ABSTRACT

ESTRADA, EMILY PATE. Immigrants in the News Media: Symbolic Boundaries in Negative, Neutral, and Positive Discourses. (Under the direction of Dr. Sarah K. Bowen).

Immigration has long been a central feature of American life. Accordingly, early and contemporary sociologists have devoted a significant amount of research to analyzing the factors that contribute to immigration and to immigrants’ experiences in American society. I analyze the cultural processes and symbolic boundaries surrounding U.S. immigrants in media discourse, a line of inquiry that has been largely neglected within the field of immigration studies. Symbolic boundaries refer to the distinctions we draw between social groups and often entail an element of “us” versus “them.” This is a meaningful omission because the shared, inter-subjective frameworks that distinguish immigrants from nonimmigrants serve as the foundation for the inequality immigrants encounter and, ultimately, other lines of immigration-related inquiries. In order to investigate distinctions between “us,” the native-born and “them,” the foreign-born, I examined symbolic boundary-work in 587 newspaper articles across four outlets. While many scholars have examined how immigrants are portrayed in the news media, they most often focus on discourse that is openly negative or hostile. However, I argue that in focusing on only negative media discourse, scholars have failed to analyze an important part of the story: rhetoric that is neutral or more receptive towards immigrants. Neutral or positive discourses surrounding immigration may challenge boundaries between immigrant and nonimmigrants, or reinforce them but in more subtle ways. I find that across a variety of topics, including culture, the economy, and immigration control, newspaper outlets generally reinforce symbolic boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants through discourses that are not only
negative, but, surprisingly, discourses that are neutral and positive as well. Two implications stem from these findings. First, my research illuminates a key mechanism related to the reproduction of the inequality immigrants face. As many sociologists have noted, cultural processes must legitimate or reinforce the structure in order for it to continue to exist. My work suggests that the legal and political structures surrounding immigrants are reinforced by media discourses that (re)create boundaries between immigrant and nonimmigrant groups. Secondly, my work has significant implications for the scholarship on inequality more generally. In contrast to other systems of inequality, my findings suggest that symbolic boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants are shaped through discourse that is negative, neutral, and positive. The wide range of discourses that contribute to boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants – from blatantly hostile to overtly receptive – likely stems from the legitimacy granted to the way we organize ourselves politically. The system of nation-states is based on the idea of national sovereignty, which suggests that nations have the right to determine who they are going to allow within their borders and who they are going to keep out. The premise is that the government prohibits entry of those who are somehow fundamentally “different” than those within arbitrary national borders, which is expressed – both implicitly and explicitly – in the frames described here. Thus, while it is generally unacceptable to express openly racist and sexist ideas in public discourse, this is not the case as it relates to distinctions based on nativity. Essentially, regardless of whatever side of the aisle an individual may be on, very rarely does the actual distinction of “immigrant” come into question. As it relates to scholarship on inequality, this project suggests that when differences between groups are codified by political and legal institutions,
discourses in society may ultimately reinforce these differences even if they are critical of them.
Immigrants in the News Media: Symbolic Boundaries in Negative, Neutral, and Positive Discourses

by
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A dissertation or thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of North Carolina State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Sociology

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DEDICATION

When the roots are deep, there is no reason to fear the wind.

-African Proverb

This work is dedicated to my partner in life, David. You are my forever best friend and the roots that make me less fearful of the wind (and, geez Louise, this process was a rocks-in-your-pockets doozy of a windstorm). I love you dearly, dear.
On August 11, 1982 at approximately 8:15 am was welcomed into this world by Lewis, Cheryl, and Mackinzee Pate, and has been the ultimate morning person ever since. In 1988, Cheryl married John Jackson, the man that would raise Emily as his own. In 1990, the family became complete with the addition of Katherine Elizabeth. Emily attended Levelland High School, where, at the ripe old age of 14, she met the person who would become her life partner. theirs was a classic high school romance: she was a lowly freshman, he was a senior that could get her into all the cool parties. Little did she know that she had found her person, and on December 16, 2000 they were wed. Emily attended Texas Tech University in Lubbock, TX where she earned her Bachelor’s degree in Political Science and minored in Women’s Studies. Her original plan was to attend law school, but about a month before graduation she realized two things: 1) she did, in fact, not want to go to law school and 2) she did, in fact, not want to continue her studies in Political Science. An advisor suggested she look into sociology, a discipline she somehow managed to avoid the entirety of her undergraduate education. After reading a rather boring, dense Introduction to Sociology textbook, she immediately knew that she would devote the rest of her life to the discipline. Accordingly, she enrolled in Texas Tech’s Masters of Sociology program in which she graduated from in 2008. Feeling like she still had room to grow as a sociologist, she and David decided to move 1,500 miles away from everyone and everything they knew so that she could pursue her PhD at North Carolina State University. Emily and David live in Raleigh with their “non-traditional children,” Gizmo and Orbitz. Emily’s passions all coalesce around the letter F: food, fitness, fashion, and being fanatically friendly.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION, THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK, AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Immigration has long been a central feature of American life. Accordingly, early and contemporary sociologists have devoted a significant amount of research to analyzing the factors that contribute to immigration and to immigrants’ experiences in American society. In the early 1920s, Park first theorized about race relations and the process of assimilation. He was followed by Gordon (1964), who relied on the experiences of early 20th-century European ethnic immigrants to describe the stages of assimilation. According to Park (1926) and Gordon (1964), immigrants undergo a series of fixed stages in a linear progression that inevitably results in complete absorption into the host society.

Since these early theorists, the U.S. has experienced significant changes related to immigration. Between 1970 and 2010, the proportion of immigrants living in the U.S. more than doubled, from 4.7% to 12.9% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau 2012). The majority of these new arrivals are now non-White; while in 1960, 75% of immigrants came from Europe, in 2010, 53% of immigrants had migrated from Latin America and 28% came from Asia (U.S. Census Bureau 2012). Furthermore, while most people moving to the U.S. have historically resided in traditional immigrant destinations such as California, Texas, and Illinois, the 1990s saw the rise of new immigrant destinations such as North Carolina, Georgia, and Iowa (Lichter and Johnson 2009).

As a result of these demographic changes, scholarship on immigration has proliferated. Some scholars focus on the structural underpinnings that motivate migration,
studying the economic, social, and political factors pushing immigrants out of their countries of origin and pulling them to their destination countries (Massey 2008; Portes 1997; Robinson 2009; Zúñiga and Hernández-León 2005). Other immigration researchers focus on interactions between immigrant and nonimmigrant1 groups (Kasnitz et al. 2008; Marrow 2011; Massey and Sanchez 2010), especially in new immigrant destinations that have not historically had a large foreign-born population. Yet another line of research explores how immigrants are represented in public discourse through various institutions such as the government and media (Chavez 2013; Flores 2003; Martinez-Brawley and Gualda 2009; McConnell 2011; McElmurry 2009; Stewart, Pitts, and Osborne 2011; Padín 2005; Sohoni and Sohoni 2014; Sohoni and Mendez 2014). Lastly, scholars examine the process of assimilation and how it affects the distribution of material and nonmaterial resources that immigrants obtain and receive (DiPrete and Eirich 2006; Haller et al. 2011; Massey, Rugh, and Pren 2010; Portes, Fernandez-Kelly and Haller 2009; Portes and Zhou 1993; Waldinger and Feliciano 2004; Waters et al. 2010). Regardless of the specific approach, I suggest that these lines of inquiry, in one way or another, all focus on documenting, explaining, or analyzing the inequality, exploitation, and marginalization immigrants experience.

While this scholarship is meaningful and provides important insight into the process of immigration, a significant gap remains. Like most research on inequality (Lamont, Beljean, and Clair 2014), immigration scholars have largely failed to examine the cultural processes and symbolic boundaries that produce and reproduce immigrants’ marginalization.

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1 In general, throughout my dissertation I refer to the native- and foreign-born populations as nonimmigrants and immigrants respectively. I do so because the language we use to label groups has a meaningful impact on how they are perceived by society, something especially important to consider given the topic of my project. While even the terms nonimmigrants and immigrants note some distinction between the two groups, I find them less value-laden than the terms native- and foreign-born.
Cultural processes entail the shared classifications and categories that exist in society (Lamont and Molnar 2002). Cultural processes are supported by symbolic boundaries, or the distinctions made between “us” and “them” (Lamont and Molnar 2002; Wimmer 2008). Symbolic boundaries are related to the social construction of difference and are often normative where one group is more highly valued than another.

This is a meaningful omission within the scholarship on immigration because the shared, inter-subjective frameworks that distinguish immigrants from nonimmigrants serve as the foundation for the inequality immigrants encounter and, ultimately, other lines of immigration-related inquiries. According to Lamont and colleagues (2014), cultural processes “constitute the missing link between micro-level cognition and macro-level outcomes” (595). That is, these symbolic boundaries serve as a bridge between the social and social psychological classification of immigrants and the structural outcomes they experience. The symbolic category of “immigrant” must first exist and be occupied by certain actors before factors of migration, interactions between groups, representations of immigrants, and the distribution of resources immigrants receive can be studied. However, despite their profound influence, symbolic boundaries go largely unexamined, not only by society at large, but also by scholars of immigration themselves. In studying cultural processes, then, I am answering the call of other researchers to examine how inequalities are reproduced (Lamont et al. 2014; Schwalbe 2000).

In order to investigate distinctions between “us,” the native-born and “them,” the foreign-born, I examine the types of symbolic boundary-work newspaper outlets engage in when covering immigration. Discourse is a prime medium for examining symbolic
boundaries, because it is the site through which reality and knowledge is created in our society; it is through discourse that these socially constructed boundaries are, in part, created (Foucault 1980; Lamont et al. 2014). The media represents an especially powerful institution when it comes to the dissemination of discourse because its function is to report on unfolding events in society and the happenings of other social institutions (Altheide 2013). This reporting is often viewed as unbiased by much of the public, despite that the fact that in many ways it is socially constructed; actors choose which topics to cover and in what ways (Fowler 1991). Through this social construction, the media also has the potential to influence the social world around it by communicating to audiences which topics are newsworthy and by setting the parameters of how an issue should be thought about (Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes and Sasson 1992; Kim, Scheufele, and Shanahan 2002; Saguy, Gruys, and Gong 2010).

Immigration scholars that analyze how immigrants are represented in society come closest to examining the cultural processes and symbolic boundaries surrounding immigration. Studies that examine how immigrants are represented in the news media find that they are portrayed as threatening in a variety of ways: economically, by undermining Americans’ access to jobs and straining the social welfare system (Chavez 2013; Martinez-Brawley and Gualda 2009; McElmurry 2009; Stewart et al. 2011); culturally, by resisting assimilation into the American mainstream and actively trying to change the fabric of society (Chavez 2013; Flores 2003; McConnell 2011; Padín 2005); and socially, by immigrating without documentation and bringing crime to local communities (Martinez-Brawley and Gualda 2009; Sohoni and Sohoni 2014; Sohoni and Mendez 2014; Stewart et al. 2011). This research is well-established, and although not all of these scholars explicitly reference symbolic boundaries, their work nonetheless investigates how media discourse reinforces
distinctions between “us,” the native-born and “them,” the foreign-born. However, most of this work focuses on newspaper discourse that is overtly negative or xenophobic. I argue that in focusing only on negative public discourse, scholars have failed to analyze an important part of the story: rhetoric that is neutral or more receptive towards immigrants. My analysis of symbolic boundary-work in newspaper articles addresses this by examining discourses that are not only negative, but those that are neutral and positive as well. Considering recent challenges to America’s racial hierarchy (described in more detail below), it may be that positive or neutral discourses signify a blurring of boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants. On the other hand, these discourses may, much like the negative discourses, reinforce boundaries between the two groups but in ways that are more subtle and covert.

**Contemporary U.S. Immigration in Context**

Sociologists widely recognize that the structure of society and cultural elements found within reinforce and support one another (Giddens 1984; Habermas 1984; Marx 1867). Given this, in the following section I provide contextual information related to U.S. immigration in order to better understand the importance of studying cultural processes and symbolic boundaries surrounding immigrants in public discourse.

*Political Economy Surrounding Immigration*

Economic context is important to consider in relation to symbolic boundaries and immigrants for two reasons. First, as will be described below, the political economy serves as the structural underpinnings of immigration; the vast majority of immigration occurring to the U.S. today is economically motivated (Portes 1997). Secondly, immigrants fill the need today’s economy has for a hyper-exploitable, vulnerable work force. The source of this
vulnerability, in many ways, stems from the symbolic boundaries that exist between “us,” the native-born, and “them,” the foreign-born (Robinson 2009).

The structural underpinnings of immigration stem in part from the neoliberal political economy. In the immediate post-WWII period, dominant political and economic models centered on the developmental state. The idea was that states should take an active role in shaping and protecting their national economic development by subsidizing infant industries, implementing tariffs to protect domestic markets from foreign competition, and setting interest rates to encourage saving or spending depending on the immediate economic needs (Evans 1995). While these policies helped to promote economic advancement in a variety of nations, beginning in the mid-1970s a new era began to emerge, one in which “markets came progressively to be seen as the most desirable mechanism for regulating both domestic and world economies” (Fourcade-Gourinchas and Babb 2002). This new line of thinking, generally referred to as neoliberalism, rested on the idea of competitive advantage; if left alone, national economies would carve out their niche in the global economy, resulting in economic development not only for individual nation-states, but for the global economy as a whole. Many countries, from liberal to conservative, implemented policies designed to strengthen the market including privatizing public industries, eliminating social welfare resources, dialing back state regulations, and opening domestic markets for foreign competition and investment (Fernandez-Kelly and Massey 2007; Fourcade-Gourinchas and Babb 2002; Overbeek 2002; Rose 1999). The shift towards neoliberal economic policies resulted in dramatic consequences for countries around the world, one of the most significant of which has been an increase in the movement of displaced persons from poor nations to rich ones.
For many poor nations, the transition to neoliberalism stemmed from debt crises that emerged in the early 1980s. In the 1970s, advanced nations such as Britain and the U.S. began to pursue liberalized monetary policies that favored the freer movement of capital. This progression towards liberal monetary policy was solidified in 1971 when President Nixon removed the gold-standard fixed monetary system, allowing the American dollar to float (Forcade-Gourinchas and Babb 2002; McMichael 2011). As a result of these new liberal monetary policies, financial institutions in rich nations began to unwisely lend capital to Latin American and other countries who funneled these newly gained funds into public spending on items such as infrastructure development. Towards the end of the 1970s, this increasingly volatile economic climate caused international interest rates to mushroom, making it extremely challenging – if not impossible – for many borrowing nations to satisfy the demands of their loans. In 1982, Mexico became the first Third World nation to officially default on its loan obligations, which had grown to 36% of its GDP (Ibarra and Carlos 2015). In order to find relief from its debt, Mexico, along with other nations in similar positions, turned to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) who agreed to help in exchange for a commitment to neoliberal structural adjustment policies. In Mexico, this meant radically opening domestic markets to free trade and dismantling public lands to allow for private ownership (Fourcade-Gourinchas and Babb 2002). The agricultural sector was hit the hardest by these neoliberal reforms; investment in agriculture decreased by 95.5% and the credit available to the rural sector by 64.4% (Ibarra and Carlos 2015). Small, local producers were suddenly forced to compete with global firms at the very time that state support was eroding (Richmond 2002). Similar policies and series of events unfolded in poor, Latin American
nations around the world, resulting in a massive number of displaced persons, unable to survive through the means they had traditionally done so.

While Asian countries did not experience a debt crisis like those in Latin America, they were not immune to the effects of neoliberalism. Due to the decreases in trade barriers, beginning in the 1970s and continuing through the 80s, U.S. corporations began to make direct investments in Asian nations by establishing U.S.-owned factories, setting up transnational corporation headquarters and training Asian management and technical personal (Yang 2010). This resulted in the displacement of people from traditional economies, forced to migrate for survival. Political and social disparities also contribute to migration patterns between Asian nations and the U.S., where “a lack of personal freedom, personal security, political stability, and democracy in many Asian sending countries, pushed Asians to leave their homeland” (Yang 2010: 17). A significant amount of migration from Asian nations also stems from limited opportunities for college education in countries of origin as compared to the U.S. (Kanjanapan 1995).

Rich countries, especially the U.S., also began to experience significant economic shifts beginning in the 1970s. In the decades subsequent to WWII, the U.S. went unchallenged as the world hegemonic power. This era of unchallenged U.S. dominance witnessed the rise of a substantial middle-class, with employers paying workers higher wages which were passed along to consumers in the form of higher prices. Without significant competition on the global market, U.S. corporations were also able to avoid pursuing more efficient production models. However, as the economies of Japan and Western Europe began to expand and the neoliberal global economy became more integrated, U.S. employers started to pursue profit-maximizing strategies that resulted in a shift of power from employees to
employers (Liaw and Frey 2007). For example, around this time, U.S. industries began to outsource their production systems to other countries where they could pay workers lower wages and avoid costly environmental regulations. This process, known as deindustrialization, had a negative effect on American workers who found themselves in an extremely precarious position; jobs that were once secure and permanent, were now being shipped to other countries, resulting in massive layoffs. U.S. firms also began to adopt “flexible” labor models, deepening the division between core and peripheral labor segments (Nelson, Nelson, and Tratuman 2014). Jobs in the peripheral labor market expanded along with practices such as temporary work arrangements, subcontracting, and a shift towards part-time or seasonal employment. These changes make workers extremely vulnerable, eroding the power they once enjoyed.

The changes associated with the emergence of a neoliberal capitalist economy comprise the structural underpinnings of the political economy surrounding immigration, or the push factors driving immigrants out of their home countries and the pull factors drawing them in to developed nations. In rich nations, employers’ shift towards flexible, service-oriented production created a need for workers that were hyper-exploitable which ultimately stems from a position of vulnerability (Kalleberg 2011; Overbeek 2002). This type of economic restructuring was key to the rise of new immigrant destinations, with immigrants relocating to fill labor vacuums resulting from increased demand for workers in low-wage, low-skill jobs outside traditional settlement areas (Massey 2008; Zúñiga and Hernández-León 2005). Because displaced persons in poor nations are largely redundant, migrants, in particular those that are undocumented, are especially suited to serve as a vulnerable workforce (Robinson 2009). Through this vulnerability and complete lack of bargaining
power (Liaw and Frey 2007), migrants have helped “…shore up the floundering American economy” (Green 2011: 367).

Policies Surrounding U.S. Immigration

U.S. immigration policies represent another important contextual element to consider when analyzing symbolic boundaries and immigration. Immigration legislation formally establishes who is allowed within particular borders as well as the resources and rights afforded to those classified as foreign-born (De Genova 2005; Heyman 1998, 2001; Hiemstra 2010; Wilkinson 2014). Thus, while symbolic boundaries are challenged, created, and reinforced within other areas of social life – such as public discourse – immigration policies serve as a key site where distinctions based on nativity emerge.

U.S. immigration legislation once included overtly racist language, such as the 1924 National Origins Act, which aimed to, “preserve the racial status quo in the United States” (Dobkin 2009: 30). However, while today’s immigration policies are race-neutral, they still contribute to the social construction of difference between immigrants and nonimmigrants (Saenz and Douglas 2015). For example, a 1976 amendment to the Hart-Celler Act established a 20,000 quota limit for migrants coming from the Western Hemisphere which resulted in an increase in unauthorized immigration from Latin American nations whose immigration far exceeded this limit (De Genova 2005). This act, then, contributed to the social construction of the “illegal” immigrant because, “At a time when there were (conservatively) well over a million Mexican migrants coming to work in the United States each year, the overwhelming majority would have no option but to do so ‘illegally’” (De Genova 2005: 234).
The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act was the next major piece of federal-level immigration legislation that reinforced distinctions between nonimmigrants and immigrants (Golash-Boza 2009). This legislation had two primary components. First, it made employers responsible for verifying the lawful presence of their workers and specified significant fines for those found employing unauthorized workers. Secondly, it created a path towards citizenship for immigrants who continuously lived in the United States prior to 1982. As a result, approximately 2.7 million previously unauthorized immigrants received amnesty (Badger 2014). Ten years later, Clinton signed the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, considered one of the most punitive of all immigration measures (Podgorny 2009). This act expanded the enforcement powers of the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) agency, allowed for further criminal removal of unauthorized immigrants, and significantly increased funding for border security (Douglas and Sáenz 2013). In 2006, Congress attempted to overhaul the immigration system with the Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act (HR 4437), which would have made it a felony for immigrants to be in the U.S. without proper documentation and increased sanctions for people providing assistance to undocumented immigrants among other things. However, this legislation did not pass, in part due to massive backlash and public protests from the Latino community. More recently, President Obama has issued executive orders that have deferred deportation for unauthorized immigrant youth and non-violent offenders (Preston and Cushman 2012), while at the same time deporting more immigrant than any U.S. president and “almost more than every other president combined from the 20th century” (Rogers 2016).
In recent years, governments at the state- and local-levels have also begun to propose and pass immigration legislation (Reich and Barth 2012). Most of this legislation has been restrictive in nature (Ebert et al. 2014), deepening the divide between immigrants and nonimmigrants. In 2010, Arizona passed the Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhood Act (S.B. 1070). This legislation gained national attention and served as a model for other states to pass similar legislation. AZ’s S.B. 1070 enabled police officers to determine an individual’s immigration status during lawful stops if they suspected the person was undocumented and also prohibited local government officials from limiting the enforcement of federal immigration laws. Although parts of the law were over turned by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2012, aspects of the legislation remain intact. In addition to state-level efforts, local-level ordinances against immigration have also gained notoriety. Although eventually ruled unconstitutional by federal courts, Hazelton, PA’s Illegal Immigration Relief Act is one of the most well-known. This ordinance made it unlawful for businesses to recruit, hire, or continue to employ unlawful workers and for landlords to rent to “illegal aliens.”

Research suggests that immigration policies have far-reaching effects on the immigrant community. The social construction of “illegality” serves a function in society by creating and sustaining a vulnerable, and therefore cheap, reserve army of labor (De Genova 2005). Furthermore, researchers argue that migration to new immigrant destinations is, at least in part, due to exclusionary state policy such as California’s Proposition 187, which prompted the movement of immigrants out of gateways and toward new destinations by threatening to deny immigrants access to public services thus giving them an incentive for internal migration (Johnston, Karageorgis, and Light 2013; Marrow 2005; Massey 2008). Additionally, research into the effects of Arizona’s S.B. 1070 found that Spanish-speaking
Latinos in Arizona had worse self-reported health than Latinos in surrounding states without exclusionary policies, an outcome attributed to the increased stress of living in an exclusionary state (Amuedo-Dorantes, Puttitanun, and Martinez-Donate 2013).

Social and Demographic Contexts Surrounding U.S. Immigration

While America has traditionally been divided along a rigid, relatively impenetrable White/Black fault line (DuBois 1903), increases in diversity as a result of immigration from non-European countries, intermarriage rates, and multiracial identification have called the future of America’s colorline into question (Lee and Bean 2007). Thus, because most immigrants today are non-White, racial context is also important to discussions of symbolic boundaries and immigrants.

Some suggest that the future of America’s colorline will be a White/non-White divide, in which Whites maintain their racial privilege above other racial and ethnic groups. Supporters of this hypothesis point to the remaining gaps between racial and ethnic groups (Gans 1999). For example, Latino households earn $23,000 less than White households, experience a 25.3% poverty rate, and continue to have lower health insurance coverage rates compared to Whites (U.S. Census 2012). U.S. institutions also seem to group racial minority groups as a collectivity, with policies such as affirmative action applying to all non-White racial groups (Skrentny 2002). Lastly, the label “people of color” suggests that non-White groups share a similar status in the racial hierarchy, noting the marginalization they experience (Hollinger 2005).

Others see signs of a shift to a Black/non-Black divide. Research shows that newer Latino and Asian immigrants and their descendants are assimilating into White, mainstream culture in terms of socioeconomic status, residential patterns, linguistic patterns, and
intermarriage (Parisi, Lichter and Taquino 2011; Waters and Jiménez 2005). Furthermore, both qualitative and quantitative data suggest that Whites and immigrant groups view Asians and Latinos as culturally more similar to Whites than Blacks (Lee and Bean 2007; Stokes-Brown 2012) and that Latino immigrants may be distancing themselves from the Black racial category (Marrow 2011). This distancing from Blacks may begin early on, as Latino and Asian children are more likely to be friends with White children as compared to Black children (Quillian and Campbell 2003). Later on in life, Latinos favor Whites over Blacks for intimate dating relationships (Feliciano, Lee, and Robnett 2011). Lastly, research indicates that successive generations of Latino foreign-born groups tend to have fewer group-interested policy preferences and weaker group consciousness (Sears and Savalei 2006).

Another option for the color line is a tri-racial hierarchy that would include Whites, “honorary Whites,” and “collective Blacks.” Although not receiving the full wages of Whiteness (Roediger 2007), honorary Whites would be above collective Blacks in the racial hierarchy. Support for the tri-racialization hypothesis stems from differences within racial and ethnic groups. When examining differences within minority ethnic and racial groups based on skin-color, class and nationality, gaps emerge in terms of income, occupational status, education, ethnic identification and rates of intermarriage (Bonilla-Silva 2004; Frank et al. 2010). For example, significant differences exist between Cuban- and Mexican-Americans along the lines of material outcomes such as income and education, as well as racial self-identification measures.

Researchers speculating on the future of America’s colorline have examined a variety of indicators to see where different immigrant groups might fit into the racial hierarchy. This project contributes to these discussions by examining the cultural processes and symbolic
boundaries surrounding immigrants, signifying the extent to which they are portrayed as similar to or different than nonimmigrants in public discourse.

**Cultural Process and Symbolic Boundaries**

My research is framed around the theory of cultural processes and symbolic boundaries because these elements of society serve as the foundation for not only other scholarship on the sociology of immigration, but ultimately the inequality immigrants experience in general as well. Shared cultural processes give meaning to our social world. They are a part of the toolkit that actors internalize and use to make sense of the world around them (Swidler 1986). Cultural processes include classifications and categories as well as the “scripts, narratives, repertoires, and symbolic boundaries” (Lamont et al. 2014: 580) that support them, “which individuals perceive and make sense of their environment” (Lamont et al. 2014: 583). My work focuses on the symbolic boundaries component of cultural processes, or the socially constructed differences that distinguish “us” from “them” (Wimmer 2008). These differences are often associated with inequality, where “they” become stigmatized through negative stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination (Lamont et al. 2014). Symbolic boundaries divide groups in society based on a variety of characteristics such as phenotype, culture, religion, class, and, important to my research, nativity among others (Fox and Guglielmo 2012).

Many early sociology theorists studied symbolic divisions between groups (Lamont, Pendergrass, and Pachucki 2015). For example, Durkheim noted that distinctions between the sacred and profane were based on common definitions in society. Members of society that understood and observed sacred practices experienced symbolic distance from those that did not understand or observe the same practices (Durkheim 1915). These distinctions, according
to Durkheim, promoted stability and cohesion in society. In contrast, Weber’s theorization of
group boundaries focused on the inequality that results when groups compete with one
another over status place within hierarchies (Weber 1978 [1922]). DuBois’ work in the early
20th-century also relates to symbolic boundaries between groups. He theorized that
America’s colorline and “veil” creates symbolic distance between racial groups which then
results in social distance (DuBois 1903). Lastly, Douglas’s (1966) work also centers on the
social construction of cultural differences. She argued that in-group members often view
outsiders as pollutants and as threatening to their purity in order to maintain their moral
superiority.

Cultural process and symbolic boundaries are taken-for-granted, and serve as the
foundation for “ongoing, routine relationships that enable and constrain social action”
(Lamont et al. 2014: 584). However, once distinctions between “us” and “them” gain
salience, they become profoundly influential in a variety of ways. First, individuals who
identify with a certain social group engage in identity work to reaffirm their membership in
that group (Lamont et al. 2014; Massey and Sanchez 2010; Tajfel and Turner 1978;);
questions of “Who am I?” are often answered based on group membership. Secondly,
symbolic boundaries influence how groups relate to and perceive one another (Lamont and
Molnar 2002; Lamont et al. 2014; Tajfel 1978; Tajfel and Turner 1979;). For example,
groups often view one another as competition for scarce resources (Bonacich 1972; Olzak
2013). Studies also suggest that individuals tend to think of their own group as superior in
order to create a positive, secure self-concept (Espiritu 2001; Hornsey 2008). For example,
Oakes and Turner’s (1980) demonstrate that individuals who engage in greater intergroup
discrimination report higher self-esteem. This competition for superior status also occurs
within groups, where some members are viewed as “deserving” and others as “undeserving” (Schwalbe et al. 2000; Yukich 2013).

Lastly, symbolic boundaries help to legitimate the unequal distribution of resources between groups, drawing distinctions between the “deserving” and “undeserving” (Alba 2005; Saperstein, Penner, and Light 2013). Although there are exceptions, in general there is a relational quality inherent to symbolic boundaries (Lamont et al. 2014) where some social groups are more highly valued than others in society. Symbolic boundaries help to legitimate that hierarchy and hegemonic dominance (Wimmer 2008). Schwalbe (2000) argues, “Exploitation depends on rudimentary othering, which is in turn reinforced by successful exploitation. These two generic processes underlie the creation and reproduction of inequality” (777).

Despite their profound influence, symbolic boundaries are generally taken-for-granted in society and, I argue, by most immigration scholars as well. However, there is nothing inevitable or natural about them. Rather, actors engage in symbolic “boundary-work,” or a struggle over who gets classified as an “us,” and who remains in the out-group of “them” (Frank, Akresh, and Lu 2010). Lamont and Molnar (2002) suggest that symbolic boundaries are “tools by which individuals and groups struggle over and come to agree upon definitions of reality” (168). Thus, symbolic boundaries involve “a process of constituting and re-configuring groups by defining the boundaries between them” (Wimmer 2008: 1027).

As a result of this struggle, symbolic boundaries are not fixed but rather change over time and range in strength from blurry to bright (Alba 2005; Fox and Guglielmo 2012). Bright boundaries are those where “the distinction involved is unambiguous, so that individuals know at all time which side of the boundary they are on,” which is in contrast to
blurred boundaries where “zones of self-presentation and social representation…. allow for ambiguous locations with respect to the boundary” (Alba 2005: 22). Researchers have also identified a variety of ways that symbolic boundaries undergo change in society (Alba 2005; Wimmer 2008; Zolberg and Long 1999). When boundaries between groups are bright, boundary-crossing is most likely to occur. This happens when individuals move from one group to another, without any perceptible change of the boundary itself. Another option involves boundary blurring, where distinctions between different social groups become less salient. Lastly, boundary shifting happens when the structure of the boundaries fundamentally change so that populations once excluded, become included. For example, Lovemand and Muniz (2007) demonstrate that a change in the definition of whiteness prompted the rapid classification of a large number of people as White in Puerto Rico, rather than actors individually crossing boundaries.

Symbolic Boundaries and Immigration

Symbolic boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants have an especially high degree of legitimacy because they stem from the concept of state-sovereignty, the idea that states have the right to determine who they are going to allow within their borders and, conversely, who they are going to keep out. As a result of this legitimacy, symbolic boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants tend to go unquestioned by the public and academics alike. Indeed, an underlying assumption of the nation-state system is that those included have something in common, such as work ethic, religion, or family values, distinguishing them from those excluded (Verdery 1994). Because immigration involves the movement of people across national borders, it has the potential to both challenge and reaffirm notions of national identity, national sovereignty and social control (Bloemraad,
Korteweg, and Yurdakul 2008). Considering this, citizenship is a form of social closure mechanism; distinctions between those that belong and those that do not enable or constrain access to material and non-material resources and thus, contribute to the reproduction of inequality (Aleinikoff 1994). As Zolberg and Woon (1999) describe it, “Immigrants are almost always seen to be the bearers of an alien culture, and, in that capacity, evoke conjectures regarding their putative impact on the receiving country’s self-defined identity and perspective integrity” (8).

Citizenship is most commonly conceptualized according to which individuals have the formal “right” to reside within particular borders. These distinctions between authorized and unauthorized immigrants have meaningful political and legal ramifications. However, there are alternate forms of citizenship related to immigration beyond these realms, including the rights immigrants have access to, political participation, and a sense of belonging (Chavez 2013; Bloemraad et al. 2008; Bosniak 2008). Citizenship derived from access to rights relates to the contract between the state and residents where each side has obligations to the other. Political participation is another dimension of citizenship, with scholars and the global community coming to view this as a basic human right detached of any formal immigration status. Lastly, citizenship based on a sense of belonging is defined by which groups are welcome and which are unwelcome. Scholars of citizenship argue that the state and immigration policies serve not only as political and legal means of exclusion, but also as a social mechanism to draw boundaries between immigrant and nonimmigrant groups. Indeed, much like race, class, and gender, nativity now serves as a major dimension of difference in American life (Massey 2007).
Media Discourse and Immigration

Although they go unexamined, symbolic boundaries do not operate as a force of their own, but instead, “unfold in the context of structures (organizations and institutions) in which individuals live” (Lamont et al. 2014: 585). This “unfolding” occurs through discourse because this is where reality and knowledge are constructed. Thus, actors that shape discourse, have the social, cultural, and political power to shape what is viewed and thought of as truth and ultimately reality (Berger and Luckmann 1966; Foucault 1978, 1980). Indeed, Lamont et al. (2014) suggest that “to develop a full understanding of [cultural processes] ramifications, we…have to study how they are enabled and constrained at the meso-level, through institutional…forces; for instance,…how they are represented or debated in various arenas (public discourse…for instance)” (596). The news media is a prime institution to study discourse and symbolic boundary-work because its manifest function is to report the events that are unfolding in the world and the workings of other social institutions such as the government and economy. In other words, the news media is the site through which knowledge, derived from discourse, is disseminated to the public at large (Altheide 2013).

The news media is also an important institution as it relates to symbolic boundaries because, despite its reputation for being “unbiased,” it is socially constructed (Fowler 1991). As a profit-driven industry, the news media has a vested interest in socially constructing coverage that maintains readership and an advertising base by selecting which stories to feature and in what ways (Branton and Dunaway 2009a, 2009b). One way to accomplish this is to include discourse that coincides with larger cultural belief systems because this coverage has a better chance at resonating with audiences (Benson and Snow 2000; Gamson 1992). Thus, the news media’s portrayal of immigrants is reflective of the features and
dynamics of the boundaries that exist between immigrants and nonimmigrants in society more generally.

In addition to reflecting society, the media also influences reality. First, it serves an agenda-setting function when actors in the news industry select which stories to feature, conveying to audiences which topics are important and “news-worthy.” Indeed, in regions where immigration receives more media attention, researchers find that people are more likely to believe that immigration is “the most important problem facing the country” (Branton, Wrinkle, and Franco 2010). The media also serves a framing function by suggesting how audiences should think about particular topics (Gamson et al. 1992; Kim et al. 2002; Saguy et al. 2010). Relying on Bourdieus’s theory of cultural reproduction, Sohono and Mendez (2014) explain that “…the media serves as a critical site of cultural and symbolic struggle where ideologies, identities, social meanings and beliefs about the world are negotiated and debated” (498). Through media discourse, immigrants are often dehumanized and turned into spectacles of the media (Chávez 2013). As Padín (2005) notes, “In writing the first draft of history, the daily press mediates the early stages of contact between immigrant and host communities and might legitimately be expected to shape the terms of their accommodation over time” (51). For example, Sohoni and Sohoni (2014) demonstrated that news coverage on crime and immigration contributes to the publics’ continued association between immigrants and increased criminality, despite evidence to the contrary.

