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Immigrants in the Media: Civic Visibility in the USA and Canada

Irene Bloemraad, Els de Graauw and Rebecca Hamlin

We argue that scholars of immigrant integration should pay more attention to immigrants' 'civic visibility' among local government officials, organisations and other residents. To document and analyse immigrants' civic visibility, we examine coverage of the Vietnamese and Indian communities in newspapers in San Jose, Boston, Vancouver and Toronto from 1985 to 2005. We ask (i) do local newspapers cover the lives of immigrants and their descendants and (ii) what explains variation in the amount of coverage devoted to different immigrant-origin communities in different places? We find little evidence that newspaper coverage is affected by the demographics of an area, newsroom factors or simplified models of the national political and discursive opportunity structures. Instead, we take an 'embedded' context of reception approach, which takes seriously the intersection between general discursive opportunity structures on immigration and particular discourses about certain types of migrants. Our findings suggest the need to complicate national opportunity structure frameworks by considering how their interaction with specific immigrant communities produces between-country and between-group variation. Our results also underscore the importance of immigrant agency; greater visibility in local media appears to link with immigrants' greater presence in domestic politics.

Keywords: Media; Civic Visibility; Immigrants; USA; Canada

Introduction

Over two decades, from 1985 to 2005, the *San Jose Mercury News* in California printed almost 120 articles per year about the Vietnamese community, providing local residents

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with stories ranging from tales of entrepreneurial success to reports on gang-related violence. In comparison, those of Vietnamese origin appeared in approximately 52 articles per year in the *Boston Globe*, 22 articles per year in the *Toronto Star* and 19 articles per year in the *Vancouver Sun*. Thus, newspaper readers in the Boston area might know that a Vietnamese community lives in their region—and those in San Jose certainly would—but this group is far less visible to readers of the Toronto and Vancouver papers.

These differences are revealing in that quantity of media coverage provides, we suggest, an important indicator of immigrants' *civic presence* in a particular place. For residents who are not of Vietnamese background and have limited contact with Vietnamese migrants, media coverage might shape not just their image of the community, but their very awareness of the Vietnamese community's presence. When immigrants are not visible to local government, community organisations and the larger public, they are more likely to be marginalised in local civic and political affairs (Ramakrishnan and Lewis 2005; Winders 2012). We suggest that quantity of media coverage provides an important indicator of Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad's (2008) concept of immigrants' civic presence, and we develop a comparative metric to measure media visibility in four cities in the USA and Canada.

We then ask, what accounts for variation in civic presence, as reflected in local media? The greater number of Vietnamese-origin residents in San Jose initially seems to be an easy answer, but a demographic argument fails on closer examination. We also consider explanations based on practices of news production. Ultimately, however, we argue for an embedded 'context of reception' approach, one that takes seriously the intersection between general discursive opportunity structures on immigration and particular discourses about certain types of migrants.

In advancing this embedded approach, we build on prior scholarship that highlights distinctive 'national models' of reporting practices, cultural repertoires and political opportunity structures (Abu-Laban and Garber 2005; Benson and Saguy 2005; Koopmans 2004; Koopmans et al. 2005). We underscore, however, that these national models do not treat all immigrant groups the same. Migrants face different modes of incorporation structured by their legal entry or visa category, human capital and racial minority status (Portes and Böröcz 1989; Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Portes and Zhou 1993). In particular, we observe that refugee status has a distinctive effect on media coverage in the USA as compared to Canada. We are also attentive to immigrants' local agency in generating civic presence. Our data hint that when minorities engage in political mobilisation, this activity produces spill-over into broader media coverage of the community.

Empirically, we compare newspaper coverage of Vietnamese- and Indian-origin residents in four metropolitan areas: Boston, MA; San Jose, CA; Toronto, ON; and Vancouver, BC. Comparing two Asian-origin migrant groups allows us to probe media coverage between a largely refugee group (Vietnamese) and one composed predominantly of economic and family-sponsored migrants (Indians). The newspapers

we examine—the Boston Globe, San Jose Mercury News, Toronto Star, and Vancouver Sun—are important regional sources of news and information, shaping what officials and residents know about immigrant and ethnic groups living in their midst. We focus on 1985-2005, the 21-year period directly preceding the dramatic decline in print-based journalism that came with the spread of Internet news and social media.1

Immigrants' (In)Visibility: Defining and Measuring Civic Presence

North American scholars who study immigrant incorporation primarily investigate the extent to which immigrants and their descendants become part of the economic and cultural 'mainstream' (e.g., Alba and Nee 2003). We propose that an equally significant but understudied part of incorporation is immigrant communities' civic visibility in the eyes of other residents, from public officials to ordinary citizens. We start with Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad's concept of 'civic presence,' which entails visibility among the general population, recognition in local governance and alliances with other civic actors (2008, 20-21). Recent research suggests that a lack of visibility among local decision-makers shuts immigrants out of urban planning as well as access to social service grants (Winders 2012; de Graauw, Gleeson, and Bloemraad 2013).

