondents' abilities to recall the race of the perpetrator in the news article they were exposed to. **Hypothesis 2** predicted respondents would be more successful at recalling the race of the perpetrator when shown a Latino perpetrator than respondents shown a white perpetrator. **Hypothesis 3** posited when no perpetrator race shown, respondents would claim to recall a race of the perpetrator as Latino more than other racial or ethnic groups. These hypotheses serve two main purposes. First, they serve as a manipulation check to examine if respondents successfully recall the perpetrator they were exposed to in their treatment conditions. If respondents did not know what the race of the perpetrator was, there should not be an effect. Second, these hypotheses tested baseline cognitive association between Latinos and crime. If respondents impute Latino when they were not shown a perpetrator, this would support the causal claim that people associate Latinos and crime.

As Table 5 conveys, respondents were generally successful at recalling the race of the perpetrator included in the article. This was true in the Latino criminal treatment group, the white criminal treatment group, and the no perpetrator shown treatment group. Respondents in the treatment group who read an article with a Latino criminal successfully recalled the race of the perpetrator 85% of the time. Respondents in the treatment group who read an article with a white criminal correctly recalled the race of the perpetrator 92% of the time. These results do not support H2 that predicted respondents would be

more successful at recalling the race of the perpetrator when shown a Latino perpetrator than respondents shown a white perpetrator. In fact, respondents were slightly more successful at recalling the perpetrator in the white criminal treatment group than the Latino criminal treatment group, though not significantly so.

To further distinguish between respondents' capacities to recollect the race of the perpetrator and general attentiveness to the article, other variables were used for comparison. Respondents were asked to recall mundane details from the news article they read. For example, respondents were asked to recall what car the perpetrator drove off in. I selected the most common American car of the past 18 years— Toyota Camry. This car was used to avoid artificially inflating recall by asking about unique attributes that would stand out in readers' minds. The response options were also similar (black Toyota Corolla, blue Toyota Corolla, and black Toyota Camry) and presented in a randomized order. Randomized, similar response options were listed to mitigate primacy response bias and identify how precisely respondents were reading the article. This is displayed as "Information Check" in Table 5 and Table 6. Additionally, one question asked respondents to leave the question blank if they were carefully reading the question. This request was placed in the middle of the question text to disguise this attention check as a typical question. This is displayed as "Attention Check" in Table 5 and Table 6.

Table 5: Manipulation Checks by Treatment Group

	Latino Treatment	White Treatment	No Perpetrator Shown	Average
Attention Check	89%	88%	92%	90%
Information Check	80%	81%	83%	81%
Race Recall	85%	92%	72%	83%
Average	85%	87%	82%	85%

Table 5 presents the percentage of correct responses respondents gave in the various attention checks across treatment groups. There are no significant differences across treatment groups.

In general, respondents were just as successful at recalling the race of the perpetrator than other measures of attentiveness. However, respondents in treatment groups that featured specific perpetrators were moderately more successful at recalling race of the perpetrator than respondents who did not see a specific perpetrator. An average of 89% of respondents in the Latino and white treatment groups successfully recalled the race of the perpetrator they had seen. This is notably more successful than the treatment group without a specific perpetrator, where 72% of respondents successfully recalled this. As Table 6 demonstrates, the treatment groups with a specific perpetrator performed better only in recalling the race of the perpetrator. This suggests being exposed to an image of a person increases attention to personal information, like race, and may reduce attention to other details. Respondents did not recall the perpetrator as African American or another race substantially more than others, which diverges from previous research (Gilliam and Iyengar, 1997). This suggests individuals might not automatically associate Latinos and criminality in their minds. If this is

the case, it would undercut the chance that these cues will change opinions about

immigration, since such effects rely on the presumed automatic linkage of

Latinos, crime, and immigration.

Table 6: Manipulation Checks by Exposure to a Specific Perpetrator or Not

	Latino & White Treatments	No Perpetrator Shown	Average
Attention Check	89%	92%	90%
Information Check	81%	83%	82%
Race Recall	89%	72%	81%
Average	86%	82%	84%

Table 6 presents the percentage of correct responses respondents gave in the
various attention checks across treatment groups. This table compares
performance among those randomly assigned to a treatment group that featured
a specific, human perpetrator in the article and those that saw a stock photo of
caution tape. There are no significant differences across treatment groups.

Opposition to Immigration and Perception of Immigrants as Criminals

Hypothesis 4 predicted that respondents would be more opposed to

inclusive immigration policies when assigned an article featuring a Latino

perpetrator than respondents assigned a white perpetrator. This gets at the core

argument that exposure to a Latino perpetrator of crime in news increases

opposition to immigration. Table 7 displays the results of simple T-tests

comparing each treatment group to the control. There is also no significant

difference in immigration opposition between the Latino and white treatment

groups.

Table 7: Opposition to Immigration in Latino and White Treatment Groups

	Unstandardized B	Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.581	.014		40.926	.000
Latino Treatment Group	.002	.020	.004	.081	.936
White Treatment Group	.012	.020	.031	.623	.534

Table 7 presents the effect of the Latino treatment group and the white treatment group on respondent opposition to immigration. The dependent variable runs from 0-1, with high scores corresponding to high opposition to immigration.

Hypothesis 5 predicted that respondents would report stronger perception of immigrants as threatening criminals when assigned an article featuring a Latino perpetrator than respondents assigned a white perpetrator. This hypothesis also gets at the core causal claim that exposure to news featuring a Latino criminal causes a heightened perception of immigrants as a threat. Similar to Hypothesis 4, respondents' responses across treatment groups demonstrated no significant evidence to reject the null hypothesis and no differences between any of the three conditions. Table 8 displays this.

Table 8: Impact of Latino and White Criminal Cue on Perceptions of Immigration Threats

	Unstandardized B	Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.536	.015		35.661	.000
Latino Treatment Group	.010	.021	.022	.469	.640
White Treatment Group	.018	.021	.040	.832	.406

Table 8 presents the effect of the Latino treatment group and the white treatment group on respondent opposition to immigration. The dependent variable runs from 0-1, with high scores corresponding to high perceptions of threat.

The Moderating Effect of Regular Contact with Latinos

I next explore whether regular contact with Latinos, as measured by the percent of respondents' home state population comprised of Latino residents, alters the impact of exposure to crime news on support for immigration. **Hypothesis 6** posited that the effect of exposure to news highlighting Latino crime would be largest for respondents living in states with fewer Latinos. This is because they would have fewer experiences with the out-group that might mitigate the effects of inequitably negative news depictions of the out-group.

Figure 6 demonstrates the mean differences across conditions and between low and hi Latino contact groups. The results are not directly in line with my expectations. The first set of red and blue bars depict the impact of Latino population on the control group's opposition to immigration. In this group, mean opposition is higher among respondents from states with a hi Latino population

($\bar{X}$=0.57) compared to respondents from states with a low Latino population

($\bar{X}$=0.50).

Among respondents with little real world contact with Latinos (the blue

bars), exposure to the Latino perpetrator did marginally *increase* opposition to

immigration ($\bar{X}$=.51) compared to the control ($\bar{X}$= .50), but that is not a

significant difference. Additionally, exposure to the white perpetrator among

respondents from low Latino states causes respondents to become slightly *more*

opposed to immigration ($\bar{X}$=.55) compared to the control.