Portrayals of Immigrants in Newspapers

A significant amount of research examines media portrayals of immigrants. Although most of this work does not explicitly adopt a symbolic boundary framework, these studies
contribute to our understanding of how immigrants are constructed as “them” in relation to the nonimmigrant “us.” According to these studies, for the most part, newspaper discourse portrays immigrants as threatening and detrimental to society and, thereby, reinforces “bright” boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants. A prominent theme within this news coverage relates to the economy (Chavez 2013; Martinez-Brawley and Gualda 2009; McElmurry 2009; Stewart et al. 2011), likely a result of America’s market-based culture (Benson and Saguy 2005). In general, most existing research tends to focus on negative frames, including how immigrants are fiscally harmful to the state (i.e. as a stress on the welfare system) and to the nonimmigrant population specifically (i.e. taking jobs away) (Martinez-Brawley and Gualda 2009). For example, Martinez-Brawley and Gualda (2009) found that when discussing immigration and the economy, newspapers in Arizona emphasize immigrants’ use of tax-funded services, such as the strain they place on border hospitals. Immigrants are also frequently depicted as “lazy” and “self-serving” in relation to their economic pursuits, a construction that makes a clear boundary between “us” (the native-born) and “them” (the foreign-born) (McElmurry 2009).

The news media also frames immigrants as culturally and demographically threatening (Chavez 2013; Flores 2003; McConnell 2011; Padín 2005). McConnell (2011) illustrates how even a seemingly objective aspect of journalism – the reporting of Census statistics – can present a biased perspective. She found that one newspaper emphasized the rates of change of Latino and Asian immigrant populations far more often than rates of changes of Whites and Blacks populations, and that coverage of these changes tended to be highly inflammatory. Likewise, Chavez’s (2013) work traces the historical development of the “invasion threat narrative,” which suggests that immigrants pose a threat to society. This
narrative is exemplified in a quote from Pat Buchannan who suggested that, “Mexico is the
greatest foreign policy crisis I think America faces in the next 20, 30 years…We’re going to
have 135 million Hispanics in the United States by 2050, heavily concentrated in the
southwest.” Culturally, researchers find immigrants are simultaneously portrayed as “like
Whites” in some ways (industrious, enterprising), as well as “unlike Whites” (Padin 2005)
and inherently incompatible with American ethos (Flores 2003).

Lastly, researchers find that newspapers describe immigrants as a threat to public
safety (Martinez-Brawley and Gualda 2009; Sohoni and Sohoni 2014). The association
between immigrants and crime contributes to the pervasive “invasion threat narrative”
described above (Chavez 2013; Stewart et al. 2011) and is often used as a way to justify
restrictive policies (Sohoni and Mendez 2014). For instance, newspapers in Arizona
emphasize the criminal activity of Mexican/Latino immigrants over any other topic
(Martinez-Brawley and Gualda 2009) despite an erroneous association between crime and
immigrants. Furthermore, newspapers tend to sensationalize stories that involve criminal
acts of immigrants by including stereotypes of the cultural outsider who, for example, does
not speak English (Stewart et al. 2011). Portraying immigrants as criminal is a particularly
powerful image because it plays on the fears of a largely native, White audience (Glassner
2010). Using an experimental design, Gilliam et al. (1996) found that participants who
viewed news segments featuring Black suspects showed an increased concern for crime
compared to those that viewed news segments featuring White perpetrators. Although
Gilliam et al.’s study analyzes a different social group than the focus on my research, it

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2 Empirical research suggests that concern over immigrant crime might be unwarranted; immigrant
communities are not exceptionally criminal when compared to native groups (Miller 1994), especially
in rural areas (Crowley and Lichter 2009).
illustrates that crime stories in the news media may be particularly salient for White audiences when featuring minority racial or ethnic groups.

Immigrants are also portrayed as a threat to public safety in non-criminal ways. White (2010) provides an example of discourse that portrays immigrants as threatening by comparing depictions of immigration and leprosy outbreaks in early 20th century America to 21st century Arkansas. At the turn of the 20th century, the U.S. print news media openly associated outbreaks of leprosy to immigrant populations. The relationship between immigrants and leprosy reappeared with a report from Fort Smith, Arkansas connecting an impending leprosy outbreak to their immigrant population. White (2010) explains, “The expression of fear associated with leprosy…is a surface presentation of a general fear of the “other” and a broader concern that “illegal” immigrants threaten the American way of life…” (23).

My Contribution

My work offers meaningful contributions, both theoretically and empirically. Theoretically, it furthers our understanding of how the inequality immigrants experience is reproduced. Scholars of immigration focus their efforts on unpacking immigrants’ oppression in a variety of ways, including analyzing factors related to their migratory decisions (Massey 2008; Portes 1997; Robinson 2009; Zúñiga and Hernández-León 2005), interactions and perceptions between the host society and immigrant community (Kasnitz et al. 2008; Marrow 2011; Massey and Sanchez 2010), and how immigrants’ assimilation experiences affect the resources they have access to (DiPrete and Eirich 2006; Haller et al. 2011; Massey et al. 2010; Portes et al. 2009; Portes and Zhou 1993; 2005; Waldinger and Feliciano 2004; Waters et al. 2010). However, these scholars fail to consider a key component that underlies macro-
level indicators (such as interactions and perceptions) and micro-level outcomes (such as the distribution of resources or factors contributing to migration), as well as connections between these two levels. I am referring here to meso-level cultural processes and symbolic boundaries that first create distinctions between immigrants and nonimmigrants, and then place certain individuals into these categories. In order to study immigrants’ movement, how immigrants are perceived by members of the dominant group, or the resources immigrants have – or lack – access to, this boundary of “immigrant” must first exist. My project analyzes the features and dynamics of the symbolic boundaries surrounding immigrants in newspaper articles to better understand how the inequality immigrants experience is created and reproduced.

Researchers that have examined representations of immigrants in the news media work to unpack the cultural processes underlying the inequality immigrants experience to a certain degree (Chavez 2013; Flores 2003; Martinez-Brawley and Gualda 2009; McConnell 2011; McElmurry 2009; Padin 2005; Sohoni and Sohoni 2014; Sohoni and Mendez 2014; Stewart et al. 2011). While some of this research explicitly references symbolic boundaries, even those that do not provide insight into the boundaries surrounding immigrants. However, these studies focus almost exclusively on the negative discourses found in immigration newspaper articles, which is an important oversight. Public opinion on immigration is highly divided; two out of three Americans say they are dissatisfied with current immigration levels (Gallup 2012), yet 57% think immigrants “strengthen rather than burden society” (Pew Hispanic Center 2014). Yet, in focusing on only one type of discourse – that which is negative – other aspects of the story go unexplored. Gramsci’s concept of hegemony is important to consider here, whose “enduring contribution was to focus our attention beyond
explicit beliefs and ideologies to see how routine, taken-for-granted structures of everyday thinking contribute to a structure of dominance” (Gamson et al. 1992: 381). Neutral or positive rhetoric may challenge boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants. Indeed, as a result of the increased diversity related to post-1965 immigration, America’s racial hierarchy is currently undergoing a significant transition (Lee and Bean 2007). While it is unclear how the ethnoracial hierarchy will take shape, immigrants, or at least certain segments within this population, could potentially begin to see the “wages of Whiteness” (Roediger 2007) similar to the experiences of previous eras of immigrants (Alba 2005; Fox and Guglielmo 2012; Massey and Sanchez 2008). If this is occurring, then boundary-shifting may be reflected in neutral or positive public discourse surrounding immigrants. On the other hand, neutral or positive discourses could also serve to reinforce boundaries, especially given today’s era of colorblind racial ideology3(Bonilla-Silva 2003) where most systems of inequality are more covert than they once were.

Indeed, Lamont and Molnar (2002) call for future studies of symbolic boundaries to “undertake the systematic cataloguing of the key mechanisms associated with the activation, maintenance, transposition or the dispute, bridging, crossing and dissolution of boundaries” (187). To date, researchers of immigration in the news media have explored only one such mechanism related to symbolic boundaries and immigrants – negative discourses. My research addresses this empirical gap by asking: What type of boundary-work does negative discourse in immigration newspaper articles perform? What type of boundary-work does neutral discourse in immigration newspaper articles perform? And, lastly, what type of boundary-work does positive discourse in immigration newspaper articles perform?

3 The dominant racial ideology of today is colorblind in nature, attributing racial inequality to anything other than race.
Based on previous literature, I anticipate that negative discourses surrounding immigration will draw clear and bright boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants. My expectations of the neutral and positive discourses surrounding immigrants are more open-ended. On one hand, it could be that these discourses blur boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants, something that America has already historically witnessed. This is a viable possibility especially considering the changes to the racial colorline America is currently experiencing. Non-Hispanic Whites are losing their numerical majority in the United States, so boundaries may shift to include immigrants, or at least some immigrant groups, within the boundaries of Whiteness so as to preserve Whites’ superiority in the racial hierarchy. On the other hand, it also seems plausible that neutral or positive discourses surrounding immigrants would, just like negative discourses, also reinforce boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants but more subtly so. The boundaries between “us,” the native-born and “them,” the foreign-born serve a function in today’s neoliberal capitalist economy in that they contribute to the vulnerability, and therefore, hyper-exploitable many immigrants, especially those that are unauthorized, experience in our society today. Thus, it seems possible that although not overtly hostile like negative discourses, positive and neutral references would maintain these boundaries but more subtly. This seemed especially plausible given the nature of inequality in today’s society, which is much more covert and hidden than it once was (Bonilla-Silva 2013; Jackman 1994).

To investigate these questions, I conducted a frame analysis of 587 newspaper articles on immigration sampled across four outlets: the Los Angeles Times, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, the News & Observer (Raleigh, NC), and the San Antonio Express. These outlets were chosen to maximize variation along two theoretically meaningful dimensions –
level of incorporation into the global economy and immigrant destination type. Although meaningful variations emerged in a few instances, most of my findings suggest that these outlets have far more in common than there are differences. I began my analysis by developing a codebook that went through many rounds of testing and revising. In the end, I solidified thirty-seven codes. While applying these categories to the sample, I memoed extensively, making note of potentially interesting patterns that emerged related to immigration and symbolic boundary-work in the newspaper articles. Based on the initial memos, I developed three empirical chapters described in more detail below.

Outline of Dissertation

In Chapter Two, I provide more information related to my methodology including a detailed description of my case selection method, characteristics of the various cities my outlets were chosen from, my analysis technique, and examples from the codebook I applied to my sample.

Chapter Three is my first empirical chapter. Here, I analyze discourses surrounding Latin American immigrants and culture. I focus on Latin American immigrants exclusively in this chapter because research suggests that this group is the target of (mostly White) nonimmigrant anxieties about the “browning of America.” I frame this portion of my dissertation around the literature on assimilation and suggest that it contains two significant gaps. First, it focuses almost exclusively on structural-level material outcomes to measure the degree to which immigrants have incorporated into society and, thereby, neglects to consider other aspects of immigrants’ experiences such as culture belonging. Secondly, it treats acculturation, or the adoption of American values and beliefs, as something obtained at the individual level rather than a process that is socially constructed. I show that immigrants are
generally constructed as cultural outsiders, in both blatant and subtle ways, and that this construction often (but not always) contributes to the inequality immigrants’ experience. I also find that in some ways immigrants are portrayed as culturally similar to Americans especially as it relates to family values. I also find that the acculturation process is portrayed in highly normative terms, with nonacculturation depicted as bad for a variety of reasons and acculturation as beneficial. Lastly, while most frames suggest – either overtly or subtly – the superiority of American culture, one frame stood in opposition: immigrants’ culture was praised and celebrated when it could be used in service to the dominant group.

In Chapter Four, I focus exclusively on positive discourses surrounding immigration in newspaper articles. I find that the most prevalent positive frames centered on the economy, including the contributions immigrants make to U.S. society, their willingness to perform jobs deemed too lowly by Americans, the upward mobility some immigrants experience and, lastly, the vulnerability immigrants experience at the hands of greedy employers. I argue that although these frames seemingly advocate on behalf of immigrants, they engage in neoliberal discourses that suggest that an individual’s worth to society is based on their economic contributions and that success is ultimately a personal responsibility. In doing so, they reinforce hierarchical distinctions between immigrants and nonimmigrants. For example, outlets praise immigrants for working jobs that Americans do not want to do; their worthiness of inclusion, then, is based on their ability to serve as an underclass in the U.S. economy.

In the last empirical chapter, I explore the discourse surrounding immigration control, focusing on direct quotations related to immigration policies and enforcement. This is a meaningful contribution because immigration control, specifically immigration policies and
enforcement, ultimately serve as the foundation for distinctions between “us” and “them.” However, the maintenance of this system of social control depends legitimacy; those in the public must view it as credible and worthy of support. While many actors contribute to statements of legitimacy, many also, of course, challenge it. I find that immigrants tend to advocate against immigration control on the grounds that they deserve recognition in society. This is in contrast to nonimmigrant government officials, law enforcement agents, and experts, who, whether advocating for or against immigration control, reinforce boundaries between themselves and immigrants in ways that are explicit and more subtle. For example, some actors make a direct association between immigrants and criminality to justify social control mechanisms. Furthermore, actors that are critical of immigration often focus their argument on the ill-effects policies and enforcement have on the nonimmigrant population which contributes to the privilege and power they have in society.

I conclude my dissertation by offering a synopsis of the theoretical framework used for my dissertation, summaries of each chapter’s major findings, and then further develop the implications of my project as a whole. I also provide directions for future research based on the limitations of my data.
CHAPTER TWO: METHODS

Introduction

Symbolic boundaries, or the distinctions we make between social groups (Lamont and Molnar 2002), are profoundly influential to identities (Lamont et al. 2014; Massey and Sanchez 2010; Tajfel and Turner 1978;), intergroup relations (Lamont and Molnar 2002; Lamont et al. 2014; Tajfel 1978; Tajfel and Turner 1979;), and systems of inequality (Alba 2005; Lamont et al. 2014; Saperstein et al. 2013; Schwalbe 2000; Wimmer 2008). However, categories and classifications that distinguish “us” from “them” are often taken-for-granted; they become an unquestioned component of the invisible cultural toolkit that we use to navigate the world around us. This is especially the case when it comes to boundaries that distinguish immigrants from nonimmigrants, which stem from the widely-accepted belief that nation-states have the right to determine who they are going to allow within their borders and who they are going to keep out (Verdery 1994). Symbolic boundaries between “us,” the native-born and “them,” the foreign-born, are so taken-for-granted, that even scholars of immigration tend to leave them unexamined.

However, there is nothing inevitable about this classification schema. Rather, actors engage in a struggle over these distinctions; they are, in the end, socially constructed. Public discourse is one medium through which this struggle occurs because it is the site where knowledge, truth, and reality are defined (Foucault 1980). Much of this discourse unfolds in the news media, a social institution tasked with reporting on the events of the day. In addition to reflecting the social world it is surrounded by, the news media also shapes how audiences view a particular issue. Gamson et al. (1992) suggest that “media messages can act as
teachers of values, ideologies, and beliefs and that they can provide images for interpreting the world whether or not the designers are conscious of this intent” (374). For example, Saguy and Gruys’ (2010) analysis of media accounts surrounding eating disorders shows that reports on anorexia and bulimia are often framed in relation to a set of complex social factors, while obesity is framed as a personal issue related to poor decisions. As it relates to my topic, an analysis of negative, neutral, and positive discourses in immigration newspaper articles will shed light on the boundary-work surrounding immigrants in U.S. society.

**Case Selection**

I used the “diverse cases” (Seawright and Gerring 2008) or “theoretically decisive” (Ragin and Becker 1992) method of case selection to determine which newspaper outlets to include in my analysis. With this technique, cases are selected to maximize variation along meaningful dimensions but are otherwise as similar as possible. I selected outlets that varied based on two contextual elements because prior research indicates that media coverage is dependent upon the environment in which it emerges (Brown 2013; Hellgren 2014). Specifically, I speculated that a location’s media coverage of immigration would vary based on level of incorporation into the global economic system and immigrant destination type.

I relied on Sassen’s (2001) global city theory for my understanding of how incorporation into the global economic system influences migratory flows. Sassen suggests that central command points, such as London, New York, and Tokyo function as key locations for finance and specialized service firms. She argues that global cities pull in a highly-skilled migrant workforce needed for positions at large service-industry firms.

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4 For example, Brown’s (2013) analysis of welfare coverage indicated that newspaper discourse in Alabama and Georgia featured morality claims that focused on lazy and hyper-fertile black recipients. This is in contrast to California and Arizona where coverage centered on Hispanic, Asian, or Native American recipients and claims about who is legally entitled to benefits.
(accounting, advertising, finance, etc.). At the same time, global cities necessitate the migration of lower-skilled migrants needed to fill two types of positions. First, low-skilled migrants work to support the lifestyle of the highly-skilled labor force in hotels, boutiques, and other high-end businesses. Second, low-wage immigrants fill lower-paying service positions (receptionist, clerks) at specialized service firms need.

I also varied cases based on immigrant destination type. From early 20th century to the 1980s, states such as Texas, California, Illinois, Florida, and New York were prominent immigrant destinations. However, in the late 1980s, migration patterns became more dispersed, giving rise to new immigrant destinations including Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Minnesota, Nevada, New York, New Jersey, North Carolina, and Oregon (Durand, Massey, and Charet 2000; Durand, Massey, and Capoferro 2005; Massey et al. 2010). Scholars have identified three main explanations for this shift in settlement patterns: 1) amnesty granted by the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) 1986 (Durand et al. 2000; Durand et al. 2005; Lichter and Johnson 2009; Massey et al. 2010); 2) economic downturns in many traditional immigrant states (Durand et al. 2000; Liaw and Frey 2007); and 3) increased native-born hostility towards immigrants in traditional states (Durand et al. 2000; Massey et al. 2010). By shaping dynamics between different groups, immigrant destination type is likely to influence newspaper discourse and the creation and maintenance of symbolic boundaries. Previous research indicates that both Whites and Blacks experience increased anxieties as a result of these new immigrant populations (Bretell and Nibbs 2009; Dunn, Aragones, and Shivers 2005; Grey and Woodrick 2005; Marrow 2011; Nelson and Hiemstra 2009; Stephan, Diaz-Loving, and Duran 2000). As such, I anticipated that newspaper

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5 The well-publicized Prop 187 in California, designed to prevent access to the public education system for children of undocumented migrants among other things, is as an example of this hostility.
discourse in new immigrant destinations would be more polarizing than discourse coming from traditional destinations.

I began the case selection process by identifying cities according to their level of incorporation into the global economic system. I used the Globalization and World Cities (GaWC) Research Network’s ranking of cities, a commonly cited source in the global city literature (Castells et al. 2010). The GaWC classifications stem from Sassen’s theory of global cities where locations are ranked based primarily on the presence and global connectedness of large service industry firms (Taylor, Catalano, and Walker 2002). I identified cities at the top and bottom of the roster in order to maximize variation on level of incorporation into the global economy. Global cities on the initial list included: Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York City, Philadelphia, St. Louis, San Diego, San Francisco, and Seattle. Non-global cities included: Birmingham, Hartford, Jacksonville, Las Vegas, Memphis, Nashville, New Orleans, Omaha, Raleigh, Rochester (NY), Sacramento, Salt Lake City, and San Antonio.

I then relied on two datasets to draw distinctions between new and traditional immigration destinations. First, using data from the American Communities Project (ACP), I divided the global and non-global cities listed above based on their percent change in the foreign-born population between 1990 and 2009. Cities that experienced a 200% increase of their foreign-born population within this time period were treated as new destinations, while those that had less than a 200% increase were considered not new. Secondly, I added an additional check on my distinctions between new and traditional immigrant destinations by relying on data and definitions provided by Singer (2004). According to her definitions, a new immigrant destination can either be emerging (“Very low percentage foreign-born until
1970, followed by a high proportion in the post-1980 period), re-emerging (“Foreign-born percentage exceeds national average 1900 – 1930, lags it after 1930, then increase rapidly after 1980”), or pre-emerging (very low percentages of foreign-born for the entire 20th century). Because Singer’s data collection ended in 1990, for the pre-emerging category, an additional stipulation was that there had to be a significant increase in the foreign-born population between 1990 and 2009 based on the ACP data described above. Based on the combination of these two criteria, cities that made the new immigrant destination list included: Atlanta (global), Dallas (global), Denver (global), Birmingham (non-global), Jacksonville (non-global), Las Vegas (non-global), Memphis (non-global), Nashville (non-global), Omaha (non-global), Raleigh (non-global), Salt Lake City (non-global), and Tulsa (non-global).

Taking into account the need to vary the cases based on level of incorporation into the global economic system, but relative consistency on other dimensions (described below), I selected two new immigration destinations: Atlanta as a new, global city, and Raleigh as a new, non-global city. It was more challenging to find variation on level of incorporation into the global economy between traditional immigrant destinations, because most traditional immigrant destinations are global. I identified Los Angeles as the traditional, global city because of the characteristics it had in common with Atlanta and Raleigh (discussed in more detail below). In order to identify a non-global, traditional location, I investigated a handful of cases that had been excluded from Singer’s list because their population is less than a million, including: Jacksonville, New Orleans, and San Antonio. San Antonio was the only case that met Singer’s definition of an area with continuous immigration (“Above-average percentage foreign-born for every decade” since the 1960s). Thus, the four cases for this
As mentioned above, my strategy for case selection was to maximize variation based on level of incorporation into the global economic system and immigrant destination type, while minimizing variation on other city characteristics as much as possible (Table 2). The selected cases are similar in terms of the racial distribution of their foreign-born populations, unemployment rates, median incomes, poverty rates, and industry composition (U.S. Census American Community Survey 2009). In each city, Hispanics comprise the bulk of the foreign-born population, followed by Asians. In Los Angeles, Raleigh, and San Antonio, Whites comprise the third largest racial group among the foreign-born population, and Blacks are the fourth largest racial group among foreign-born persons. In Atlanta, however, the trend is reversed; Blacks are the third largest racial group among foreign-born persons, and White are the fourth.

Economic indicators also align for the chosen cases. Unemployment rates are similar for all four cities and range from 8.1% (Atlanta) to 4.9% (San Antonio). Median incomes are also fairly similar; Los Angeles has the greatest median income at $58,525, separated from the city with the smallest median income, San Antonio with $47,955. San Antonio has the largest percentage of families living in poverty at 12.6%, with Raleigh having the fewest at 7.9%. The industry composition is also alike between cities. For each location, professional and scientific sectors comprise the majority of the economic activity. In three of the locations – Atlanta, Los Angeles, and Raleigh – manufacturing is the second largest industry. In San Antonio, the second largest industry is finance, insurance, and real estate. The third
largest industry in Atlanta, Raleigh, and San Antonio is construction, while the third largest industry in LA is finance, insurance, and real estate.

Another important characteristic to consider is the percent of foreign-born persons residing in each city. Atlanta, Raleigh, and San Antonio are fairly similar; in 2009, Atlanta had 12.62% foreign-born, Raleigh had 10.74%, and San Antonio had 11.20% (U.S. Census American Community Survey 2009). Los Angeles, however, had 34.19%. Los Angeles has a high foreign-born population because it is not merely a traditional immigrant destination, but a traditional immigrant gateway. That is, foreign-born persons often enter the U.S. and arrive in L.A. as a port of entry city. The differences in percent foreign-born is potentially problematic given that Los Angeles and San Antonio are both classified as traditional immigrant destinations. However, although San Antonio does not have as large a foreign-born population as Los Angeles, it is considered a minor gateway city, characterized as “more modest versions of the major-continuous gateways, with long histories of immigrant settlement” (Singer 2015). Furthermore, the distinction between traditional and new immigrant destinations is based on change in the foreign-born population rather than absolute count (Singer 2004). When considering change in the foreign-born population, L.A. and San Antonio are more similar with 25.75% and 104.76% increases between 1990 and 2009, while Atlanta and Raleigh have changes of 464.08% and 538.50%.

The overall racial distribution of the population of these cities is also more complicated (U.S. Census American Community Survey 2009). For this characteristic, the cities align with one another by immigrant destination type. Hispanics are the largest ethnoracial group, followed by Whites for the traditional destinations of Los Angeles and San Antonio. In LA, Asians are the third largest racial group, and Blacks are the smallest racial
group. In San Antonio, Blacks are the third largest racial group, and Asians are the smallest. The new immigrant destinations – Atlanta and Raleigh align with one another in terms of racial distribution; Whites are the largest racial group, followed by Blacks, Hispanics, and lastly, Asians.

Another important characteristic to consider is political context. For this dimension, the cases aligned with one another on level of incorporation into the global economic system. Although I had intended to collect the number of registered voters who identify as Republican and Democrat, I was unable to because two of the states my cities are located within states (Texas and Georgia) that do not allow registered voters to declare a party affiliation. Because of this, I relied on county results from the 2012 Presidential election. My global areas, Los Angeles and Atlanta, cast a significant amount of votes for Obama (D) (Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk 2013; Fulton County Election Summary Report 2012), while Raleigh and San Antonio were split more evenly between Obama (D) and Raleigh (R) (Wake County Election Results 2012; Bexar County, Texas Official Results 2012).

In sum, my strategy for selecting cases was based on the “diverse cases” model where variation is maximized across two theoretically meaningful dimensions, level of incorporation into the global economy and immigrant destination type, while at the same time minimize variation as much as possible on other characteristics. In doing so differences that emerged between the newspaper outlets could conceivably be connected back to dimensions that varied, rather than as a result of other indicators. As will become evident in the empirical chapters that follow, the outlets were much more similar in their coverage of immigration – across a variety of topics – than dissimilar. I note meaningful variations where
they emerged, but by and large, my results and analysis were consistent across outlets, regardless of economic and sociohistorical variations found between them.

**Data Collection**

To collect my data, I sampled from the newspaper outlet with the largest circulation rate in each city. This included the *Los Angeles Times (LAT)*; the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution (AJC)*; the *San Antonio Express-News (SAE)*; and the *News & Observer (N&O; Raleigh)*. With the exception of the *N&O*, I retrieved articles through LexisNexis Academic. I searched for articles published between 2000 and 2012 that contained the word “immi*” or “migra*”\(^6\) in the title. The “*” conveys wildcard characters so that variations of the words immigrant (i.e., immigration or immigrants) and migrant (i.e., migration or migrants) would be returned. A similar search was conducted for the *N&O* but because this publication was not available via LexisNexis, I used America’s News. The selected time period encompasses several important events, including 9/11, the ongoing economic crisis, three Presidential elections, and the rise of state-level self-deportation laws. It was important to collect data across a substantial amount of time because “big events” can influence how issues are covered in the media (Gamson et al. 1992; Hopkins 2010). I included only pieces that contained at least 500 words because articles with fewer words were unlikely to discuss the topic in a meaningful way. I included new stories at the local and national level, but excluded articles that focused on emigration from the U.S. While it could be argued that these stories also perform boundary-work, I was most interested in understanding how media discourse portrays U.S. immigration. I excluded letters to the editor, but included news stories, editorials and op-eds. I included editorials because they provide insight into the

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\(^6\) Preliminary searches indicate that using these terms more broadly, for example in the article text, produced unrelated results. However, articles with these words in the title were primarily about immigration.
perspectives of those in power within the news outlets. I also decided to include op-eds because although these pieces are more subjective in nature, newspaper outlets elevate the perspectives of those given access to writing an op-ed (Estrada, Ebert, and Lore 2016; Saguy and Gruys 2010). As Saguy and Gruys (2010) suggest, by publishing editorials and op-eds, the “mainstream media gives them cultural authority” (238).

Using these criteria, a total of 3,083 articles were returned from the LAT, 1,125 from the AJC, 785 from the SAE and 268 from the N&O. Based on techniques used by other researchers conducting similar methods, I sampled 10% of the articles from the LAT and AJC. I oversampled the SAE and N&O at 100 articles each because these outlets had significantly fewer returns. For each outlet, I sorted the returns chronologically and then performed a systematic random sample in order to ensure that my articles spanned the entirety of the time period. I sampled every tenth article for the LAT and AJC, every eight article for the SAE, and every third article for the N&O. I eliminated thirty-four articles that were not relevant to my project. For example, an article collected from the N&O described a punk rock band that happened to be comprised of immigrants, but their immigrant status was not a feature of the story. Another eliminated article was retrieved from the AJC, which described an “imminent rate cut” in the headline of the article. In the end, I was left with 291 articles from the LAT, 105 from the AJC, 96 from the SAE, and 95 from the N&O for a total sample size of 587 articles.

Analysis Technique

I conducted a frame analysis to examine the boundary-work between nonimmigrant and immigrant groups in newspaper discourse. Goffman (1974) defines frames as “definitions of a situation [that] are built up in accordance with principles of organization
which govern events – at least social ones – and our subjective involvement in them (10).” Frames set the parameters for how something is spoken, thought, or written about, and thus, help social actors make sense of the world around them. They also make certain ideas more salient than others, where salience refers to “making a piece of information more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to audiences” (Entman 1993: 53). As Gamson and Modigliani (1989) note, “…media discourse can be conceived of as a set of interpretive packages that give meaning to an issue... At its core is a central organizing idea, or frame, for making sense of relevant events, suggesting what is at issue (3).”

Frames are derived from the process of “framing.” This suggests that there is an active component involved in the social construction of reality as it relates to the news media (Benford and Snow 2000). They are also “action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns” of actors involved in social processes like collective action, lawmaking, and social movements (Benford and Snow 2000: 614). My analysis is of framing as a process, rather than frames that are fixed, because groups compete with one another over how to define situations or issues (Entman 1993). In other words, “The media…provide a series of arenas in which symbolic contests are carried out among competing sponsors of meaning” (Gamson et al. 1992: 385). The meaning-making component of frame analysis is highly compatible with studying symbolic boundary-work, also something actors struggle with one another over.

My first step in data analysis was to establish a codebook. Several coding categories stem from prior research, while others were derived from an initial reading of a pilot sample of 100 articles. I developed my codebook iteratively, testing and revising across several rounds. The final codebook consists of thirty-six categories (see Appendix B for complete
codebook). To test my codebook, I selected a small sample of articles and applied the categories as defined in my codebook. I then waited several days to recode the same articles to test for consistency. Once coding rounds were consistent, I proceeded with coding the entire sample. My codebook is expansive, spanning elements of discourse that is thematic (e.g., culture, education, work), tonal (e.g., social benefit, social problem), structural (e.g., quote, metaphor), and related to content (e.g., push factors, statistics, references to specific nations). I applied codes to full paragraphs that contained a particular theme so that I would be able to examine the context that surrounded specific references. I coded articles across two rounds, where I applied a portion of the thirty-six categories to the 587 articles, then applied the remaining categories during a second round. The coding process unfolded over a period of approximately three months. In order to ensure that I coded in a consistent manner, I periodically “re-coded” articles that I coded several weeks prior. Each check yielded similar coding applications, ensuring the validity of my coding procedure.

I used NVivo 10 to code and analyze my newspaper data for a variety of reasons. First, it is designed to accommodate large amounts of texts as well as multilevel coding (document- and text-level). In addition to applying the thirty-six categories to the actual text of the articles, I also classified each article based a variety of characteristics including headline, author, and date of publication. Secondly, NVivo allows the user to apply multiple codes to one segment of data which yields richer data. For example, the following sentence “Students must straddle two languages and, essentially, two cultures” (Torres 2004) was coded with both the “language” and “culture” categories. Third, I chose NVivo because it easily allowed me to examine frequencies and identify patterns that emerge in my data which I then used to guide my qualitative frame analysis (Richards and Richards 1994).
Several meaningful codes emerged deductively from my data, all of which, not surprisingly, are related to the contextual elements surrounding immigration described in the previous chapter. For example, codes related to the economy, including the categories of “taxes,” “economy,” and “work,” were where the positive frames surrounding immigration emerged most salient. This is an important contribution because most literature examining portrayals of immigrants in the news media focus on negative frames. Furthermore, the categories of “policy” and “enforcement” proved informative. While arguments on both sides of the immigration issue were related to these codes, many of the arguments that seemingly advocated on behalf of immigrants reinforced boundaries between the two. Lastly, the codes of “culture,” “family,” and “language” shed light on the ways in which immigrants were socially constructed as culturally belonging or as deserving of exclusion.