We measure civic presence through media coverage. Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad mention the mainstream media as one facet of civic presence without elaborating on it. We identify three directions for analysis: (i) the quantity of coverage, (ii) the topical focus (e.g., stories about politics, crime, education) and (iii) the tone or valence (whether portrayals are positive, negative, mixed or neutral). Most research on the media and minorities has concentrated on topical focus, such as the framing of immigration across countries (e.g., Abu-Laban and Garber 2005; Benson 2013; Caviedes 2015; Koopmans et al. 2005; Lawlor 2015), or on tone, especially negative, racialised portrayals of specific groups (e.g., Bleich et al. 2015; Chavez 2001; Indra 1979; Santa Ana 2002; Tolley 2015).

In studying topic or tone, however, researchers must make a positive selection bias: they can only study what is there. As important, we contend, is the prior evaluation of what is not there: which immigrant-origin communities fail to appear in media accounts—for good or ill—in the places where they live? Little to no media coverage could be advantageous if visibility automatically translated to negative images. But it is rare that contemporary media reports are uniformly negative given journalistic conventions of reporting multiple sides of a story. Chavez (2001, 23) finds a preponderance of alarmist magazine covers in reporting on immigration in the USA, 66% of the total, but he also finds that 25% were positive and 9% neutral or balanced. Bleich and colleagues (2015) find a much higher proportion of positive headlines about Muslims in British newspapers than implied by accounts of Islamophobia, suggesting that media coverage is far from uniformly negative.

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Indeed, there could be real costs to invisibility. A lack of media coverage could keep issues of concern off the agenda, render immigrant hardships and accomplishments invisible, and make it difficult for immigrants to be seen as legitimate stakeholders in their communities. Research on media and agenda-setting indicates that the volume, breadth and prominence of coverage increase the salience and public knowledge about public policy issues as diverse as gun control, social security and foreign policy (e.g., Barbaras and Jerit 2009; Soroka 2003).

We consequently focus on how much coverage immigrant-origin groups receive and the topical focus of articles; we leave questions of tone for future analyses. We develop a comparative metric of coverage that can be extended to other cases to evaluate civic presence. We then ask: what explains variation in the amount of coverage devoted to different immigrant-origin communities in different places?

Understanding Immigrants' Civic Presence in the Media

We first consider the influence of demographic presence, the particularities of news production and contexts of reception. We follow with a contextual approach that takes seriously the intersection of migrant group and location, as well as the potential agency of immigrant communities in increasing their civic presence. We sketch out these frameworks at a general level before detailing the implications for our cases.

Demographic Presence: Newspapers as Population Mirrors

The most straightforward explanation for variation is the prediction that media coverage (and civic presence) simply mirrors demographic presence. If newspapers are population mirrors, differences in the amount of media coverage across cities and groups, as well as change in reporting over time, should correlate with an immigrant group's size. An immigrant or minority group will not figure in many stories if it constitutes a small number of a region's residents.

News Production: Journalists and Media Corporations

Alternatively, amount of media coverage may be driven by the characteristics of journalists, the ideological orientation of newspaper editors and owners and market factors such as corporate ownership, competition or media concentration (Benson 2013; Benson and Saguy 2005). We might expect newspapers with more ethno-racial diversity among their newsroom staff to cover immigrant communities more because of better access to informants or multilingualism. Surprisingly, however, evidence for a link between journalists' biography and media coverage is limited. Zilber and Niven (2000) conclude that a reporter's race does not affect coverage of African-American politicians. Zoch and Turk (1998) find that female journalists are somewhat more likely to use female sources, but just as likely to favour 'official' government and other elite sources as male journalists—sources biased towards male

power-holders—resulting in limited change in the representation of women. It is nonetheless plausible that co-ethnic journalists might be better able to represent immigrant communities, resulting in more articles over a wider array of topics.