If a respondent is from a state with a hi Latino population (California,

Texas, Florida, New York, Illinois, Arizona, New Jersey, New Mexico, Georgia,

Nevada, and Colorado) and is exposed to crime news with white or Latino

perpetrator it actually *reduces* opposition to immigration compared to the

control group. Exposure to the Latino perpetrator substantially reduces

opposition to immigration among respondents with a lot of real world contact

with Latinos ($\bar{X}$=.48) compared to the control ($\bar{X}$=.57).
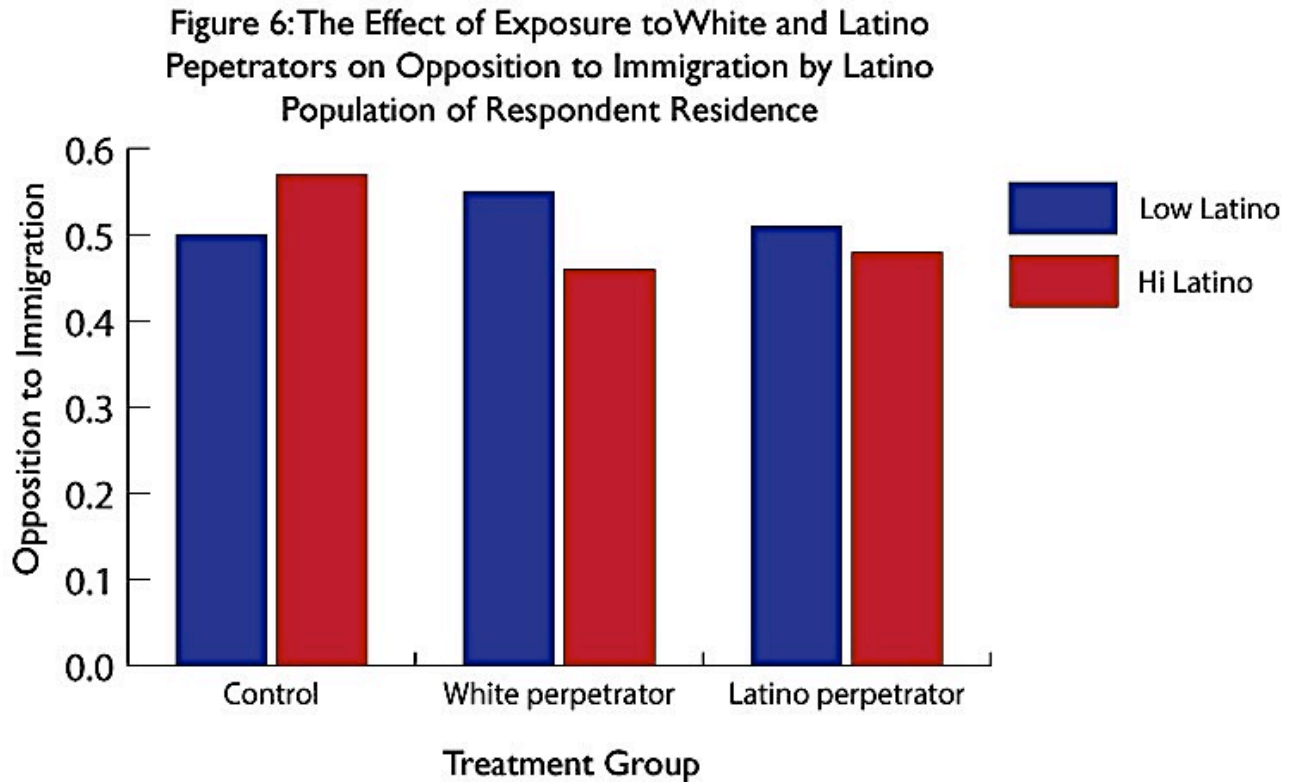
Figure 6: The Effect of Exposure to White and Latino Pepetrators on Opposition to Immigration by Latino Population of Respondent Residence

Note: The dependent variable runs from 0-1, with high scores corresponding to high opposition to immigration.

Hypothesis 7 theorized that exposure to Latino crime would have the largest effect on perceptions of immigrant threat among respondents from states with fewer Latino residents. Utilizing the same states considered to have higher Latino populations from the previous hypothesis, Figure 7 demonstrates the mean perception of immigrants as threatening criminals across conditions broken down by respondent residence in a hi or low Latino population state. Similar to Figure 6, the results do not directly align with my expectations and Figure 7 reveals no significant findings.

Among respondents with little personal contact with Latinos (the blue bars), exposure to the Latino perpetrator did marginally *increase* opposition to
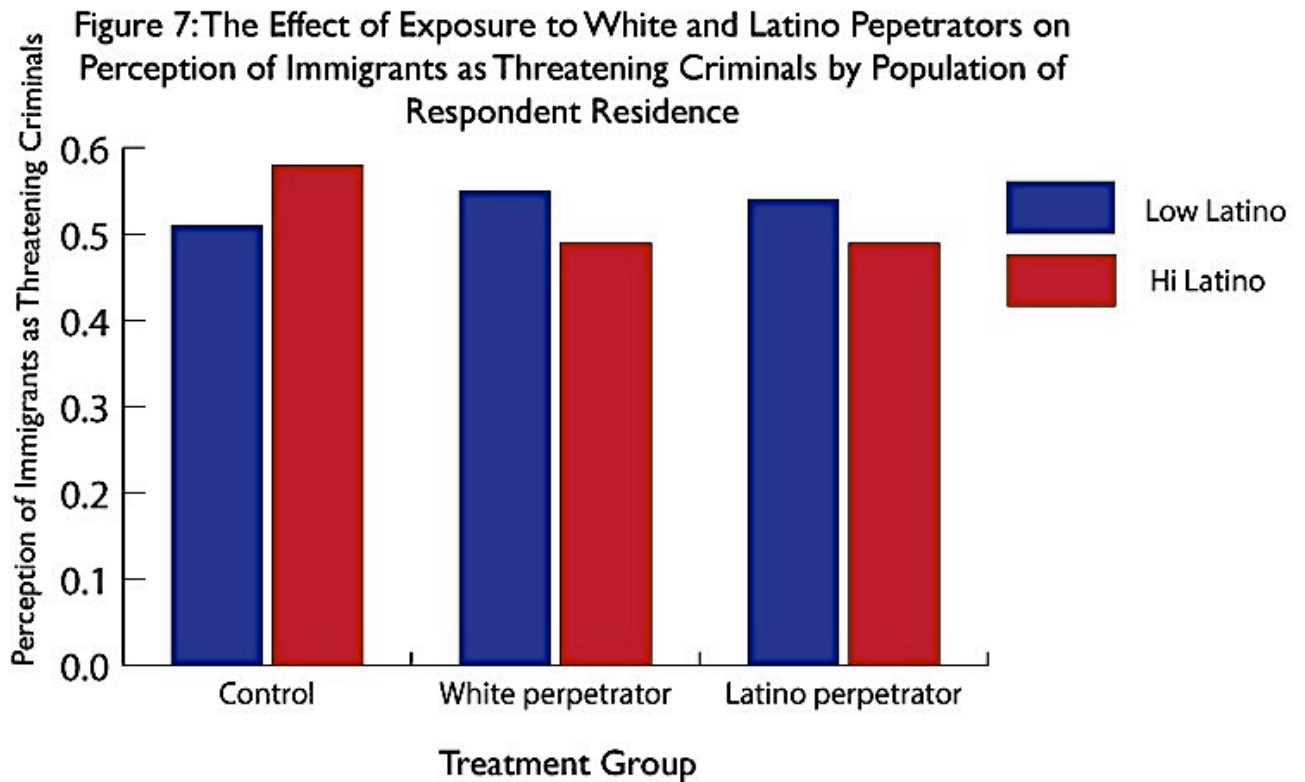
immigration ($\bar{X}$=.54) compared to the control ($\bar{X}$= .51), but that is not a significant difference. Additionally, among respondents from states with few Latinos, exposure to the white perpetrator causes respondents become slightly *more* opposed to immigration ($\bar{X}$=.55) compared to the control. Overall, however, exposure to the Latino crime story has little impact among respondents who reside in places with few Latinos.