During my initial phase of applying the categories to my sample, I memoed extensively, taking note of the meaningful patterns I thought were emerging from the data. Based on these memos, I selected text associated with the categories that seemed most fruitful (i.e., the ones described in the previous paragraph). I then conducted another round of coding that was more inductive in nature, examining the prevalent frames that emerged from the negative, neutral, and positive discourses surrounding immigration in newspaper articles. In other words, my initial coding phase was semi-deductive in that it was based on a codebook derived from prior literature and a pilot sample. This first round of coding allowed me to make the data more manageable, and guided yet another round of coding that was more inductive and flexible. This two-fold approach was what ultimately allowed me to uncover and further explore aspects of the discourse surrounding immigration that previous scholars had not yet unpacked.
CHAPTER THREE: “THE SLOWEST TO ADOPT ENGLISH IN SUCCEEDING GENERATIONS”: IMMIGRANT ACCULTURATION AND THE MAINTENANCE OF SYMBOLIC BOUNDARIES IN NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Introduction

When announcing his run for the Republican Presidential nomination in June 2015, Donald Trump declared, “When Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending their best…They’re sending people that have lots of problems...They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists. And some, I assume, are good people” (Lee 2015). Although politicians and pundits across the political spectrum condemned Trump’s statement, his rhetoric resonated with a significant segment of the American public. Trump’s appeal likely stems from the native-born population viewing immigrants as economic competition (Bonacich 1972) and from the anxiety they experience as a result of demographic changes to America’s foreign-born population (Craig and Richeson 2014). Between 1970 and 2010, the proportion of immigrants living in the U.S. more than doubled, from 4.7% to 12.9% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau 2012). The majority of these new arrivals are now non-White; while 75% of immigrants in 1960 came from Europe, 53% of the foreign-born population in 2010 migrated from Latin American countries and 28% came from Asian nations (U.S. Census Bureau 2012). Within this context, portions of the U.S. population have become concerned about the so-called “browning of America,” a phrase used to describe potential changes to the ethnoracial hierarchy (Johnson, Farrell, and Guinn 1997). Much of their uneasiness stems from questions about how and the extent to which immigrants, especially from Latin American nations, fit into American culture (Chavez 2013).
Sociologists have long studied immigrants’ incorporation into American society. Researchers have examined how immigrants adopt and influence American culture and values, their experiences of structural mobility and perceptions between ethnic immigrant and nonimmigrant groups. According to Park (1926) and Gordon (1964), immigrants undergo a series of fixed stages in a linear progression that inevitably results in complete absorption into the host society. Park (1926) surmised that subordinate groups initially make contact with the host society, undergo a period of competition, and then eventually incorporate. He was followed by Gordon (1961), who advanced theories on assimilation by describing the stages of acculturation, structural assimilation, and marital assimilation. Current scholars argue that these earlier models of assimilation have limited relevance to the experiences of contemporary immigrants because of the different social, political, and economic contexts they encounter compared to previous cohorts of immigrants. As a result, new models of assimilation have emerged, the most notable of which being segmented assimilation theory (Portes and Zhou 1993). Researchers have used segmented assimilation theory to examine how individual-level and contextual factors influence the extent to which contemporary immigrants have achieved parity with mainstream American society in terms of education, income, occupational prestige, residential patterns, English proficiency, and intermarriage rates among other indicators. In recent years, scholars have also begun to pay attention to how assimilation works as a two-way process, whereby immigrants, within significant structural constraints, have the agency to affect which aspects of their ethnicity are emphasized in the dominant society, which attributes they absorb, and which they reject (Alba and Nee 2003; Massey and Sanchez 2010).
Although the literature on segmented assimilation has contributed to our understanding of how immigrants are received and incorporate into American society, I argue that there are two significant gaps within this field. First, this research conceptualizes assimilation based almost solely on material outcomes, such as income, educational attainment, and residential patterns. Scholars of assimilation take the extent to which immigrants have obtained these material outcomes as an indication of whether immigrants have incorporated into American society, without considering other important dimensions (Jung 2009). Secondly, while those studying assimilation view acculturation, or the adoption of American values, as an important part of the process, they implicitly place a normative value on American culture and suggest that individual immigrants acculturate as a result of their own efforts, rather than considering how cultural belonging is socially constructed. That is, an underlying assumption of this scholarship is that in order to achieve “success” in U.S. society, immigrants should adopt American culture and forsake their own. Furthermore, while immigrants are active participants in the process (Alba and Nee 2003; Espiritu 2001; Massey and Sanchez 2010), acculturation is not solely an individual-level accomplishment; it also depends on the extent to which society views immigrants as cultural outsiders or insiders. In sum, by focusing almost exclusively on material outcomes and treating acculturation as an individual-level, normative process, this scholarship constructs assimilation as involving the subordination of immigrants’ culture to the dominant group. In doing so, it masks the cultural processes involved in reproducing the inequality immigrants encounter (Jung 2009).

To examine the social construction of cultural belonging, I analyze the news media’s portrayal of Latin American immigrants’ incorporation into American culture, focusing
specifically on symbolic boundaries. Symbolic boundaries are the conceptual distinctions made between “us” and “them,” and have profound consequences on identities, interactions, and the distribution of resources via institutions (Lamont and Molnar 2002). I explore public discourse because it is through this medium that powerful actors shape reality, knowledge and “truths” in society (Foucault 1980). Newspapers represent a prime candidate for examining symbolic boundary-work because they are a widely-consumed form of discourse. Furthermore, the news media is an elite institution in society because it has the ability to not only reflect but also shape the social world (Kim et al. 2002). Other researchers have examined portrayals of immigrants in the news media. According to their work, immigrants are portrayed not only as threatening culturally, but also more negatively in relation to the economy and public safety (Chavez 2013; Flores 2003; Innes 2010; Martinez-Brawley and Gualda 2009; McConnell 2011; McElmurry 2009; Stewart et al. 2011). While these analyses are meaningful and clearly demonstrate bright boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants, they tend to focus virtually exclusively on negative discourses. I suggest that this is meaningful omission because rhetoric that is neutral or positive has the potential to engage in boundary-work as well. This discourse may challenge boundaries between nonimmigrants and immigrants, or reinforce it but in more subtle ways.

Through an analysis of symbolic boundaries in negative, positive, and neutral immigration newspaper discourse, I examine an important dimension of immigrants’ experience in the U.S.: the social construction of cultural belonging. I investigate the social construction of this cultural belonging, beyond the individual efforts made to adopt American values and customs. I begin the chapter by describing earlier iterations as well as contemporary versions of assimilation theory, and then provide a critique of the theory that
dominants the field today. I go on to explain why the symbolic boundaries surrounding immigration and culture in newspaper discourse is a meaningful line of analysis to investigate immigrants’ belonging or exclusion in American society and also outline previous relevant literature. I find that, either explicitly or implicitly, most newspapers portray immigrants as culturally different in ways that contribute to the marginalization immigrants’ experience although on occasion, references to cultural difference does not take on a hierarchical quality. Outlets also make it clear that nonacculturation is detrimental not only to immigrants themselves, but to society more generally. In a few ways, immigrants are portrayed as culturally similar to Americans in a positive tone. Outlets also suggested that acculturation is good by detailing individual success stories of immigrants who have adopted American values and customs. Lastly, I also find that immigrants’ culture is sometimes embraced within newspaper discourse, but only in instances in which it serves or can be exploited by the dominant group, privileging the well-being of those that already have higher status in our society.

**Segmented Assimilation Theory**

Largely as a result of rapid industrialization and urbanization, between 1880 and 1920 approximately 20 million immigrants from Western and Southeastern Europe made their ways to U.S. shores (Massey and Sanchez 2010). In doing so, they ushered in political, economic, and social changes to American society. Accordingly, a key area of study within early 20th century sociology examined how ethnic immigrant groups and later generations adapted to American life. Park’s (1926) “race relations cycle” was one of the earliest theories of assimilation, where he suggested that minority racial and ethnic groups’ incorporation into the dominant group was “apparently progressive and irreversible” (150). According to his
model, assimilation begins with initial contact between the minority and dominant groups, moves to a period of competition, and ends with accommodation where subordinate groups succumb to the dominant. Influenced by this linear model of incorporation, in the early 1960s Gordon (1964) developed a straight line model of assimilation based on the experiences of European ethnic immigrants. Like Park, Gordon’s model involved distinct, linear stages. Gordon argued that European immigrants first experienced acculturation by adopting American values and language. This was followed by structural assimilation, where they integrated into the dominant groups’ social networks and organizations. Lastly, they experienced marital assimilation, where the boundaries between European ethnic immigrants and nonimmigrants ceased to exist. Gordon observed that once assimilated, immigrants integrated completely into American society and left behind connections to their countries of origin. His theory was heavily influenced by the functionalist thinking of his time, as he suggested that this complete incorporation promoted stability in society.

More recently, scholars have argued that while Gordon’s straight-line model may have applied to the experiences of Western and Southeast European immigrants in the early 20th century, it is less useful in explaining the experiences of contemporary immigrants for a variety of reasons. First, the racial composition of the U.S. foreign-born population changed significantly after 1965 in that society generally views today’s immigrants, who hail primarily from Latin American and Asian countries, as non-White. Contemporary

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7 There is some debate surrounding the extent to which early immigrant populations underwent assimilation exactly as described by Park and Gordon. For example, early European immigrants did not completely abandon the culture of their countries of origins, but instead continued to maintain their ethnic identities in later generations. Furthermore, many of these immigrants underwent circular migration by traveling back and forth between the U.S. and their countries of origins (Massey and Sanchez 2010).
8 While some debate surrounds the extent to which early European ethnic immigrants were classified as non-White, Fox and Guglielmo (2012) demonstrate that the boundaries these groups encountered were based on
immigrants also face a vastly different political environment with far more immigration controls as compared to the early 20th-century (De Genova 2005; Ebert, Estrada, and Lore 2014). Lastly, the structure of the economy has changed significantly. Whereas early generations of immigrants experienced a booming post-WWII economy, today’s immigrants encounter a highly bifurcated labor market with few stable jobs and an abundance of low-paying, precarious occupations (Massey and Sánchez 2010).

To account for these differences, Portes and Zhou (1993) developed a model of segmented assimilation to explain the experiences of today’s immigrants. In contrast to prior models, they suggest that immigrants and their descendants do not necessarily experience upward mobility and complete integration into American society. Rather, immigrants’ incorporation can take a variety of forms, including upward mobility through the adoption of mainstream American values and culture, upward mobility achieved through resource-rich co-ethnic networks, or downward mobility into the underclass of American society (Portes and Zhou 1993). According to this theory, both individual-level characteristics and the contexts surrounding immigrants affect assimilation outcomes. Individual-level factors are primarily divided into three categories: human capital (education, technical skills), acculturation (adoption of American values, English proficiency), and racialized characteristics (skin color). Acculturation can take three forms, which correspond to the three possible assimilation outcomes (Waters et al., 2010). Consonant acculturation promotes upward mobility and occurs when both the immigrant parent and child adopt American cultural values and learn English, leaving the culture of their countries of origin behind. In contrast, dissonant acculturation leads to downward mobility and occurs when children
outpace their parents in learning American cultural values and customs. When this happens, parents lack strong authority over their children, who begin to associate with the “nihilistic inner-city youth culture” (Waters et al. 2010: 1169). Lastly, selective acculturation occurs when both parent and children gradually adopt American cultural values and begin to learn English, while simultaneously retaining elements of original culture. Immigrants’ upward or downward mobility is also significantly impacted by the political, social, and co-ethnic contexts they encounter.

Portes and Zhou’s segmented assimilation theory has received considerable scrutiny from researchers who have examined whether the process they describe affects immigrants and their descendants’ experiences of upward or downward mobility. Much of this research focuses on individual-level, structural outcomes such as socioeconomic status (DiPrete and Eirich 2006; Haller et al. 2011; Massey et al. 2010; Portes et al. 2009; Waldinger and Feliciano 2004; Waters et al. 2010), residential patterns (Alba and Nee 2003), educational attainment (Farley and Alba 2002; Haller et al. 2011; Hirschman 2001; Kasinitiz et al. 2004; Pong and Hao 2007; Portes and Fernandez-Kelly 2008; Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Warikoo and Carter 2009; Waters et al. 2010; Zhou 2009), intermarriage rates (Lee and Bean 2004; Perlmann and Waters 2004; Rosenfeld 2002), levels of English proficiency (Bean and Stevens 2003; Waters and Jimenez 2005; Xi 2013), naturalization rates (Cort 2012) and negative adaptation trajectories such as prison incarceration and teen pregnancy (Waters et al. 2010). By and large, existing empirical studies support segmented assimilation theory. Researchers find that at the individual level, human and cultural capital measures have the most significant effect on mobility outcomes (Waters et al. 2010). At the structural level, the
resources and support co-ethnic communities have to offer are most influential (Bankston and Zhou 1997; Keller and Tillman 2008; Zhou 2009; Zhou and Bankston 2001).

Scholars studying immigrants’ experiences in the United States have also begun to conceptualize the assimilation process as something that both dominant and immigrant groups participate in (Alba and Nee 2003). While the structure of society – especially the contexts of reception that immigrants encounter that may constrain or enable opportunities – significantly influences the degree to which they will be accepted, immigrants have the ability to “broker the boundaries to help define the content of their ethnicity in the host society, embracing some elements ascribed to them and rejecting others” (Massey and Sanchez 2010: 15). For example, Espiritu (2001) illustrates how Filipino families conceptualize White femininity as sexually promiscuous and as self-interested in relation to family. In doing so, their immigrant identities maintain a degree of cultural superiority over the dominant group.

Critiques of Segmented Assimilation Theory

Studies that explore the process of segmented assimilation and its outcomes provide insight into important aspects of how immigrants experience American life. However, I suggest that there are two significant issues within this area of scholarship. First, it focuses almost exclusively on material outcomes. In doing so, it fails to consider other important aspects of immigrants’ experiences in the U.S. More specifically, this scholarship assumes that immigrants have incorporated once they achieve parity with “mainstream” society in terms of material outcomes, without considering the importance of cultural belonging or exclusion. Jung (2009) suggests that assimilation scholarship ultimately seeks to uncover which groups “belong” within a nation. However, he argues that in considering only material
outcomes such as income, education, and residential patterns to examine belongingness, this research neglects to consider “the relations of power (i.e., domination) and the inequalities of and struggles over resources that power relations ordinarily entail” (Jung 2009: 389). These power relations, inequalities, and struggles over resources stem from which groups are viewed as similar to the dominant group, and which are viewed as different. Likewise, Bloemraad et al.’s (2008) note that citizenship can be defined not only in terms of legal status, rights, and political participation, but also cultural belonging. In sum, when assimilation scholars emphasize that immigrants have incorporated once they achieve certain structural outcomes, they minimize the importance of other aspects of immigrant incorporation including cultural belonging9.

Secondly, segmented assimilation research suggests that immigrants achieve acculturation through their individual efforts to learn English and adopt American values, which then results in mobility. This treatment of acculturation is flawed in two ways. First, while boundaries of belongingness can and sometimes do shift to include immigrant groups and values, in general, both the mainstream and academics expect outsiders to adapt and absorb the values of the dominant group. As such, there tends to be a significant degree of inequality inherent to the assimilation process whereby the immigrant group’s culture is subordinated to the group with more power. Furthermore, scholars using a segmented assimilation framework often fail to consider how cultural belonging or exclusion is socially constructed, beyond the individual. An example of how belongingness is socially constructed comes from Blauner (1972) who suggests that the initial method of incorporation sets the boundaries of Whiteness in terms of educational outcomes, income, housing patterns, etc. The experiences of Black Americans, and their continued denial of access to the same resources and opportunities afforded to White Americans, are largely absent in these discussions, implicitly leaving this group outside the boundaries of mainstream society (Jung 2009).

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9 While not explicitly stated, the assimilation literature largely defines mainstream society by standards of Whiteness in terms of educational outcomes, income, housing patterns, etc. The experiences of Black Americans, and their continued denial of access to the same resources and opportunities afforded to White Americans, are largely absent in these discussions, implicitly leaving this group outside the boundaries of mainstream society (Jung 2009).
trajectory for not only initial ethnic groups, but also impacts how subsequent generations are received into society. For example, although many European ethnic immigrants migrated as a result of strife in their countries of origin, their initial migration was nonetheless voluntary. This is in contrast to early Latin American groups who were forced to integrate when the U.S. conquered portions of Mexico. Blauner argues that although today’s Latin American immigrants migrate voluntarily in search of employment, this initial mode of incorporation affects contemporary Latinos’ experiences in the labor market, where they serve as a highly exploitable reserve army of labor. Experiences of early Latin Americans also impact the political and cultural environments surrounding Latinos today, who continue to be treated and viewed as colonial subjects (Blauner 1972). While, as mentioned, immigrants have the ability to “broker” these boundaries of exclusion and inclusion to a certain extent (Massey and Sanchez 2010), generally speaking groups that have the most resources in power in society have a greater degree of influence over how groups are constructed as belonging or excluded. Thus, contrary to how segmented assimilation research views acculturation, the degree to which immigrants “belong” culturally is not solely due to individual efforts but also as a result of larger cultural processes in society.

**Cultural Processes, Symbolic Boundaries, and the Politics of Nation-Building**

To summarize, I argue that the literature on assimilation fails to consider the social construction of immigrants’ cultural belong or exclusion by examining incorporation based solely on the degree to which immigrants have reached parity with mainstream society and by treating acculturation as an individual outcome based on effort. I suggest that these issues can be addressed by examining the cultural processes and symbolic boundary-work surrounding Latin American immigrants in newspaper discourse.
Shared cultural processes give meaning to our social world, working as an invisible toolkit that actors internalize and then use to make sense of the world around them (Swidler 1986). These processes include classifications and categories as well as the “scripts, narratives, repertoires, and symbolic boundaries” (Lamont et al. 2014: 580) that support them. Symbolic boundaries work to socially construct differences, or potentially similarities, between groups. Lamont and Molnar (2002) define symbolic boundaries as “conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space” and as “tools by which individuals and groups struggle over and come to agree upon definitions of reality” (168). Because boundaries that exist between social groups in our society are so deeply engrained in our culture, there is an air of inevitability surrounding them and, as such, they often go unexamined. However, once distinctions between “us” and “them” become salient, they have a profound effect on individual identity, intergroup relations, and larger systems of inequality (Tajfel 1978; Tajfel and Turner 1979); they define who and which groups belong, and which do not.

Differences between immigrants and nonimmigrants have an especially high degree of legitimacy (and are therefore more likely to be taken for granted), because they stem from the concept of state-sovereignty, the idea that states have the right to determine who they are going to allow within their borders and, conversely, who they are going to keep out (Starr 1992). An underlying assumption of this right is that those allowed within have something culturally in common with the dominant group, such as work ethic, religion, or family values, that distinguishes them from those excluded (Verdery 1994). Thus, the way Latin American immigrants are portrayed as culturally similar to or different than the dominant group can signify whether they “belong.”
Discourse constructs immigrants as belonging (or not) because it creates and shapes our reality and knowledges. For example, at certain points in American history, racial and ethnic minority groups have been constructed as undesirable; Native Americans were framed as savages, Chinese immigrants were often constructed as disease ridden and dirty, Irish immigrants were portrayed as prone to alcoholism, and Italian immigrants were associated with crime (Waters and Simes 2013). These depictions justified “civilization” programs designed to assimilate “savages,” America’s invasion of nations, and overall disparate treatment (Flores 2003; Gamson et al. 1992; Omi and Winant 1994; Padín 2005; Santa Ana 2002). Thus, those that have the ability to shape discourse, have the power to shape what is viewed and thought of as truth (Foucault 1980). The news media represents a prime medium for examining this discourse, because it is an elite institution whose function is to report the events that are unfolding in the world and the workings of other social institutions such as the government and economy. In other words, the news media is the site through which knowledge, derived from discourse, is disseminated to the public at large (Altheide 2013).

Furthermore, the news media is unique because it both reflects and influences the world around it. As a profit-driven industry, the news media has a vested interest in featuring coverage that maintains their readership and advertising base (Branton and Dunaway 2009a, 2009b). Newspaper outlets draw readers in by including coverage that coincides with larger cultural belief systems that resonate with audiences (Benford and Snow 2000; Gamson 1992). Thus, the way the news media portrays Latin American immigrants in relation to American culture provides insight into the features and dynamics of the cultural boundaries that exist between immigrants and nonimmigrants in society. Media depictions of Latin American immigrants may signify that cultural boundaries are rigid, blurring, or both.
The media also influences reality. Actors in the news industry select which stories to feature and in doing so, convey a message to their audience about which topics are important and “news-worthy.” Research indicates that the public is more likely to think of immigration as the most important problem facing the country in areas where immigration receives more media attention (Branton et al. 2010). The media also serves a framing function, by suggesting to readers how to think about a particular topic (Kim et al. 2002). For example, Sohoni and Sohoni (2014) demonstrated that news coverage on crime and immigration contributes to the publics’ continued association between immigrants and increased criminality, despite evidence to the contrary.

Research on Immigrants in the News

Other researchers have examined how the news frames immigration. Research indicates that immigrants are often portrayed as culturally and demographically threatening to the U.S. (Chavez 2013; Flores 2003; McConnell 2011; Padín 2005). McConnell (2011) illustrates how even a seemingly objective aspect of journalism – reports on Census statistics – can present a biased perspective. She found that one newspaper emphasized the rates of change of Latino and Asian immigrant populations far more often than rates of changes of Whites and Blacks populations. Furthermore, coverage of changes in the Latino and Asian population included inflammatory language such as “whopping” and phrases including “an explosion of immigrants” (McConnell 2011). Likewise, Chavez’s (2013) work traces the historical development of the “invasion threat narrative,” which suggests that immigrants pose a threat to society. This narrative is exemplified in a quote from Pat Buchannan who suggested, “Mexico is the greatest foreign policy crisis I think America faces in the next 20, 30 years…We’re going to have 135 million Hispanics in the United States by 2050, heavily
concentrated in the southwest”. Culturally, researchers have found that immigrants are portrayed simultaneously “like Whites” in some ways (industrious, enterprising), as well as “unlike Whites” (Padín 2005) and inherently incompatible with American ethos (Flores 2003).

In addition to portraying immigrants as culturally threatening, there are other prominent themes within news media coverage of immigration. While not directly tied to the topic of immigration and culture, these frames nonetheless contribute to the social construction of immigrants’ cultural exclusion. A prominent theme within newspaper coverage is that immigrants are a threat to public safety (Martinez-Brawley and Gualda 2009; Sohoni and Sohoni 2014), an especially powerful image that plays on the fears of a largely native, White audience (Glassner 2010). The association between immigrants and crime contributes to the pervasive “Latino Threat Narrative”10 found in American society (Chavez 2013; Stewart et al. 2011) and is often used as a way to justify restrictive policies and enforcement (Sohoni and Mendez 2014). For instance, newspapers in Arizona emphasized the criminal activity of Mexican/Latino immigrants over any other topic (Martinez-Brawley and Gualda 2009) despite an erroneous association between crime and immigrants. Furthermore, Stewart et al. (2011) argue that newspapers sensationalize stories that involve criminal acts of immigrants by including stereotypes of the cultural outsider who, for example, does not speak English. Immigrants are also portrayed as a threat to public safety in non-criminal ways. White (2010) provides an example of discourse that portrayed immigrants as threatening by comparing depictions of immigration and leprosy outbreaks in

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10 The ‘invasion threat narrative’ mentioned above falls under the umbrella of a larger ‘Latino Threat Narrative’ that speaks more generally to the threat Latinos, and specifically Latino immigrants, pose to American society in a variety of ways.
early 20th century America to 21st century Arkansas. At the turn of the 20th century, the U.S. print news media openly associated outbreaks of leprosy to immigrant populations. The relationship between immigrants and leprosy reappeared with a report from Fort Smith, Arkansas connecting an impending leprosy outbreak to their immigrant population. White (2010) explains, “The expression of fear associated with leprosy…is a surface presentation of a general fear of the “other” and a broader concern that “illegal” immigrants threaten the American way of life” (23).

Another prominent theme within news coverage relates to the economy (Chavez 2013; Martinez-Brawley and Gualda 2009; McElmurry 2009; Stewart et al. 2011). In general, analyses indicate that immigrants are portrayed negatively through frames that suggest that immigrants are fiscally harmful to the state (i.e. as a stress on the welfare system) and to the nonimmigrant population specifically (i.e. taking jobs away) (Martinez-Brawley and Gualda 2009). For example, Martinez-Brawley and Gualda (2009) found that when discussing immigration and the economy, newspapers in Arizona emphasized immigrants’ use of tax-funded services, including the strain they place on border hospitals. Researchers also find that immigrants are also likely to be portrayed as “lazy” and “self-serving” in relation to their economic pursuits, a construction that makes a clear boundary between “us” (the native-born) and “them” (the foreign-born) (McElmurry 2009).

Previous research that examines news media portrayals of immigrants provides important insight into how boundaries between “us,” the native-born, and “them,” the foreign-born, are socially constructed. However, in focusing only on negative public discourse, scholars have failed to analyze an important part of the story: rhetoric that is more neutral or more receptive towards immigrants. Public opinion on immigration is highly
divided; two out of three Americans say they are dissatisfied with current immigration levels (Gallup 2012), yet 57% think immigrants “strengthen rather than burden society” (Pew Hispanic Center 2014). Positive or neutral discourses may challenge immigrants’ marginalization and therefore blur boundaries between immigrant and nonimmigrant groups. On the other hand, positive discourses could also serve to reinforce boundaries, especially given today’s era of colorblind racial ideology\(^{11}\) (Bonilla-Silva 2003). While overtly negative rhetoric surrounding immigration obviously contributes to immigrants’ cultural exclusion, positive rhetoric may also contribute to marginalization but in more subtle ways.

**Methods**

*Case Selection*

I sampled newspaper outlets with the largest circulation rate across four cities: Los Angeles (*LA Times; LAT*), Atlanta (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution; AJC*), San Antonio (*San Antonio Express-News; SAE*), and Raleigh (*News & Observer; N&O*). I chose these locations because they have similar characteristics in all but two key ways – level of incorporation into the global economic system (global/non-global) and immigrant destination type (new/traditional). While most of the findings I present focus on overlap in coverage between the newspaper outlets, I also discuss meaningful variations in the results section when they emerged.

*Data Collection*

With the exception of the *N&O*, I retrieved articles through LexisNexis Academic. I searched for articles published between 2000 and 2012 that contained the word “immi*” or

\(^{11}\) The dominant racial ideology of today is colorblind in nature, attributing racial inequality to anything other than race.
“migra*” in the title. The “*” conveys wildcard characters so that variations of the words immigrant (i.e., immigration or immigrants) and migrant (i.e., migration or migrants) would be returned. I conducted a similar search for the N&O but because this publication was not available via LexisNexis, I used America’s News. The selected time period encompasses several important events, including 9/11, the ongoing economic crisis, three Presidential elections, and the rise of state-level self-deportation laws. I included only pieces that contain at least 500 words, as articles with fewer words were unlikely to discuss the topic in a meaningful way. I included new stories at the local and national level, as well as editorials and op-eds. I systematically sampled 10% of articles from the LA Times and Atlanta Journal-Constitution, and 100 articles each from the News & Observer and San Antonio Express-News. This resulted in an initial sample size of 587 articles across all outlets. However, for the purposes of this chapter, I parsed out articles that referenced Latin American immigration exclusively because society treats and views immigrant groups differently based on their country of origin (Portes and Zhou 1993). This resulted in a total of 338 articles across all outlets.

**Analysis Technique**

I conducted a frame analysis to examine the discourse surrounding immigrants and culture in newspaper articles. Goffman (1974) defines frames as “definitions of a situation [that] are built up in accordance with principles of organization which govern events – at

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12 Preliminary searches indicate that using these terms more broadly, for example in the article text, produced unrelated results. However, articles with these words in the title were primarily about immigration.

13 I excluded articles that focused on immigration unrelated to the U.S. While it could be argued that these stories also perform boundary-work, I am most interested in understanding how newspaper discourse portrays U.S. immigration.

14 I did this by searching for articles that referenced “(Latin OR Hispanic OR Argentina OR Belize OR Bolivia OR Brazil OR Chile OR Colombia OR Costa Rica OR Cuba OR Ecuador OR El Salvador OR Guatemala OR Guyana OR Honduras OR Mexico OR Nicaragua OR Panama OR Paraguay OR Peru OR Puerto Rico OR Suriname OR Uruguay OR Venezuela).”
least social ones – and our subjective involvement in them” (10). Frames set the parameters for how something is spoken, thought, or written about, and thus, help social actors make sense of the world around them. Frame analysis has a meaning-making component to it, which is highly compatible to studying cultural processes and symbolic boundary-work.

My first step to analyze the data was to establish a codebook. Several coding categories stem from prior research, while I defined others from an initial reading of a pilot sample of 100 articles. I developed my codebook iteratively, testing and revising across several rounds. The final codebook consists of approximately forty codes. I used NVivo 10 to code and analyze my newspaper data for two reasons. First, it is designed to accommodate large amounts of texts as well as multilevel coding (document- and text-level). Second, this program allows multiple codes to be applied to one segment of data, providing for richer analysis. Third, I chose NVivo because it allowed me to identify the frequencies and patterns that emerged in my data (Richards and Richards 1994).

I drew my analysis from text coded as related to “culture” and “language” to examine frames that contribute to the social construction of immigrants’ cultural belonging or exclusion. I applied the culture code to text that referenced “immigrant or specific immigrant-related ethnic group (e.g. Hispanic) art, festivals, food, history, and/or sports, or when the world ‘culture’” was specifically mentioned. Text that referenced “the system of communication used by immigrants or a specific immigrant-related ethnic group (e.g. Hispanics)” including references to “the languages immigrants speak or immigrants’ proficiency in English” received the language code. I selected these codes because this is where discussions of the degree to which immigrants are incorporating into American culture, resisting that incorporation, and their cultural characteristics emerged most salient.
By focusing exclusively on these codes, I excluded other aspects of belonging including those related to immigrants’ work life, educational experiences, or political participation. However, I chose to focus on these codes to examine portrayals of immigrants and the process of acculturation in an effort to move away from focusing on material outcomes that have been traditionally analyzed with the immigrant assimilation scholarship as noted above. Of the 338 articles that referenced Latin American immigration exclusively, I applied the codes of “culture” or “language” to 162. Thus, these articles comprise the final sample used for analysis in this chapter.

Findings

Four dominant frames related to immigrants and culture emerged from my analysis of the text. The first suggested that immigrants are culturally different. In a few instances, these references merely noted immigrants’ cultural differences without implying that they were inferior to American culture. However, most often, immigrants’ cultural differences were portrayed in a negative light or were referenced in association with undesirable qualities immigrants possess through discourse that was negative, neutral, and positive. Outlets also subtly depicted nonacculturation as bad through neutral discourses, referencing how immigrants’ cultural outsidersness contributed to their vulnerability, burdened social institutions, and threatened American society. Newspaper coverage also suggested that acculturation is good by describing the upward mobility immigrants experience when they adopt American culture and by portraying immigrants who adopt American values in a positive light. I argue that although most of the discourse in these frames is neutral or positive (rather than explicitly negative), they implicitly suggest that immigrants should adopt American culture and in doing so, regardless of intent, contribute to the subordination
of immigrants’ culture to the dominant group. Lastly, and in contrast to the first three frames, some articles framed *immigrants’ culture as good when it serves the dominant group*, either economically or politically.

**Immigrants are Culturally Different**

Outlets frequently suggested that *immigrants are culturally different*. Whether through overtly negative or neutral discourse, I suggest that in most instances, outlets portrayed immigrants’ cultural difference as inferior. As shown in Figure 1, although relatively infrequent, about 12% of the Latin American immigration articles that referenced culture or language explicitly devalued immigrant culture through negative discourse. Some of this animosity was aimed at the Mexican flag. For example, in an article describing the 2006 protests surrounding proposed immigration legislation, the *LAT* included coverage of an interview with a state representative who stated, “‘When you come here and wave a Mexican flag in our face in a country that’s giving a lot of these people an opportunity…, I think a lot of Americans are insulted” (Miller 2006). Although this article provided a forum for both those in favor and against the protests, this quotation has the potential to resonate with audiences because it comes from a government official, a group that society views as credible (Noakes 2000). In another *LAT* article covering the 2006 protests, the journalist included a quotation from of a well-known local radio disc jockey who “criticized the display of Mexican flags.” He suggested, “‘I would have loved to hear a sound bite [from the protests] that said, ‘Viva America.’ I didn’t hear it’” (Miller and Fernandez 2006).

Newspapers also included coverage that was explicitly hostile towards the use of Spanish. An article in the *SAE* quotes a resident of San Antonio who felt that immigrants should, “‘Learn English in this country. I don’t like going into Wal-Mart and seeing Spanish’” (Scharrer
Likewise, a resident of a rural Iowa town is quoted in the LAT as wondering, “‘I grew up in this town. Why do I see Spanish signs everywhere?’” (Barabak 2007). Although overtly hostile statements such as these were relatively uncommon, I suggest that in these passages, immigrants are framed as clinging to the flags and language of their home country, both taken as signs of immigrants’ resistance to participating in American culture. These depictions, then, reinforce a bright boundary of inequality between Latin American immigrants and those in the dominant group.

More frequently, outlets conveyed the message that immigrants are culturally different through discourse that was neutral, but, I argue, in ways that still contribute to boundaries of inequality. These references were found in 32% of the articles analyzed for this chapter (Figure 1). For example, although not explicitly described as a deficiency, several articles used neutral discourse to report on the negative consequences associated with Latin American’s use or reliance on Spanish. For example, an article in the AJC noted the lack of academic progress for non-English speaking students when it reported, “Most students – black, white and English-speaking Latinos – made double-digit gains…But students not fluent in English did not” (Torres 2004). Likewise, an article from the N&O described a recent study that suggested that second- and third-generation Hispanic immigrants show signs of linguistic assimilation, but then went on to report, “The study found, however, that Hispanics of Mexican origin -- who predominate in the largest U.S. immigrant influx in a century -- are the slowest to adopt English in succeeding generations” (Greve 2007). While these articles report factual information surrounding immigrants and language, I suggest that they also imply that speaking Spanish is a shortcoming. Furthermore, even articles with English-speaking immigrants noted linguistic markers of difference in pejorative terms. For
example, in an article that described protests surrounding the 2006 immigration reform measure, the *N&O* described an immigrant as speaking in “halting English” (Rocha 2006b). Other articles emphasized that Latin Americans prefer to speak Spanish, which contributes to the vulnerability they experience. For example, an article in the *AJC* went into great detail describing an illegal dental practice that caters to immigrants. The article suggested, “Many immigrants…tend to end up in a dental chair in someone’s living room, apartment or trailer” because, “Immigrants feel more comfortable dealing with someone who speaks their language” (Pickel 2005). Again, while this passage is neutral, in that it does not have an explicit tonal quality, I contend that it nonetheless marks immigrants as culturally different based on their linguistic preferences.

Lastly, articles often included direct references to immigrants’ use of Spanish, rather than providing a translation for their readers. This occurred thirty-six times across 124 references, or in 29% of the passages coded as related to “language.” For example, in the *SAE*, an editorialist whose father was from Cleveland and mother from Chihuahua described an interaction his mother had when crossing the border when “she realized – ay Dios mio – that she had forgotten the card at home” (Seltzer 2006). Newspapers inclusion of Spanish words and phrases are not overtly hostile, and may be attributed to the audience of particular outlets. While I am not arguing that outlets include them to intentionally contribute to symbolic boundaries of inequality between immigrants and nonimmigrants, I suggest that regardless of intent, they serve as subtle reminders of immigrants’ reliance on Spanish, and, therefore, contributes to their marginalization; intentionally or not, they convey to readers that immigrants are unlike “us” because they do not speak English. This is an especially powerful narrative because language is foundational to cultural solidarity and because
dominant groups have historically used linguistic differences to mark cultural distinctions between themselves and subordinate groups in ways that reinforce inequality (Alba 2005; Zolberg and Woon 1999). For example, in the early to mid-20th century, conformity to the English language was enforced in schools and the workforce, and there continues to be a nativist backlash against the prevalence of Spanish-speakers in the U.S. as evidenced by the English-only ordinances that have proliferated in the U.S. (Zolberg and Woon 1999). Thus, while these articles do not openly engage in xenophobic discourse, they subtly cast immigrants as culturally different and inferior through their language and in doing so, contribute to their subornation.

Articles also subtly portrayed immigrants as culturally different by referencing the non-American food they consume. In some instances, these references were merely markers of difference between immigrants and nonimmigrants rather than markers of difference that contribute to inequality. For example, in an article that described an immigrant family affected by a house fire, the wife is described as having enjoyed cooking “traditional Mexican food” such as “tamales” (Bible 2002). While we would not expect to see the same type of description if the article were about a nonimmigrant family (i.e., that the wife enjoyed cooking “traditional American food”), the overall tone of the article is one of sympathy towards the family and cultural distinctions are not conveyed in a way that connotes inferiority. Another example comes from the LAT, in an article titled, “In the Valley, a vigorous community takes root: Immigrants from Central and South America are changing the face of the area.” The article described the cultural changes immigrants have brought to an area, emphasizing foods such as “fried plantains,” “curtido,” and “handmade pupusas” (Sailant 2012). Rather than referencing these differences in a disparaging way, the article is
celebratory and applauds the cultural diversity these immigrants have brought to the community. Again, while the article makes note of the differences between immigrants and nonimmigrants, the overall tone of the article is positive.