National Model Approaches: Institutional and Discursive Contexts of Reception

Rather than demographics or news production, much of the cross-national research on media and immigrant groups concludes that variation is driven by national institutional arrangements and discursive repertoires. Examining the claims-making of immigrants, their supporters and their opponents in newspapers in France, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Great Britain, Koopmans and colleagues argue that national political opportunity structures and the discursive norms used to talk about minorities affect the type and focus of claims-making reported in the media (Koopmans and Statham 1999; Koopmans et al. 2005). Benson and Saguy (2005) underscore how country-specific cultural repertoires and institutional-legal arrangements explain differences between American and French news reporting on immigration and sexual harassment. A 'national models' framework implies that the amount and topical focus of articles should be similar across regions or migrant groups within a particular country, but different across countries. Indeed, Koopmans (2004) finds that within-country differences in newspaper stories about migrant claims-making in diverse German, Dutch and British cities are far less marked than cross-national trends.

Embedded Contexts of Reception: Inter-Group Differences

We argue that scholars must also consider how different migrant groups experience distinct receptions within the same country. Portes and colleagues, for example, argue that the intersection of racial minority status, human capital and the policies of receiving governments creates a hostile, welcoming or neutral reception for different immigrant groups within the USA (Portes and Böröcz 1989; Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Portes and Zhou 1993). The type of reception produces distinct 'modes of incorporation' or trajectories of cultural and socio-economic integration for immigrants and their children. We extend this approach to civic visibility in the media, focusing on the immigration status of groups upon arrival to North America and the political capital immigrant groups generate locally.

Much existing US research on immigrants and the media focuses on undocumented migration. 'Illegal' immigrants in the USA are especially likely to be featured in news stories on crime and welfare abuse; these stories often have a sub-text of invasion, floods or 'infection' of the national 'body' (Chavez 2001; Santa Ana 2002). Less studied is the significance of distinctions between refugees and economic or family migrants. In his analysis of magazine covers, Chavez finds that positive depictions of immigrants, often published around Independence Day, regularly feature refugees to celebrate America's generosity (2001, 24-28; 84-90; also Steimel 2010). Given cross-national variation in the migrant categories that are prioritised by policy, and the language used to justify such categories, scholars need to pay attention to within-country differences between groups.

Research on group-level modes of incorporation, like the national models approach, focuses on social and political structures. We advance the literature by also paying attention to immigrants' agency. Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad (2008) speculate that civic and political presence might be correlated: civic visibility might facilitate political incorporation, while political action—through protest or having a community member elected to office—might increase civic visibility. Indeed, media researchers argue that coverage reflects a broader set of power inequities as journalists tend to turn to leaders in government to identify newsworthy stories and sources of information (Gans 1979; Ungerleider 1991; Zoch and Turk 1998). If power matters, minority communities might gain civic visibility as they gain political influence.

Evaluating Frameworks: A Comparative Research Design

To evaluate these explanatory frameworks, we engage in comparisons across place, group and time. We focus on Indian- and Vietnamese-origin communities, groups that vary as to whether they are substantially composed of humanitarian entrants (Vietnamese) or economic and family-sponsored migrants (Indians). To tease apart national versus local dynamics, we compare media coverage in two national contexts—Canada and the USA—and, within each country, across two metropolitan areas with high immigration and broadly similar political orientations.

Demographic Presence: Vietnamese- and Indian-origin Residents in Four Regions

Canada and the USA are longstanding countries of immigration. More continuous migration has led, however, to a higher proportion of immigrants in Canada: 19% of the population in 2001, compared to 11% in the USA.² At the metropolitan level, San Jose and Vancouver are of comparable size, with 1.5 and 2 million residents, respectively, and similar proportions of foreign-born, 35.4% in San Jose and 38.6% in Vancouver. In contrast, while metro Boston and Toronto are of similar size, with over four million residents each, the proportion of foreign-born in Boston is closer to the US national average, 14.7%, whereas Toronto stands out as the most immigrant city of the four, with 44.7% of residents born outside Canada. The proportion of immigrants rose in all four cities during the 1990s. The largest percentage point increase occurred in San Jose, from 23.5% in 1990 to 35.4% in 2000, and in Vancouver, from 30.1% in 1991 to 37.5% in 2001; Toronto experienced a rise from 38.0 to 43.7% while Boston witnessed a modest increase of 12.3–14.7% foreign-born.