Among respondents from states with many Latinos (the red bars), perceptions of immigration threat are reduced (from .58 to .49). Exposure to the white or Latino perpetrator *reduces* perception of immigrants as threatening criminals ($\bar{X}$=.49) compared to the control ($\bar{X}$=.58). This indicates when respondents from a state where they are more likely to interact with Latinos and were exposed to a white or Latino criminal, they felt less threatened by immigrants than the control.

Although pattern of results was unexpected, Figure 7 illustrates the same basic pattern as before: exposure to the Latino crime story actually has little impact among respondents who reside in places with few Latinos. However, when respondents are exposed to a white perpetrator of crime and they do not live around many Latinos, they feel more threatened by immigration. Among respondents from states with many Latinos, perceptions of immigration threat are actually reduced (from .58 to .49). Though I predicted exposure to crime news would boost opposition—especially among respondents who had little interaction with Latinos in their daily lives—I found opposition was substantially

reduced by exposure to crime news among those living around many Latinos.

Perhaps this latter group of respondents was resistant to these negative news

depictions of criminals knowing their many Latino (and white) neighbors are not

actually prone to crime.

Figure 7: The Effect of Exposure to White and Latino Pepetrators on Perception of Immigrants as Threatening Criminals by Population of Respondent Residence

Note: the dependent variable runs from 0-1, with high scores corresponding to high perceptions of threat.

Additionally, I examined the relationship between numerous moderating

variables and the two dependent variables: opposition to immigration and

perception of immigrants as threatening criminals. Regression analyses

examining the effect of respondent education level, gender, news consumption,

age, and party identification did not produce significant results. This indicates

the effects of exposure to these stories were very consistent across many types of respondents.

Discussion

Although immigrants are one of the least violent and crime-prone groups in the United States, public opinion about immigration is often driven by a misperception that immigrants are more likely to commit crime than native residents. Since this misperception has consequential policy implications in the United States, examining what is shaping these misperceptions is also consequential. Existing literature demonstrates how the media has a profound role in informing (or misinforming) the public. Scholars have found an association between Latinos and immigration in news and the minds of the public. Since the public's dominant schema for immigrants is a working-class Latino, I predicted crime news that references Latinos may prime negative attitudes about immigrants even when the perpetrator's immigrant status is not mentioned. However, the data do not provide significant evidence to support this claim.

Hypothesis 1 predicted news depictions of Latinos as perpetrators of crime would exceed actual Latino incarceration. However, content from the Arizona Republic and the Houston Chronicle suggests this is not the case. These findings are therefore consistent with Dixon and Linz's (2000) content analysis of minorities in crime news, and undermine one of the basic causal linkages in the explanation I described in the inception.

While this content analysis did demonstrate that a majority of the news in the sample was episodic, there were many thematically framed articles—this diverges from the conventional crime news script (Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000). This finding illustrates a potential journalistic shift toward more thematic coverage of local crime and could affect individuals' attribution of blame. Consumers of such thematically framed crime news may vote to enact policies that harm racial or ethnic groups disproportionately represented as criminals because of misattribution of blame onto the entire group. Moreover, disproportionately representing racial or ethnic groups thematically may promote ethnic blame discourse and influence political behavior.

Additionally, a substantial proportion of articles did not include the race of the perpetrator. The conventional expectation demands the discussion of a specific perpetrator or suspect in a local crime news story (Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000). This suggests an evolving journalistic norm to dodge discussion of race. This may lead to general trend of underrepresenting people of color in news compared to reality regardless of the role.

Ultimately, the content analysis findings suggest wide variability in representations of racial and ethnic groups as criminals in local crime news. The considerable variability in which criminals are overrepresented and underrepresented suggests unique journalistic choices from each news organization. Since local news organizations package stories into easily digestible formats for their audiences, perhaps this variability in which racial and ethnic

groups are overrepresented and underrepresented as criminals stems from which racial or ethnic criminal script digests with least cognitive effort in each local market. Further investigation into comparing audience perceptions of which racial or ethnic group is most cognitively associated with criminality in different local news media markets may provide additional insight.

In the experimental component of this study, I examined how exposure to racial cues in local crime news influences public opinion on immigration. I also explored whether regular interaction with Latinos, as quantified by the percent of the respondents' home state population comprised of Latino residents, alters the effect of exposure to crime news on support for immigration. After careful analysis of the sample of voting-age adults in the United States, there was no significant evidence to reject the null hypotheses. However, among respondents who frequently interact with Latinos, opposition to immigration was substantially reduced through exposure to crime news. Since individuals perceive immigrants to be more prone to crime than native residents (Wang, 2012) and the dominant schema for an immigrant is a working-class Latino, but Latinos are not more prone to crime than native residents (Ewing, Martínez, & Rumbaut, 2015), this misperception is likely not coming from real life interactions. Since the racial cues in crime news about Latino criminals did not significantly resonate with respondents, this misperception is likely not coming from the news media. Moreover, the misperception of severe immigrant criminality must be propagated from elsewhere—I further explore this below.

There are several drawbacks to the methodology of this study that have implications for future research on this topic. For the content analysis, I sought to examine images and text of news articles. Since databases like Lexis Nexis omit images, I had to rely on the individual archives from the online news sources. Since local news organizations have fewer resources to curate a strong online archive of news articles than mainstream national news organizations, this limited the number of articles I could sample from. Due to the increased thematic coverage in the sample of articles, numerous articles did not meet the episodically framed crime story requirement for inclusion. As a result, the sample of articles was smaller than I desired.

Access to a database that curated local television news may have yielded more significant results due to intensified sensory experience television provides through audio and video. Aside from being unable to attain access to a database of local television news for the content analysis, there are technical challenges about mirroring this television coverage in the experiment and isolating race of the as the casual agent. Creating or editing a crime news broadcast for different treatment groups that differs only by the race of the perpetrator is technically difficult. It would also be important to remove divisive source cues that may act as a heuristic for respondents to make judgments (i.e. a FOX news symbol may encourage support from conservative respondents and heighten resistance from liberal respondents). News anchors may also impact respondents' questionnaire responses as well. Moreover, though utilizing television news for the content

analysis may yield more significant results due to heightened sensory experience with sounds and video, but it is technically difficult to design and isolate a causal agent precisely in an experimental portion.