However, I suggest that other references to the food Latin American immigrants consume marked not only differences between immigrants and nonimmigrants, but in subtle ways conveyed the image of immigrants’ cultural inferiority. For example, the article mentioned above about an illegal dental practice referenced “peddlers hawk[ing] Mexican snacks” (Pickel 2005). This description is seemingly neutral, however the label “peddlers” is interesting as these are generally suspicious persons in undesirable occupations and the verb “hawking” suggests they yell loudly to solicit customers. Therefore, I argue that this reference, in the midst of an article that is largely negative, reinforces the idea that the culture immigrants participate in is different and of lower-grade than American culture. I suggest that articles also subtly reinforced immigrants’ cultural inferiority by referencing their non-American food in conjunction with portrayals of desperation, which was especially common as it relates to beans. An article in the LAT quoted an immigrant contemplating migrating back to Mexico because you “‘might as well eat beans and be with your family!’” (Gorman 2008) while another immigrant suggested, “‘sometimes we can’t afford beans’” (Ellingwood 2008). While each of these passages are neutral and come directly from immigrants, the journalists’ decision to include reference to beans when describing poverty is especially interesting considering the negative association between Latin Americans and beans, evidenced by the historical racial slur “beaner.” Another example of an article that references immigrants’ food in relation to their desperation described the charitable services Mixtec migrants from Mexico rely on. The article suggested, “that support starts with a simple meal
of soup and Mexican sweet bread” (Alvarez 2001). Again, this is a neutral reference, but it also associates an aspect of immigrant culture with characteristics deemed undesirable in America life.

As other researchers have argued, even seemingly straight-forward descriptive reporting contributes to boundaries between dominant and marginalized groups by highlighting differences between the two (McConnell 2011). Although references to Latin American immigrants’ language and food are descriptive and largely neutral, newspapers – quite likely unintentionally – construct immigrants as different through the un-American language they speak and food they consume. While some references merely note differences between immigrants and nonimmigrants without engaging in themes of domination and subordination, many of them take on a hierarchical quality where immigrants’ culture is construed as “less than” that of American culture or as related to immigrants’ inferiority. I suggest that these subtle indicators of immigrants’ cultural inferiority work as coded language by highlighting how immigrants participate in culture differently than the dominant group. Coded language refers to terms that are not openly inflammatory, but conjure up images associated with a particular group of people in a way that contributes to their marginalization. Thus, these references draw a “dim” boundary between immigrants and the dominant group and, therefore, contribute to the inequality immigrants face, especially when considering the next two frames described below – that nonacculturation is bad and that acculturation is good.

Nonacculturation is Bad

In 25% of the Latin American immigration articles referencing culture or language, outlets also suggested that nonacculturation is bad (Figure 1). While the LAT and N&O were
relatively similar in how often they included this frame, the *AJC* included it more than any other at 36% while the *SAE* was the least likely to feature it at 18%. I suggest that some outlets coverage, while largely neutral and sympathetic, portrayed immigrants’ failure to adopt American culture as bad because it makes them vulnerable. An article in the *AJC* stated, “Often limited in English-speaking skills, unfamiliar with a new culture and flush with cash from their jobs, immigrants can be an easy mark for scams” (Rodriguez 2001). Another, in the *LAT*, noted, “Scam artists have long exploited immigrants facing language barriers and byzantine legal procedures in schemes big and small” (Kim 2011). While these articles utilized neutral discourse and focus on the resources and help immigrant victims receive, I contend that they ultimately portray immigrants as gullible, naïve individuals who are susceptible to victimization as a result of their cultural outsiderness. Articles also associated nonacculturation with vulnerability by referencing immigrants’ inability to access institutional resources. The *LAT* quoted a director from the Los Angeles city attorney’s office who suggested, “‘If you are illegal and monolingual and you can’t access any public services, you are trapped…You are scared and you are in danger’” (Gorman 2009a). Likewise, the *AJC* features an interview with a local immigration attorney, who suggested that

‘The sheriff’s office says people are told explicitly that they are acting on behalf of ICE and I don’t doubt them. But when a regular mom has been in jail four days, hasn’t seen her kids, and is being told all sorts of things through a translator, not all of this [is clear].’ (20)

While references to immigrants’ vulnerability are seemingly sympathetic in nature, they also engage in elements of victim-blaming, an ideology well-documented as contributing to the reproduction of inequality (Bonilla-Silva 2013). Although likely not intentional, these articles
implicitly suggest that if immigrants were more familiar with American culture and spoke English, they may not be as susceptible to victimization. In other words, their vulnerability is of their own making. As an alternative, articles may instead focus on an inhospitable context of reception that contributes to immigrants’ victimization. That is, outlets could choose to emphasize the structure of society, rather than on the shortcomings of immigrants, to explain why immigrants are vulnerable.

I argue that articles also cast nonacculturation in a negative light by including detailed descriptions of the burden immigrants impose on social institutions. Much of this discourse centered on the educational system, with articles referring to how schools “grapple with the issue of English fluency every day” (Torres 2004) and discussing how “the changing ethnic composition of the school has created worries about achievement” (Rosenblatt and Helfand 2001). Some articles acknowledged immigrants’ contributions, but these positive statements were often followed by references to the costs immigrants create as well. For example, a passage from the NdO stated, “Researchers have said that Hispanics contribute billions of dollars a year to the state’s economy through purchases, taxes, and labor. But there are costs as well, for school districts struggling to pay for English-as-a-second-language classes” (Quillin 2011). Outlets also emphasized the burden immigrants place on legal institutions: for example, by discussing how officers undergo special training to “deal with” this population. An article in the LAT noted, “Providing language services represents an added burden on state and local governments already wobbly kneed with budget troubles” (Ellingwood 2003). This same article suggested, “Critics say the language programs might be done with good intentions, but…they are a poor use of public money” (Ellingwood 2003). Although not overtly stated as such, I maintain that these passages imply that immigrants are
taking advantage of the American taxpayer through their resistance to acculturation, which may relate to a resistance towards immigration to the U.S. in general. Additionally, the fact that references to the burdensome, unacculturated immigrant were made in relation to the educational and legal systems is likely to resonate culturally with audiences because these institutions stem from core American values of hard work, equality, and law-and-order. This cultural resonance makes this frame all the more powerful (Benford and Snow 2002; Gamson et al. 1992; Shriver, Adams, and Cable 2013).

Nonacculturation was also depicted as generally detrimental to American society through discourse that was more negative. This narrative coincides with what Chavez (2013) describes as the Latino Threat Narrative, the idea that Latin American immigration has the potential to reconquer portions of America. An op-ed in the *LAT* suggested, “Anglo-Protestant values enabled Americans to create a vibrant and productive society. Our…wealth attracts people…in massive numbers who are en route to destroying what they came here looking for” (Nachman 2004). Others spoke of immigrants “invading” America through their lack of acculturation, stated explicitly by a resident of Los Angeles who “concluded that Mexican immigrants were invading the country and weren’t interested in assimilating” (Riccardi 2006).

Some of this coverage was sensational in nature, with an *LAT* article describing a political advertisement as featuring “a man choking on a meatball after hearing on a news broadcast that English is no longer America’s official language. He calls 911 and then passes out while listening to a menu of options for speakers of Spanish, Korean, and other languages” (Bailey 2000). Another example of sensationalized rhetoric comes from the *LAT*, where a local politician suggested “the country is under siege by ‘a cult of multiculturalism’”
This discourse is especially effective in constructing immigrants as cultural outsiders because it stokes nativists’ fears about the “browning of America.” The impact these sensationalized frames have on Othering immigrants is likely more significant because they come from an elite group of social actors – American politicians, who are granted a significant degree of legitimacy in our society (Noakes 2000).

Acculturation is Good

Outlets also framed *acculturation as good*, which was found in 19% of all articles included for analysis in this chapter (Figure 1). The vast majority of these references focused on individuals, with only two passages across all outlets referencing acculturation at the group-level. Most of these positive articles focused on immigrant children, who are often associated with innocence and, as such, deserving. An *AJC* article described one immigrant child as a “hard-working scholastic star who would make any parent proud” (Holmes 2000). It continued: “She immigrated to Los Angeles nine years ago, perfected her English, earned a Merit Scholarship and graduated last year from Occidental College with honors” (Holmes 2000). The *LAT* reported on an immigrant child whose, “English was so limited he stumbled over the words for numbers and colors. Four years later, he was on the wait list at Princeton” (Barbassa 2006). In addition to associating acculturation specifically with educational success, newspaper outlets also framed immigrant children’s adoption of American culture more positively in general terms. For example, an article from the *AJC* who described an immigrant child as becoming “so ‘Americanized’ that she wouldn’t fit back in her native country…She has…grown to enjoy American barbecue, the ‘Twilight’ vampire romance series and country music” (Redmon 2012a). Although the discourse in these articles does not explicitly suggest that acculturation is beneficial, I suggest that in emphasizing the upward
mobility of individual immigrants they subtly convey this very idea. Furthermore, this frame has the potential to resonate with audiences, as it aligns with American cultural beliefs surrounding children, innocence, and vulnerability (Benford and Snow 2002; Gamson et al. 1992; Shriver et al. 2013). The emphasis placed on immigrant children may also be attributed to their perceived malleability, in contrast to immigrant adults who are thought of as less likely to change.

I contend that articles also portrayed acculturation as good by framing immigrants who attested to their desire to participate in American culture and speak English in a positive light. An article in the *SAE* quoted an immigrant who said, “‘It was hard adapting to life in the United States…I didn’t speak English, but I applied myself’” (Buch 2012). Likewise, an article from the *AJC* described an immigrant family participating in the American tradition of Thanksgiving. The article included a quote from an immigrant who said, “‘It is something we have to do…they are very happy that the nation gives thanks together…. It is very American, and it’s something that’s very important’” (Wagstaff 2000). Another reference in the *LAT* quoted an immigrant who said “‘you’re going to see a sea of people wearing white shirts and white blouses and carrying the American flag, honoring this country because this is the country we want to belong to” (Miller 2006). According to social identity theory (Turner and Tajfel 1979), immigrants have a vested interest in voicing their desire to participate in American culture. When immigrants identify with and, more importantly, are classified by others as part of the in-group, they are afforded the resources and power associated with membership in the dominant group.

Although not overtly xenophobic, the *acculturation is good* frame subtly reinforces boundaries between immigrant and nonimmigrant groups. By portraying immigrants who
have acculturated in a positive light, outlets implicitly suggest that adherence to dominant culture is meritorious, privileging it above and beyond immigrants’ culture. This relates to Jung’s (2009) argument that assimilation is fundamentally about power and inequality in that it involves one group subordinating another. Furthermore, much like the literature found on segmented assimilation, this frame is highly individualized, suggesting that it is up to the individual immigrant to adapt to American culture. This narrative fails to consider the structure surrounding immigrants’ experiences with American culture, or how inhospitable contexts of reception – including the social construction of immigrants as cultural outsiders – may discourage immigrants from adopting American values and customs. There is also little credence given to the idea that immigrants may choose to distance themselves from aspects of American culture they deem undesirable, despite this process being well-documented by researchers (Espiritu 2001; Massey and Sanchez 2010).

**Immigrants’ Culture as Good when it Serves the Dominant Group**

While the vast majority of cultural references portrayed American culture as superior and the adoption of U.S. values as advantageous, one frame emerged in contrast to the others. In approximately 9% of the Latin American immigration articles that referenced culture or language, newspapers portrayed immigrants’ culture in a more positive light when it served the interests of dominant groups (Figure 1). While this portrayal was relatively consistent across outlets, the N&O was most likely to feature it, including it in 15% of its articles. For example, outlets, especially in new immigrant destinations, glorified immigrants’ culture in rural communities. An article in the N&O reported, “hundreds of Mexican and Central American immigrants…have helped reverse the population drain” and that, “the influx has meant new customers with money to spend, and a stable and inexpensive labor pool”
Articles such as these have a positive tone to them, as each embrace the culture immigrants’ have brought to these destinations. However, this acceptance is portrayed only in conjunction with their economic contributions. That is, I argue that they implicitly suggest that if not for their economic contributions, immigrants’ culture may not be as readily accepted or
described in a such a receptive manner. In this way, these references to immigrants’ culture – although positive – work to serve the dominant group and therefore, contribute to the marginalization immigrants’ experience. Furthermore, descriptions of the drastic cultural changes immigrants bring to new immigrant destinations have the potential to reinforce concerns about the consequences associate with demographic shifts, providing proof that the “browning of America” is, indeed, happening (McConnell 2011). These depictions have even more potential to draw boundaries between the two groups because they come from outlets in new immigrant destinations, which have little history of contact with immigrant communities.

Another way outlets framed immigrants’ culture more positively was when it could be of political use to the dominant group. Several articles noted how politicians use Spanish to shore up Latin American immigrants and their descendants as a key constituency. For example, an article from the LAT describing political strategy contended that during both presidential races, Bush’s campaign aides waged a “sophisticated, bilingual campaign that many credit with helping the GOP make inroads into a constituency that had been moving to the Democrats” (Wallsten 2007). Another example comes from an editorial in the LAT, which suggested that in the aftermath of Proposition 187, “Republicans have been in damage control, some of them even learning a few palabras en Espanol and coming frighteningly close to donning sombreros” (Lopez 2002). Similarly, a politician quoted in the AJC noted, “‘I have to campaign in Spanish…in order to keep my seat’” (Pickel 2006b). In each of these passages, politicians are described as actively use Spanish in order to further

15 Passed in 1994, California’s widely-publicized Proposition 187 is recognized as being quintessentially anti-immigrant (Marrow 2005; Massey 2008). The legislation proposed a screening system to significantly restricted immigrant families’ access to state services, including public education and health care facilities. The proposition was later ruled unconstitutional by federal courts.
their own self-interest. Outlets also described Latin American immigrants and their
descendants’ use of Spanish more positively when it could be of use to business. For
example, an SAE article noted, “Some of the country’s largest banks…have been working to
woo more Hispanic customers…by hiring more bilingual tellers, making it easier for
Mexican immigrants to open accounts” (Thiruvengadam 2006). In each reference, outlets
portray immigrants’ culture as something elite groups can capitalize on in order to achieve a
certain end goal, whether it be a political office or financial gain.

These passages frame immigrants’ use of Spanish much differently than the passages
referenced above, where the use of Spanish was portrayed as something that marked
immigrants as culturally different and as a burden to taxpayers through the accommodation
social institutions must undergo. However, I contend that these positive discourses still
maintain symbolic boundaries between immigrant and nonimmigrant groups because
immigrants’ use of Spanish is framed as something that can be exploited in service to
dominant elite groups, whether business or political, and as such, contributes to immigrants’
marginalization. While Spanish is portrayed as a positive marker of difference between
immigrants and nonimmigrants, it is a difference that dominant groups can capitalize on in
order to maintain and further their interests.

Discussion

This chapter examines the social construction of cultural belonging surrounding Latin
American immigrants in newspaper discourse. I find that immigrants are generally portrayed
as cultural outsiders, both explicitly and implicitly. Furthermore, newspapers place a
normative value on the acculturation process, with nonacculturation depicted in a negative
light and acculturation portrayed more positively. In contrast to these frames, newspaper
discourse embraces immigrant culture when it serves to further the interests of elite actors. I argue that explicit portrayals of immigrants as cultural outsiders reinforce bright boundaries between immigrant and nonimmigrants, while discourse that makes subtle note of immigrants’ inferior, cultural “outsiderness” reinforce “dim” boundaries between the two groups. I also suggest newspapers implicitly subordinate immigrant culture and once again, reinforce boundaries between immigrant and nonimmigrant groups when they frame acculturation through a normative lens. The way that newspaper outlets frame acculturation as ideal becomes even clearer considering how infrequently they referenced transnationalism. While it is widely documented that immigrants engage in the culture of both their countries of origin and host societies (Lee and Bean 2007; Massey and Sanchez 2010), across all newspaper outlets, only three references were made to these ties. Furthermore, discourse that depicts acculturation as related to individual effort minimizes the role the social world plays in this process, further contributing to the social construction of immigrants as cultural outsiders. Several implications stem from these findings.

First, my results and analysis suggest that the two gaps I identified within research on segmented assimilation are significant. I argued that, first, segmented assimilation literature focuses almost exclusively on material outcomes as evidence of immigrants’ acceptance (or lack thereof) into American society, without taking into account the importance of cultural belonging. In doing so, this scholarship overlooks the inequality and domination inherent to the assimilation process (Jung 2009). Secondly, I contended that researchers studying assimilation treat acculturation as achieved by individual immigrants in route to experiencing either upward or downward mobility, failing to consider how cultural belonging is socially constructed. The results presented here suggest that cultural belonging is also an important
dimension of immigrants’ experiences, as material outcomes do not provide a complete picture of the differences and similarities that exist between immigrants and the dominant group. I have demonstrated that immigrants continue to be on the fringes of cultural belonging except, of course, as it relates to their ability to serve the dominant group. Furthermore, my research indicates that acculturation is not merely an outcome pursued and achieved by individuals, but also socially constructed through cultural processes found in larger society.

Another implication relates to the marginalization and exploitation immigrants face in society. Many of these frames reinforce one another to prevent immigrants’ full acceptance in American life. That is, if newspapers frame acculturation as good and attainable through individual efforts, yet discourse simultaneously constructs immigrants as cultural outsiders, then immigrants can be held personally responsible for their cultural deficiencies. This is akin to the dominant racial ideology of today: colorblind racism. Colorblind racial ideology attributes differences between racial groups to anything other than race. Rather, members of the dominant group explain differences between racial groups as resulting from a lack of personal responsibility of certain members of racial minority groups and to the ways minority racial groups’ cultures are incompatible with success in American life. In many ways, the frames identified here make the same types of argument in regards to immigrants. Immigrants are depicted as personally responsible for not having the “right” type of culture. This contributes to the vulnerability they experience, a vulnerability that ultimately helps to legitimate the economic exploitation many, especially those who are undocumented, face (Robinson 2009). Furthermore, this theme of individualism also enables elite actors to exploit immigrants as scapegoats to further their own political goals. These actors can point to
immigrants, as cultural outsiders, to explain what is wrong with America (Johnson 1996; Pfitsch 2005), regardless of how much power this group actually holds in the political process and U.S. society in general.

Lastly, while it is recognized among race and gender scholars that in today’s world it is generally unacceptable to openly express racist and sexist ideas or to explicitly portray minority racial groups and women as “us” versus “them” (Bonilla-Silva 2013), the results presented here suggest that this is not the case for Latin American immigrants. Some of the frames described here, as well as ones identified by other scholars examining media discourse surrounding immigration (Chavez 2013; Flores 2003; Innes 2010; Martinez-Brawley and Gualda 2009; McConnell 2011; McElmurry 2009; Stewart et al. 2011), were openly hostile and xenophobic towards immigrants. This is discourse that, once again, is largely absent from news outlets when referencing minority racial groups or women.

Furthermore, the research presented here suggests that, in addition to examining news media discourse surrounding immigrants that is openly negative (see Chavez 2013; Flores 2003; Innes 2010; Martinez-Brawley and Gualda 2009; McConnell 2011; McElmurry 2009; Stewart et al. 2011), it is also important to examine discourse that is neutral or positive. Beyond the frames that explicitly depicted immigrants as cultural outsiders, even those that described immigrants’ changes to rural communities, language, and food in neutral terms still engaged in distinctions between “us,” the native-born and “them,” the foreign-born in ways that contributed to inequality. When outlets refer to “their” language and food and to the cultural changes “they” bring to communities, they symbolically distance nonimmigrants from immigrants in a way that seems natural and inevitable. These unquestioned boundaries likely stem from the legitimacy granted to the way we organize ourselves politically. The
system of nation-states is based on the idea of national sovereignty, which suggests that nations have the right to determine who they are going to allow within their borders and who they are going to keep out (Starr 1992). As a result, distinctions between immigrants and nonimmigrants seem natural and, therefore, go unchallenged. The premise is that the government prohibits entry of those who are somehow fundamentally “different” than those within arbitrary national borders (Verdery 1994). However, these differences need not necessarily have an element of inequality to them. The inequality associated between “us” and “them” is socially constructed, which is expressed – both implicitly and explicitly – in the frames described here.
CHAPTER FOUR: “EAGER TO ACCEPT JOBS FEW AMERICANS WANT”:
POSITIVE FRAMING OF IMMIGRATION IN NEWSPAPER ARTICLES AND THE
MAINTENANCE OF SYMBOLIC BOUNDARIES

Introduction

Since the mid-20th century, the U.S. foreign-born population has experienced
significant demographic changes in terms of size, composition, and settlement patterns.
Between 1970 and 2010, the proportion of immigrants living in the U.S. more than doubled,
from 4.7% to 12.9% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau 2012). The majority of these new
arrivals are now non-White; while in 1960, 75% of immigrants came from Europe, in 2010,
53% of immigrants had migrated from Latin America and 28% came from Asia (U.S. Census
Bureau 2012). Furthermore, while most people moving to the U.S. have historically resided
in traditional immigrant destinations such as California, Texas, and Illinois, the 1990s saw
the rise of new immigrant destinations such as North Carolina, Georgia, and Iowa (Lichter
and Johnson 2009).

Although America has long been hailed as the “land of immigrants,” these recent
changes have resulted in increased attention to the issue of immigration from both the public
and academics. Sociologists have examined the factors contributing to these changes in
migration patterns, how material resources are distributed among immigrant groups (income,
education, etc.), intergroup relations between the dominant group and immigrants, and the

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16 Based on U.S. Census classifications, Latinos comprise an ethnicity and typically receive the racial category
of White. However, research suggests that this is not reflective of how society generally views the racial order.
Whites and Latinos alike do not view Latinos as part of the White race (Massey and Sanchez 2010), and
significant differences in material outcomes (for example, in income, education, wealth, etc.) continue to persist
between the two groups (Lee and Bean 2007).
identity work immigrants engage in. Symbolic boundaries of difference between “them,” the
foreign-born, and “us,” the native-born, are at the foundation of these lines of inquiry; in
order for scholars to study how resources are distributed between groups, how groups relate
to one another, or how individuals identify, distinctions between groups must first exist.

Researchers have also analyzed the social construction of difference as it relates to
immigrants, focusing on how restrictive immigration legislation and negative public
discourse surrounding immigration creates rigid boundaries between immigrant and
nonimmigrant groups. Immigration policy promotes differences between immigrant and
nonimmigrants by establishing which groups “belong” within a nation-state and, conversely,
which do not. In doing so, legislation establishes who is allowed to participate in political,
Wilkinson 2014). Symbolic boundaries between nonimmigrants and immigrants are also
shaped by larger discourses. Certain individuals have the power to shape discourse, and,
therefore, reality, knowledge and “truths” (Foucault 1980). Newspapers represent a widely-
consumed form of public discourse in American society making them a worthy cultural
artifact to examine when thinking about how symbolic boundaries between immigrant and
nonimmigrant groups are constructed or challenged. Researchers have found, for example,
that portrayals of immigrants in newspaper articles are largely negative and center on the idea
that immigrants pose a “threat” to America economically, culturally and in terms of safety
(Chavez 2013; Flores 2003; Innes 2010; Martinez-Brawley and Gualda 2009; McConnell
2011; McElmurry 2009; Stewart et al. 2011).

These studies contribute to our understanding of symbolic boundaries between
immigrant and nonimmigrant groups. Frames that explicitly “Other” immigrants establish
rigid, bright boundaries between the two groups, contributing to immigrants’ vulnerability and the inequality they experience. However, in focusing only on negative public discourse, scholars have failed to analyze an important part of the story: rhetoric that is more receptive towards immigrants. There is good reason to believe that positive public discourses surrounding immigration exist, as public opinion on immigration is highly divided. Two out of three Americans say they are dissatisfied with current immigration levels (Gallup 2012), yet 57% think immigrants “strengthen rather than burden society” (Pew Hispanic Center 2014). This discourse is worthy of examining because it likely performs boundary-work, either reinforcing or challenging distinctions between immigrants and nonimmigrants. Given the demographic changes described above, the future of America’s colorline is in question; in 2050, Whites will no longer constitute the numerical majority. Thus, certain groups may have an interest in challenging boundaries between immigrants – or at least certain immigrant groups – and nonimmigrants in order to preserve Whites’ placement atop the racial hierarchy. Thus, positive discourses may challenge immigrants’ marginalization and therefore blur boundaries between immigrant and nonimmigrant groups. On the other hand, positive discourses could also serve to reinforce boundaries, especially given today’s era of colorblind racial ideology17 (Bonilla-Silva 2003). While overtly negative rhetoric surrounding immigration obviously contributes to immigrants’ marginalization, positive rhetoric may also contribute to marginalization but in more subtle ways. This is especially the case given that today’s neoliberal capitalist economy requires a vulnerable, hyper-exploitable workforce (Robinson 2009). Immigrants, especially those that are unauthorized, service in this capacity

17 The dominant racial ideology of today is colorblind in nature, attributing racial inequality to anything other than race.
largely as a result of the way society “Others” them (De Genova 2005). Thus, newspaper discourse may subtly reinforce boundaries even in positive discourses.

The research presented here fills this gap by examining the boundary-work associated with positive framing of immigration. I begin by describing the theory of cultural processes, focusing specifically on the features and consequences associated with symbolic boundaries and the social construction of difference. I then explain how discourse, especially that found within the news media, shapes the dynamics of these boundaries. After a review of prior literature that explores immigration in the news media, I detail my methodology and describe how today’s neoliberal political economy has influenced migration patterns in the past half century. I find that the overwhelming majority of positive references to immigrants were in relation to the economy. First, newspapers emphasize immigrants’ contribution to American society as taxpayers, consumers, and especially as workers. Secondly, articles frequently advocate for immigrants’ inclusion based on their willingness to perform labor Americans deem too lowly. Third, newspapers devote a considerable amount of space describing some immigrants as hardworking, ambitious, and upwardly mobile. Lastly, newspapers portrayed immigrants sympathetically by describing immigrants’ vulnerability and exploitation at the hands of greedy employers. On the surface, these positives frames advocate for immigrants’ inclusion into American society or portray immigrants sympathetically. However, I argue that these frames embrace discourses that center on the importance of economic contributions and personal responsibility. In doing so, they subtly reinforce distinctions between immigrant and nonimmigrant groups and, therefore, contribute to the inequality immigrants face.
Cultural Process, Symbolic Boundaries, and Immigration

I focus on symbolic boundaries that distinguish “us” from “them” because once they become salient, they have a profound effect on individual identities, intergroup relations, and larger systems of inequality (Tajfel 1978; Tajfel and Turner 1979). This relates to positive framing, because it has the potential to challenge these boundaries, and therefore influence identity-work, intergroup relations, and inequality. Of course, positive framing may also reinforce these boundaries, which would still be consequential to immigrants and nonimmigrants. Shared cultural processes give meaning to our social world, working as an invisible toolkit that individuals internalize, and then use to make sense of the world around them (Swidler 1986). These processes include classifications and categories and the “scripts, narratives, repertoires, and symbolic boundaries” (Lamont et al. 2014: 580) that support them. Because boundaries that exist between social groups in our society are so deeply engrained in our culture, there is an air of inevitability surrounding them and, as such, they often go unexamined. Symbolic boundaries work to socially construct differences, or potentially similarities, between groups. Lamont and Molnar (2002) define symbolic boundaries as “conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space” and as “tools by which individuals and groups struggle over and come to agree upon definitions of reality” (168).

Differences between immigrants and nonimmigrants have an especially high degree of legitimacy (and are therefore more likely to be taken-for-granted) because they stem from the concept of state sovereignty. This is the idea that states have the right to determine who they are going to allow within their borders and, conversely, who they are going to keep out. Indeed, an underlying assumption of the nation-state system is that those included have
something in common, such as work ethic, religion, or family values, distinguishing them from those excluded (Verdery 1994). In the U.S. and other industrialized countries, immigration legislation establishes formal boundaries of exclusion and inclusion based on immigration status. These laws classify who belongs in a country and who does not (De Genova 2005; Heyman 1998, 2001; Hiemstra 2010; Wilkinson 2014). While immigration legislation once included overtly racist language, such as the 1924 National Origins Act whose intent was to “preserve the racial status quo in the United States…” (Dobkin 2009: 30), the immigration policies of today are race-neutral in language but highly racialized in consequences (Saenz and Douglas 2015). For example, a 1976 amendment to the Hart-Celler Act established a 20,000 quota limit for migrants coming from the Western Hemisphere. This quota grossly underestimated the number of immigrants coming from Latin American nation, resulting in an increase in unauthorized immigration. In subsequent decades, this quota was coupled with measures such as the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act and the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Reconciliation Act, which resulted in the criminalization of immigration offenses, increased immigration enforcement, and restrictions placed against immigrants’ access to resources in society, all of which work as a social control mechanism against immigrants who are predominantly non-White.

**Immigrants, Discourse, and the News Media**

Discourse is the medium through which our reality and knowledges are constructed. Those who have the power to shape discourse, have the power to shape what is viewed and thought of as truth (Foucault 1980). The news media is ideal for examining societal discourse, because its manifest function is to report on unfolding events and the workings of other social institutions such as the government and economy. In other words, the news
media is the site through which knowledge, derived from discourse, is disseminated to the public at large (Altheide 2013).

Furthermore, the news media is unique because it both reflects and influences the world around it. As a profit-driven industry, the news media has a vested interest in featuring coverage that maintains their readership and advertising base (Branton and Dunaway 2009a, 2009b). One way to accomplish this is to include discourse that coincides with larger cultural belief systems because they tend to resonate more with audiences (Benford and Snow 2000; Gamson 1992). Thus, the way in which the new media portrays immigrants can tell us something about the features and dynamics of the boundaries that exist between immigrants and nonimmigrants in society. The media also influences reality in two ways. First, editors and journalists in the news industry select which stories to feature and in doing so, convey a message to their audience about which topics are important and “news-worthy.” Research indicates that the public is more likely to think of immigration as the most important problem facing the country in areas where immigration receives more media attention (Branton et al. 2010). The media also serves a framing function, by suggesting to readers how to think about a particular topic (Kim et al. 2002). For example, Sohoni and Sohoni (2014) demonstrated that news coverage on crime and immigration contributes to the publics’ continued association between immigrants and increased criminality, despite evidence to the contrary.

Other researchers have examined how news articles frame immigration. A prominent theme within news coverage relates to the economy (Chavez 2013; Martinez-Brawley and Gualda 2009; McElmurry 2009; Stewart et al. 2011), likely a result of America’s market-based culture (Benson and Saguy 2005). In general, analyses indicate that immigrants are portrayed negatively through frames that suggest that immigrants are fiscally harmful to the
state (i.e. as a stress on the welfare system) and to the nonimmigrant population specifically (i.e. taking jobs away) (Martinez-Brawley and Gualda 2009). For example, Martinez-Brawley and Gualda (2009) found that when discussing immigration and the economy, newspapers in Arizona emphasized immigrants’ use of tax-funded services, including the strain they place on border hospitals. Researchers also contend that immigrants are also likely to be portrayed as “lazy” and “self-serving” in relation to their economic pursuits, a construction that makes a clear boundary between “us” (the native-born) and “them” (the foreign-born) (McElmurry 2009).

Prior research also notes that news articles often portray immigrants as culturally and demographically threatening to the U.S. (Chavez 2013; Flores 2003; McConnell 2011; Padín 2005). McConnell (2011) illustrates how even a seemingly objective aspect of journalism – reports on Census statistics – can present a biased perspective. She found that one newspaper emphasized the rates of change of Latino and Asian immigrant populations far more often than rates of changes of Whites and Blacks populations. Furthermore, coverage of changes in the Latino and Asian population included inflammatory language such as “whopping” and phrases including “an explosion of immigrants” (McConnell 2011). Likewise, Chavez’s (2013) work traces the historical development of the “invasion threat narrative,” which suggests that immigrants pose a threat to society. This narrative is exemplified in a quote from Pat Buchannan who suggested, “Mexico is the greatest foreign policy crisis I think America faces in the next 20, 30 years…We’re going to have 135 million Hispanics in the United States by 2050, heavily concentrated in the southwest.” Culturally, researchers have found that immigrants are portrayed simultaneously “like Whites” in some ways (industrious,
enterprising), as well as “unlike Whites” (Padín 2005) and inherently incompatible with American ethos (Flores 2003).

Lastly, researchers suggest that newspapers frequently describe immigrants as a threat to public safety (Martinez-Brawley and Gualda 2009; Sohoni and Sohoni 2014), an especially powerful image that plays on the fears of a largely native, White audience (Glassner 2010). The association between immigrants and crime contributes to the pervasive “Latino Threat Narrative”18 found in American society (Chavez 2013; Stewart et al. 2011) and is often used as a way to justify restrictionist policies (Sohoni and Mendez 2014). For instance, newspapers in Arizona emphasized the criminal activity of Mexican/Latino immigrants over any other topic (Martinez-Brawley and Gualda 2009) despite an erroneous association between crime and immigrants. Furthermore, Stewart et al. (2011) argue that newspapers sensationalize stories that involve criminal acts of immigrants by including stereotypes of the cultural outsider who, for example, does not speak English. Immigrants are also portrayed as a threat to public safety in non-criminal ways. White (2010) provides an example of discourse that portrayed immigrants as threatening by comparing depictions of immigration and leprosy outbreaks in early 20th century America to 21st century Arkansas. At the turn of the 20th century, the U.S. print news media openly associated outbreaks of leprosy to immigrant populations. The relationship between immigrants and leprosy reappeared with a report from Fort Smith, Arkansas connecting an impending leprosy outbreak to their immigrant population. White (2010) explains, “The expression of fear

18 The ‘invasion threat narrative’ mentioned above falls under the umbrella of a larger ‘Latino Threat Narrative’ that speaks more generally to the threat Latinos, and specifically Latino immigrants, pose to American society in a variety of ways.
associated with leprosy...is a surface presentation of a general fear of the “other” and a broader concern that “illegal” immigrants threaten the American way of life” (23).

In sum, prior research examining newspaper discourse on immigration has yielded meaningful insight into the cultural processes surrounding distinctions between immigrants and nonimmigrants. Their findings suggest that many of the boundaries surrounding immigrants are negative and clearly brighten boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants and have a significant impact on immigrants’ incorporation. However, the majority of studies focus on overtly negative or hostile frames and neglect to consider the implications of rhetoric that is more positive.

Methods

Case Selection

I sampled newspaper outlets with the largest circulation rate across four cities: Los Angeles (Los Angeles Times; LAT), Atlanta (Atlanta Journal-Constitution; AJC), San Antonio (San Antonio Express-News; SAE), and Raleigh (News & Observer; N&O). I chose these locations because they have similar characteristics in all but two key ways: level of incorporation into the global economic system (global/non-global) and immigrant destination type (new/traditional). While most of the findings I present focus on overlap in coverage between the newspaper outlets, I also discuss meaningful variations between the outlets in the discussion section.