Those born in Vietnam or India have substantial demographic presence in both countries, and they figure among the top 13 immigrant groups in all four metro areas. Significant Vietnamese migration to North America began in 1975 as refugee flows; today it is dominated by family reunification (Beiser 1999; Bloemraad 2006; Hein 1993; Zhou and Bankston III 1998). People born in Vietnam made up the 2nd largest

immigrant group in San Jose in 2000, the 8th largest in Boston, the 9th largest in Vancouver and the 13th largest in Toronto. Migration from India has a longer history, especially on the West Coast, but was cut off at the turn of the twentieth century by anti-Asian exclusions. Today, Indian migrants to North America arrive primarily under family reunification provisions or as high-skilled workers. Indians constituted the largest foreign-born group in Toronto in 2001, the fourth largest in San Jose and Vancouver and the ninth largest group in Boston.³

Canada and the USA as National Contexts

Compared to Europe, the Canadian and US approaches to civic membership and multiculturalism—key variables in the analysis of Koopmans and colleagues (2005) are quite similar. Nevertheless, a more robust immigrant settlement policy in Canada and an official multiculturalism policy are credited with generating greater civic and political incorporation among immigrants there than the laissez-faire American approach (Bloemraad 2006). The US cultural orientation to 'market rationality,' highlighted by Benson and Saguy (2005), might also distinguish the two countries, a possibility supported by the more frequent mention of economic mobility and the 'American Dream' in reporting on immigration in the USA as compared to Canada (Abu-Laban and Garber 2005; Steimel 2010).

A national models approach would thus suggest that, given a more welcoming policy and discursive environment, immigrants and refugees of all backgrounds will have more civic visibility in Canadian than US newspapers. Reporting might also focus more on stories related to multiculturalism and settlement. Conversely, if American 'market rationality' holds, stories there may focus more on business and economic incorporation.

Modes of Incorporation: Refugee, Family and Economic Migrants

Canada and the USA both valorise humanitarian migration. In the USA, however, refugee status provides distinct material and discursive benefits. US policy towards migrants' settlement is largely laissez-faire, presuming that immigrants will help themselves through private assistance from friends and families (Bloemraad and de Graauw 2012; U.S. GAO 2011). Refugees such as the Vietnamese, however, receive aid through a government-coordinated resettlement programme, and they often enjoy symbolic recognition as ideological allies fleeing Cold War Communism or as persecuted victims needing humanitarian aid (Hein 1993; Nawyn 2011). In contrast, while Canada was an ally of the USA during the Cold War, anti-Communism was less resonant in domestic politics; rather, immigration policy and government discourse prioritised economic immigration.⁴ Settlement and multiculturalism policy is also more uniform across refugee and non-refugee groups in Canada (Bloemraad 2006).

Given discursive and institutional differences in mode of incorporation, we expect US papers to cover Vietnamese-origin residents more frequently than those of Indian origin and Canadian papers to provide similar coverage of the two groups. Cross-nationally, we expect American Vietnamese communities to receive more coverage than Vietnamese communities in Canada.

Local Political Engagement and Civic Presence

Immigrants' under-representation in political institutions might contribute to limited media coverage and reduced civic visibility. During our period of study, no one of Vietnamese origin held elective office at the city, county, state/province or federal level in the four cities. However, the groundwork for a breakthrough in San Jose politics was evident at the end of the period. There was also no elected representative of Indian origin in Boston or San Jose. Politicians with origins in India, however, have made significant inroads into Canadian politics. The first non-white city councillor in Vancouver, elected in 1973, was an Indo-Canadian (Bloemraad 2008, 61), while the first turbaned Sikh to win federal office, in 1993, represented Brampton, a suburb of Toronto. Members of the Indian community have at times occupied a greater share of political seats in the Vancouver area—and in federal Parliament—than their proportion in the general population would predict (Black 2008; Bloemraad 2008). Given the media's sensitivity to political power, we hypothesise that greater political presence translates into more media visibility for the community as a whole, generating greater coverage of the Indian-origin communities in Canada, and especially Vancouver.

More Diversity in American Newsrooms

A lack of diversity among journalists might drive under-representation of immigrants and minorities. In Canada, journalists tend to be native-born whites (Indra 1979; Ojo 2006). A 1993 survey of Canadian papers, which included the Vancouver Sun and Toronto Star, found that for papers with a circulation over 100,000, only 20 of 917 reporters (2%) were visible minorities. A decade later, the proportion rose to 4.8%, but still fell far below the estimated 24.7% of visible minorities in these markets (Miller 2006). In comparison, 20% of journalists at the Boston Globe and 32% of journalists at the San Jose Mercury News were people of colour (compared to 18% and 48% of the population in the region, respectively; ASNE 2005). The Mercury News is also the only paper among the four to have had two non-English sister papers, the Spanish-language Nuevo Mundo and the Vietnamese-language Viet Mercury, which ran from 1999 to 2005. If greater newsroom diversity matters, we would expect higher visibility in the US papers and more coverage of the Vietnamese in San Jose during the Viet Mercury's existence.