Despite the challenges of utilizing television news for a similar experimental study in the future, it is not impossible. It is possible to create or edit a local news broadcast to appear from a fictitious local news source (with an appearance of credibility) to avoid divisive source cues. The researcher would have to manipulate the race of the perpetrator across treatment groups while holding other components constant. This would be easier if the perpetrator's name was not verbally mentioned (to avoid racial associations) and just a still image was featured as the news anchor discussed the perpetrator. This way, just the still image could be manipulated across treatment groups to isolate race. This would require a lot of technical skill and resources to produce. If produced well, this could isolate race of the perpetrator as the causal agent and measure the effects of racial cues in television crime news on opposition to immigration.

There are numerous avenues for future research to examine the link between Latinos and crime. To examine this connection more directly, a researcher could ask respondents about their attitudes toward Latinos in a pre-exposure questionnaire. After doing so, the researcher could randomly assign respondents to a news story that features either a Latino perpetrator, a white perpetrator, or an article that does not reference a specific perpetrator. The opposition to immigration effects may be larger among those who expressed

dislike for Latinos and saw a Latino perpetrator of crime in the news coverage. A challenge with this is potential anchoring bias of using respondent opinions about Latinos then reporting subsequent judgments on immigration. Researchers should consider asking about multiple racial and ethnic groups to mitigate this potential interference. To measure associations between Latinos, immigrants, and crime implicitly, a researcher could produce an implicit attitudes test to examine if respondents are connecting these ideas. While this test may be effective at examining implicit racial biases and associations, it cannot isolate the causes of those attitudes.

Although there are drawbacks to my research design that could be improved in future studies, there are numerous successful components. A strength of this design is the multi-method approach of executing a content analysis and an experiment. The content analysis provides insight into the current local crime news media landscape. This content analysis is further grounded in reality by comparing the representation of minorities as criminals in local news to actual census data. Providing this comparison between actual the news and state crime statistics is crucial for understanding news bias.

Regarding the experiment, a key strength is isolating causation. I am confident the race of the perpetrator is the sole distinction between treatment groups—this enhances the soundness of the findings and isolates perpetrator race as the causal agent driving differences among treatment groups. The articles for the three treatment groups were completely identical except for the race of the

perpetrator in the image and the name of the perpetrator of violent crime. The

images had the exact same background, and lighting. The perpetrators in the

images had identical clothing, body size, gender, similar facial hair, and a similar

age. The differences were just manipulated the race. Additionally, these images

were tested among the public for the most clearly Latino and most clearly

European (Brader, Valentino, & Suhay, 2008).

The perpetrator names were also tested among the public for most clearly

Latino and most clearly European. Instead of using a North American sounding

name for the white perpetrator, the name "Nikolai Vandinsky" was used to hold

the immigrant and foreign status constant. This was an intentional choice that,

knowingly, could depress the effects because both names convey a sense of

foreignness. It is important to note this name may appear of Russian descent to

some readers as opposed to Dutch or Eastern European. Given the political

climate in the United States at the time this experiment was employed, some

respondents may have perceived Russia and Russian immigrants more

threatening than Latino immigrants. However, utilizing the tested name "Nikolai

Vandinsky" more carefully isolated the race of the foreign immigrant criminal.

The treatment group devoid of an image of a perpetrator or a name utilized a

common stock photo of crime caution tape. This created a comparison point to

examine the impact of a specific perpetrator and not just the impact of crime

news more generally. Moreover, this study isolates race of the perpetrator as the

driving factor well and ensures the findings are not just a product of exposure to any crime news.

This study also utilized multiple measures to identify the significance of the perpetrator race in respondents' minds. When examining respondent ability to recall race of the perpetrator, this study included other measures to explore if responses were the result of general attentiveness to the article or recalling race specifically. This study asked respondents to recall mundane details to avoid artificially inflating recall by asking about unique attributes. For example, respondents were asked to recall the car the perpetrator drove away in. I selected the Toyota Camry because it is the most common American car of the past 18 years. The response options were also similar (black Toyota Corolla, blue Toyota Corolla, and black Toyota Camry) and presented in a randomized order. The number of words in the article and time allotted for respondents to read it corresponded to the average number of words reading speed of an American adult (the population of the study) to avoid giving respondents time to memorize details or read it multiple times. This study also utilized multiple questions in composite variables to measure opposition to immigration and perception of immigrants as threatening. Since these issues are very nuanced, utilizing several questionnaire responses to create composite variables with strong reliability captures the intended dependent variables more effectively than a single question alone. Moreover, this study was very carefully designed to isolate race of the perpetrator as the driving factor impacting results.

Though the content analysis could be more comprehensive, the experiment carefully manipulates race in crime news and measures opinion on immigration. Though it is possible that methodological errors produced these null results, it is more plausible to conclude the null results reveal how the world actually works. This study tells us something really important: voting age Americans do not seem to automatically associate Latinos with crime when exposed crime news. Even when crime news makes the association between Latinos and crime, public attitudes about immigration do not change. This makes sense because, as consistent with Dixon and Linz (2000) and this content analysis, the news media does not disproportionately represent Latinos as criminals compared to reality. As a result, it is logically consistent that exposure to a Latino criminal in news does not resonate with respondents and prime them to oppose immigration since the news does not create these cognitive associations. Moreover, the erroneous association between immigrants and criminality is likely not perpetuated by crime news. Alternatively, this public misperception might be propagated by strategic politicians who are unafraid to traffic falsehoods for political gain. This phenomenon is not new. The misperceptions politicians perpetuate merely evolve depending on historical context and potential political benefit.

In 1973, Richard Nixon infamously stated, "I am not a crook" as he denied his involvement with the Watergate Scandal. Former Nixon domestic policy chief, John Ehrlichman, admitted the Nixon administration had "two enemies: the

antiwar left and black people." Ehrlichman is on record expressing their plan to

get voters "to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin" and to

begin "criminalizing both heavily." His path to doing so involved a plan to "vilify

them night after night on the evening news." Ehrlichman stated the Nixon

administration knew their claims about these groups and drug use were lies yet

they persisted with this strategy to manipulate the public for political gain

(LoBianco, 2016).

Another example comes in 1981, when Lee Atwater explained Reagan's

southern strategy to win over the American public. Atwater discussed using

coded language to abstractly promote policies that disproportionately benefit

whites and hurt people of color without the speaker sounding explicitly racist. He

explained that discussing cutting taxes, forced bussing, and states' rights "are

totally economic things and a byproduct of them is, blacks get hurt worse than

whites" (Rosenthal, 2012). This strategy effectively deploys coded language to

maximize votes.

In Bill Clinton's 1996 State of the Union Address, he expressed numerous

sentiments about immigrants and criminality. He started by addressing how the

public is "disturbed by the large numbers of illegal aliens" immigrating into the

United States (Clinton, 1996). He described how undocumented immigrants are

taking jobs and burdening taxpayers. Clinton boasted about how his

administration was working "aggressively to secure our borders," has hired "a

record number of new border guards" and had "deport[ed] twice as many

criminal aliens as ever before" (Clinton, 1996). While utilizing political language

to present undocumented immigrants as threatening criminals might seem like a

recent phenomenon, it lurks in unlikely places in the United States' not-so-

distant history.