Data Collection
I searched for articles published between 2000 and 2012 that contained the word “immi*” or “migra*”\(^{19}\) in the title. The “*” conveys wildcard characters so that variations of the words immigrant (i.e., immigration or immigrants) and migrant (i.e., migration or migrants) would be returned. A similar search was conducted for the N&O but because this publication was not available via LexisNexis, I used America’s News. The selected time period also encompasses several important events, including 9/11, the ongoing economic crisis, three Presidential elections, and the rise of state-level self-deportation laws. I included only pieces that contain at least 500 words, as articles with fewer words are unlikely to discuss the topic in a meaningful way. I included new stories at the local and national level\(^{20}\), as well as editorials and op-eds. I sampled 10\% of articles from the LAT and AJC, and 100 articles each from the N&O and SAE. This left me with an initial sample size of 587 articles.

**Analysis Technique**

I conducted a frame analysis to examine the boundary-work between nonimmigrant and immigrant groups in newspaper discourse. Goffman (1974) defines frames as “definitions of a situation [that] are built up in accordance with principles of organization which govern events – at least social ones – and our subjective involvement in them” (10). Frames are how something is spoken, thought, or written about, and thus, help social actors make sense of the world around them. The meaning-making component of frame analysis is highly compatible with a cultural process perspective I use.

\(^{19}\) Preliminary searches indicate that using these terms more broadly, for example in the article text, produced unrelated results. However, articles with these words in the title were primarily about immigration.

\(^{20}\) I excluded articles that focused on immigration occurring that was unrelated to the U.S. While it could be argued that these stories also perform boundary-work, I am most interested in understanding how U.S. immigration is portrayed.
My first step to analyze the data was to establish a codebook. Several coding categories stem from prior research, while others were derived from an initial reading of a pilot sample of 100 articles. I developed my codebook iteratively, testing and revising across several rounds. The final codebook consists of thirty-seven codes. I used NVivo 10 to code and analyze my newspaper data for three reasons. First, it is designed to accommodate large amounts of texts as well as multilevel coding (document- and text-level). Second, it allowed me to apply multiple codes to one segment of data, providing for richer analysis. Third, NVivo was chosen because it allowed me to examine the frequencies and patterns that emerge in my data (Richards and Richards 1994).

In order to identify positive frames in my data, I first analyzed all text coded with the category of “social benefit,” applied when references were made to “how the immigrant population, the process of immigration, or the political/social environment surrounding immigration enhances the material or mental wellbeing of a segment of the population, helps certain groups realize/develop their full potential, or helps to achieve the realization of American values/institutions.” I then reexamined articles that did not receive this code in case there were positive references made to immigrants, but in less explicit ways defined by the social benefits category to ensure that I had a comprehensive list of the positives frames surrounding immigration in my sample of newspaper articles. In total, 464 articles, or 79%, of the 587 originally collected included some type of positive or sympathetic reference to immigrants.21 This subset of articles comprises the data I used for this chapter.

Context

As will be discussed in greater detail in the following section, the most prevalent positive frames were in relation to the economy. Given this, it is important to understand how

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21 In contrast, approximately 56% of the articles contained a negative reference to immigrants or immigration.
the immigration shifts described above relate to the larger political economy, specifically the transition to neoliberalism in both political doctrine and economic structure. While dominant political and economic models in the immediate post-WWII period centered on the idea of the developmental state\(^{22}\), beginning in the mid-1970s a new era emerged, and “markets came progressively to be seen as the most desirable mechanism for regulating both domestic and world economies” (Fourcade-Gourinchas and Babb 2002). This new line of thinking, generally referred to as neoliberalism, centered on the idea of comparative advantage; if left alone, national economies would carve out their niche in the global economy, resulting in economic development not only for individual nation-states, but for the global economy as a whole. Many countries implemented policies designed to strengthen the market including privatizing once publicly subsidized industries, eliminating social welfare resources, dialing back state regulations, and opening domestic markets for foreign competition and investment (Fernandez-Kelly and Massey 2007; Fourcade-Gourinchas and Babb 2002; Overbeek 2002; Rose 1999). The shift towards neoliberal economic policies resulted in dramatic consequences for countries around the world, one of the most significant of which has been an increase in immigration and, more specifically, the movement of displaced persons from poor nations to rich ones.

For Latin American nations, the transition to neoliberalism stemmed from debt crises that emerged in the early 1980s. As a result of new liberal monetary policies, in the 1970s financial institutions in advanced nations began to imprudently lend capital to Latin American and other countries who funneled these newly gained funds into public spending

\[^{22}\text{Under the development state model, the idea was that nations should take an active role in shaping and protecting their national economic development by subsidizing infant industries, implementing tariffs to protect domestic markets from foreign competition, and setting interest rates to encourage saving or spending depending on the immediate economic needs (Evans 1995).}\]
on items such as infrastructure development. Towards the end of the 1970s, the increasingly volatile economic climate caused international interest rates to mushroom, making it extremely challenging, if not impossible, for many borrowing nations to satisfy the demands of the loans. In 1982, Mexico became the first Third World nation to officially default on its loan obligations, which had grown to 36% of its GDP (Fourcade-Gourinchas and Babb 2002). In order to find relief from its debt, Mexico, along with other nations in a similar position, received assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) who mandated neoliberal structural adjustment policies. As a result, Mexico implemented major structural reforms including radically opening domestic markets to free trade, allowing up to 100% foreign ownership in publicly traded Mexican firms, and the historic dismantling of public lands to allow for private ownership (Fourcade-Gourinchas and Babb 2002). In 1994, Mexico’s transition to a neoliberal agenda was solidified with their membership into the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which further eroded domestic market protections from trade with the United States and Canada (Fernandez-Kelly and Massey 2008). In many poor nations, neoliberal policies have resulted in massive amounts of displaced persons, unable to survive through the means they had traditionally done so.

While Asian countries did not experience a debt crisis like those in Latin America, they were not immune to the consequences of neoliberalism especially as it relates to migration. Due to the decreases in trade barriers, beginning in the 1970s and continuing through the 80s, U.S. corporations began to make direct investments in Asian nations by establishing U.S.-owned factories, setting up transnational corporation headquarters and training Asian management and technical personal (Yang 2010). This resulted in the displacement of people from traditional economies, forced to migrate for survival. Political
and social disparities also contribute to migration patterns between Asian nations and the U.S., where “a lack of personal freedom, personal security, political stability, and democracy in many Asian sending countries, pushed Asians to leave their homeland” (Yang 2010: 17). A significant amount of migration from Asian nations also stems from limited opportunities for college education in countries of origin as compared to the U.S. (Kanjanapan 1995).

Rich countries, especially the U.S., also experienced significant economic shifts beginning in the 1970s. While the U.S. had essentially gone unchallenged as the world hegemonic power for several decades subsequent to WWII, as the economies of Japan and Western Europe began to expand and, as a result of neoliberal policies, the global economy became more integrated, U.S. employers and firms started to face stiff competition. This fundamentally changed the relationship between labor and employers. Employers began to pursue profit-maximizing strategies that resulted in a shift of power from employees to employers (Liaw and Frey 2007). U.S. industries began to outsource their production systems to other countries where they could pay workers lower wages and avoid costly environmental regulations. This process, known as deindustrialization, had a negative effect on American workers who found themselves in an extremely precarious position; jobs that were once secure and permanent, were now shipped to other countries, resulting in massive layoffs. Firms in the U.S. also adopted “flexible” labor models, deepening the division between core and peripheral labor segments (Nelson et al. 2014). Jobs in the peripheral labor market are typified by practices such as temporary work arrangements, subcontracting, and a shift towards part-time or seasonal employment. These changes make workers extremely vulnerable, eroding the power they once enjoyed.
The changes associated with the emergence of a neoliberal capitalist economy comprise the structural underpinnings of the political economy surrounding immigration, or the push factors driving immigrants out of their home countries and the pull factors drawing them in to developed nations. In rich nations, employers’ shift towards flexible, service-oriented production created a need for workers who were hyper-exploitable which ultimately stems from a position of vulnerability (Kalleberg 2011; Overbeek 2002). Because displaced persons in poor nations are largely redundant, migrants, in particular those who are undocumented, are especially suited to serve as this vulnerable workforce (Robinson 2009). Through this vulnerability and complete lack of bargaining power (Liaw and Frey 2007), migrants help “shore up the floundering American economy” (Green 2011: 367). While the source of and need for immigrants’ vulnerability stems from the political economy, it is sustained through cultural, ideological processes that make it appear natural, normal, or at the very least, unproblematic which is what my analyses center on.

Findings

Four dominant positive frames emerged from my analysis, all in relation to the economy. Newspaper outlets suggested that immigrants contribute to the U.S. economy, immigrants perform vital labor deemed too lowly for Americans, (some) immigrants are hardworking, ambitious, and upwardly mobile and, lastly, immigrants are vulnerable. While these frames seemingly blur boundaries between immigrant and nonimmigrant groups, I argue that by engaging in discourses that support a neoliberal economy, they subtly brighten boundaries between immigrant and nonimmigrants and help to sustain immigrants’ marginalization.
Immigrants Contribute to the U.S. Economy

One of the most prevalent positive frames spoke of how immigrants contribute to the U.S. economy as taxpayers, consumers, and workers. As Figure 2 indicates, 24% of all articles that contained at least one positive reference to immigrants made note of the contributions they make to the economy. Although common in each, the frequency of this frame varied across outlets to some degree; it was featured in 36% of positive articles in the AJC, 33% in the N&O, 29% in the SAE, and 16% in the LAT. Journalists described immigrants as taxpayers to convey how similar they are to the dominant group, stated explicitly in a N&O article that suggested, “they live among us, pay sales taxes and property taxes like us and perform labor for us” (Stroud 2012). Taxpaying immigrants were also portrayed as heroically “saving the day” when it comes to Social Security. An article in the LAT reported, “illegal immigrants contribute to the economy…including payments to Social Security, which many will never collect” (Larrubia 2006). Journalists strengthened this “taxpaying immigrant” image by including direct quotations from migrants attesting to their desire to pay taxes. In an AJC article, one immigrant said, “‘It’s the responsibility of every person to pay taxes’” (Varela 2007). Direct quotations are an effective literary device because they add legitimacy to the claim being offered (Fairclough 2003). Here, the reader does not have to take the journalist’s word that immigrants want to pay taxes; he or she can hear it straight from the source. Journalists also included precise accountings of immigrants’ tax contributions to American society. For example, a passage from the LAT stated, “Stephen Moore of the libertarian Cato Institute and head of the conservative Club for Growth testified before Congress last year that a typical immigrant family pays an estimated $80,000 more in taxes than it will receive in local, state and federal benefits over a lifetime of eligibility”
This passage is especially effective because it specified the credentials of the actor testifying before Congress and in doing so, adding legitimacy to the claims being made.

Immigrants were also cast as economic contributors through their consumption patterns. An article in the *AJC* referred to “the Latino dollar” as “one of the most coveted prizes in the American market” (Ghitis 2004) while another pointed out that when immigrants arrive to the U.S., “The first thing they do is…buy a car or a van” (Pickel 2006a). Newspapers also made reference to the importance of immigrants-as-consumers for individual businesses. In an *LAT* article, a small-business owner stated, “‘If they take 10 or 12 million people out of this country, I die’” with the article going on to suggest that his children’s success was in “thanks to customers like Joaquin Vega,” an immigrant (Lopez 2006). An article in the *N&O* went even further in talking about the American economy’s need for immigrants as consumers. It suggested, “if the federal government manages to root out the illegal immigrants working in North Carolina, some communities will become virtual ghost towns and dozens of business owners will go bankrupt” (Collins 2007).

The most prevalent positive frame associated with immigrants’ contributions portrayed them as worker, a role that journalists frequently essentialized. Articles referred to immigrants as “migrant workers” or “migrant labor,” suggesting that immigrant’s presence in American society is primarily as it relates to the work they provide. For example, an article from the *AJC* reported, “The slayings and attacks on four other immigrant workers…stunned the area’s large Hispanic community” (Staff Writer 2005). This article focused on an assault committed against local immigrants, which has seemingly little to do with their occupations, yet the persons involved are identified as “immigrant workers.” The immigrant worker was also essentialized as hardworking, often in an attempt to convey how harmless immigrants
are. For example, one article suggested, “Araceli, a house cleaner in San Antonio, and her son Carlos, a construction worker, say they’re simple, honest folk. They’ve never been arrested. They’re not on welfare. They work hard and pay their income taxes” (Rozenberg 2008). The phrase “hard-working immigrant” was referenced often, implying that a strong work ethic is at the core of the immigrants’ identity. Frequently, the hardworking immigrant image was accompanied by reference to a specific nationality – Mexican. The following passage from the AJC suggested, “Labor demand and supply are met by hard-working Mexicans who every day cross the border” (Arnau 2002).

Passages that describe immigrants as taxpayers, consumers, and hard workers openly advocate for their inclusion, but I argue that they also (re)create immigrants into neoliberal objects. America has long been a market-based culture, beginning with its inception where the Protestant ethic, hard work that contributes to personal and society wealth, signifies a person’s moral worth (Weber 1905). This ideology has become even stronger and more pervasive under a neoliberal regime, where a person’s worth is largely determined by their economic contribution to society (Gazso and McDaniel 2010; Lavee and Offer 2012). Thus, when newspapers frame immigrants as workers, taxpayers, and consumers, they are objectified as physical “things” that contribute to the economy with little reference made to their humanity or other meaningful attributes. Although positive, within this frame, immigrants’ worthiness of inclusion is based on how they serve the U.S. economy, and therefore the dominant group, through the taxes they pay, the goods and services they purchase, and the labor they perform.

*Immigrants Perform Vital Labor Deemed Too Lowly for Americans*
A second positive frame suggested that immigrants perform vital labor deemed too lowly for Americans, which was referenced in 47% of all articles that contained a positive statement about immigration with, again, some variation across outlets (Figure 2). This frame appeared in 62% of the positive articles in the N&O, 53% in the AJC, 50% in the SAE, and 39% in the LAT. Articles frequently referenced the need for migrant labor to fill America’s labor shortage, framing immigrant workers as indispensable to the economy. An article in N&O explained, “unauthorized workers fill pressing labor needs in the U.S. economy” (Johnson 2008). In another article, an employer explained, “I don’t know that we could accomplish as a business without that labor pool” (Hennessy-Fiske and Cannon 2004).

Newspapers also provided detailed descriptions of why immigrants are so badly needed, namely, that they will perform labor Americans consider beneath them. Some passages made this quite explicit. For example, referring to occupations “such as medical aides, security guards, and nearly all forms of manual labor,” an editorialist at the N&O wrote, “These aren’t the jobs we’re spending billions of taxpayer dollars preparing our children for. They’re the jobs we hope they’ll avoid” (Martinez 2003). Furthermore, the LAT reported, “the scrap business has long attracted immigrants breaking into the U.S. economy by doing what others considered too lowly” (Ni 2000). Newspapers also provided multiple examples of the types of work immigrants do, which were often in relation to manual labor or in the low-end service industry. In fact, while a significant number of immigrants come to the U.S. to work in highly-skilled professions, references to these occupations were relatively scarce across all newspaper outlets. Of all the occupations referenced in newspaper articles, 81% were in relation to lower prestige occupations such as construction workers, day laborer, or agricultural workers. For example, an article in the AJC explained, “They do the work that
keeps this country running --- in construction and restaurants, child care and home care” (Bernhardt 2003) while an editorialist in the LAT wrote, “We don’t stop to think about the legal status of the men and women who pick our strawberries, paint our houses, park our cars or clean our toilets” (Ramos 2003). The LAT and SAE also generalized the type of labor immigrants perform, often referring to them as “cheap labor.”

In addition to listing the actual occupations held by immigrants, news articles also included rich descriptions of the types of jobs Americans are unwilling to do, focusing largely on occupations in the agriculture and construction industries. For example, in reference to farm work, the AJC suggested, “Temperatures can soar above 100 degrees just as the season peaks in dawn-to-dusk work shifts” (Feagans 2007a). Another example comes from an article in the SAE that reported on a construction worker who applied for deferred deportation under President Obama’s 2012 executive order23. The article began by explaining, “Luis Yanez is used to spending time in the sweltering South Texas heat, but today he begins a process that could free him from the drudgery of painting houses” (Buch 2012). Newspaper articles also used adjectives to describe the types of jobs immigrants perform. Words such as “dull, dirty or dangerous” (Matthews 2001) and as “unglamorous” (Easterbrook 2005) were often evoked, and, the LAT described one task performed by roofers as, “an exhausting grind that demands brute strength” (Bartletti 2006).

These frames emphasize immigrants’ utility within the U.S. economy or evoke sympathy from the reader. However, I argue that these jobs become stigmatized when described as ones that Americans are unwilling to do (Heyman 1998). “Dirty work” describes occupations and tasks that are perceived as disgusting or degrading (Hughes 1951). Ashforth

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23 In 2012, President Obama issued the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) executive order that allowed unauthorized immigrants that migrated prior to the age of 15 to defer deportation orders.
and Kreiner (1999) suggest that dirty work involves occupations with physical or social taint.\textsuperscript{24} Physically tainted jobs are those that are associated with elements such as dirt, garbage, sewage, and dangerous conditions, while social taint occurs with positions associated with a servile relationship with others. Many of the jobs referenced in relation to the work Americans deem too lowly have an element of this physical or social taint associated with them, as evidenced by the rich description newspaper provide of these occupations. This stigma associated with these positions becomes associated with immigrants themselves, who are framed as all too eager to perform these undesirable tasks (Hughes 1962; Waldinger and Lichter 2003).

Frames that suggest that immigrants will perform labor refused by Americans implicitly establish a hiring queue whereby a particular ethnic group – in this case, immigrants who hail primarily from Latin and Asian nations – are praised as the most “appropriate” worker for these dirty jobs (Waldinger and Lichter 2003). This creates an ethnicized class hierarchy whereby those in the in-group – Americans – have the right to perform meaningful work they find emotionally, physically, and/or mentally rewarding. Indeed, “employers value immigrants precisely because they are not like ‘us’” (Waldinger and Lichter 2003: 17) in that they are eager to perform dirty work for little pay, with little resistance. This stigmatization of immigrant labor is especially effective in reinforcing boundaries between immigrant and nonimmigrants considering, as mentioned above, the prevalence of discourse that suggests that an individuals’ worth is dependent on their economic contributions (Gazso and McDaniel 2010; Lavee and Offer 2012; Lister 2004); if

\textsuperscript{24} The authors also identify moral taint as associated with dirty work, when occupations require workers to engage in acts deemed immoral by society such as prostitution and drug dealing. The moral taint aspect of dirty work was not present in the frames suggesting that immigrants do work deemed too lowly by Americans.
the labor immigrants contribute, while important, is stigmatized, so too are immigrants themselves. Furthermore, there is a demeaning and dehumanizing quality associated with the descriptions of immigrants’ work. These vivid descriptions help to explain exactly why Americans do not want to perform these types of jobs, resulting in a deepening of the boundaries between the two groups. References to the conditions and skill required for some of these jobs (e.g., “brute”) have an animalistic quality associated with them, suggesting that immigrants are somehow less than human. Interestingly, a similar type of animalistic imagery has also been found in portrayals of immigrants in negative framing found within newspaper articles (Santa Ana 1999).

(Some) Immigrants are Hardworking, Ambitious, and Upwardly Mobile

Newspapers also portrayed immigrants positively by praising individual immigrants for their ambition and upward mobility. As depicted in Figure 2, this frame appeared in 21% of articles that had a positive reference to immigration. There was relatively little variation in the frequency of this coverage, with the LAT, N&O, and SAE all featuring it in about 20% of their articles. However, the AJC stood out as including this frame in 28% of its articles that spoke of immigration in a positive light. One of the most commonly referenced routes to success involved acquisition of the English language. Immigrants ability to learn English was portrayed as key to success in American life, with a senior writer with the Pew Hispanic Center explaining that learning English “is key to assimilation ‘because it’s how people get a better job, talk to their neighbors, talk to their child’s teacher and fit in generally’” (Greve 2007). The N&O reported on Sarah, who “conquered limited English and homesickness for her native Mexico to become an outstanding student at her Raleigh high school” (Easterbrook 2004). In this passage, Sarah is portrayed as heroically “conquering” English
and subsequently achieving academic success. In another example, a *LAT* editorialist wrote, “My father learned English and got a high school diploma at the Hollywood campus. Adult education helped propel my Guatemalan American family into the middle class” (Tobar 2012). Here, the editorialist attributes his family’s rise to the middle class to his father’s ability to learn English. Newspaper articles conversely portrayed a lack of English as a barrier. For example, the *AJC* reported, “Pena says he hopes to find work through his sons. He’s too old to be of interest to most construction contractors or farmers. If he knew a trade – say carpentry, masonry or electrical – he could be more marketable. He speaks no English and cannot read, but has children can” (Sager 2002). Pena is depicted as essentially destitute, left with no other option but to rely on his sons for work.

Another prominent theme within this frame centered immigrants’ adoption of American cultural values, and specifically their embrace of the American Dream. An article from the *N&O* provided a detailed description of the life of one Bangladeshi immigrant, Mizan Rahman, who is described as migrating to America at the age of 19 to pursue an education. Rahman sold his first company for $15 million, and the article noted that he is now running his second successful business. Rahman suggested, “‘This kind of idea did not work where I grew up…I think that’s why I came to the United States.’” The journalists of this article then noted, “It’s a conclusion many immigrants to this country seem to have reached, either out of necessity or, like Rahman, a desire to forge their own versions of the American Dream” (Grantham 2012). In this passage, Rahman praised the United States for providing an opportunity to achieve success, which was followed by the journalist praising Rahman for “forging” his own version of the American Dream. In another passage, the *LAT* described the harrowing journey of a Mexican migrant suggesting, “He once was one of them...
a poor and desperate young man from Mexico who left behind a pregnant wife and three children and risked his life crossing the border on an illegal search for the American Dream. Now he is everything they aspire to be,” with the article going on to note that, “The farmworker became a farm owner, saving enough to buy a small apple orchard on the outskirts of Yakima” (Bustillo 2006). This migrant is depicted as the ultimate protagonist; someone who “risked his life” for the betterment of his family. This article explicitly praised this immigrant, suggesting that he is someone others aspire to be like. This reference also pulls from another core American value – that of the male breadwinner. This male breadwinner image is at the heart of America’s gendered marital contract, where men are rewarded for engaging in the formal wage economy outside the home (Tichenor 2005).

Although this frame is positive in that it praises immigrants for their desirable qualities and upward mobility, I argue that it also embraces a discourse that has become especially prevalent with the rise of neoliberalism, that of “personal responsibility.” The emphasis here is on individuals as responsible, self-reliant, and self-sufficient social actors who, when left alone by the meddlesome, dependency-creating state, will pursue what is in their best interest, resulting in success (Harvey 2007; Jessop 2002; Rose 1999; Wilson 2007). In the above passages, Sarah and Mizan took responsibility for their lives by accumulating the appropriate human capital (i.e., learning English) and cultural capital (i.e., adhering to the American Dream). Consequently, their initiative and personal success warrant praise. However, this depiction also suggests that immigrants who have not experienced upward social mobility in America have failed to do so because of their own deficiencies.

These frames also center on the concept of deservingness (Marrow 2012; Yoo 2008; Yukich 2013) by making an implicit distinction between “good/deserving” immigrants and
“bad/undeserving” ones. This is akin to the “model movement strategy” described by Yukich (2013) where social movement organizations selectively choose which actors to use as spokespersons in order to actively counter the negative stereotypes associated with the group. Parallel to the frame presented here, immigrants targeted as deserving were those who adhered to dominant cultural values, and those who incorporated into mainstream, White America. In praising these “deserving” immigrants, the newspapers create a symbolic boundary within the immigrant population and also brighten the boundary between the “undeserving” immigrants and nonimmigrants. This frame individualizes their lack of “deservingness,” placing the responsibility for these boundaries on unsuccessful immigrants themselves. Much of the same rhetoric is used today to explain why and reinforce the boundaries poor people experience in our society, which centers largely on the idea that they deserve it.

*Immigrants are Vulnerable*

Finally, newspapers also frequently portrayed immigrants as vulnerable. Newspapers included this frame in 24% of the articles with a positive reference to immigration, with some variation (Figure 2). The *LAT* and *N&O* both included this in 22% of their positive articles, while the *SAE* featured it in 26%. The *AJC* included this frame the most often, in 32% of their articles. While this frame is not as overtly positive as those described above, the passages associated with it are sympathetic to immigrants’ experiences and thus, help to humanize this population. When members of the dominant group understand the pain and sorrow that members of a marginalized group experience, they begin to feel compassion which can erode social distance (Schwalbe 1992). Much of this vulnerability is attributed to a lack jobs and rampant poverty in their countries of origin. The *N&O* reported, “because of
dire poverty in Mexico, people have been willing to take their chances” (Chavez-Leyva 2009) and migrate. Likewise, the LAT provided quotations from migrants who suggested “there are no jobs in Oaxaca” (Reza 2004) and that “there aren’t any [jobs] in El Salvador” (Price 2001). However, these references were vague and offered little explanation of why the economies of these nations are in poor condition. An exception was found in an article from the SAE, which stated,

At some point, the protests ought to focus on Mexico, too, because two governments are involved in this situation, not just one…Nobody wants to talk about how NAFTA has contributed to this national dislocation of mexicanos, but that is what it is: A dislocation by a policy that was signed by the elites of both countries to benefit the elites of both countries. Mexico’s mass out-migration, and soon, Central America’s, is from their collapsed agricultural sectors, and it will continue because those countries cannot compete with the United States’ agricultural sector, price-wise. This noncompetitiveness has already turned Mexico, where corn was first developed, into a net importer of corn, an important staple (Guerra 2006).

This passage provides a comparison between how articles most typically referenced conditions in immigrants’ countries of origin – superficially and without explanation – and how articles could potentially explain the structural elements associated with the impoverished conditions referenced. It is likely no coincidence that this article appeared in the SAE rather than the other outlets sampled for this study. As a traditional immigrant area within a border state, the immigrant population within San Antonino, especially those of
Mexican origin, is large and deeply tied to the community. This paper caters to an audience that might be more aware of the consequences associated with the political economy on migration as compared to other outlets. Furthermore, while the same could also potentially be said for Los Angeles since it, too, is a traditional immigrant destination within a border state, differences in level of incorporation into the global economy help explain why this critique appeared in the SAE and not the LAT. The LAT might be less inclined to criticize policies, such as NAFTA, because portions of its readership likely benefit from it.

Articles also explained immigrants’ exploitation as resulting from “unscrupulous” employers. The AJC suggested that a state lawmaker “wants to protect them from exploitation by unscrupulous employers who don’t pay them fair wages” (Redmon 2007). An editorialist in the SAE argued, “Excuse me, but haven’t we been rewarding their employers’ illegal behavior by letting them pocket extra profits gleaned from exploiting workers unprotected by wage minimums?” (Guerra 2007). Immigrants were portrayed as having no choice to enter into these exploitative arrangements as described in the following N&O passage: “undocumented Mexican workers and their families… remain trapped in a labor black market that violates them on both sides of the border” (Martinez 2003).

Frames like these have the potential to evoke pity and potentially empathy on the part of the reader as they gain a greater awareness of the vulnerability immigrants’ experience. However, rather than focusing on the ultimate source of immigrants’ vulnerability, newspapers attribute it to impoverished conditions in their countries of origin or as a result of greedy employers, failing to take into account the social political forces that ultimately drive poverty in their countries of origins and employers’ need to exploit immigrant workers. In other words, newspapers fail to contextualize immigrants’ vulnerability as it relates to the
power dynamics and features that exist in today’s neoliberal political economy. In doing so, I contend that newspapers depoliticize immigrants’ vulnerability, making it seem as though immigrants’ decision to migrate is made by an individual that finds themselves in impoverished conditions, without discussing how this impoverishment relates to neoliberal policies. Additionally, newspapers suggest that the exploitation immigrants experience is as a result of greedy employers, rather than the structural need for an exploitable workforce. In sum, I argue that without contextualizing immigrants’ vulnerability within the larger structures of inequality and power, newspapers implicitly make it seem inevitable or natural.

Discussion

The research presented here examines the positive framing surrounding immigration in newspaper articles. I find that the most prominent positive frames were in relation to the economy. Newspapers frequently advocate for immigrants’ inclusion into American society based on their contributions as taxpayers, consumers, and most of all, workers. Articles were also prone to emphasizing the labor migrants contribute to American society, framing it as vital to the economy because of immigrants’ willingness to perform labor deemed too lowly by Americans. Journalists also frequently praised individual immigrants for their hard work and social mobility, especially those who adopt dominant cultural values. Lastly, I find that articles frequently create a sympathetic image of immigrants as vulnerable to exploitation at the hands of “unscrupulous employers.”

On the surface, it may seem as though these frames blur boundaries between immigrant and nonimmigrant groups by advocating for immigrants’ inclusion or portraying them sympathetically. However, I argue that these frames engage in discourses that emphasize individuals’ economic contributions and personal responsibility. As such, they
subtly maintain rigid distinctions between “us,” the native-born and “them,” the foreign-born. In emphasizing immigrants’ worthiness based on their economic contributions, immigrants are transformed into neoliberal objects whose sole worth stems from their ability to serve the dominant group. Further, many passages stigmatized the work immigrants perform by emphasizing their eagerness to do work Americans consider beneath them. Frames like these help to maintain hierarchies between immigrant and nonimmigrant groups, especially given the pervasiveness of neoliberal discourse that suggests that an individual’s worth is based on their economic contribution; if immigrants’ contribution is stigmatized, they too come to be associated with the stigmatization. Another discourse that has become especially prevalent under neoliberalism centers on themes of personal reasonability, suggesting that in a meritocratic society, social actors are solely responsible for the successes and failures. When articles praise the choices of individual immigrants who have experienced upward mobility, they implicitly fault those immigrants who have not experienced similar success. Lastly, articles depoliticize the source of immigrants’ vulnerability by suggesting it stems from poor conditions in their countries of origins or from “bad apple” employers. This contributes to immigrants’ marginalization by obscuring the actual cause of and need for exploitative migrant labor.

The implications from these findings are threefold. First, this research suggests that immigrant’s exploitation is not solely legitimated by overtly negative cultural belief systems. As with any material system of inequality, the structural underpinnings associated with immigrants’ vulnerability must be supported by a cultural belief system that legitimates the exploitation found within (Marx [1859] 1977). Without a belief system that makes the public amendable to the exploitative arrangements found within any system, that system is likely to
be called into question. Thus, while the source and need for immigrants’ vulnerability stems from the global political economic system, it is sustained through processes that legitimate the inequality and oppression immigrants encounter. One way this vulnerability is sustained is through the social construction of difference between “us,” the native-born and “them,” the foreign-born. As other scholars have documented, a major source of this vulnerability stems from legislation that restricts and criminalizes immigrants’ movement, resulting in an ever present threat of deportation (De Genova 2005; Robinson 2009). This threat offers employers a great deal of leverage over migrant works, contributing to their vulnerability and exploitation (Delgado-Wise and Covarrubias 2007; Harrison, Lindsey, and Lloyd 2012). Researchers have also noted that immigrants’ vulnerability stems from xenophobic public discourse that “Others” threatening immigrants, forcing them to live in the shadows of society (Chavez 2013).

My research, however, suggests that even positive public discourse surrounding immigration legitimates the exploitation immigrants face, but more subtly. While America’s cultural belief system has centered on individual’s market contributions and personal responsibility since its inception, actors involved in advocating or neoliberalism as an economic policy have been able to capitalize on these themes. As a result, they are stronger and more pervasive now more than ever. Thus, these discourses are present even in positive frames, and ultimately contribute to the symbolic boundaries of inequality immigrants face. Newspapers place an emphasis on immigrants’ economic contributions, suggesting that they are worthy for inclusion based on their ability to serve the dominant group. Furthermore, much of the coverage advocates for immigrants’ inclusion into American society based on the much needed labor they perform. In addition to centering on immigrants’ ability to
service the dominant group, this frame also stigmatizes the work immigrants perform and in doing so, stigmatizes immigrants themselves. Another positive frame praised the upward class mobility certain immigrants experienced – those that took personal responsibility for their lives by building their human and cultural capital – but in doing so, implicitly blamed those immigrants who do not experience the same type of structural outcomes. Lastly, newspaper portrayed immigrants’ vulnerability sympathetically, but also depoliticized the source of this vulnerability, obscuring the exploitation immigrants’ face or making it appear natural.

Another implication of these findings is that positive frames may provide people who are more “pro-immigrant” a degree of psychological comfort despite contributing to their marginalization. These actors can assuage their liberal guilt for the exploitation immigrants experience in U.S. society by praising their efforts, making them feel righteous in their recognition of a marginalized group (Vera, Feagin, and Gordon 1995). Thus, these frames allow for a degree of psychological benefit, without calling into question the overall structure that contributes to migrants’ exploitation. Furthermore, these positive frames allow actors to avoid the negative emotions that might arise by ignoring the unearned advantages they receive from being born in the U.S and how they benefit from migrant laborers.

Lastly, this research provides insight into the future of America’s racial colorline. My argument is that while many of the frames surrounding immigrants are positive, arguing for immigrants’ inclusion or evoking feelings of sympathy, they actually reinforce status differentials between nonimmigrants and immigrants, who hail primarily from Latin and Asian countries. These cultural processes, then, place immigrants in the middle of the racial hierarchy whereby their contributions and positive qualities are recognized, but only so far as
it serves the dominant group, stopping short of full inclusion into Whiteness. However, this recognition of immigrants’ contributions and positive qualities is different than the recognition Black Americans receive, which continues to be virtually nonexistent (Feagin 2014). Thus, these positives frames suggest limited inclusion for immigrants, which is still a more inclusive reception than Blacks receive in American society.

Future research examining the positive frames surrounding immigration may take into account variations between contexts. My preliminary analysis of the differences between newspaper outlets indicates that the sociohistorical and economic environment surrounding an area may influence the type of boundary-work newspaper discourse engages in. For example, newspapers in the new immigrant destinations (AJC and N&O) provided richer descriptions of immigrants as taxpayers and consumers, and also emphasized the need for immigrant labor more so than newspapers in the traditional immigrant destinations.