Newspaper Ownership and Political Orientation

The Boston Globe and Toronto Star are major regional broadsheets with long histories, a left-of-centre editorial position, and localised ownership during the period of our study. The Boston Globe, founded in 1872, is the most widely circulated daily in the greater New England region, with an estimated daily readership of almost

1.2 million people in 2005. The Toronto Star, founded in 1892, has circulation and readership numbers comparable to the Boston Globe, at just below one million readers.8 The Star has a long history of taking centrist or somewhat left-of-centre positions on social and economic issues and endorsing the centrist federal Liberal Party in elections. Similarly, between 1986 and 2000, the Boston Globe heavily favoured Democratic candidates for office, a partisan bias reflecting the political orientation of the paper (Ansolabehere, Lessem, and Snyder Jr., 2006).

The San Jose Mercury News and Vancouver Sun are smaller papers owned by large media conglomerates; they tend to support more business-friendly political positions. The Mercury News, founded in 1851, was owned by the Knight Ridder Corporation from 1952 to 2006. With an estimated readership of 670,000 in 2005, the paper frequently reports on the high-tech industry of Silicon Valley, the paper's primary area of coverage and readership. The Vancouver Sun, established in 1912, has similar readership numbers, just under half a million. The Sun has a right-of-centre editorial focus: it supported the federal Conservative Party in the 2006 elections and consistently backed the right/centre BC Liberal Party in provincial elections. A 2000 study by NewsWatch Canada concluded that both the Vancouver Sun and Toronto Star let business leaders define stories more frequently than labour sources, but the ratio of business over labour predominance was higher in the Sun, 6 to 1, versus 3.5 to 1 in the Star. 11

Newspaper-specific considerations might influence the topical focus of stories more than quantity of coverage, such that the Boston Globe and Toronto Star may publish more on social issues, while the San Jose Mercury News and Vancouver Sun may publish more about business.

Data and Methods

We analyse coverage in four metropolitan papers of record: the San Jose Mercury News, Toronto Star, Boston Globe, and Vancouver Sun. We conducted full text searches to find all articles that mention residents of Vietnamese or Indian origin.¹² Our unit of analysis is the printed article. We derived our search terms from extensive trial and error test searches of typical words and phrases that come up in newspaper coverage of the two groups.¹³ We generated a list of headlines for all articles that returned a 'hit' on the search terms for each group, by year and by newspaper. 14 After eliminating duplicate articles across search terms, we had a list of 21,787 articles. We then drew a 10% random sample, stratified by year, returning 2076 articles.¹⁵

Early analysis revealed that the sample contained numerous stories not germane to our focus on Vietnamese- and Indian-origin communities in North America. We thus eliminated stories without a link to North America and our communities of interest, retaining 1205 articles, or 58%, for further analysis. 16 All retained articles mention a person, organisation, incident or some issue related to the Vietnamese- or Indian-origin community in the USA or Canada, even if only in passing.

We coded each retained article for basic descriptive information. This included the date, newspaper section, number of words, whether the article was accompanied by a photo or other visual representation, the author, the type of article (news, feature, op-ed, etc.), the geographical focus and whether the article touched on the homeland or had some mention of transnationalism. We assigned each article a primary and secondary 'topic' code. Topic coding sought to identify the main focus or subject of the article. We employed 97 topical codes that fell into 10 categories: (i) violence, crime and the law, (ii) religion, (iii) cultural issues, (iv) social policy, (v) politics and legislation, (vi) education, (vii) economics, business and work, (viii) social issues, (ix) health and health care and (x) immigrant profiles or demographic stories.¹⁷ During content analysis, we also assigned each article a code of 1, 2, or 3 to indicate the centrality of the immigrant group to the article. Articles coded 1 had significant coverage of the group, those coded 2 had less but still substantive coverage and articles assigned 3 contained only a passing reference to the group. 18 Given decisions we judged too complicated for a computer program, all coding was done by humans, primarily by two of the authors.¹⁹

Our subsequent analysis measures 'coverage' as a count of all retained articles by community and newspaper. We assess coverage both as an aggregate count of all articles and by topic.²⁰ As we discuss below, we also standardise the count measure by the underlying population size to create a comparative metric across groups and areas.

Table 1 provides a descriptive overview of the data, by newspaper. The two US papers tend to publish slightly longer articles with a photograph, perhaps because these are more likely to be 'feature' stories than breaking news or opinion pieces. We define 'news' stories as those that reported on an event within a few days of its occurrence; 'features' include human interest articles as well as broader news analyses (e.g., how census statistics reveal a changing city or summarising gang activity over the last year). Stories in the Canadian papers tend to be shorter news stories, including a sizeable proportion of opinion pieces such as editorials, letters to the editor or op-eds. Articles in all four papers overwhelmingly centred on local news germane to the metro area or province/state, accounting for two-thirds to three-quarters of the total. This finding affirms our selection of these papers as windows onto local civic visibility.