In the current political moment, discussions of immigration and crime are

prominent in Donald Trump's political rhetoric. Trump has made numerous

claims about the criminality of immigrants—most notably immigrants from

Mexico to the United States. In June 2015, he claimed Mexican immigrants are

"bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists" (C-SPAN, 2015). When

further discussing his stance on immigration in October 2016, he stated, "we have

some bad hombres here" (C-SPAN, 2016). As previously explained, these

erroneous claims are unsubstantiated by data suggesting immigrants commit

more crime than native born United States residents (Butcher & Phiel, 2008;

Ewing, Martínez, & Rumbaut, 2015; Rumbaut, 2008; Spenkuch, 2014).

Trump often pairs rhetoric painting immigrants (especially Latino

immigrants) as criminals with rhetoric discrediting the media. He frequently

derides the news media as "fake news," claiming they present him inaccurately.

In his first individual press conference as President of the United States, he

referred to journalists as "dishonest people" (C-SPAN, 2017). After this same

press conference, he tweeted "The FAKE NEWS media (failing @nytimes,

@NBCNews, @ABC, @CBS, @CNN) is not my enemy, it is the enemy of the

American People!" (realDonaldTrump, 2017a). On February 6, 2017, Trump

tweeted that "any negative polls are fake news" (realDonaldTrump, 2017b).

Moreover, politicians like Trump who are willing to present deceptive,

unsubstantiated claims for political gain have power to propagate misperceptions

upon which individuals base political behavior.

Since people do not have firsthand exposure to all political occurrences,

utilizing the news media to provide information and hold elected officials

accountable important to democratic participation in United States politics.

Politicians propagating erroneous information to the public while simultaneously

discrediting fact-checking institutions like the media (which in this study provide

accurate representations of racial breakdown of criminals compared to actual

crime rates) is a dangerous combination for democracy. Since firsthand exposure

to all political occurrences is impossible and the news media is presented as

untrustworthy, the public will seek information directly from politicians. Though

news organizations are often for-profit organizations with agendas of their own,

emboldened politicians who convince the public anyone who discredits their

statements is "fake news" do not promote an informed populace.

To test the impact of politicians propagating misperceptions about

immigration and crime to the public, an experiment is required to isolate

causation. A common tradeoff in experiments is external validity versus

controlling potentially interfering pre-treatment effects. For an experiment with

high external validity and also high pre-treatment effects, researchers could first

provide respondents a pre-exposure questionnaire to rank specific public officials

on perceived trust and perceived knowledge relative to themselves—these are the two requirements for establishing credibility in political persuasion (Lupia, 2016). Using a fictitious politician could diminish pre-treatment effects and also external validity. This questionnaire would also ask about respondents' trust in the news media's presentation of accurate information.

After the questionnaire, respondents are presented with a fictitious speech in which the public official they perceived to be most credible presents a clear misperception. After exposure, respondents complete a questionnaire that asks them (among other questions so as to not reveal what is being studied) to report if they believe the misperception presented in the speech. Another treatment group undergoes the same process except after exposure to the speech they are presented with a news article indicating the speech presented a misperception. After exposure to both, respondents complete a questionnaire that asks them (among other questions so as to not reveal what is being studied) to report if they believe the misperception presented in the speech. This could also be done with public officials respondents trust least or moderately trust to see if that influences respondent belief of misperceptions. After the study, respondents are debriefed and ensured the speech was fictitious so the public officials' reputations are not harmed by this study. A study such as this could effectively measure how credibility (of news organizations as well as politicians) influences belief of misperceptions.

Ultimately, my study reveals people do not seem to automatically associate Latinos with crime. Even when crime news makes this connection, attitudes about immigration do not change. The linkage between immigrants and crime might be forged much more directly by strategic politicians who are unafraid to traffic in false information for political benefit. This notion has serious implications for public involvement in politics and political behavior. When the public is susceptible to political rhetoric falsely demonizing groups in society and is simultaneously distrusting of watchdog news organizations that attempt to correct those misperceptions, perhaps the real "bad hombres" are not the groups politicians stigmatize after all.

References

"A Deep Dive Into Party Affiliation." 2015. Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. http://www.people-press.org/2015/04/07/a-deep-dive-into-party-affiliation/

Abowd, J. M., & Freeman, R. B. 1991. Introduction and summary. In J. M. Abowd & R. B. Freeman (Eds.), Immigration, trade, and the labor market (pp. 1–25). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Beirne, P., & Messerschmidt, J.W. 2014. *Criminology: A Sociological Approach*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

Borjas, G. J., & Freeman, R. B. 1992. *Immigration and the work force: Economic consequences for the United States and source areas*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Brader, T. 2006. *Campaigning for Hearts and Minds*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Brader, T., Valentino, N. A., & Suhay, E. 2008. What triggers public opposition to immigration? Anxiety, group cues, and immigration threat. American Journal of Political Science, 52, 959–978.

Brown, A., & Lopez, M. H. 2013. Ranking Latino Populations in the States. Retrieved December 09, 2016.

Butcher, K., & Phiel, A. M. 2008. Crime, Corrections, and California: What does Immigration Have to Do with It? Public Policy Institute of California. Volume 9.

Citrin, J, Green, D., Muste, C., & Wong, C. 1997. Public opinion toward immigration reform: The role of economic motivations. Journal of Politics 59, 858–81.

Clinton, B. J. 1995, January 24. *State of the Union*. Address presented at Congress, Washington DC.

Crispin-Miller, M. 1998. Crime News in Baltimore: The Economic Cost of Local TV's Bodybag Journalism. New York: Project on Media Ownership.

C-SPAN. 2015, June 16. Presidential Candidates Debate [Video File]. Retrieved Feb 21, 2017.

C-SPAN. 2016, October 19. Donald Trump Presidential Campaign
        Announcement [Video File]. Retrieved Feb 21, 2017.

C-SPAN. 2017, February 16. Donald Trump Presidential Campaign
        Announcement [Video File]. Retrieved Feb 21, 2017.

Dixon, T. L. & Linz, D. 2000. Overrepresentation and underrepresentation of
        African Americans and Latinos as lawbreakers on television news.
        Journal of Communication, 50(2), 131-154.

Dixon, T. & Williams, C. L. 2015. The Changing Misrepresentation of Race and
        Crime on Network and Cable News. Journal of Communication, 65:1, 24-
        39.

Entman, R.M. 1990. "Modern Racism and The Images Of Blacks in Local
        Television News." Critical Studies in Mass Communication 7:332–346.

Entman, R.M. 1992. "Blacks in the News: Television, Modern Racism, and
        Cultural Change," Journalism Quarterly 69:341–362.

Elias, R. 1994. "Official Stories: Media Coverage of American Crime Policy."
        Humanist 54:3–8.

Espenshade, T. J., & Calhoun, C. A. 1993. An analysis of public opinion toward
        undocumented immigration. Population Research and Policy Review, 12,
        189–224.