Variations in coverage between new and traditional immigrant destinations likely stems from differences in their histories of immigration and the audiences their papers encounter. As described above, immigration has resulted in significant demographic changes across the U.S. These shifts have been felt more acutely in new immigrant destinations which, for the first time, are encountering populations that challenge the historical Black/White divide. For example, Raleigh’s immigrant population comprised just 3.24% of the population in 1990 but grew to 10.74% in 2009, which represents an increase by 538.50%. Likewise, in Atlanta, the immigrant population grew from 3.82% to 12.62% between 1990 and 2009, resulting in an increase of 464.08%. As the passages in this chapter suggest and research supports, most of the migration that has occurred to these new immigrant destinations is economically motivated (Lichter and Johnson 2009). Yet, due to this relative lack of history with
immigrants, their presence has a more dramatic effect of the shaping of colorline and, as such, these newspapers do more work in advocating for immigrants’ inclusion. This is likely as a result of the economic necessity of having immigrants in these areas.
CHAPTER FIVE: “YOU HAVE TO KNOW YOUR ENEMY,” “SPITTING ON THE SIDEWALK IS GOING TO BE AN AGGRAVATED FELONY,” AND “WHEN IS MOMMY COMING BACK?”: SYMBOLIC BOUNDARIES AND COMPETING CLAIMSMAKERS IN THE DEBATES SURROUNDING IMMIGRATION CONTROL

Introduction

Over the past three decades, policymakers have made significant changes to U.S. immigration control. First, immigration violations that were once handled as civil offenses have become criminalized (Stumpf 2006). Secondly, state- and local-level governments have begun to pass immigration legislation and policies, ushering in the devolution of immigration policymaking (Reich and Barth 2012). Lastly, immigration enforcement and detention has become increasingly privatized (Simes and Waters 2013). Companies such as the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) and the Geo Group now perform many of the duties once reserved for the federal government. How, exactly, have these significant changes to immigration control been accomplished?

States must gain and maintain legitimacy in order to continue to exist (Buchanan 2002; Nivette 2014). This is especially true of formal social control systems, including immigration control, because the government dominates and attempts to elicit compliance from certain segments of the population (Alexander 2010; Roscigno et al. 2015). In order to gain this legitimacy, states must convince the public that their actions are fair, just, and warranted (Shriver et al. 2013). State and non-state officials accomplish this by engaging in dominant ideologies that support the status quo by making inequalities seem natural, normal, or inevitable (Lamont et al. 2014). In contrast, oppositional ideologies challenge the status
quo and legitimacy of state-sponsored activities (Shriver et al. 2013).

Groups communicate dominant and oppositional ideologies through public discourse, which shapes reality, knowledge and truths in society (Foucault 1980). Newspaper outlets frequently feature these public discourses, both reflecting and influencing reality (Gamson et al. 1992; Kim et al. 2002; Saguy et al. 2010). While previous research has examined the news media’s portrayals of immigrants in relation to the economy, culture, and security (Chavez 2013; Flores 2003; Innes 2010; Martinez-Brawley and Gualda 2009; McConnell 2011; McElmurry 2009; Stewart et al. 2011), these studies have not examined the news media discourse on immigration control specifically.

I suggest that this is a meaningful omission because immigration control, comprised of policies and enforcement, represents an important aspect of American society for nonimmigrants and immigrants alike. Immigration policies create political-legal distinctions between “us,” the native-born, and “them,” the foreign-born, by establishing who is formally allowed within the geographical borders and the rights and resources they have access to (Starr 1992; Verderery 1994). Immigration enforcement makes these distinctions salient by imposing sanctions on members of society that do not adhere to them. Although often taken-for-granted, classifications that stem from immigration control have significant, direct consequences on the immigrant community that range from reinforcing undocumented immigrants’ hyper-vulnerability (De Genova 2005) to negative health outcomes (Amuedo-Dorantes, Putitinanun, and Martinez-Donate 2013). Media discourse often legitimizes immigration control by creating bright symbolic boundaries between “us,” the law-abiding American public and “them,” the threatening, criminal immigrant (Simes and Waters 2013). However, given that immigration is a polarized topic (Pew Hispanic Center 2013), the media
may also challenge these boundaries through discourses that are more critical of immigration control.

The research presented here addresses this gap by asking: How does media discourse legitimate or challenge immigration control? Which groups engage in this debate? What types of boundary-work do they perform? I answer these questions by analyzing direct references to immigration control in four newspapers over a twelve-year period. I begin the chapter by explaining past and contemporary immigration policy and enforcement practices in the U.S., address the importance of legitimacy in the maintenance of systems of social control. I explain how symbolic boundaries lie at the heart of this legitimacy, and how newspaper discourse helps to (re)construct or challenge distinctions between “us,” the native-born and “them,” the foreign-born. I find that a variety of groups engage in debates about immigration control but do so in significantly different ways. In the articles analyzed, government officials and law enforcement agents are most vocal in support of immigration control and make two main arguments: that immigrants represent a criminal threat and that immigration control should be enforced because it is the law. Those that engage in these arguments draw bright boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants and explicitly legitimate immigration control. Law enforcement agents as well as “expert” nonimmigrants are also critical of immigration control. These groups argue that the system is flawed and, contrary to what one might expect, that it creates negative consequences for the native-born population. While these nonimmigrants are seemingly “pro-immigrant,” I suggest that their arguments subtly reinforce distinctions between immigrants and nonimmigrants and do little to question the legitimacy of immigration control. In contrast, immigrants’ arguments against immigration control suggest that the system causes them to live in a culture of fear and tears.
their families apart. Thus, immigrants craft an image of a sympathetic immigrant who
deserves to be treated with the same dignity and respect afforded to nonimmigrants and in
doing so, blurs boundaries between the two groups.

**U.S. Immigration Control: Then and Now**

Immigration control stems from the concept of state-sovereignty and consists of two
components, legislation and enforcement. State sovereignty is the idea that states have the
right to determine who they are going to allow within their borders and, conversely, who they
are going to keep out. An underlying assumption of this idea is that those included have
something in common, such as work ethic, religion, or family values, distinguishing them
from those excluded (Verdery 1994). In many ways this system works as a social closure
mechanism; distinctions between those who belong and those who do not enable or constrain
access to material and non-material resources and thus, contribute to the reproduction of
inequality (Aleinikoff 1994). However, society generally takes these categories of inclusion
and exclusion for granted, signifying the high degree of legitimacy they possess (Starr 1992).

U.S. immigration legislation once included overtly racist language, such as the 1924
National Origins Act, which aimed to, “preserve the racial status quo in the United States”
(Dobkin 2009: 30). While today’s immigration policies are race-neutral, they still contribute
to the social construction of difference between immigrants and nonimmigrants (Saenz and
Douglas 2015). For example, a 1976 amendment to the Hart-Celler Act established a 20,000
quota limit for migrants coming from the Western Hemisphere which resulted in an increase
in unauthorized immigration from Latin American nations whose immigration far exceeded
this limit (De Genova 2005). This act, then, contributed to the social construction of the
“illegal” immigrant because, “At a time when there were (conservatively) well over a million
Mexican migrants coming to work in the United States each year, the overwhelming majority would have no option but to do so ‘illegally’” (De Genova 2005: 234).

The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act was the next major piece of federal-level immigration legislation that reinforced distinctions between nonimmigrants and immigrants (Golash-Boza 2009). This legislation had two primary components. First, it made employers responsible for verifying the lawful presence of their workers and specified significant fines for those found employing unauthorized workers. Secondly, it created a path towards citizenship for immigrants who continuously lived in the United States prior to 1982. As a result, approximately 2.7 million previously unauthorized immigrants received amnesty (Badger 2014). Ten years later, Clinton signed the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, considered one of the most punitive of all immigration measures (Podgorny 2009). This act expanded the enforcement powers of the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) agency, allowed for further criminal removal of unauthorized immigrants, and significantly increased funding for border security (Douglas and Sáenz 2013). In 2006, Congress attempted to overhaul the immigration system with the Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act (HR 4437), which would have made it a felony for immigrants to be in the U.S. without proper documentation and increased sanctions for people providing assistance to undocumented immigrants among other things. However, this legislation did not pass, in part due to massive backlash and public protests from the Latino community. More recently, President Obama has issued executive orders that have deferred deportation for unauthorized immigrant youth and non-violent offenders (Preston and Cushman 2012). More recently, President Obama has issued executive orders that have deferred deportation for unauthorized immigrant youth and non-
violent offenders (Preston and Cushman 2012), while at the same time deporting more immigrant than any U.S. president and “almost more than every other president combined from the 20th century” (Rogers 2016).

In recent years, governments at the state- and local-levels have also begun to propose and pass immigration legislation (Reich and Barth 2012). Most of this legislation has been restrictive in nature (Ebert et al. 2014), deepening the divide between immigrants and nonimmigrants. In 2010, Arizona passed the Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhood Act (S.B. 1070). This legislation gained national attention and served as a model for other states to pass similar legislation. AZ’s S.B. 1070 enabled police officers to determine an individual’s immigration status during lawful stops if they suspected the person was undocumented and also prohibited local government officials from limiting the enforcement of federal immigration laws. Although parts of the law were overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2012, aspects of the legislation remain intact. In addition to state-level efforts, local-level ordinances against immigration have also gained notoriety. Although eventually ruled unconstitutional by federal courts, Hazelton, PA’s Illegal Immigration Relief Act is one of the most well-known. This ordinance made it unlawful for businesses to recruit, hire, or continue to employ unlawful workers and for landlords to rent to “illegal” aliens.

Over the past two decades, policy decision-makers have also made significant changes to immigration enforcement. For example, undocumented immigration offenses have shifted from civil to criminal courts, resulting in a heightened severity of punishment for immigration violations. Consequently, in the past decade, the number of prisoners entering federal prison for immigration offenses increased by 145 percent (ACLU 2014). In 2009, this number surpassed the number of people entering federal prison for weapons,
property, and violent offenses combined (ACLU 2014). A significant contributing factor to this increase has been the federal government’s recruitment of state and local law enforcement to identify and detain “criminal aliens” through programs such as 287(g) and Secure Communities.

Policy makers have also instituted a shift towards the privatization of immigration enforcement. Beginning in the 1990s, the federal government began contracting with private prison companies to manage immigration detention centers (Ackerman and Furman 2013; Dickson 2014). As of July 2014, two corporations – Corrections Corporations of America (CCA) and the GEO Group, Inc. – ran 11 of the 13 privately administered immigration detention centers. This shift towards the privatization of immigration enforcement has proven lucrative (Golash-Boza 2009). In 2012, CCA and the GEO Group netted $441.9 million in federal contracts to manage the detention of undocumented immigrants (Fang 2013).

The consequences of immigration control are well-documented. For example, the social construction of “illegality” helps to create and sustain a vulnerable, and therefore cheap, reserve army of labor (De Genova 2005). Additionally, research into the effects of AZ’s S.B. 1070 found that Spanish-speaking Latinos in Arizona had worse self-reported health than Latinos in surrounding states without exclusionary policies. Researchers attribute this differential outcome to increased stress as a result of living in an exclusionary state (Amuedo-Dorantes et al. 2013). The criminalization of immigration violations also exposes immigrants to illicit activities, increasing their chances of engaging in criminal activity. For example, Martinez and Slack’s (2014) research shows that while detained, immigrants began to perceive serious crimes as treated only slightly more severely than immigration offenses
and also began to internalize a criminal identity, leading to an increase in propensity to commit criminal acts.

In sum, the U.S. has a long history of immigration policy and enforcement based on the idea that immigrants are in some way different than American citizens. In recent years, significant changes to immigration control, in both policy and enforcement, have made these distinctions even more salient. But how, exactly, is the system of immigration control – and the distinctions that stem from it – maintained?

**Legitimacy, Symbolic Boundaries, and Media Discourse**

Like any organization, states must maintain legitimacy in order to continue to exist (Buchanan 2002; Nivette 2014). States secure legitimacy when the public views them as credible and believes that their actions are fair and just (Buchanan 2002; Gilley 2006; Hegtvedt and Johnson 2000; Nivette 2014; Roscigno et al. 2015; Weber 1958). Legitimacy is especially important to state-sponsored systems of social control because they involve a component of domination and obedience (Alexander 2010; Roscigno, et al. 2015). Citizens must believe that the state is meting out procedural justice (Jackson et al. 2013), or that prosecution and sentencing are handled in a fair and just manner (Hegtvedt and Johnson 2000).

To gain this credibility, state organizations engage in a hegemonic project in which it takes a pro-active stance, attempting to anticipate criticism from diverse interest groups and shore up its own vulnerability through a range of…communications strategy
that frames policy to the state’s own advantage (Simmons and Keohane 1992: 427).

Indeed, elites frame events and issues in ways that allow them to pursue their own interests (Shriver et al. 2013: 874). This framing often entails vilifying subordinate groups (Roscigno et al. 2015). States obtain this legitimacy, “within the context of broader normative frameworks, values, and systems of belief that are ultimately supportive of established arrangements” (Roscigno et al. 2015).

Although states must obtain legitimacy to maintain systems of social control, this legitimacy is often challenged by other elite groups and private actors. That is, elite and non-elite groups compete with one another over how particular issues and topics are framed within society. While elites tend to have more resources and control in shaping discourse (Foucault 1980), other groups vie for the ability to shape public opinion that may go against the dominant group’s interests. Shriver et al. (2013) refer to this opposition as discursive obstruction, defined as an “oppositional campaign waged by networks of elite state and private actors who use their power to sway public opinion against movements that challenge elite interests” (377). Ideologies that are in opposition to systems of social control are significant because a lack of legitimacy “may lead citizens to (1) reject the monopoly of physical force to employ self-help and/or (2) withdraw commitment from institutions, breaking down social control” (Nivette 2014: 93). For example, Matsueda and Drakulich (2009) show that perceived criminal injustices against the Black community undermines the legitimacy of the legal system. This leads to support for alternates to social control such as progressive affirmative action programs. As it relates to immigration control, within recent years there has been a call “for a rejection of the formulation of the ‘‘criminal alien’ - the
Ideologies that legitimate systems of social control center on symbolic boundaries, or distinctions between “us” versus “them” (Simes and Waters 2013). Symbolic boundaries work to socially construct differences, or potentially similarities, between groups. Lamont and Molnar (2002) define symbolic boundaries as, “conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space” and as, “tools by which individuals and groups struggle over and come to agree upon definitions of reality” (168). Because boundaries that exist between social groups in our society are so deeply engrained in our culture, there is an air of inevitability surrounding them and, as such, they often go unexamined. As mentioned above, this is especially true of the boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants. Society views distinctions between “us,” the native-born, and “them,” foreign-born, as natural because they are derived from geographical borders backed by the concept of state-sovereignty (Verdery 1994). However, distinctions between “us” and “them” have a profound effect on individual identity, intergroup relations, and larger systems of inequality (Tajfel 1978; Tajfel and Turner 1979).

Discourse is a key medium to examine the ideologies and symbolic boundaries surrounding immigration control because it constructs our reality and knowledges. Consequently, individuals who shape discourse, have the social, cultural, and political power to shape what is viewed as truth and ultimately reality (Foucault 1980; Roscigno et al. 2015). States actively shape the discourses available to the public, and often do so in ways that legitimate the power and control they have in society (Noakes 2000). At the same time, those
opposed to state action also contribute to discourses found in society although they are also bound by the cultural and political landscape (Shriver et al. 2013). Nonetheless, Foucault (1978) suggests that those who stand in opposition to oppressive power engage in “reverse discourse” that has the potential to liberate.

The news media is where much of this discourse unfolds; its manifest function is to report on unfolding events and the happenings of other social institutions such as the government and economy. In other words, the news media is the site through which knowledge, derived from discourse, is disseminated to the public at large (Altheide 2013). The media also serves an important framing function by suggesting how audiences should think about particular topics (Gamson et al. 1992; Kim et al. 2002; Saguy et al. 2010). For example, Sohoni and Sohoni (2014) demonstrated that news coverage on crime and immigration contributes to the publics’ continued association between immigrants and increased criminality, despite evidence to the contrary. Additionally, Chermak and Weiss (2005) have shown that law enforcement agencies are aware of the importance of the media in obtaining legitimacy from the public. Thus, the news media can provide insight into how immigration control is legitimated or challenged because, “media messages can act as teachers of values, ideologies, and beliefs and…provide images for interpreting the world whether or not the designers are conscious of this intent” (Gamson et al. 2002: 374).

Research on Immigrants in the News

Other researchers have examined how the news frames immigration. A prominent theme within this coverage is that immigrants are a threat to public safety (Martinez-Brawley and Gualda 2009; Sohoni and Sohoni 2014), an especially powerful image that plays on the fears of a largely native, White audience (Glassner 2010). The association between
immigrants and crime contributes to the pervasive “Latino Threat Narrative”25 found in American society (Chavez 2013; Stewart et al. 2011) and is often used as a way to justify restrictive policies and enforcement (Sohoni and Mendez 2014). For instance, newspapers in Arizona emphasized the criminal activity of Mexican/Latino immigrants over any other topic (Martinez-Brawley and Gualda 2009) despite an erroneous association between crime and immigrants. Furthermore, Stewart et al. (2011) argue that newspapers sensationalize stories that involve criminal acts of immigrants by including stereotypes of the cultural outsider who, for example, does not speak English. Immigrants are also portrayed as a threat to public safety in non-criminal ways. White (2010) provides an example of discourse that portrayed immigrants as threatening by comparing depictions of immigration and leprosy outbreaks in early 20th century America to 21st century Arkansas. At the turn of the 20th century, the U.S. print news media openly associated outbreaks of leprosy to immigrant populations. The relationship between immigrants and leprosy reappeared with a report from Fort Smith, Arkansas connecting an impending leprosy outbreak to their immigrant population. White (2010) explains, “The expression of fear associated with leprosy…is a surface presentation of a general fear of the “other” and a broader concern that “illegal” immigrants threaten the American way of life” (23). Researchers have well-documented the association between immigrants and public safety in news media discourse, which contributes to the legitimation of immigration control; if there is a group of people who are criminal and a threat to public safety, the state has an obligation to bring them under control.

25 The ‘invasion threat narrative’ mentioned above falls under the umbrella of a larger ‘Latino Threat Narrative’ that speaks more generally to the threat Latinos, and specifically Latino immigrants, pose to American society in a variety of ways.
In addition to associating immigrants with crime, there are several other prominent themes within news media coverage of immigration. While not directly tied to immigration control, these frames nonetheless implicitly legitimate the system by reinforcing symbolic distinctions between immigrants and nonimmigrants. For example, a prominent theme within news coverage relates to the economy (Chavez 2013; Martinez-Brawley and Gualda 2009; McElmurry 2009; Stewart et al. 2011). In general, analyses indicate that immigrants are portrayed negatively through frames that suggest that immigrants are fiscally harmful to the state (i.e. as a stress on the welfare system) and to the nonimmigrant population specifically (i.e. taking jobs away) (Martinez-Brawley and Gualda 2009). For example, Martinez-Brawley and Gualda (2009) found that when discussing immigration and the economy, newspapers in Arizona emphasized immigrants’ use of tax-funded services, including the strain they place on border hospitals. Researchers also find that immigrants are also likely to be portrayed as “lazy” and “self-serving” in relation to their economic pursuits, a construction that makes a clear boundary between “us” (the native-born) and “them” (the foreign-born) (McElmurry 2009).

Prior research also notes that news articles often portray immigrants as culturally and demographically threatening to the U.S. (Chavez 2013; Flores 2003; McConnell 2011; Padin 2005). McConnell (2011) illustrates how even a seemingly objective aspect of journalism – reports about Census statistics – can present a biased perspective. She found that one newspaper emphasized the rates of change of Latino and Asian immigrant populations far more often than rates of changes of Whites and Blacks populations. Furthermore, coverage of changes in the Latino and Asian population was highly inflammatory. Likewise, Chavez’s (2013) work traces the historical development of the “invasion threat narrative,” which
suggests that immigrants pose a threat to society. This narrative is exemplified in a quote from Pat Buchannan who suggested, “Mexico is the greatest foreign policy crisis I think America faces in the next 20, 30 years…We’re going to have 135 million Hispanics in the United States by 2050, heavily concentrated in the southwest”. Culturally, researchers have found that immigrants are portrayed simultaneously “like Whites” in some ways (industrious, enterprising), as well as “unlike Whites” (Padín 2005) and inherently incompatible with American ethos (Flores 2003).

In sum, prior research examining newspaper discourse on immigration has yielded meaningful insight into the symbolic boundaries that surround immigrants and nonimmigrants. Their findings suggest that many of the boundaries surrounding immigrants are negative and clearly brighten boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants, which has a significant impact on how immigrants experience American life, especially as it relates to inequality. However, these analyses fail to examine the beliefs surrounding immigration control specifically. This is a meaningful omission because immigration policy and enforcement determines which individuals have access to citizenship, the rights and resources afforded to immigrants, the degree to which they are allowed to integrate, and the sanctions associated with violations of immigration law, affording them symbolic and social status within society (De Genova 2005; Gerteis and Goolsby 2005; Heyman 1998, 2001; Hiemstra 2010; Wilkinson 2014; Van Houtum and Van Naerssen 2002). An assumption of immigration control is that those subjected to it are different than those outside the system and thus, “deserve” to be dominated by the state (Verdery 1994); political and legal distinctions between “us” and “them” are rarely challenged (Starr 1992). However, as a state-sponsored system that fundamentally dominates and attempts to elicit compliance from
certain individuals, immigration control must be viewed as credible in order to continue to exist. The research presented here addresses this gap by asking: *How does media discourse legitimate or challenge immigration control? Which groups engage in this debate? What types of boundary-work do they perform?*

**Methods**

*Case Selection*

I sampled newspaper outlets with the largest circulation rate across four cities: Los Angeles (*LA Times*), Atlanta (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*), San Antonio (*San Antonio Express-News*), and Raleigh (*News & Observer*). I used the “diverse cases” (Seawright and Gerring 2008) technique of case selection to determine the newspaper outlets included in this analysis. With this method, cases are selected to maximize variation along meaningful dimensions but are otherwise as similar as possible. Based on prior research that indicates that media coverage is dependent upon the environment in which it emerges (Brown 2013; Hellgren 2014)26, I speculated that media coverage of immigration would vary based on a cities’ level of incorporation into the global economic system and their immigrant destination type. However, my analysis suggests that outlets are more similar in their coverage of immigration control than dissimilar. Thus, the results and analysis presented here indicate how immigration control is legitimated or challenged regardless of level of incorporation into the global economy or immigrant destination type.

*Data Collection*

26 For example, Brown’s (2013) analysis of welfare coverage indicated that newspaper discourse in Alabama and Georgia featured morality claims that focused on lazy and hyper-fertile black recipients. This is in contrast to California and Arizona where coverage centered on Hispanic, Asian, or Native American recipients and claims about who is legally entitled to benefits.
With the exception of the *N&O*, I retrieved articles through LexisNexis Academic. I searched for articles published between 2000 and 2012 that contained the word “immi*” or “migra*”\(^{27}\) in the title. The “*” conveys wildcard characters so that variations of the words immigrant (i.e., immigration or immigrants) and migrant (i.e., migration or migrants) would be returned. I conducted a similar search for the *N&O* but because this publication was not available via LexisNexis, I used America’s News. The selected time period encompasses several important events, including 9/11, the ongoing economic crisis, three Presidential elections, and the rise of state-level self-deportation laws. I included only pieces that contain at least 500 words, as articles with fewer words were unlikely to discuss the topic in a meaningful way. I included new stories at the local and national level\(^{28}\), as well as editorials and op-eds. I systematically sampled 10% of articles from the *LA Times* and *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, and 100 articles each from the *News & Observer* and *San Antonio Express-News*. This search yielded an initial sample size of 587 articles.

**Analysis Technique**

I conducted a frame analysis to examine the discourse surrounding immigration control in newspaper articles. Goffman (1974) defines frames as, “definitions of a situation [that] are built up in accordance with principles of organization which govern events – at least social ones – and our subjective involvement in them” (10). Frames set the parameters for how something is spoken, thought, or written about, and thus, help social actors make sense of the world around them. They are also “action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns” of actors involved in social

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\(^{27}\) Preliminary searches indicate that using these terms more broadly, for example in the article text, produced unrelated results. However, articles with these words in the title were primarily about immigration.

\(^{28}\) I excluded articles that focused on immigration unrelated to the U.S. While it could be argued that these stories also perform boundary-work, I am most interested in understanding how newspaper discourse portrays U.S. immigration.
processes like collective action, lawmaking, and social movements (Benford and Snow 2000: 614). In the political arena, groups frames issues to legitimate or challenge policies developed to solve the problem (Guetzkow 2010). Therefore, using frame analysis, I can examine the arguments groups use to legitimate or challenge the system of immigration control.

My first step of data analysis was to establish a codebook. Several coding categories stem from prior research, while I defined others from an initial reading of a pilot sample of 100 articles. I developed my codebook iteratively, testing and revising across several rounds. The final codebook consists of approximately forty codes. I used NVivo 10 to code and analyze my newspaper data for a few reasons. First, it is designed to accommodate large amounts of texts as well as multilevel coding (document- and text-level). Second, this program allows multiple codes to be applied to one segment of data, providing for richer analysis. Third, I chose NVivo because it allowed me to identify the frequencies and patterns that emerged in my data (Richards and Richards 1994).

To examine the ideologies surrounding immigration control, I drew my analysis from direct quotations that were coded as “policy” or “enforcement.” The “policy” code was applied to any description of “immigration-related measures, laws, policy, bills, procedures, or legislation.” I applied the “enforcement” code to text that described “someone being compelled to observe or comply with a law or rule as it relates to immigration” which “may have included reference to the actors doing the enforcing, those affected by enforcement, details of enforcement raids, detention centers or any other enforcement institutions, and enforcement legislation or policy.” In total, there were 201 articles that included direct quotations that referenced either security or policy related to immigration control.
I chose to examine direct quotations associated with these codes for two reasons. First, arguments either in favor or against immigration control emerged most salient in direct quotations. Most references to immigration policy or enforcement that did not stem from direct quotations were neutral and provided little insight into the ideologies that legitimate or challenge immigration control. For example, an article in the AJC reported, “Rep. Mary Squires (D-Norcross), whose district is about 30 percent Hispanic, attended several meetings and said she plans to introduce a bill in January to license illegal immigrants” (Bixler 2001). This passage is descriptive and uninformative in terms of the ideologies surrounding immigration control. Secondly, I focus on quotations to study which voices news outlets feature and the arguments they engage in. Research suggests that the news industry has a reputation for being more inclusive of groups who society views as more credible, such as government officials (Chermak and Weiss 2005). Thus, it is meaningful to study which groups are given media access. While newspapers may not directly endorse the perspectives of those they quote, they nonetheless provide prominent space to certain groups and in doing so, elevate their perspectives and opinions. In order to examine which voices were featured more often in the sample, I marked each quotation during my initial rounds of coding. I then went through each quotation related to either “enforcement” or “policies” and identified which group the quoted person belonged to (for example, government official, immigrant, interest group representative, etc.).

Findings

Members from a variety of groups engaged in arguments over immigration control, including government officials, law enforcement agents, nonimmigrant experts, and immigrants themselves. As will be discussed further in the Discussion section, it is important
to consider which groups are making what arguments, as not all “voices” are seen as equally credible (Gamson 1992). For example, audiences give government and law enforcement agents a greater degree of credibility as compared to other groups, so their arguments may resonate more with the public. Indeed, my findings suggests that government and law enforcement agents were at the forefront of advocating for greater immigration control, suggesting that immigrants are criminal, immigrants pose a threat to national security, “illegal” immigrants are unlawful and that enforcement is the law. On the other hand, “expert” nonimmigrants as well as law enforcement agents were more critical of immigration control, arguing that immigration control is flawed and that immigration control harms native-borns. While the public generally views these two groups as legitimate, it is telling that government officials, the group given the most authority in society, were essentially absent in making arguments against immigration control. Lastly, and unsurprisingly, immigrants were primarily critical of immigration control. They argued that immigration control causes immigrants to live in fear and that immigration control tears immigrant families apart.

Government and Law Enforcement Officials: Immigrants are Criminal, a Threat to National Security, and “Illegal”

Many government and law enforcement officials advocated for immigration control by suggesting that immigrants are criminal. As shown in Figure 3, this frame appeared at least once in 20% of the articles that contained a direct quotation related to “enforcement” or “policy” category. There was some variation in the frequency in which it appeared across outlets; 18% of the articles in the LAT contained this reference, 19% in the AJC, 25% in the San Antonio Express and 31% in the N&O. For example, an article from the N&O quoted a
county sheriff who suggested, “‘We’re trying to rid the state of illegal alien criminals’” (Collins 2007). In defense of AZ’s S.B. 1070, Governor Brewer proclaimed, “‘We cannot sacrifice our safety to the murderous greed of drug cartels’” (Riccardi 2010a). In another LAT article, a state representative from Arizona contended, “‘Illegal immigrant brings crime, kidnapping, drugs – drains our government services…Nobody can stand on the sidelines and not take part in this battle’” (Riccardi 2010b). As other researchers have noted (Martinez-Brawley and Gualda 2009; Sohoni and Sohoni 2014), these statements openly associate immigrants with crime. Throughout American history, this association has proven effective at drawing bright boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants and at legitimating acts of social control (Simes and Waters 2013).

Government officials and law enforcement agents also argued in favor of immigration control by portraying immigrants as a threat to national security, found in 15% of all articles included in this analysis (Figure 3). In some quotations, the association between terrorism and immigrants was implicit. For example, an article in the AJC quoted a U.S. Representative as suggesting, “‘Border security is the first step’…’We have a very porous border, and none of the restrictions or laws in place seem to have any effect’” (Keefe and Rockwell 2006). Likewise, an SAE article quoted a former Border Patrol Chief who stated, “‘It’s a meaningful proposal that addresses issues with national security, fraudulent documentation and illegal immigration all at the same time’” (Rozemberg 2005). Those who associated immigration with terrorism often portrayed the situation as dire. For example, the LAT included a quotation from a U.S. Senator who argued, “‘Greater interagency cooperation will…protect the United States against international terrorism and national security threats…You have to know your enemy’” (McDonnell and Carollo 2001). Similarly, an article in the SAE included
a quotation from a U.S. Representative who maintained, “Securing our nation’s borders is an imperative, and this bill does it” (Chapa 2006). Lastly, a LAT article quoted a spokesperson for the Immigration and Naturalization Services who said, “The question you have to ask is: Can we afford to sit back and wait for people to commit a terrorist act…or instead, should we utilize all the authorities of the U.S. government to intercept and disrupt and deter individuals who may be linked to terrorist organizations?” (Savage 2002). Although, as noted above, members of the dominant group have long associated immigrants with crime, the association of immigrants with terrorism and “national security” has increased significantly in the post-9/11 era. Scholars have well-documented this association in institutions beyond the media (Donato and Armenta 2011; Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013; Jones-Correa and De Graauw 2013; Menjívar and Abrego 2012; Stumpf 2006). Once again, this connection plays upon White nativists’ fears of the threatening immigrant “Other,” reinforcing boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants and legitimating immigration control.

Government and law enforcement agents were also prone to supporting immigration control by suggesting that “illegal” immigrants are unlawful. As shown in Figure 3, 19% of articles that included a direct quotation related to “enforcement” and “policy” in the AJC contained this frame, 28% of the articles in both the SAE and LAT referenced it, while 38% of the articles in the N&O made this reference. Across all outlets, about 27% of the articles contained a direct quotation related to “policy” or “enforcement.” An LAT article quoted a local mayor who suggested, “If someone is here illegally, they can be deported as is, now. There is no expectation that if you are here illegally, you are allowed to stay” (Winton and Yi 2006). Similarly, an article from the LAT quoted a County Supervisor who suggested, “County taxpayers are spending hundreds of millions of dollars housing and supporting
criminal aliens who have broken the law to be here…They need to be deported’” (Gorman 2009b). Derogatory references to “illegals” stem from the deeply held American value of “law-and-order.” While these statements do not portray immigrants as overtly threatening, they emphasize their law breaking behavior; this is, in turn, is assumed to be grounds for more restrictive immigration control. Thus, nonimmigrants who reference the unlawfulness associated with immigrants’ decision to migrate reinforce bright boundaries between the law-abiding, American-citizen “us,” and the unlawful (on principle), immigrant “them.”

Government agents and law enforcement also advocated for immigration control by suggesting that *enforcement is the law*. This was the most common frame used to advocate for immigration control, found in 47% of all articles used for analysis in this chapter with relatively little variation between outlets (Figure 3). For example, in a *SAE* article, a State Republican Executive Committee member suggested, “‘We believe in enforcing laws that are in place’” (Scharrer 2010). Similarly, a U.S. Representative claimed, “‘I’m for securing the borders and enforcing the laws’” (Miller 2006). Lastly, the *LAT* included a quotation from another U.S. Representative who described his solution to the “immigration issue”: “‘It’s a radical one. Scary. Enormously controversial…It’s called: Enforce ... the ... law’” (Barabak 2007). Actors that engaged in this frame commonly relied on metaphors to make their arguments. For example, they described measures that limit the power of law enforcement agencies as “handcuffs.” An attorney in Los Angeles argued that a local-ordinance preventing officers from inquiring about immigration status “‘handcuffs police officers’ ability to ensure law and order in the city’” (McGreevy and Winton 2007). A California State Senator suggested that repealing the law would take “‘the handcuffs off of law enforcement’” (Riccardi 2010b). On the other side of the spectrum, restrictive immigration control measures
were described as “tools.” An AJC piece quoted a county sheriff who suggested, “If someone is here illegally and commits a crime, whether a misdemeanor or felony, they need to serve their sentence and be deported…This program will be [a] useful tool in accomplishing that goal” (Feagans 2007b). Similarly, a law enforcement agent noted, “‘Since 9/11, we have to use everything in the tool kit to protect ourselves from terrorists. If you catch a terrorist but can’t prove he’s a terrorist, you can at least deport him for being illegal’” (Reza 2003).

I suggest that government officials and law enforcement agents who advocate for immigration control because it is the law, contribute to the maintenance of symbolic boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants because they leave the law itself unquestioned and unexamined. This is a patterned absence; what is left unspoken or unpacked sheds light on key assumptions in society. This patterned absence relates to state sovereignty, or the taken-for-granted idea that nation-states have the right to control who they allow within their borders, and, conversely, who they exclude. Immigration – the movement of people across geographic borders – fundamentally challenges this (Bloemraad et al. 2008). Consequently, social control mechanisms designed to enforce this right do not have to be explained or rationalized. This illustrates the high degree of legitimacy immigration control possesses in the U.S., a system that fundamentally rests on the idea that there are inherent differences between “us,” the native-born and “them,” the foreign-born.

Law Enforcement Agents and Expert Nonimmigrants: Immigration Control is Flawed and Harms Native-Borns

Expert nonimmigrants and law enforcement agents who were critical of immigration control suggested that immigration control is flawed in a variety of ways. This frame was
also relatively common, found in 39% of all articles that included a direct quotation related to immigration control articles (Figure 3). One argument they engaged in centered on the system being unconstitutional and focused on immigrants’ rights. Many of their claims referenced the racist implications of specific policies and practices. For example, in an *SAE* article, a law enforcement official critical of AZ’s S.B. 1070 asked, “‘What are we saying? ‘Hey, you’ve got an accent. Let me see your passport’…It damn near leads to racial profiling’” (Aradillas 2002). In an *AJC* article, a professor from Georgetown University Law Center contented,

> It seems inconceivable to me that people who have been lawful residents in the United States and were subject to U.S. government power have no constitutional rights in the process of their removal…I find that a startling proposition in a government of laws (Bixler 2000).