Findings and Analysis

We report on findings with two main questions in mind. To what extent are Vietnamese and Indian communities visible in local newspapers as measured by quantity of coverage? When stories include these groups, what is the topical focus of the article?

	•	-		
	SJ Mercury News	Boston Globe	Vancouver Sun	Toronto Star
Years	1985-2005	1985–2005	1991–2005	1985–2005
No. of articles coded	374	141	363	327
Average no. articles per year	17.8	6.7	24.2	15.6
Av. length (no. of words)	725	913	666	570
Photo(s) with article (%)	46	54	32	35
Type of article ^a				
News (%)	47	40	64	56
Feature (%)	41	50	15	24
Opinion (%)	8	6	20	15
Other (%)	5	4	3	6
Geographic scope ^b				
Metro/state/ province (%)	77	75	75	63
National/other states or provinces (%)	16	18	23	32
International (%)	7	7	2	5

Table 1. Descriptive overview of newspaper samples.

Are Immigrants 'Visible' in Local Media? Demography and Mirror Representation

We start with the hypothesis that newspaper coverage is proportional to the size of the community, such that reporting 'mirrors' demographic presence. Table 2 reports on group sizes across the four metro areas, looking at the foreign-born and national origin communities. If we include people born in North America, those of Vietnamese origin number about 25,000 in the Boston area, a quarter the size of the community in San Jose, which was about 99,000 in 2000.²¹ Just over 18,000 people report Vietnamese ethnicity in Vancouver and 34,000 do so in Toronto.²² Those of Indian origin constitute large populations in Vancouver and Toronto, 123,500 and almost 280,000 residents, respectively. The figures for Boston and San Jose are 36,000 and 65,000, respectively.

It is difficult to determine how to apply the demographic mirror hypothesis. If the Vietnamese make up 6% of the San Jose area population, should 6% of San Jose Mercury News articles mention the Vietnamese community? Rather than use an arbitrary baseline, we draw relative comparisons across papers and between groups. Table 3 lists the number of articles in our sample with some mention of the Vietnamese or Indian community, however slight, by group and by newspaper, and it shows an annualised count of articles by group. We then standardise the annual

^aPercentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

^bFor articles coded 1 or 2 on centrality; see the Data and Methods section for discussion.

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Table 2. Descriptive statistics for Metro Boston, San Jose, Toronto and Vancouver, 2000/2001^a.

	San Jose	Boston	Vancouver	Toronto
Total population	1,537,873	4,033,503	1,986,965	4,682,897
Total foreign-born population	544,260	594,614	767,720	2,091,095
Foreign-born (%)	35.4	14.7	38.6	44.7
Vietnamese-origin community				
Total foreign-born (Vietnam)	85,403	23,407	27,335	53,220
Share of total population (2000/2001) (%)	5.6	0.6	1.4	1.1
Vietnamese race/ethnicity (single response)	99,148	25,415	18,450	34,200
Share of total population (2000/2001) (%)	6.4	0.6	0.9	0.7
Indian-origin community				
Total foreign-born (India)	47,603	23,172	69,070	149,730
Share of total population (2000/2001) (%)	3.1	0.6	3.5	3.2
East Indian race/ethnicity (single response)	64,961	35,935	123,570	279,330
Share of total population (2000/2001) (%)	4.2	0.9	6.2	6.0
Religious affiliation ^b				
Catholic	_	_	364,790	1,578,880
Protestant	_	_	499,185	1,131,055
Muslim	_	_	52,590	254,115
Hindu	_	_	27,410	191,305
Jewish	_	_	17,270	164,510
Buddhist	_	_	74,550	97,165
Sikh	_	-	99,000	90,590

^aUS statistics for 2000 are for Boston and San Jose urbanised areas; Canadian statistics for 2001 are for Toronto and Vancouver CMAs.

Table 3. Quantity of newspaper coverage by size of immigrant-origin community.

	Total number of articles ^a	Average no. of articles per year	Population size (2000/2001)	Annual no. of articles per 100,000 residents
Indian-origin co	ommunity			
San Jose	124	5.9	64,961	9.1
Boston	31	1.5	35,935	4.1
Vancouver	335	22.3	123,570	18.1
Toronto	280	13.3	279,330	4.8
Vietnamese-orig	in community			
San Jose	250	11.9	99,148	12.0
Boston	110	5.2	25,415	20.6
Vancouver	28	1.9	18,450	10.1
Toronto	47	2.2	34,200	6.5

^aAll articles retained from the initial 10% sample, after first-round exclusions. See the Data and Methods section for more details.

number by the underlying national origin population, creating an annual count of articles per 100,000 Vietnamese- or Indian-origin residents (last column of Table 3).²³ This is a metric that can be used in other comparative research.