Ewing, W., Martínez, D.E., & Rumbaut, R.G. 2015. The Criminalization of
        Immigration in the United States. American Immigration Council Special
        Report.

Gans, H.J. 1979. Deciding what's news: A study of CBS Evening News, NBC
        Nightly News, Newsweek, and Time. New York: Pantheon Books.

Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M., Signorelli, N., & Shanahan, J. 2002.
        Growing up with television: Cultivation Porcesses. Media Effects.
        Advances in Theory and Research, 2, 121-153.

Gilens, M. 1999. *Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and the Politics
        of Antipoverty Policy.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gilliam, F. Jr., & Iyengar, S. 1997. "Prime Suspects: The Effects of Local
        News on the Viewing Public." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the
        Western Political Science Association, Portland.

Gilliam, F. Jr., & Iyengar, S. 2000. "Prime Suspects: The Influence of Local Television News on the Viewing Public." American Journal of Political Science 44.3. 560-73.

Gilliam, F. Jr., Valentino, N. A., & Beckmann, M. 2002. Where You Live and What You Watch: The Impact of Racial Proximity and Local Television News on Attitudes about Race and Crime. *Political Research Quarterly, 55*(4), 755-780.

Gimpel, J. G., Burns P., & Edwards, J. R., Jr. 1999. The Congressional politics of immigration reform. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Hess, S. 1991. Live from Capital Hill: Studies of congress and the media . Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute.

Iyengar, S. 1991. Is Anyone Responsible? How Television Frames Political Issues. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Iyengar, S. 2011. *Media Politics A Citizen's Guide* (2nd ed.). New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Iyengar, S., & Kinder, D. R. 1987. *News that matters: television and American opinion.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kinder, D. R., & Kam, C. D. 2009. *Us against them: Ethnocentric foundations of American public opinion.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

LoBianco, T. 2016, March 24. Report: Aide says Nixon's war on drug targeted blacks, hippies. *CNN.*

Lupia, A. 2016. *Uninformed: Why People Know So Little about Politics and What We Can Do About It.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Martinez, R., & Lee, M.T. 2000. "On Immigration and Crime." Pp. 485–524 in Criminal Justice 2000: The Nature of Crime: Continuity and Change, vol. 1, edited by Gary LaFree, Robert J. Bursik, Sr., James Short, and Ralph B. Taylor. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

Papper, R., & M. Gerhard. 1997. "Newsrooms Still Earn Profits," Communicator. 7-8.

Prior, M., & Lupia, A. 2008. Money, Time, and Political Knowledge: Distinguishing Quick Recall and Political Learning Skills. *American Journal of Political Science, 52*(1), 169-183.

realDonaldTrump. 2017a, February 16. The FAKE NEWS media (failing @nytimes,@NBCNews, @ABC, @CBS, @CNN) is not my enemy, it is the enemy of the American People! [Twitter post]. https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/832708293516632065

realDonaldTrump. 2017b, February 6. Any negative polls are fake news, just like the CNN, ABC, NBC polls in the election. Sorry, people want border security and extreme vetting. [Twitter post]. https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/828574430800539648

Romer, D., Jamieson, K. H., & Aday, S. 2003. Television news and the cultivation of fear of crime. Journal of communication, 53(1), 88-104.

Romer, D., Jamieson, K. H. & de Coteau, N. J.. 1998. "The Treatment of Persons Of Color in Local Television News— Ethnic Blame Discourse or Realistic Group Conflict?" Communication Research 25:286–305.

Roper Starch Worldwide. 1994. Roper Reports, 93: 22-23.

Rosenthal, A. 2012, November 14. Lee Atwater's 'Southern Strategy' Interview. *The New York Times*.

Rumbaut, R.G. 2008. Undocumented Immigration and Rates of Crime and Imprisonment: Popular Myths and Empirical Realities. University of California, Irvine.

Rumbaut, R. G., & Ewing, W.A. 2007. The Myth of Immigrant Criminality and the Paradox of Assimilation: Incarceration Rates among Native and Foreign-Born Men.Washington, DC: Immigration Policy Center, American Immigration Law Foundation.

Shoemaker, P. J., & Reese, D. R. 2014. Routines. In Mediating the message in the 21st century: A media sociology perspective (pp. 164-203). New York: Routledge.

Shrum, L. J., Burroughs, J. E., & Rindfleisch, A. 2005. Television's cultivation of Material values. Journal of Consumer Research, 32(3), 473-479.

Spenkuch, J. L. 2014. "Understanding the Impact of Immigration on Crime." American Law and Economics Review, 16(1): 177–219.

Valentino, Nicholas A. 1999. "Crime News and the Priming of Racial Attitudes During Evaluations of the President." Public Opinion Quarterly 63 (Fall): 293–320.

Valentino, N. A., Brader, T. and Jardina, A. E. 2013. Immigration Opposition Among U.S. Whites: General Ethnocentrism or Media Priming of Attitudes About Latinos?. Political Psychology, 34: 149–166.

Valentino, N. A., Hutchings, V. L., & White, I. K. 2002. Cues that matter: How political ads prime racial attitudes during campaigns. American Political Science Review, 96, 75–90.

Wang, X. 2012. Undocumented Immigrants as Perceived Criminal Threat: A Test of the Minority Threat Perspective. Criminology: 50(3):743-776.

Wilson, C. C., Gutiérrez, F., & Chao, L. C. 2003. *Racism, sexism and the media: The rise of class communication in multicultural America.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Appendix

I. Questionnaire
This is exported from Qualtrics. Formatting appears differently than it did to the 614 respondents.

CONSENT Thank you for participating in this study. This study aims to evaluate the quality of news coverage. It should take about 7 minutes for you to complete this survey. All answers will remain completely confidential, so please answer the questions to the best of your ability. If you agree to participate in this study, the following survey will ask you to read a news story randomly selected from a variety of topics. Please read the story to evaluate the quality of the news coverage and be prepared to answer some questions. You will be asked to answer these questions to the best of your ability. You will also be asked a number of questions about yourself. All of your answers will remain completely confidential. There is minimal risk of discomfort from participation in this study. In the unlikely event that you experience any discomfort during any part of the research study, you are welcome to exit the survey at any time by closing the browser window. You may skip any questions you do not wish to answer; however, incomplete surveys may be discarded and not used in the study. You will receive $0.70 for completing the study. You may withdraw your participation at any time without loss of any benefit to which you are already entitled. The records of this study will be handled as confidentially as possible. Data will be analyzed upon completion of the study and no personally identifying information is being collected from study participants. Since you are enrolling in this research study through the Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) site, we need to let you know that information gathered through Amazon MTurk is not completely anonymous. Any work performed on Amazon MTurk can potentially be linked to information about you on your Amazon public profile page, depending on the settings you have for your Amazon profile. Any linking of data by MTurk to your ID is outside of the control of the researcher for this study. We will not be accessing any identifiable information about you that you may have put on your Amazon public profile page. We will store your MTurk worker ID separately from the other information you provide to us. Amazon Mechanical Turk has privacy policies of its own outlined for you in Amazon's privacy agreement. If you have concerns about how your information will be used by Amazon, you should consult them directly. This survey is part of a study being conducted by researchers at the University of Michigan. Any questions about this survey can be directed to mbcullen@umich.edu. Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may skip or refuse to answer any survey question without affecting your study compensation. The University of Michigan Institutional Review Board Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences has determined that this study is exempt from IRB oversight. If you agree to participate, click the link below to proceed to the survey. If you do not, please exit the survey now.