Members of these groups also argued that the system is too severe. For example, in an *N&O* article, an associate director of the National Immigration Project referred to the Secure Communities program as “‘the Criminal Alien Program on steroids’” (McDonald 2012). Quoted in an *SAE* article, a representative from the National Council of La Raza argued that the 2006 proposed legislation was a “‘very ugly, very harmful enforcement-only approach and a backdoor effort to criminalize the undocumented population’” (Martin 2006). Another quotation from a *SAE* article comes from an immigration attorney, who contended, “‘At the rate we are going in classifying offenses as aggravated felonies, one of these days spitting on the sidewalk is going to be an aggravated felony’” (Chapa 2006).
Other nonimmigrants critiqued immigration control by arguing that the system targets the wrong immigrants. The AJC included a quotation from the executive director of the Georgia Association of Latino Elected Officials who argued, “‘They’re inundating immigration with minor traffic violations instead of focusing on people who commit major crimes’” (Pickel 2007). Similarly, a former Mexican consul general in Atlanta suggested, “‘Let’s get rid of the dangerous criminals who are walking our streets, but those are not the ones who are driving without a driver’s license’” (Redmon 2012b).

Sources who engaged in this frame seemingly challenged boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants because they recognize that immigrants, just like nonimmigrants, deserve to be treated in a fair and just manner. This frame ultimately questions the procedural justice of immigration control and in doing so, challenges its authority. However, I suggest that while law enforcement and expert nonimmigrants using this frame challenge portions of the system by suggesting that it is unconstitutional, too severe, and targets the wrong type of immigrant, they do not actually question the need for the system. The actors that engaged in this frame, then, are bound by what Foucault refers to as a “discursive field” which sets institutional parameters of how something is thought or spoken about which then come to take on a common sense quality (Kroll-Smith and Gunter 2005; Steinberg 1999). Thus, rather than actually questioning the legitimacy of the nation-state system and categorization of “immigrant,” these actors implicitly suggest that while flawed, if reformed, it would be effective. As an alternative, actors that were critical of immigration control may point to the ways in which the political economy entices immigrants to migrate without authorization and how capitalist elites benefit from their vulnerability in the labor market. Thus, the increasing need for cheap, vulnerable labor in a
global, capitalist society goes unquestioned as does the way enforcement along the United States-Mexico border contributes to this vulnerability (Green and Grewcock 2002:88; Kirby 2006). Actors may also question the vary categorization of “immigrant” and “nonimmigrant,” especially in a globalized world where capital, goods, and services are not bound to geographical borders in the same way that people are. In doing so, it subtly reinforces not only the legitimacy of immigration control but boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants.

Members of these groups also argued that *immigration control harms native-borns*. While not as common as the other frames, referenced in only 10% of the articles used for analysis across all outlets (Figure 3), the way it reinforces boundaries is especially insidious. One of the most frequent objections was in reference to the economy. An article from the *SAE* article quoted a chairperson and chief executive of a prominent local business who suggested, “‘For the whole South Texas area, it would be catastrophic if we had a policy that tried to shut down our trade relationships and business relationships with Mexico’” (Thiruvengadam 2006). Law enforcement who referenced consequences for native-borns also focused on how immigration enforcement would strain government institutions. The *LAT* included a quotation from a police captain who suggested, “‘local departments do not have the resources to train their people in federal immigration law’” (Delson 2007). Many of these actors also argued that restrictive immigration control would have a detrimental effect on public safety by eroding trust between the immigrant community and law enforcement agencies. For example, an *LAT* article quotes an LAPD Assistant Chief who suggested, “‘If an undocumented woman is raped and doesn’t report it, the suspect who raped that woman,
remember, could be the suspect who rapes someone else’s sister, mother or wife later’” (Winton and Yi 2006).

While these arguments are seemingly beneficial to immigrants, in that they point to detrimental effects associated with immigration control, I suggest that they also privilege the perspectives and well-being of nonimmigrants. For example, in the quote from the law enforcement agent above that referenced rape, the enforcement agents’ concern is for the dominant groups’ sisters, mothers, and wives, rather than immigrant women. Rather than centering criticisms against immigration control on immigrants – those most directly affected by the system – arguments are instead made in relation to how the system adversely effects groups who already enjoy a considerable amount of relative power and prestige in American society. In doing so, this frame subtly reinforces hierarchical boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants by prioritizing the ill effects of immigration control may have on the native-born population; the needs and concerns of nonimmigrants are placed above immigrants, the group that, once again, are the ones most directly affected by domination under a system of social control.

Immigrants Critical of Immigration Control

Immigrants who were critical of immigration control suggested that immigrants live in fear, which appeared in about 29% of the articles that included a direct quotation related to immigration control. For example, in an AJC article an immigrant asked, “‘But how can it be peaceful if every day you go out and you worry about the police? It’s not the same as living in your country, where you are free’” (Pickel 2007). Similarly, the SAE included a quotation from an immigrant who suggested, “‘I feel just as American as any of my friends or
neighbors... But I’ve had to live almost my entire life knowing I could be deported just because of the way I came here’” (Martin 2012).

Immigrants also criticized immigration control by arguing that it tears immigrant families apart. This frame was not as common, found in 10% of the articles across all outlets with little variation (Figure 3). For example, an article in the LAT sympathetically describes the plight of an immigrant family who is locked in a family detention center. The father suggested, “I would never leave her… It’s fine to make me pay for the mistakes I’ve made. But… no child deserves this’” (Gaouette and Bustillo 2007). Similarly, another article quoted an immigrant mother who said, “I live in fear every day… We send our children to school and wonder if we will see them again. But we feel we have to take the risk. We have nothing in Mexico, and our children will have everything here’” (Delson 2005). Another article described the experiences of an immigrant family whose mother has been detained. The relative tasked with taking care of the children suggested that they ask, “When is mommy coming back?” every day (Parsons and Nicholas 2010). Immigrants who reference the turmoil immigrant families experience as a result of immigration control are especially effective at portraying immigrants in a sympathetic light because they tap into one of the most central American values – that of family. Many of these passages are also highly gendered. The majority of references to sympathetic families being torn apart is in reference to mothers and children. In U.S. society, women are expected to take on the bulk of parental duties (Tichenor 2005). By tapping into this gendered belief, this frame has the potential to resonate with the public culturally (Benford and Snow 2002; Gamson et al. 1992; Shriver et al. 2013;).
I assert that these frames work to subtly blur boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants by evoking feelings of empathy. When members of the dominant group understand the pain and sorrow that members of a marginalized group experience, they begin to feel compassion which can erode social distance (Schwalbe 1992). By undermining this symbolic difference, this frame also potentially challenges the system of immigration control. However, I also suggest that, to some extent, these frames also reinforce boundaries between immigrant and nonimmigrant groups. These frames center on vulnerability, a quality that can deny individuals agency and turn them into subjects (Butler 1993). Vulnerability is a universal and constant condition of the human experience, but, when recognized in only certain groups, it begins to contribute to systems of oppression and marginalization (Fineman 2008). Vulnerability is also associated with paternalism, an ideology that benefits powerful groups by maintaining unequal dynamics through a relationship similar to that of a father-child: the father guides his children’s decisions through a moral framework depicted as in the best interest of the children, while the children accept their father’s authority and defer to his wishes (Jackman 1994). However, while this frame may in some ways reinforce symbolic boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants, it still questions the legitimacy of the domination associated with immigration control.

Discussion

The purpose of this chapter was to examine media discourse surrounding immigration policy and enforcement to gain a better understanding of how this system is legitimated or challenged, and by whom. My findings suggest that those who were most supportive of immigration control were government and law enforcement officials, who argued that it is needed because immigrants are threatening and because it is the law. This rhetoric draws
bright boundaries between nonimmigrants and the threatening immigrant, providing legitimacy to immigration control. Law enforcement agents, as well as expert nonimmigrants, were also critical of immigration control. These groups argued that immigration control is flawed in a variety of ways and that it creates several detrimental outcomes for the native-born population. I suggest that while these arguments challenge immigration control, they do not fully undermine its legitimacy. Furthermore, some of the arguments privilege the perspective and well-being of the dominant group, subtly reinforcing boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants. Lastly, immigrants argued that the system is unjust by making them live in a culture of fear and that it tears their families apart. In doing so, immigrants blur boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants by suggesting that they deserve to be treated humanely. This discourse also calls into question the domination immigrants experience as a result of immigration policies and enforcement. These results have significant implications.

First, the results suggest that in addition to considering the arguments made in favor or against immigration control, it is also important to examine the sources making these claims. Nonimmigrants, whether in support or critical of immigration control, did not challenge the need for its existence and in overt and subtle ways, reinforced boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants. In contrast, immigrants blurred boundaries between themselves and nonimmigrants by evoking feelings of empathy from native-born audiences; their arguments also went the furthest in actually challenging immigration control as a system of domination. Society views certain groups as more credible and, as such, the arguments made by members of those groups are granted a greater degree of legitimacy as compared to members not in those favored groups (Ibarra and Kitsuse 1993). For example,
dominant groups enjoy a high degree of institutional legitimacy, which allows their messages to go unquestioned by the public (Noakes 2000; Roscigno et al. 2015). Furthermore, because members of dominant groups have the most to gain from systems of stratification, they also have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo (Jackman 1994; Noakes 2000). Thus the power differential between the nonimmigrants and immigrants is significant especially when considering the arguments they engaged in. Thus, while on the surface it seems as though newspaper outlets are providing “balanced” coverage of immigration control, because groups in favor of and against immigration control are both included, the power imbalances that exist between the two types of sources contribute to the inequalities immigrants face and, in the end, legitimate immigration control.

Second, and relatedly, my analysis suggests that it is important to examine not only discourses that are openly anti-immigrant in nature, but also those that seemingly advocate on behalf of immigrants. It is not surprising that nonimmigrants (i.e., government officials and law enforcement agents) in favor of immigration control relied on xenophobic images of the threatening immigrant and notions of “law-and-order” to support their stance, but it is telling that even nonimmigrants who were critical of the system did not challenge the need for its existence. That is, while law enforcement agents and expert nonimmigrants in opposition to immigration control referenced flaws and adverse effects on the native-born community, they did not challenge the fundamental necessity of the system. In doing so, they implied that some type of system was legitimate. This is likely because those in opposition to immigration control are surrounded by a specific discursive field (Foucault 1969) or by discursive opportunity structures that limit the frames they are able to engage in when arguing against immigration control. Thus, because “discursive obstruction campaigns occur
within relevant discursive opportunity structures, and thus are bound by the cultural and political landscape,” (Shriver et al. 2013: 877) even nonimmigrants who are sympathetic to the immigrants’ experience are bound by the legitimacy of state-sovereignty and the political-legal distinctions between immigrants and nonimmigrants that stem from it. These categorizations seem natural or inevitable and, as a result, while immigration control may have faults, the existence of the system itself goes unquestioned.

Lastly, the results support what other researchers suggest about cultural context and arguments surrounding an issue (Benford and Snow 2000; Gamson et al. 1992; Shriver et al. 2013). Nonimmigrants who supported immigration control spoke of the need to maintain “law-and-order,” a deeply held American value. Nonimmigrants who were critical of immigration control called the system into question based on the value of justice, not only for immigrants but for nonimmigrants as well. On the other side, immigrants evoked images of the family in highly gendered ways to craft a sympathetic image. Indeed, immigrant families will sometimes call upon highly gendered cultural beliefs systems that reflect what is expected of men and women, sometimes in ways to create an image of moral superiority (Espiritu 2001). This suggests that groups are strategic in how they frame their stances on particular issues in order to make the most compelling argument to the public.
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

Introduction

This dissertation analyzed the cultural processes and symbolic boundaries surrounding U.S. immigrants in media discourse, a line of inquiry that has been largely neglected within the field of immigration studies. Symbolic boundaries refer to the distinctions we draw between social groups and often entail an element of “us” versus “them” (Lamont and Molnar 2002; Lamont et al. 2014). This is a meaningful omission because the shared, inter-subjective frameworks that distinguish immigrants from nonimmigrants serve as the foundation for the inequality immigrants encounter and, ultimately, other lines of immigration-related inquiries. Rather than focusing on outcomes of inequality, such as how groups perceive one another or the distribution of resources between immigrants and nonimmigrants, this study examined the ways that inequality is reproduced, resisted, or transformed through the construction of boundaries. In order to investigate distinctions between “us,” the native-born and “them,” the foreign-born, I examined symbolic boundary-work in 587 newspaper articles across four outlets. Discourse is a prime medium for examining symbolic boundaries, because it is the site through which reality and knowledge is created in our society; it is through discourse that these socially constructed boundaries are, in part, created (Foucault 1980; Lamont et al. 2014). The media represents an especially powerful institution when it comes to the dissemination of discourse because its function is to report on unfolding events in society and the happenings of other social institutions (Altheide 2013) and because it has the potential to influence the social world around it (Kim et al. 2002; Gamson et al. 1992; Saguy et al. 2010).
While many scholars have examined how immigrants are portrayed in the news media, they most often focus on discourse that is openly negative or hostile (Chavez 2013; Flores 2003; McConnell 2011; Chavez 2013; Padín 2005; Martinez-Brawley and Gualda 2009; Sohoni and Sohoni 2014; Sohoni and Mendez 2014; Stewart et al. 2011). This research is meaningful and clearly demonstrates how media discourse reinforces bright boundaries between “us,” the native-born and “them,” the foreign-born. However, I argue that in focusing on only negative media discourse, scholars have failed to analyze an important part of the story: rhetoric that is neutral or more receptive towards immigrants. Indeed, Lamont and Molnar (2002) suggest that studies of symbolic boundaries should “undertake the systematic cataloguing of the key mechanisms associated with the activation, maintenance, transposition or the dispute, bridging, crossing and dissolution of boundaries” (187). I took up this call in my research by asking: What type of boundary-work does negative discourse in immigration newspaper articles perform? What type of boundary-work does neutral discourse in immigration newspaper articles perform? And, lastly, what type of boundary-work does positive discourse in immigration newspaper articles perform?

Summary of Chapters

My dissertation was divided across three empirical chapters. In the first, I examined the social construction of cultural belonging surrounding Latin American immigrants in newspaper discourse. I found that immigrants are generally portrayed as cultural outsiders, both explicitly and implicitly. I also found that newspapers place a normative value on the acculturation process, with nonacculturation depicted in a negative light and acculturation portrayed more positively. In contrast to these frames, newspaper discourse embraced immigrant culture when it served elite interests. I argued that explicit portrayals of
immigrants as cultural outsiders reinforce bright boundaries between immigrant and nonimmigrants, while discourse that makes subtle note of immigrants’ cultural outsiderness in ways that promote inequality reinforce “dim” boundaries between the two groups. I also suggested newspapers implicitly subordinate immigrant culture and once again, reinforce boundaries between immigrant and nonimmigrant groups when they frame acculturation through a normative lens. Furthermore, discourse that depicts acculturation as related to individual effort minimizes the role the social world plays in this process, further contributing to the social construction of immigrants as cultural outsiders.

For the second empirical chapter, I examined positive frames surrounding immigration in newspaper articles. I found that the most prominent positive frames were in relation to the economy. Newspapers frequently advocated for immigrants’ inclusion into American society based on their contributions as taxpayers, consumers, and most of all, workers. Articles also emphasized the labor migrants contribute to American society, framing it is vital to the economy because of immigrants’ willingness to perform labor deemed too lowly by Americans. Journalists also frequently praised individual immigrants for their hard work and social mobility, especially those that adopt dominant cultural values. Lastly, I found that articles frequently created a sympathetic image of immigrants as vulnerable to exploitation at the hands of “unscrupulous employers.” On the surface, it may seem as though these frames blur boundaries between immigrant and nonimmigrant groups by advocating for immigrants’ inclusion or portraying them sympathetically. However, I argued that these frames actually subtly reinforce boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants by suggesting that immigrants’ worthiness of inclusion is based on their economic contributions, especially as stigmatized workers, that upward mobility is a personal
responsibility, and by neglecting to consider any of the structural underpinnings associated with the exploitation immigrants face.

In the last empirical chapter, I analyzed media discourse surrounding immigration policy and enforcement to examine how this system is legitimated or challenged, and by whom. Government officials and law enforcement were prone to arguing in favor of immigration control because immigrants are threatening and because it is the law. This rhetoric draws bright boundaries between nonimmigrants and the threatening immigrant, providing legitimacy to immigration control. Expert nonimmigrants and law enforcement agents were also critical of immigration control. These groups argued that there are a variety of flaws within the system and that it has several detrimental outcomes for the native-born population. I suggest that while these arguments challenge immigration control, they do not fully undermine its legitimacy. Furthermore, some of the arguments privilege the perspective and well-being of the dominant group, subtly reinforcing boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants. Lastly, immigrants argued that the system is unjust by causing them live in a culture of fear and that it tears their families apart. In doing so, immigrants blur boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants by suggesting that they deserve to be treated humanely. This discourse also calls into question the domination immigrants experience as a result of immigration policies and enforcement.

Implications

Beyond what I have described in the individual chapters, two significant implications stem from my overall findings. First, my research advances the scholarship on immigration by showing that just like with other social dimensions, such as age, race, and gender, symbolic boundaries based on nativity are socially constructed by powerful institutions.
While distinctions between immigrants and nonimmigrants may first emerge from legal and political institutions (Verdery 1994), my research illustrates how public discourse works to reinforce or challenge those differences. As many sociologists have noted, cultural processes must legitimate or reinforce the structure in order for it to continue to exist (Giddens 1984; Habermas 1984; Marx 1867). My work suggests that the legal and political structures surrounding immigrants are reinforced by media discourses that (re)create boundaries between immigrant and nonimmigrant groups. This connection illuminates a key mechanisms related to the reproduction of the inequality immigrants face. For example, as others have noted, immigrants serve as a much-needed hyper-exploitable workforce in America’s neoliberal market economy. The exploitation immigrants experience stems from their vulnerable status in America, especially those that are undocumented (Robinson 2009). However, while the official designation of “undocumented” stems from political and legal institutions, in order for that categorization to gain salience and have power, it must resonate with mainstream society. The boundary-work performed by newspaper articles on immigration is one such way this happens.

Second, my work has significant implications for the scholarship on inequality more generally. In contrast to other systems of inequality, my findings suggest that symbolic boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants are shaped through discourse that is negative, neutral, and positive. The wide range of discourses that contribute to boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants – from blatantly hostile to overtly receptive – likely stems from the legitimacy granted to the way we organize ourselves politically. The system of nation-states is based on the idea of national sovereignty, which suggests that nations have the right to determine who they are going to allow within their borders and who they are
going to keep out (Starr 1992). The premise is that the government prohibits entry of those who are somehow fundamentally “different” than those within arbitrary national borders (Verdery 1994), which is expressed – both implicitly and explicitly – in the frames described here.

Thus, while it is generally unacceptable to express openly racist and sexist ideas in today’s society (Bonilla-Silva 2013; Jackman 1994), this is not the case as it relates to distinctions based on nativity. Several frames I described in the acculturation and immigration control chapters, as well as ones identified by other scholars examining media discourse surrounding immigration (Flores 2003; Innes 2010; Martinez-Brawley and Gualda 2009; McConnell 2011; McElmurry 2009; Stewart et al. 2011; Chavez 2008), were openly hostile and xenophobic towards immigrants. Going further, my analysis indicated that boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants are shaped through discourse that is neutral. For example, many outlets provided seemingly straight-forward reports that described immigrants’ culture. While these passages were not negative, they nonetheless reinforced hierarchical distinctions between “us” and the immigrant “them.” In these passages, differences between immigrants and nonimmigrants are essentially taken-for-granted, portrayed as natural. Lastly, as illustrated in the positives frames and immigration control chapters, arguments that are seemingly “pro-immigrant” can contribute to “dim” boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants. Essentially, regardless of whatever side of the aisle an individual may be on, very rarely does the actual distinction of “immigrant” come into question. Because of the legitimacy the idea of state-sovereignty holds, the vast majority of discourses – whether they be negative, neutral, or more positive – ultimately reinforced boundaries between immigrants and nonimmigrants. As it relates to scholarship on
inequality, this project suggests that when differences between groups are codified by political and legal institutions, discourses in society may ultimately reinforce these differences even if they are critical of them.

**Limitations and Future Research**

As with all research, my project has limitations that are important to consider, especially in terms of future research. First, although newspapers continue to be a widely-consumed form of public discourse (American Press Institute 2014), I had no way of determining which audiences were encountering the articles I analyzed and the consequences associated with these frames. Because they comprise the numerical majority, I presume that the vast majority of readers are nonimmigrants although immigrants too, of course, encounter the frames described in my results. This is an important limitation because while media framing plays a significant role in how people view and come to understand certain issues, audiences play an active part in this knowledge-building process as well (Gamson et al. 1992; McCombs and Shaw 1972). That is, they use their preexisting cognitive schemas and other sources of knowledge to determine how to interpret how a topic is presented (Gamson 1992). As such, it would be meaningful if future research examined the consequences of media framing. The theory of cultural processes contends that symbolic boundaries serve as the bridge between social psychological and macro-level outcomes. My work has identified and analyzed several characteristics of these “bridges,” however, it would be meaningful to examine exactly how this bridging process works. For example, an experimental design would be able to examine the social psychological effect of symbolic boundaries. Participants could be exposed to different types of media framing surrounding immigration to determine if certain types of coverage affect views towards immigrants. At the macro-level,
it would be interesting to examine how variations in news coverage of immigration across different geographical locations might affect immigrants’ macro-level outcomes such as income, education, and wealth attainment.

Secondly, my work gave little consideration to the organizational constraints facing the news industry. While I noted how the profit-driven nature of the media influences the way newspapers cover certain topics, there are other organizational elements that may affect which topics are covered and how. For example, America’s two-party, “winner-take-all” political system may foster more extreme media discourse surrounding political issues, including immigration (Hallin and Mancini 2004). These types of characteristics are likely to influence the media discourse surrounding immigration, however, this type of analysis was once again beyond the scope of my research. Future research may examine how cross-cultural variations in the news industry affect the discourse surrounding immigration.

Although my project references the importance of gender in a couple of chapters, it does not explicitly use an intersectional perspective. This perspective would be fruitful for future research endeavors as news coverage surrounding nativity varies along with other social dimensions such as such as nationality, gender, race, among other things. This is an important contribution because oppression operates simultaneously on a variety of levels and across several socially constructed categories of difference and inequality (Collins 1990); to examine multiple categories in conjunction with one another would provide a richer picture of the cultural processes that link micro- and macro-outcomes of inequality. Again, although not fully explored in my data, initial observations suggest meaningful differences in how immigrants are discussed based on, for example, gender and nationality. For example, unauthorized immigrant men were often depicted as breadwinners willing to undertake great
risk to migrate to the U.S. to provide for their families. While unauthorized immigrant women seemingly undertook the same types of risk in crossing the border without documentation, newspaper articles tended to emphasize their role as nurturing parents. Additionally, while most references to the labor immigrants perform was of the stigmatized occupations they occupy as described in Chapter our, some articles referenced work in high-tech and professional industries. When this type of workers was referenced, they were almost exclusively noted to be an immigrant from an Asian nation.

Future research should also explore how news media framing of immigrants varies across time and contexts. For example, news coverage of immigrants changed dramatically in 2006 during the debates of the Border Projection, Anti-terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act (H.R. 4437). Around this time, arguments that recognized immigrants’ contributions became more prevalent across all outlets. Further, as expected, newspaper outlets devoted a significant amount of attention to immigration-related political protests surrounding the debates of this legislation. While “big events” will obviously affect media coverage, a longitudinal analysis would illuminate how coverage of these big events affects the symbolic boundary-work outlets engage in. Additionally, while most of the coverage between outlets was relatively uniform, as noted in the empirical chapters, meaningful difference did emerge, especially as it relates to new and traditional immigrant destinations. I also suspect that as a result of the heightened occupational diversity of immigrants within global cities, symbolic boundary-work in newspaper coverage of immigration may be more heterogeneous in these locations as compared to non-global cities. This suggests that comparisons between outlets along other contextual dimensions, such as rural versus urban newspapers, could be meaningful as well.
REFERENCES


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Podgorny, Diana R. 2009. “Rethinking the increased focus on penal measures in immigration law as reflected in the expansion of the” aggravated felony” concept.” The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology: 287-316.


APPENDICES
Appendix A: Methodological Notes

My dissertation analyzes negative, neutral, and positive discourses in immigration newspaper articles, distinctions that I made through several rounds of coding. As to be expected, editorials and op-eds were prone to using explicit negative or positive discourses depending on the perspective of the author. Editorials and op-eds that argued against immigration or advocated for a more restrictive environment utilized negative discourses. For example, an editorial in the AJC titled, “Keep pressure on at workplace: Best strategy against illegal immigration is to go after businesses, cut off demand” argued, “Dozens of Georgia school districts, county health departments and other local government agencies have to shoulder the burden of providing social services needed by the low-wage immigrants and their families” (King 2006). This is clearly negative discourse because it advocates for the “best strategy” for immigration control and points to immigrants’ detrimental consequences on society. On the other hand, editorials and op-eds that were more receptive towards immigrants relied on positive discourses. For example, an editorial in the SAE titled, “Legal or not, immigrants are already home” advocates for progressive immigration reform on the grounds that immigrants are already a part of American society and contribute significant to the economy (Seltzer 2006). This is positive discourse because it takes a more hospitable stance towards the immigrant population and recognizes their positive impact.

It was more difficult to classify discourse in straight-forward news articles as neutral, negative, and positive discourses because these distinctions were not always as clear. In other words, my classification of these discourses entailed a degree of subjectivity. Accordingly, it is important to reflect on how my social location and experiences inherently influence how I interpret the textual data; my categorization of neutral, negative, and positive discourses is
filtered through the lens in which I see them. I cannot and do not separate myself from the issue of immigration, a topic I am sympathetic towards. I am a critical sociologist that openly acknowledges the marginalization and oppression immigrants experience and the very little power they possess in the U.S. I was born and raised in rural West Texas, a part of the country with a very large Latino population that spans multiple generations. Growing up, I had many first-, second-, and third-generation Latino immigrants in my peer network and my life partner, whom I met very early in life, is a third-generation Mexican-American. Nonetheless, I attempted to categorize the newspaper text as neutral, negative, or positive in as systematically as possible and to adhere to the criteria I established early on. I elaborate on this process in more detail below.

While conducting my pilot sample, it became apparent that in many instances, newspaper articles frames immigrants in ways that were explicitly negative or positive. As such, I created two categories that reflected these passages including “social benefits” and “social problems.” Text that referenced “how the immigrant population, the process of immigration, or the political/social environment surrounding immigration enhances the material or mental wellbeing of a segment of the population, helps certain groups realize/develop their full potential, or helps to achieve the realization of American values/institutions” received the code of social benefit. Additionally, I specified that in order, “To use this code, there must be a clear statement that ‘x’ is a benefit because of ‘y,’ that ‘x’ is beneficial to ‘y,’ or that ‘x’ creates the benefit of ‘y.’” An example of text that received the code of social benefit comes from an article in the N&O when the outlet reported, “Johnson said illegal immigrants are important not just to their employers, but to the businesses they support, such as car dealerships, grocery stores and apartment complexes” (Collins 2007).
applied the category of “social problem” to references on “how the immigrant population, the immigration system, or the political/social environment surrounding immigration infringes on the material or mental wellbeing of segments of the population, prevents certain groups from realizing or developing their full potential, or impedes the realization of American values/institutions” and, also specified, “To use this code, there must be a clear statement that ‘x’ is a problem because of ‘y,’ that ‘x’ is problematic to ‘y,’ or that ‘x’ creates the problem of ‘y.’” The following passage from the AJC is an example of text that received the “social problem” category: “Opponents worry that illegal immigrants would use licenses to access services to which they are not entitled. They also doubt that illegal immigrants would buy insurance” (Bixler 2001). In a few instances, a passage of text received both categories, including the following example from the AJC which reported, “While illegal immigrants burden the social infrastructure --- schools, hospitals and housing --- they also revitalize many neighborhoods as they open new businesses and buy additional goods and services” (Tucker 2008).

On occasion, there were passages that did not overtly reference the beneficial or detrimental effects immigrants have on the U.S., but nonetheless conveyed a negative or positive stance towards immigrants. I considered discourse that was less receptive of immigrants or that referred to the adverse reactions others have towards immigrants as negative. For example, an article in the SAE reported, “Republicans point to the…poll's finding that 73 percent of respondents wanted to limit immigration, beef up border security and toughen penalties on employers who hire unauthorized workers” (Castillo 2008). I interpreted text that was more receptive of immigrants or advocated on their behalf as positive. For example, in reference to litigation surrounding Arizona’s SB 1070, an article in
the LAT quoted an immigration attorney as saying, “‘This lawsuit is important because it's basically about the rights of young people to go about their daily lives and ability to be able to support their families’” (Caracmo 2012). Lastly, if discourse was not explicitly or implicitly negative or positive, I considered it to be neutral. An example of this type of discourse comes from the N&O, which reported, “Although it is easy to give an immigration bill a stern name, it is hard to pass one. That will be the real challenge confronting Congress next year” (Doyle 2006).

REFERENCES


### CLASSIFICATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code:</th>
<th>Full</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DATE</td>
<td>The date of the article in mm/dd/yy format.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEADLINE</td>
<td>The headline of the article. Copy/paste as it appears.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DESK</td>
<td>The desk or section associated with the article. Copy/paste as it appears.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAGE</td>
<td>The page number of the article. Copy/paste as it appears.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TYPEMIG</td>
<td>The type of migrant discussed in the article. Choose between undocumented, documented, unspecified, other, or multiple.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TYPEART</td>
<td>The type of article. Choose between editorial, op-ed, or news. Both editorial and op-ed articles express opinions, but editorials come from the editorial board of a newspaper, while op-eds are written by people outside of the news organization. Towards the end of the article, op-ed pieces will explain who the author is and which group they are affiliated with (when applicable), whereas editorial bylines will say “editorial board” generally or mention that the person listed on the byline is from the editorial board.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code:</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Definitio</td>
<td>The geographical focus of the article. Choose between local, state, federal, or other.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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**CATEGORIES**

**Tone**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code:</th>
<th>SOCIALBENEFIT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Definitio</td>
<td>Anything related to immigrants or the process of immigration described as a social benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When to use:</td>
<td>Use this when references are made to how the immigrant population, the process of immigration, or the political/social environment surrounding immigration enhances the material or mental wellbeing of a segment of the population, helps certain groups realize/develop their full potential, or helps to achieve the realization of American values/institutions. To use this code, there must be a clear statement that “x” is a benefit because of “y,” that “x” is beneficial to “y,” or that “x” creates the benefit of “y.” This may include statements about how immigrants contribute to the economy, how immigration policies reward highly-skilled migrants, how a restrictive piece of immigration legislation protects American citizens, or how immigrants are good for America because they are family-oriented. Benefits may positively affect nonimmigrants, immigrants, or other collective goods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When not to use:</td>
<td>Do not apply when references are made to how immigrants, the process of immigration, or the political/social climate surrounding immigration benefit an individual actor; the benefit must relate to broader society. Do not apply to explicit or implicit positive references to immigrants without an explanation of how these positive characteristics represent a social benefit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example:</td>
<td>“These are students who came to this country as children and went to school here,” Nesbitt said. “I just feel that in the long run it’s better for society if they get a degree. Hopefully, they can become documented and contribute to society.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note:</td>
<td>This should also be coded as CHILDMIG, EDUCATION, ID, and MALEQUOTE.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code:</th>
<th>SOCIALPROBLEM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Definitio</td>
<td>Anything related to immigrants or the process of immigration described as a social problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When to use:</td>
<td>Use this code when references are made to how the immigrant population, the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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use: immigration system, or the political/social environment surrounding immigration infringes on the material or mental wellbeing of segments of the population, prevents certain groups from realizing or developing their full potential, or impedes the realization of American values/institutions. To use this code, there must be a clear statement that “x” is a problem because of “y,” that “x” is problematic to “y,” or that “x” creates the problem of “y.” This may include references to immigrants taking jobs away from citizens, immigration laws preventing talented immigrants from contributing to the economy, or illegal immigrants undermining American values. Social problems may negatively affect nonimmigrants, immigrants, or other collective goods.

When not to use: Do not apply when references are made to how immigrants, the process of immigration, or the political/social climate surrounding immigration are a problem for individual actors; the problem must relate to broader society. This code should also not be applied to explicit or implicit negative references to immigrants, without an explanation of how these negative characteristics pose a social problem.

Example: “As the immigrant population, both illegal and legal, grows in North Carolina and throughout the country, so too does the strain immigrants place on social service providers to make sure their basic needs such as food, housing and education are satisfied.”
Note: This should also be coded as HOUSING, EDUCATION, and WELFARE.

“ICE has decided to upgrade accommodations for detained illegal and criminal immigrants,” he said during the opening minutes of the hearing. “While we would all like to be upgraded, we don’t have the luxury of billing the American taxpayers or making federal law enforcement agents our concierge.”
Note: This should also be coded as ENFORCEMENT, TAXES and MALEQUOTE.

Nouns

Code: NATION
Full Definition: Immigrant nationalities, ethnicities, or countries of origin

When to use: Use this code on references to the country immigrants or specific immigrant-related ethnic groups (e.g. Hispanics) come from or are associated with. This may include references to specific countries, nationalities, or ethnicities.

When not to use: Do not apply this code to references of race such as White, Black, or Asian (instead, use code RACE).

Example: “I oppose granting guest worker status and eventual legal residency to any of the millions of Mexicans who are in the United States through violation of our immigration laws.”
Note: This should also be coded as CRIME and POLICY.
“Julie Ann Crommett, 16, is a junior at Walton High School in east Cobb, where she has a 4.1 GPA. She was born in Puerto Rico. Her mother is from Cuba and her father is from Maine. The family, however, lived most of the time in Puerto Rico before moving to metro Atlanta in 1990.”
Note: This should also be coded as CHILDMIG, EDUCATION, FAMILY, and PERSONAL.

“They have been more and more active politically,’ Price said of the Indian-American community.”
Note: This should also be coded as MALEQUOTE.

A 1995 study from the Forest Park Comprehensive Plan, which used figures from the 1990 census, estimated that Forest Park’s population of 17,048 residents consisted of 19.1 percent African-Americans, 2.3 percent Hispanics and 4.0 percent Asian/non-White/other, according to John Boothby, director of development for Forest Park. Boothby said the actual numbers could be much higher, since immigrants are sometimes reluctant to participate in the national census.
Note: This should also be coded as NATION and STATISTICS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code:</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Definition:</td>
<td>Male migrant individuals or groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When to use:</td>
<td>Use this code on references to male migrants, either as individual people or as a group. When applied to a group, it should be comprised of male migrants exclusively.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When not to use: Do not use if sex is unclear or unspecified. Do not apply to references to children (instead, use CHILDMIG).

Example:

“‘Now I feel the same as before --- without hope,’ said Manuel Barron, a construction worker from Mexico.”