^bOnly the Canadian Census asks about religion; no comparable data are available for the US cities. Source: US and Canadian Census, 2000 and 2001.

Table 3 makes clear that civic presence, as measured by coverage in mainstream newspapers, is not correlated with the size of a migrant community. Based on the annual count of articles per 100,000 residents, we find that the Indian community in Vancouver received about twice as much coverage as the Vietnamese.²⁴ In the other three papers, the Vietnamese had greater civic visibility than the Indian community. In the Toronto Star and San Jose Mercury News, the ratio of Vietnamese to Indian articles was about 3:2. In the Boston Globe, stories about the Vietnamese were five times as numerous as articles mentioning Indians. The Boston Globe thus appears to over-report on the Vietnamese community, relative to those of Indian origin, or conversely, it prints few articles on those of Indian origin given their population size. Although the actual number of Indian-origin residents in metro Boston is greater than those of Vietnamese origin, readers of the Boston Globe would not gain that impression based on the level of media coverage. Thus, simple demographics are not a good indicator of an immigrant community's civic visibility in the leading local paper.

If we employ a more sophisticated demographic measure, which considers change over time, the demographic hypothesis still receives limited support. In Boston, the number of Vietnamese residents grew from 9476 in 1990 to 25,415 in 2000, an increase of 168%; this growth doubled the group's share of the metro Boston population from 0.3% to 0.6%. Yet we find a steady rate of five to six articles per year that mention the Vietnamese community, rather than an increase over time. Similarly, the Vietnamese-origin population in San Jose climbed from 54,115 to 99,148 people from 1990 to 2000 (an 83% increase), with their population share growing from 3.8% to 6.4%. As in Boston, the near doubling of the community did not come with a doubling of newspaper stories; coverage remained quite constant at about 9-10 articles per year. In the two Canadian cities, the Vietnamese populations grew modestly, but coverage of the community was most prevalent in the late 1980s and 1990s. This period marked the end of 'boat people' resettlement in Canada and their early years of integration. The story of refugee resettlement and early adjustment was perhaps deemed newsworthy by the Canadian papers, but as the community settled, they faded from the pages of local media, despite an increase in numbers.

There is also no discernible pattern between population growth and coverage for the Indian community in the Toronto Star and Vancouver Sun, but some evidence of a link in the two US papers. In Boston, the Asian Indian population rose from 11,987 residents in 1990 to 35,935 in 2000, an increase of 200%, pushing their share of the metro Boston population from 3.3% to 4.9%. Reporting was generally quite low, but while from 1985 to 1998, there was an average of only one article per year, from 1999 to 2005, this rose to three articles per year. Coverage also increased with population growth in San Jose, which went from 19,962 in 1990 to 64,961 in 2000, an increase of 225%. From 1985 to 1989, less than 1 article per year mentioned Asian Indians, from 1990 to 1994, there were just under 4 per year, from 1995 to 1999 there were 5.4, and from 2000 to 2005, an average of 11 articles per year were printed. The demographic hypothesis is thus not convincing in general, but newspapers might be sensitive to demographic changes as dramatic as those in the Indian communities of Boston and San Jose.

Newspaper Characteristics: Journalists, Political Orientation and Ownership

Does a more diverse newsroom increase newsprint coverage of immigrant-origin communities? We do not have data on staff composition over time for each paper, but we captured the name of every journalist, columnist or writer of articles with a by-line. This list of names does not provide strong evidence that coverage depends on journalists' background.

In six of the eight newspaper/group combinations, no single journalist wrote more than a handful of articles. This includes the Boston Globe's coverage of the Vietnamese community, which stands out in Table 3 as having the highest density of articles per 100,000 Vietnamese residents. Of the 62 names associated with Globe articles, only one, Alex Pham, carries a recognisable Vietnamese last name. It is thus not the case that one or two Vietnamese-origin journalists produced the relatively large number of articles in Boston. Conversely, where we found more concentrated authorship, for coverage of the Indian community in Vancouver, neither of the two most prominent writers (Kim Bolan and Malcolm Parry) is of East Indian background. Only coverage of the Vietnamese in the San Jose Mercury News reveals some link between a journalist's background and civic presence. Of the four authors who wrote the most stories, two have Vietnamese-origin names (Tran and Nhu). Perhaps surprisingly, almost all of their pieces appeared in the Mercury News before the establishment of the paper's sister publication, the Viet Mercury. So it is not the case that the San Jose Mercury News was reprinting English versions of articles produced for its Vietnamese-language paper. Overall, there is no evidence that variation in civic presence across the four papers and the two communities can be explained by who wrote the articles, although we cannot rule out the possibility that having more minority journalists might increase coverage.²⁵