AGE What is your age?
❍ Under 18 (1)
❍ 18 - 24 (2)
❍ 25 - 34 (3)
❍ 35 - 44 (4)
❍ 45 - 54 (5)
❍ 55 - 64 (6)
❍ 65 - 74 (7)
❍ 75 - 84 (8)
❍ 85 or older (9)

GENDER Gender
❍ Male (1)
❍ Female (2)

RACE Race-ethnicity
❍ White (1)
❍ Black or African American (2)
❍ American Indian or Alaska Native (3)
❍ Asian (4)
❍ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (5)
❍ Other (6)

EDU Education
❍ Less than high school (1)
❍ High school graduate (2)
❍ Some college (3)
❍ 2 year degree (4)
❍ 4 year degree (5)
❍ Professional degree (6)
❍ Doctorate (7)

STATE Which state do you currently reside in?
Alabama (1) Alaska (2)Arizona (3)Arkansas (4)California (5)Colorado (6)Connecticut (7)Delaware (8)Florida (9) Georgia (10) Hawaii (11) Idaho (12) Illinois (13) Indiana (14)Iowa (15)Kansas (16)Kentucky (17)Louisiana (18)Maine (19)Maryland (20)Massachusetts (21)Michigan (22)Minnesota (23)Mississippi (24)Missouri (25)Montana (26)Nebraska (27)Nevada (28)New Hampshire (29)New Jersey (30)New Mexico (31)New York (32)North Carolina (33)North Dakota (34)Ohio (35)Oklahoma (36)Oregon (37)Pennsylvania (38)Rhode Island (39)South Carolina (40)South Dakota (41)Tennessee (42)Texas (43)Utah (44)Vermont (45)Virginia (46)Washington (47)Washington, DC (48)West Virginia (49)Wisconsin (50)Wyoming (51)

PARTY Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?"
❍ Republican (1)
❍ Independent (2)
❍ Democrat (3)

Display This Question:
    If   Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?" Republican Is Selected
STR Would you call yourself a strong Republican or a not very strong Republican?
❍ Not very strong Republican (1)
❍ Very strong Republican (2)

Display This Question:
    If   Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?" Independent Is Selected
LDR Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic party?
❍ Republican party (1)
❍ Neither party (2)
❍ Democratic party (3)

STD Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or a not very strong Democrat?

❍ Not very strong Democrat (1)

❍ Strong Democrat (2)

CONSUME_NEWS On a typical week, how many days do you watch, read, or listen to news on the internet, not including sports?

❍ 0 days (1)

❍ 1 day (2)

❍ 2 days (3)

❍ 3 days (4)

❍ 4 days (5)

❍ 5 days (6)

❍ 6 days (7)

❍ 7 days (8)

❍ Don't know (sysmiss)

If 0 days Is Selected, Then Skip To End of BlockIf Don't know Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Block

READ NEWS During a typical week, how many days do you read news (online or printed), not including sports?

❍ 0 days (1)

❍ 1 day (2)

❍ 2 days (3)

❍ 3 days (4)

❍ 4 days (5)

❍ 5 days (6)

❍ 6 days (7)

❍ 7 days (8)

❍ Don't know (sysmiss)

If 0 days Is Selected, Then Skip To   During a typical wee...

TV NEWS During a typical week, how many days do you watch TV news, not including sports?
- ○ 0 days (1)
- ○ 1 day (2)
- ○ 2 days (3)
- ○ 3 days (4)
- ○ 4 days (5)
- ○ 5 days (6)
- ○ 6 days (7)
- ○ 7 days (8)
- ○ Don't know (sysmiss)

PRMPT2 Next, we would like you to read a news story randomly selected from a variety of topics. Please read the story to evaluate the quality of the news coverage and be prepared to answer some questions. You will have 60 seconds to read the article.

(Participants randomly assigned to treatment group 1, treatment group 2, or treatment group 3.)

PRMPT6 Now that you have read the article, please answer the following questions regarding the quality of the news story.

EXPL The news article explained the story clearly.
- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Disagree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Agree (4)
- ○ Strongly agree (5)

VIOLENT I found the article to be violent.
- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Disagree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Agree (4)
- ○ Strongly agree (5)

LEARN I learned a lot from the article.
- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Disagree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Agree (4)
- ○ Strongly agree (5)

PRMPT7 Next, please tell us what you remember about the article.

CAR What type of car did the perpetrator steal from the victim?
- ○ black, Toyota Camry (1)
- ○ blue, Toyota Camry (2)
- ○ black, Toyota Corolla (3)
- ○ blue, Toyota Corolla (4)

VICT_RACE What was the race of the perpetrator from the article?
- ○ White (1)
- ○ Latino (2)
- ○ African American (3)
- ○ Asian (4)
- ○ Middle Eastern (5)
- ○ None shown (6)
- ○ Don't know (7)

PRMPT8 Next, we would like to know your opinions about issues in the news. Please answer the following questions.

DP Do you favor or oppose the death penalty for people convicted of murder?
- ○ Strongly oppose (1)
- ○ Oppose (2)
- ○ Neither favor nor oppose (3)
- ○ Favor (4)
- ○ Strongly favor (5)
- ○ Don't know (sysmiss)

NUM_IM Do you think the number of immigrants from foreign countries who are permitted to come to the United States to live should be
❍ Decreased a lot (5)
❍ Decreased a little (4)
❍ Left the same as it is now (3)
❍ Increased a little (2)
❍ Increased a lot (1)

IM_JOB How likely is it that immigrants will take jobs away from people already here?
❍ Very unlikely (1)
❍ Unlikely (2)
❍ Neither likely nor unlikely (3)
❍ Likely (4)
❍ Very likely (5)
❍ Don't know (sysmiss)

RANK Rank the issues local officials should allocate the money toward: 1 being the most money and 6 being the least money.
_____ Public schools (1)
_____ Immigration (2)
_____ Fire department (3)
_____ Crime (4)
_____ Parks (5)
_____ Environment (6)

LEGAL_STAT Some states have passed a law that will require state and local police to determine the immigration status of a person if they find that there is a reasonable suspicion he or she is an undocumented immigrant. Those found to be in the U.S. without permission will have broken state law. From what you have heard, do you favor, oppose, or neither favor nor oppose these immigration laws?
❍ Strongly oppose (1)
❍ Oppose (2)
❍ Neither favor nor oppose (3)
❍ Favor (4)
❍ Strongly favor (5)
❍ Don't know (sysmiss)

CIRC There is a proposal to allow people who were illegally brought into the U.S. as children to become permanent U.S. residents under some circumstances. Specifically, citizens of other countries who illegally entered the U.S. before age 16, who have lived in the U.S. 5 years or longer, and who graduated high school would be allowed to stay in the U.S. as permanent residents if they attend college or serve in the military. From what you have heard, do you favor, oppose, or neither favor nor oppose this proposal?
- ❍ Strongly favor (1)
- ❍ Favor (2)
- ❍ Neither favor nor oppose (3)
- ❍ Oppose (4)
- ❍ Strongly oppose (5)
- ❍ Don't know (sysmiss)