Note: This should also be coded as NATION and MALEQUOTE.

“Phan soon began working at the DeKalb Farmers Market, sweeping floors and stocking shelves. He often worked double shifts, and began to impress his bosses, who would later move him into management. He saved as much money as he could, hoping to one day start a business of his own.”

Note: This should also be coded as PERSONAL.

The bathhouse, a few feet behind the spare, four-room house where the men [migrant farm workers] will sleep, was designed and built by 14 N.C. State University students under the direction of Bryan Bell, head of a Raleigh nonprofit organization called Design Corps.

Note: This should also be coded as HOUSING.

**Code:** FEMALEMIG

**Full Definition:** Female migrant individuals or groups

**When to use:**

Use this code on any references to female migrants, either as individual people or as a group. When applied to a group, it should be comprised of female migrants exclusively.

**When not to use:**

Do not use if sex is unclear or unspecified. Do not apply to references to children (instead, use CHILDMIG).

**Example:**

“Kim Tran of Ellenwood shops for her family at the International Farmers Market in Lake City. The mother of three said a neighbor told her about the establishment two months ago, and one day she decided to stop in and take a look around. She hasn’t been to a large chain grocery store since.”

Note: This should also be coded as CHILDMIG, FAMILY, and PERSONAL.

“A few years ago, when Gloria had a miscarriage and was admitted to WakeMed, Medicaid paid for her care.”

Note: This should also be coded as HEALTHCARE and PERSONAL.

“Josiah is among dozens of women who have taken part in a ‘microenterprise’ program run by the Refugee Women’s Network, a grass-roots nonprofit organization created in 1995 to support immigrant and refugee women through leadership training, education and advocacy.”

Note: This should also be coded as EDUCATION, MOBILIZATION, and PERSONAL.
Code: CHILDMIG
Full Definition: Child or youth migrants

When to use: Use this code on references to youth migrants or to the children of migrants (who may not have migrated with their parents). This includes direct references to children or youth, and also words such as “student” at any level of education.

When not to use: Do not use on references to children that are not migrants and not born of migrant parents.

Example: “But as happy as he was to have succeeded in the escape, Phan also was sad: His wife Mai Le and their two children, then 3 and 5 years old, remained in Vietnam. He would not see them again until 1989.”

Note: This should also be coded as MALEMIG, FEMALEMIG, NATION, FAMILY, and PERSONAL.

Content

Code: PUSH
Full Definition: Factors that push people into migrating

When to use: Use this code when explanations for and factors contributing to migration focus on conditions or processes in the country of origin. This may include references to corrupt governments, poor economies, or religious persecution.

When not to use: Do not use on descriptions of the country of origin unless the text specifies that these conditions lead to migration.

Example: “People could decide, ‘I have to go,’” Smeke said. ‘A drop in remittances could produce a greater flow of migrants, or a greater flow to the cities’ in Mexico.”

Note: This should also be coded as SOCIALPROBLEM, NATION, and FEMALEQUOTE.

“Casas, born in the Canary Islands to parents who fled Fidel Castro’s regime in Cuba, dismisses such criticism.”

Note: This should also be coded as MALEMIG and NATION.

Cross-Code: This code will likely overlap with ORIGIN CONDITIONS.

Code: PULL
Full Definition: Factors that pull people into migrating

When to use: Use this code when explanations for and factors contributing to migration focus on conditions or processes in the destination country. This may include references to religious freedom, more job availability, or the opportunity for a
better life in general.

**When not to use:** Do not use on descriptions of the destination country unless the text specifies that these conditions create an incentive for migration.

**Example:** “The forms may list three categories: U.S. citizen, legal resident or non-immigrant alien, a term that encompasses foreign students who come to the United States legally to go to college.”

Note: This should also be coded as CHILDMIG and EDUCATION.

“It’s a conclusion many immigrants to this country seem to have reached, either out of necessity or, like Rahman, a desire to forge their own versions of the American Dream.”

Note: This should also be coded as MALEMIG.

---

**Code:** STATISTICS

**Full Definition:** Statistics related immigrants, the process of immigration, or other immigration-related trends

**When to use:** Use this code on references to an immigration-related fact derived from a large set of numerical data. This may include information about the immigrant population size, percent change in population numbers, unemployment rates, crime rates, and high school completion rates of immigrants. If a statistic is at all relevant to immigration or a point being made about immigration (even if the statistic pertains to nonimmigrant groups), it should be coded.

**When not to use:** Do not use this code on fact or pieces of data derived from smaller units of analyses, such as those derived from individual organizations. For example, the sentence “Nearly all of the medical practice’s 28 staff members rely on interpreters based at the hospital when interacting with Spanish-speaking patients” would not receive this code.

**Example:** “Still, care for illegal immigrants absorbs just a small portion of North Carolina’s total Medicaid spending. In fiscal year 2005, the cost of care for illegal immigrants was less than one half of 1 percent of the Medicaid program’s total budget of $8.2 billion.”

Note: This should also be coded as HEALTHCARE and WELFARE.

“Since entering the program three years ago, the Wake County Sheriff’s Office has helped identify 2,922 people living in the county illegally who were later removed from the United States. Of those, 536 were classified as violent criminals convicted of aggravated felonies, 401 were convicted of at least one felony and at least three misdemeanors, and 718 were convicted of one misdemeanor punishable by less than a year in prison.”

Note: This should also be coded as CRIME and ENFORCEMENT.

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**Themes**

29 This is a running list of topics. As new ones emerge, I will add them to the codebook.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code:</th>
<th>BORDER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Definition:</td>
<td>Border</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When to use:</td>
<td>Use this code on references to geographic, natural and/or territorial boundaries between nation states. This may include descriptions of border crossings, calls for increased border security, or references to “the fence” or to the Rio Grande river. This code should be applied on references to borders between any two nation-states.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When not to use:</td>
<td>Do not apply to references of other types of territorial borders, such as those defining a city or between two counties. Do not apply to other types of boundaries between nations, such as beliefs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example:</td>
<td>“This week, Andres Rozental, a top Fox adviser who is co-chair of a U.S.-Mexico immigration panel, was asked on National Public Radio’s “All Things Considered”whether an amnesty might simply encourage more illegal border crossings.” Note: This should also be coded as SOCIALPROBLEM, NATION, and CRIME.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The journey to the Pakistani border, usually a day’s drive from Kabul, took about three weeks. The night they grew close to the border, battle flares lighted the night sky and the ground shook as Soviet helicopter gunships fired rockets nearby.” Note: This should also be coded as MALEMIG, NATION, and ORIGINCONDITIONS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“There’s the threat of terrorism, which we’re told will be thwarted by building a partially funded, partial fence.” Note: This should also be coded as SOCIALBENEFIT and SECURITY.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-codes:</td>
<td>If the reference is in regards to border security, this code will overlap with SECURITY.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code:</th>
<th>CRIME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Definition:</td>
<td>Crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When to use:</td>
<td>Use this code on references to immigrants or specific immigrant-related ethnic groups (e.g. Hispanics) breaking the law. This may include references to the illegality of their immigration status, gang activity, or drug trafficking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When not to use:</td>
<td>Do not use this code on references to general or nonimmigrant criminal activity. Do not use this code on general references to “illegal immigrants”unless there is an emphasis on the illegality of their status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example:</td>
<td>“Over and over again, we’ve heard the stories, whether its gang-related activity or drinking and driving or drugs,’ Dole said Wednesday. ‘What we’re trying to do is focus on that element of the undocumented community.’”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Critics of the compromise have called the proposal an ‘amnesty’ that would reward lawbreakers and create an economic drain on taxpayers.”

Note: This should also be coded as SOCIALPROBLEM, POLICY, and TAXES.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code:</th>
<th>CULTURE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Definition:</td>
<td>Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When to use:</td>
<td>Use this code when the article references immigrant or specific immigrant-related ethnic group (e.g. Hispanic) art, festivals, food, history, symbols (such as flags) and/or sports, or when the world “culture” or “assimilation” is mentioned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When not to use:</td>
<td>Do not use this code on references to immigrants’ language or religious beliefs (instead, use LANGUAGE or RELIGIOUS BELIEF) unless the word “culture” is specifically used.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example: “Chang said they hope to have fairs, festivals and performances that highlight the lively mix of cultures.”

Note: This should also be coded as MALEMIG.

“Though there were Mexican, Savadoran and Guatemalan flags sprinkled in the crowd, most of the marchers carried American flags, a response to critics who had denounced marchers in previous events for carrying Mexican flags, saying the flags showed they were unwilling to integrate into U.S. culture.”

Note: This should also be coded as NATION, MOBLIZATION, an REACTIONS.

“His whole family was that way, inviting me to have a tortilla and some leftover beans, even though they didn’t have much themselves.”

Note: This should also be coded as MALEMIG, FAMILY, and PERSONAL.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code:</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Definition:</td>
<td>Descriptions of the immigrant population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When to use:</td>
<td>Use this code on references that give an account of the features or characteristics of the immigrant or specific immigrant-related ethnic group (e.g. Hispanic) population. This may include the size of or changes in the population, birth rates, the number of documented versus undocumented immigrants, religious preferences, the number of immigrants crossing the border versus over-staying visas, or age/sex distributions. The description may be at the national, state, and/or local level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When not to use:</td>
<td>Do not use on general descriptions of the overall or nonimmigrant population.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“While it is true that Hispanics tend to identify themselves as Democrats, they also lean toward more conservative social views on matters such as abortion and homosexuality.”
Note: This should also be coded as NATION.

“Thirty-one percent of immigrant business owners are college graduates --- about the same as the population of native-born business owners.”
Note: This should also be coded as STATISTICS and DESCRIPTION.

Cross-Code: If statistical information is presented to describe the immigrant population, it will overlap with the code STATISTIC.

Code: ECONOMY
Full Definition: Economy
When to use: Use this code on references to the American labor market or to the production, consumption, and/or distribution of goods and services in or as it relates to America. This may include references to how the American economy needs immigrant workers, how immigrants “steal” jobs from American citizens, or to economic recessions/booms.
When not to use: Do not use on references to workplace conditions. For example, the sentence “Most [migrant workers] earn less than $8 an hour harvesting cucumbers, sweet potatoes, tobacco and apples” should instead be coded as WORK.
Example: “But the deep recession has ambushed long-running population trends, sharply slowing migration to much of the Sunbelt while giving a boost to states with more jobs and affordable housing.”
Note: This should also be coded as PULL.

“Wal-Mart has set a trap for us by pitting consumers against workers with the myth that living wages are incompatible with affordable goods.”
Note: This should also be coded as SOCIALPROBLEM.

Code: EDUCATION
Full Definition: Education
When to use: Use this code on references to the process of receiving or giving systematic instruction as it relates to immigrants or specific immigrant-related ethnic groups (e.g. Hispanics). This may include references to school enrollment rates, dropout rates, immigrant-student experiences, native-born students’ experiences with education as it relates to immigration, or education as a value held by immigrants.
When not to use: Do not apply to references to education that is not systematic, such as what is passed down within families or that can be found on “the street.”
Example: “The students in Laura Campagna’s ESL class have lost classmates to war, survived refugee camps, and forged a home in a foreign land with a different language and customs.”
Note: This should also be coded as CHILDMIG, LANGUAGE, ORIGINCONDITIONS.

“The memo instructs ICE agents and attorneys to give special consideration to military veterans and their family members and to those brought to the country as children, particularly those who graduated from high school and enrolled in college.”
Note: This should also be coded as CHILDMIG, ENFORCEMENT, and FAMILY.

Code: ENFORCEMENT
Full Definition: Enforcement
When to use: Use this code on references to someone being compelled to observe or comply with a law or rule as it relates to immigration. This may include references to the actors doing the enforcing, those affected by enforcement, details of enforcement raids, detention centers or any other enforcement institutions, and enforcement legislation or policy.
When not to use: Do not use on references to enforcement not related to immigration such as city code enforcement, for example (references to immigrants breaking city code would instead be coded as CRIME).
Example: “Capping years of frustration, the House voted Thursday to overhaul the beleaguered Immigration and Naturalization Service, splitting up its law enforcement and service roles into separate bureaus within the Justice Department.”
Note: This should also be coded as POLICY.

“Judges, knowing detention facilities are bursting, release defendants on personal bail even though they realize that many will promptly disappear and resume committing crimes.”
Note: This should also be coded as SOCIALPROBLEM and CRIME.
Cross-Code: If references are made to enforcement as it relates to border security, the codes BORDER and SECURITY will apply. If references are made to why enforcement is needed, the code SOCIAL SOCIALPROBLEM may apply. If references are made to enforcement as a result of immigration laws being broken, the code CRIME will apply.

Code: FAMILY
Full Definition: Family
n:

When to use: Use this code on references to a group of people or individual members related to one another through blood, adoption, or marriage. This may include references to the importance of family reunification in immigration policy, immigrants having large families or specific members of a family such as mother, father, siblings, parents, etc. The reference does not have to be about immigrant families specifically. For example, references to American family values would receive this code.

When not to use: Do not use on references to family in a different sense, not in terms of blood adoption, or marriage. For example, references to “brotherly love” would not be coded.

Example: “But details need be ironed out on thorny issues like a change in the immigration system that would give more weight to educated and skilled applicants over those applying for family reunification.”
Note: This should also be coded as EDUCATION.

“The family moved from Mexico three years ago. After traveling up and down the East Coast, the family settled in Raleigh, where Esquivel’s husband landed a full-time construction job.”
Note: This should also be coded as NATION, FEMALEMIG, and PERSONAL.

Code: HEALTH

Full Definition: Health

When to use: Use this code on references to the physical, mental, or emotional well-being of immigrants or specific immigrant-related ethnic groups (e.g. Hispanics). This may include individual health concerns/experiences or aggregate-level health measures such rates of blood pressure or obesity.

When not to use: Do not use this on references to the healthcare system (instead, use HEALTHCARE).

Example: “Latinos suffer from disproportionately high rates of diabetes, obesity, AIDS and other diseases, so the Washington, D.C.-based civil rights and advocacy organization is aiming to elevate the issue alongside hot-button concerns such as immigration.”
Note: This should also be coded as NATION and DESCRIPTION.

“Petra Escobar, a 35-year-old Mexican immigrant who has been living in the United States illegally for 20 years, developed high blood pressure in May while pregnant with her third child. Twice, it shot so high she had to be hospitalized.”
Note: This should also be coded as NATION, FEMALEMIG, CHILDMIG, and PERSONAL.
**Code:** HEALTHCARE  
**Full Definition:** Health care  
**When to use:** Use this code on references to the people, institutions, programs, and resources that provide health services as it relates to immigrants or specific immigrant-related ethnic groups (e.g. Hispanics). This may include references to doctors, nurses, hospitals, public services (e.g. Medicaid), or officials that administer public services.  
**When not to use:** Do not use this on references to individual or aggregate-level health outcomes (instead, use HEALTH).  
**Example:** “County health officials are concerned about the influx of immigrants, who put a tremendous strain on resources.”  
Note: This should also be coded as SOCIALPROBLEM and WELFARE.  
“A federal study to determine how much hospitals spend treating illegal immigrants has concluded that valid estimates are impossible to determine, frustrating the congressman who asked for the numbers.”

**Code:** HOUSING  
**Full Definition:** Housing  
**When to use:** Use this code on references to buildings or shelters in which immigrants or specific immigrant-related ethnic groups (e.g. Hispanics) live or used to live in their country of origin. This may include references to immigrants’ access to adequate housing, public housing, or the conditions in which immigrants live.  
**When not to use:** Do not use this code on references to immigrants’ labor in the construction industry (instead, use ECONOMY or WORK depending on the description).  
**Example:** “Whether it is manifested in bustling temples or weekend cricket matches in the parks, Indian life has taken root in this land of software geeks and outlandishly priced tract houses.”  
Note: This should also be coded as CULTURE and RELIGION.  
“A federal study to determine how much hospitals spend treating illegal immigrants has concluded that valid estimates are impossible to determine, frustrating the congressman who asked for the numbers.”

**Code:** ID  
**Full Definition:** Identification  
**When to use:** Identify this code on references to the people, institutions, programs, and resources that provide health services as it relates to immigrants or specific immigrant-related ethnic groups (e.g. Hispanics). This may include references to doctors, nurses, hospitals, public services (e.g. Medicaid), or officials that administer public services.  
**When not to use:** Do not use this on references to individual or aggregate-level health outcomes (instead, use HEALTH).  
**Example:** “County health officials are concerned about the influx of immigrants, who put a tremendous strain on resources.”  
Note: This should also be coded as SOCIALPROBLEM and WELFARE.  
“A federal study to determine how much hospitals spend treating illegal immigrants has concluded that valid estimates are impossible to determine, frustrating the congressman who asked for the numbers.”

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When to use:
Use this code on references to the process of establishing identity or to documents associated with identity as it relates to immigrants or a specific immigrant-related ethnic group (e.g. Hispanics). This may include references to immigrants’ access to driver’s licenses, the need to provide identification to gain access to public benefits, applying for green cards, or immigrants committing identity theft.

When not to use:
Do not use this code on references to self-identity in a more internalized sense.

Example:
“After his proposal was widely criticized, Spitzer reached an agreement with the federal government last weekend that would allow illegal immigrants to obtain a different type of license -- one they could not use as identification to board airplanes or cross national borders.”
Note: This should also be coded as BORDER, ID, and POLICY.

“Activists said the push for the licenses is part of a larger agenda to ensure that immigrant workers receive equal rights in exchange for their labor.”
Note: This should also be coded as SOCIALBENEFIT, MOBLIZATION, and WORK.

“The Kennesaw resident has been waiting for seven years to get a green card so he can become a permanent resident and eventually apply for citizenship.”
Note: This should also be coded as PERSONAL.

Cross-code:
If references are made to the policies surrounding identification as it relates to immigration, the code POLICY will overlap.

Code: IMMIGRANTVOTE
Full Definition: Immigrants as a voting bloc

n:

When to use:
Use this code on references to immigrants or specific immigrant-related ethnic groups (e.g. Hispanics) as a voting and/or political group. This may include references to Asian immigrants as an important constituency, the “Latino/Hispanic vote,” individual voting experiences, “get out the vote” efforts, or what needs to be done to capture a certain voting bloc.

When not to use:
Do not use on references to immigrant political movements (instead, use MOBLIZATION).

Example:
“The bill would create a way for most illegal immigrants to gain citizenship -- a key goal for Democrats and their growing Latino constituency, but anathema to most Republicans who viewed it as amnesty for lawbreakers.”
Note: This should also be coded as SOCIALBENEFIT, SOCIALPROBLEM, CRIME, and POLICY.

“Capturing the Latino vote, however, is a much more complicated task than
going after the black vote, or that of most other minorities.”
Note: This should also be coded as NATION an RACE.

Cross-
codes: If references are made to the actions political actors are taking to secure the immigrant vote, the code POLITICALPROCESS will overlap.

Code: LANGUAGE
Full Definition: Language
When to use: Use this code on references to the system of communication used by immigrants or a specific immigrant-related ethnic group (e.g. Hispanics). This may include references to the languages immigrants speak or immigrants’ proficiency in English.
When not to use: Example: “‘The homework we got, they didn’t understand it,’ Citlali said. ‘But they got out the Spanish-English dictionary and tried to help us.’” Note: This should also be coded as EDUCATION and FEMALEQUOTE.

“But there are costs as well, for school districts struggling to pay for English-as-a-second-language classes, for example, and government agencies that pay for health care for illegal immigrants.”
Note: This should also be coded as SOCIALPROBLEM, EDUCATION, and WELFARE.

Code: MOBILIZATION
Full Definition: Descriptions of collective mobilization efforts either for or against immigrants/immigration
When to use: Use this code on references to organized, collective social movement descriptions or activities. This may include references to the size of an advocacy group, non-disruptive (rallies, petitions, meetings between activist and immigration officials), disruptive tactics (protesting, sit-ins), or the effectiveness of an advocacy group.
When not to use: Example: “Some church leaders say it is time to pray for reform. Leaders at New Birth Missionary Baptist Church, a predominantly black church in DeKalb County, and some social justice groups had already planned a Unity Prayer Service for Immigration at New Birth on Sunday afternoon.”
Note: This should also be coded as RACE.

“U.S. immigration officials announced Monday that Elvira Arellano, an illegal immigrant who symbolized inhumane treatment of migrants to some and brazen
lawlessness to others, has been deported to her native Mexico, as immigrant-rights groups vowed to respond with massive protests.”
Note: This should also be coded as FEMALEMIG, NATION, CRIME, and ENFORCEMENT.

Cross-codes:
If an explanation is given for the reason behind mobilizing, the codes SOCIALBENEFIT or SOCIALPROBLEM may apply.

Code: ORIGIN CONDITIONS
Full Definition: Country of origin conditions
When to use: Use this code on descriptions of countries of origin. This may include references to the economic, political, and social systems in a country of origin as well as standards of living.
When not to use: Do not use on references to the border in a country of origin (instead, use BORDER).
Example: “Myanmar is run by a restrictive military government, and Campagna said those who live in the Thailand refugee camps subsist on U.N. food aid dropped from helicopters - fish paste, beans, oil and rice. They are forbidden from growing their own food, although some risk being attacked and killed to grow a few crops outside the camps.”
Note: This should also be coded as NATION.

“After Cotsiridze reported the poor living conditions at a yezid camp to a human rights organization, he said, police interrogated him.”
Note: This should also be coded as MALEMIG.

Cross-codes: This code will likely overlap with PUSH and NATION.

Code: PHYSICAL
Full Definition: References to physical appearance
When to use: Use this code on any reference to how someone or some group looks, including migrants, nonmigrants, or specific immigrant-related groups (e.g. a Hispanic). This may include reference to physical features (hair or skin color, eye shape, body type), clothing, facial hair, or stature.
When not to use:
“A small man with evocative brown eyes, graying hair and a bushy mustache, Silva wore a red-check flannel shirt, faded blue jeans and brown work boots. Somewhat jarringly, he also wore a yellow construction helmet, a habit he picked up as a field hand worried that a falling apple might thump him in the head.”

Note: This should also be coded as WORK.

“Christy Haubegger, film producer and founder of Latina Magazine, said that Latinas are now in demand in Hollywood and are reshaping the American beauty ideal of thin, tall and blond. ‘Suddenly, curves are OK,’ she said. ‘There’s never been a better time to be Latina than now.’”

Note: This should also be coded as NATION.

**Cross-codes:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code:</th>
<th>POLICY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Definition:</td>
<td>Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When to use:</td>
<td>Use this code on descriptions of immigration-related measures, laws, policy, bills, procedures, or legislation. In order to apply this code, there must be some details of the policy provided, if even briefly. This may include reference to immigration policies, requirements to obtain citizenship, legislation that is restrictive or expansive in nature, or descriptions of the dysfunctions of the bureaucracy surrounding immigration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When not to use:</td>
<td>Do not use this code on general references to policy without mention of details. For example the sentence “The measure was defeated in the House” would not receive this code.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example:</td>
<td>“A bill in the Georgia Legislature that would charge illegal immigrants a fee for sending money abroad has drawn criticism in Atlanta and in Mexico.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Faced with deep divisions in its political base over immigration reform, the Bush administration said Tuesday that it would press ahead with the president’s plan to adopt tougher measures to control the borders and crack down on illegal residents, while also pushing to enact a guest worker program that would make it easier for foreigners to enter the United States legally.”

Note: This should also be coded as BORDER and CRIME.

“Don’t feel bad, Ben -- no one can make sense of our immigration bureaucracy. It’s a cruel machine of contradictory rules and arbitrary decision-making that routinely tears marriages and families apart.”

Note: This should also be coded as SOCIALPROBLEM.

<p>| Code: | REACTIONS |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code:</th>
<th>RELIGIOUS BELIEFS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Definition:</td>
<td>Religious beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When to use:</td>
<td>Use this code on references to “everyday”immigrants’ or specific immigrant-related ethnic groups’ (e.g. Hispanics) convictions about the spiritual existence (or nonexistence) of someone or something, spiritual convictions that something is true (or is not true), or to spiritual practices. This may include references to religious rituals, spiritual healers, specific faith(s), or places of worship (churches).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When not to use:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example:</td>
<td>“Most [Hispanics] are Catholics, but there are millions of Protestants, as well as Jews and Muslims.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note:</td>
<td>This should also be coded as DESCRIPTION.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code:</th>
<th>SECURITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Definition:</td>
<td>Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When to use:</td>
<td>Use this code on references to the danger or threat immigrants or specific immigrant-related ethnic groups (e.g. Hispanics) pose. This may include references to terrorism, the need to control immigration in order to promote national security, or the need to make the border more secure.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example:

“The Maya social life in Canton revolves around the local Catholic church, and getting to Mass is important to them, LeBaron said.”
### When not to use:
Do not use on references to social security (instead, use TAXES), on references to security issues in a country of origin (instead, use ORIGINCONDITIONS), or on references to specific criminal acts (instead, use CRIME).

### Example:
“There are a multitude of reasons why people are staying put, including beefed-up border security, but the shaky labor market seems to be the primary consideration for foreign laborers.”
Note: This should also be coded as BORDER and ECONOMY.

### Code: TAXES
Full Definition:
Use this code on references to a system of compulsory contribution to state revenue as it relates to immigrants or specific immigrant-related ethnic groups (e.g. Hispanics). This may include references to immigrants taking advantage of American tax-payers, immigrants paying or not paying taxes, or the tax system in a country of origin.

### When not to use:
### Example:
“Researchers have said that Hispanics contribute billions of dollars a year to the state’s economy through purchases, taxes and labor.”
Note: This should also be coded as SOCIALBENEFIT, NATION, and ECONOMY.

### Cross-Code:
If references are made to immigrants being a burden to the tax system, the code SOCIAL SOCIALPROBLEM will overlap. If references are made to immigrants contributing to the tax system, the code SOCIAL SOCIALBENEFIT will overlap.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code:</th>
<th>WELFARE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full</td>
<td>Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When to use:</td>
<td>Use this code on references to public benefits or social support as it relates to immigrants or specific immigrant-related ethnic groups (e.g. Hispanics). This may include references to immigrants being a burden to the welfare system, specific welfare programs (e.g. Medicaid, food stamps, etc.), what immigrants have to do in order to gain access to benefits, “resources,” or whether immigrants deserve access to public benefits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When not to use:</td>
<td>Do not use this code to references of welfare in terms of well-being (instead, use HEALTH).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example:</td>
<td>“Illegal immigrants are ineligible for unemployment and welfare benefits and, when they lose their income, many have few reserves to draw on. In their home countries, most at least have family homes or farms.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note:</td>
<td>This should also be coded as “State legislators approved the law last year with an eye toward blocking illegal immigrants from getting public benefits they are not entitled to receive.” Note: This should also be coded as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-Code:</td>
<td>If references are made to immigrants being a burden to the welfare system, the code SOCIALSOCIALPROBLEM will overlap.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code:</th>
<th>WORK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full</td>
<td>Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When to use:</td>
<td>Use this code on references to public benefits or social support as it relates to immigrants or specific immigrant-related ethnic groups (e.g. Hispanics). This may include references to immigrants being a burden to the welfare system, specific welfare programs (e.g. Medicaid, food stamps, etc.), what immigrants have to do in order to gain access to benefits, “resources,” or whether immigrants deserve access to public benefits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When not to use:</td>
<td>Do not use this code on references to the contribution immigrants make to the economy (instead, use ECONOMY) or to the need employers have for migrant labor (instead, use EMPLOYER).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example:</td>
<td>“It also includes securing the border, an enhanced guest worker and visa program, and steeper penalties for employers who hire those in the country illegally.” Note: This should also be coded as BORDER, CRIME, and POLICY.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note:</td>
<td>“On a good day, lettuce crews make up to $14 an hour, but that’s only if consumers don’t suddenly prefer soup to salad. If they do, wages fall. This is not the life many Americans aspire to.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“And as the most recent and vulnerable workers, they have become easy prey for dishonest growers and labor contractors, who cheat them out of wages and expose them to the worst working conditions.”

Note: This should also be coded as SOCIALPROBLEM.

Cross-code: If references are made to the contribution immigrants make to the American economy by doing jobs natives will not, the codes SOCIALBENEFIT and ECONOMY will apply. If references are made to immigrants’ work in relation to the employer, the code EMPLOYER will apply.

### Structure

**Code:** METAPHOR

**Full Definition:** Metaphors used to describe immigrants’ characteristics or behaviors, the process of immigration, or other immigration-related topics

**When to use:** Use this code on references that suggest that anything related to immigrants or the process of immigration is the same as another otherwise unrelated object or process. The comparison may be positive or negative.

**When not to use:** Do not use on non-immigration related metaphors.

**Example:**

“Perry said he and the media may have failed to educate the public adequately about the tuition law, which has drawn fire during the ongoing debate over illegal immigration.”

Note: This should also be coded as

“But the very idea that Arizona could be up for grabs this year underscores the way illegal immigration continues to shade the state’s political landscape.”

Note: This should also be coded as

**Code:** PERSONAL

**Full Definition:** Personal stories

**When to use:** Use this code when newspaper articles humanize the nonmigrant or migrant subject. This may include a descriptive narrative of a person’s current/recent life, current or recent challenges, or other background information.

**When not to use:** Do not apply this code to paragraphs that speak of immigration more generally, without reference to specific individuals.

**Example:**

“Mac Pannill was moving fast on a recent round at the WakeMed Raleigh Campus. Within an hour, he needed to see six mothers and their newborns.

Wearing a button pinned to his white jacket that read ‘Hablo Espanol’ (I speak
Spanish), he swept into the wood-floored hospital room of one patient and lifted her newborn from a bassinet. ‘He’s big!’ Pannill said in nearly accent-free Spanish. ‘Do you have a name picked out?’”

Note: This should also be coded as HEALTHCARE and LANGUAGE.

“Raymundo, 32, who left home in Mexico about five years ago, appreciates the affordable care his family gets at Piedmont’s health clinics. He lives in Wake County with his wife, Gloria, 33, and their two daughters. All of them came into the country illegally.”

Note: This should also be coded as NATION, MALEMIG, FEMALEMIG, and FAMILY.

Code: FIRSTQUOTE
Full Definition: The first quotation of an article as it relates to immigration or immigrants, whether full or partial
When to use: Use this code on the first full or partial quote of an article marked off by quotation marks.
When not to use: Do not apply this code to quotations that are not first.

Example: “‘Having worked very, very hard to kill the bill, I am elated,’ said King, president of the Marietta-based Dustin Inman Society. He predicted the bill would not come back up this year or next.”

Note: This should also be coded as MALEQUOTE.

“He called comprehensive immigration reform ‘the decent thing to do’ and said it would serve the nation’s best interest.”

Note: This should also be coded as SOCIALBENEFIT and MALEQUOTE.

Code: QUOTEMALE
Full Definition: Quotations that come from males as it relates to immigration or immigrants, whether full or partial
When to use: Use this code on full or partial quotes that come from a male.
When not to use: Do not apply this code to quotes from a female or if the sex is unknown.

Example: “The ranking Democrat on the House Judiciary Committee, John Conyers Jr. of Michigan, had asked Smith to reconsider the title of the hearing. ‘I hope we can agree that the manner in which we treat immigrants in our detention facilities is not a laughing matter,’ Conyers wrote in a letter sent Tuesday.”

Note: This should also be coded as ENFORCEMENT.
“Caring about Hispanics is to care about this country,’ said Gonzalez, who was introduced by Mayor Julián Castro.”
Note: This should also be coded as NATION.

Code: QUOTEFEMALE
Full Definition: Quotations that come from females as it relates to immigration or immigrants, whether full or partial
When to use: Use this code on quotes that come from a female.
When not to use: Do not apply this full or partial code to quotes from a male or if the sex is unknown.
Example: “Cecilia Perez, a sales clerk in Marietta, said the politicians have failed. ‘They don’t seem to be able to make a decision,’ said Perez, who said she paid a coyote --- or smuggler --- $3,500 to come to the United States. ‘I would rather pay the government to be legally here,’ she said.”
Appendix C: List of Newspaper References


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Riccardi, Nicholas. 2010. “Immigration law may spur a showdown; Arizona signs a bill that
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Saillant, Catherine. 2012. “In the Valley, a vigorous community takes root; Immigrants from Central and South America are changing the face of the area.” *The Los Angeles Times*, August 20, p. AA-1.


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## Appendix D: Tables

Table 1: Case Selection Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Traditional Immigration</th>
<th>New Immigration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global City</td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA</td>
<td>Atlanta, GA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Global City</td>
<td>San Antonio, TX</td>
<td>Raleigh, NC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source</td>
<td>Raleigh, NC (Non-Global/New)</td>
<td>Atlanta, GA (Global/New)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level of Incorporation into the Global Economy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount and Level of Interconnectedness of Large Service Industry Firms</td>
<td>Globalization and World Cities Research Network</td>
<td>High Sufficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demographic Characteristics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Change in the Immigrant Population from 1990 to 2009</td>
<td>Singer 2004; American Communities Project (2009)</td>
<td>538.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% White</td>
<td>American Communities Project (2009)</td>
<td>66.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black</td>
<td>American Communities Project (2009)</td>
<td>19.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Hispanic</td>
<td>American Communities Project (2009)</td>
<td>8.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Asian</td>
<td>American Communities Project (2009)</td>
<td>3.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic Characteristics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Household Income</td>
<td></td>
<td>$59,316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Families Below Poverty Line</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Agricultural Survey (2009)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Construction</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Manufacturing</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Wholesale</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Retail Trade</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Transportation</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source</td>
<td>Raleigh, NC (Non-Global/New)</td>
<td>Atlanta, GA (Global/New)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Information</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent FIRE</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Professional, Science, and Technology</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Education</td>
<td>American Communities Survey (2009)</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Art</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Other Services</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Public Administration</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Political Characteristics (County Level)**

| Percent Vote for Obama                           | Individual County Board of Elections\(^{30}\) | 55 | 64.13 | 51.46 | 69.72 |
| Percent Vote for Romney                          |                                              | 44 | 34.42 | 46.94 | 27.84 |

Appendix E: Figures

Figure 1: Percentage of Latin American Immigration Culture and Language Articles Evoking Specific Frames by Outlet (N=162)
Figure 2: Percentage of Positive Articles Evoking Specific Frames by Outlet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frame</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>AJC</th>
<th>LAT</th>
<th>N&amp;O</th>
<th>SAE</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants Contribute to the U.S. Economy</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants Perform Vital Labor Deemed Too Lowly for Americans</td>
<td>58.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Some) Immigrants are Hardworking, Ambitious, and Upwardly Mobile</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants are Vulnerable</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Immigrants are a Threat to National Security

Immigrants are "Illegal"

Immigration Enforcement is the Law

Immigration Control is Flawed

Immigration Control Harms Native-Borns

Immigration Control Harms Immigrant Families

Immigration Control Creates a Culture of Fear

Figure 3: Percentage of Immigration Control Articles with Quotations Evoking Specific Frames by Source and Outlet

Government and Law Enforcement Officials

Law Enforcement Agents and Expert Nonimmigrants

Immigrants