ATTN_CHK Recent research on immigration in the United States suggests that the number of immigrants entering the United States fluctuates over time. To show that you have read the instructions, please ignore the question following this sentence and do not respond to this question. Do you believe that the fluctuating levels of immigrants entering the United States is the result of economic changes?
- ❍ Strongly disagree (1)
- ❍ Disagree (2)
- ❍ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ❍ Agree (4)
- ❍ Strongly agree (5)
- ❍ Don't know (6)

ATTDE Which comes closest to your view about what government policy should be toward unauthorized immigrants now living in the United States?
- ❍ Make all unauthorized immigrants felons and send them back to their home country (4)
- ❍ Have a guest worker program that allows unauthorized immigrants to remain in the country (3)
- ❍ Allow unauthorized immigrants to remain in the united states if they meet certain requirements (2)
- ❍ Allow unauthorized immigrants to remain in the united states without penalties (1)
- ❍ Don't know (sysmiss)

IM_CRIME Do you believe immigrants commit more crime than citizens born in the United States?
- ⭕ Strongly believe immigrants commit more crime than U.S. born citizens (5)
- ⭕ Believe immigrants commit more crime than U.S. born citizens (4)
- ⭕ Neither believe nor disbelieve (3)
- ⭕ Do not believe immigrants commit more crime than U.S. born citizens (2)
- ⭕ Strongly do not believe immigrants commit more crime than U.S. born citizens (1)
- ⭕ Don't know (sysmiss)

3 STRIKES Three-strikes laws generally increase prison sentences for people convicted of a felony who have been previously convicted of two or more times. Do you favor, oppose, or neither favor nor oppose this type of law?
- ⭕ Strongly oppose (1)
- ⭕ Oppose (2)
- ⭕ Neither favor nor oppose (3)
- ⭕ Favor (4)
- ⭕ Strongly favor (5)
- ⭕ Don't know (sysmiss)

Q54 Thank you for your participation in this research project! In this study, we are interested in how racial cues in news articles influence political attitudes. More specifically, how depictions of Latinos in local news affect support for Latino immigration into the United States. Recent evidence by media scholars suggests media messages can activate associations between racial groups and political issues, priming race as a criterion for evaluating political issues associated with specific racial groups (Dixon & Linz, 2000; Gilliam & Iyengar 2000; Iyengar, 2000; Valentino, Hutchings, & White 2008; Valentino 1999). We hypothesize racial cues in news media can influence support for policies that affect the racial groups presented. If you have any questions, concerns, or comments about the survey or the underlying research, please contact: Morgan Cullen Honors Program in Political Science Department of Political Science mbcullen@umich.edu

II. Questionnaire Items in the Composite Variables

Dependent Variable 1: Opposition to inclusive immigration

STR_IMP= (LEGAL_STAT +CIRC+NUM_IM+ATTDE)/4
Cronbach's alpha: .79

Dependent Variable 2: Perception of immigrants as a personal threat to daily life and security.

IM_PT= (IM_JOB + IM_CRIME)/2
Cronbach's alpha: .70

III. Codebook

Variable name	Description	Value
CS	Does the article feature a violent crime story? According to the FBI definition, violent crime is composed of four offenses: murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Only include stories about humans. Thematic coverage about extended, overarching trends or data (violent crime trends in the area, policy implications, etc.) without specific episodes of crime are coded as a 0. If coded as a 0, note why. Definitions and considerations: **Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter**: the willful (nonnegligent) killing of one human	No violent crime in the story=0 Murder/ nonnegligent manslaughter=1 Forcible rape=2 Robbery w/ person there=3 Aggravated assault=4 Combination of two or more acts of murder/ nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault of a victim=5

	being by another.	
	Aggravated assault: an attempt to cause serious bodily injury to another or to cause serious bodily injury purposely, knowingly or recklessly.	
	Robbery: the taking or attempting to take anything of value from the care, custody, or control of a person or persons by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear.	
	Forcible rape: non-consensual sexual activity forcibly and against the victim's will. Attempts or assaults to commit rape by force or threat of force are also included.	
	Do not include articles of thematic coverage that focuses solely on overarching trends. If an article describes numerous episodes of crime, code those occurrences	

	individually. If the news article includes a video, analyze the video for images of perpetrators and victims as well as the images and text.	
PN	How many perpetrators are featured in the selected news story? Count the number of perpetrators featured in the story. Type the number of perpetrators. Answer the remainder of questions for each individual perpetrator.	Type the number of perpetrators featured. Unknown=0
PR	What is the race of the perpetrator? Coder's initial assumption. If a name does not have a clear racial association (example, Sanchez is associated with Latino) then note race is not identified.	Type the race of the perpetrator. If no perpetrator is shown, identified, or discussed, note that here and in other applicable sections.

PS	Is the perpetrator a man or woman? Coder's initial assumption.	Man=1 Woman=2 Unknown=0 If no perpetrator is shown, identified, or discussed, note that here and in other applicable sections.
PE	How wealthy does the perpetrator appear or seem as described? As described refers to non-visual cues from the text.	Type response here. If no perpetrator is shown, identified, or discussed, note that here and in other applicable sections.
PB	How large did the perpetrator appear or seem as described in terms of stature and build? As described refers to non-visual cues from the text.	Small=1 Medium=2 Large= 3 If no perpetrator is shown, identified, or discussed, note that here and in other applicable sections.
PL	Does the story reference the legal status of citizenship of the perpetrator?	No=0 Yes=1
PI	If listed, implied, or discussed, list legal status.	Type legal status here.

VN	How many victims are featured in the selected news story? Count the number of victims featured in the story. Type the number of victims. Answer the remainder of questions for each individual victim.	Type the number of victims featured. If no victim is shown, identified, or discussed, note that here and in other applicable sections. Unknown=0
VR	What is the race of the victim? Coder's initial assumption.	Type the race of the perpetrator. If no victim is shown, identified, or discussed, note that here and in other applicable sections.
VS	Is the victim a man or woman? Coder's initial assumption.	Man=1 Woman=2 Unknown=0 If no victim is shown, identified, or discussed, note that here and in other applicable sections.
VE	How wealthy does the victim appear or seem as described? Described refers to non-visual cues from the text as opposed	Type response here. If no victim is shown, identified, or discussed, note that here and in other applicable sections.

	to an image.	
VB	How large did the victim appear or seem as described in terms of stature and build? Described refers to non-visual cues from the text as opposed to an image.	Small=1 Medium=2 Large= 3 If no victim is shown, identified, or discussed, note that here and in other applicable sections.
VL	Does the story reference the legal status of citizenship of the victim? If specified implied, or discussed, list legal status.	No=0 Yes=1
VI	If listed, implied, or discussed, list legal status.	Type legal status here.
IM	Is immigration referenced in the article?	No=0 Yes=1
LI	Is immigration specifically regarding Latino/Hispanic immigration referenced?	No=0 Yes=1

LT	If included, describe the tone of the reference to Latino/Hispanic immigration. Include specific quotes from the article if applicable.	

Data from content analysis and experiment are available upon request.