We also do not find strong evidence that editorial political ideology produces an East Coast/West Coast difference in the topical focus of articles about immigrants and refugees. As seen in Table 4, business and economic stories were slightly more prominent in the *San Jose Mercury News*, accounting for 8% of Vietnamese stories and 13% on the Indian community, but the difference with other papers, for which the percentages ranged from 0 to 9, is not dramatic.²⁶

Papers differed most noticeably in their reporting on stories about crime and violence. Overall, 24% of articles centred on issues of crime, violence and the law. The *Vancouver Sun* was most likely to focus on crime and the *San Jose Mercury News* was the least likely. Indra (1979) argues that the *Sun* has a long history of associating South Asians with violence. But if such a 'crime' focus exists, it also affects the *Sun*'s reporting on the Vietnamese. In fact, despite newspaper-level differences in crime reporting, papers were quite consistent in the percentage of stories dedicated to crime across groups. This could indicate systematic variation in newsroom reporting practices, for example, in norms about specifying the race or background of

Table 4. Topical focus of articles, by group and newspaper, 1985-2005a.

	All	SJ Mercury News		Boston Globe		Vancouver Sun		Toronto Star	
Topical focus ^b	Average	Vietnamese	Indian	Vietnamese	Indian	Vietnamese	Indian	Vietnamese	Indian
Culture and religion (%)	29	26	38	19	39	0	32	19	32
Religion (%)	13	3	22	6	26	0	16	0	20
Cultural issues (%)	16	23	16	14	13	0	16	19	12
Violence, crime and the law (%)	24	15	17	19	22	36	33	27	26
Politics and legislation (%)	18	25	18	14	4	0	16	12	19
Profiles, demographics, migration (%)	11	12	9	21	22	18	9	27	7
Social issues (%)	9	14	3	19	4	27	3	12	10
Social policy (specific government programmes) (%)	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
Health care or health issues (%)	4	8	3	4	0	0	2	8	2
Other social issues (%)	5	5	0	14	4	27	0	4	7
Economics, business, work (%)	5	8	13	3	9	0	5	0	3
Education (%)	3	1	1	4	0	18	3	4	3
Number of articles	828	186	76	72	23	11	237	26	197

^aOf articles in which group centrality was coded 1 or 2. See the discussion of centrality coding in the Data and Methods section for more details.

^bPercentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

perpetrators or victims of crimes. But such newspaper particularities do not provide purchase in explaining topical variation across minority groups.

Contexts of Reception, Modes of Incorporation, Political Power and Civic Presence

Our analysis suggests that variation in media coverage is better explained by the intersection of national policy and group-specific modes of incorporation. We also find a relationship between political presence and civic visibility in newspapers.

While the USA and Canada both employ a discourse of humanitarian aid to refugee communities, the position of refugees is more distinctive in the USA. The US federal government has historically embraced refugees as 'allied aliens' supporting America's battle against Communism (Hein 1993), a stance that has driven more publicly-funded and public-private settlement efforts for refugees than for other migrants (Bloemraad 2006; Nawyn 2011). This discursive and institutional opportunity structure might make journalists more aware of refugee communities. Given journalists' reliance on government elites to identify newsworthy stories, greater US government engagement with refugees might also bring more media attention. Consistent with this argument, we find that the Vietnamese community is covered more by the US papers than the Canadian ones. Coverage of the Vietnamese is also far greater, in both US papers, relative to the Indian-origin community. In Boston, we find an annual rate of over 20 articles per 100,000 Vietnamese residents, compared to 4 per year for the Indian community; in San Jose, the respective figures are 12 and 9, as reported in Table 3.

Given the sensitivity of reporters to those holding political power, we might also expect more coverage of the Indian-origin community in Vancouver, the area where this group has made the most dramatic inroads into politics. Indeed, coverage is double or even quadruple the level in the other cities. The importance of political activity as an avenue to civic visibility is also suggested by the topical focus of articles (Table 4). In Canada, where the Indian community has been much more prominent politically than the Vietnamese, 'politics' was a primary focus of 16% of articles about the Indian community in the Vancouver Sun, but none of the articles about the Vietnamese. In the Toronto Star, 19% of articles about those of Indian origin focused on politics, compared to 12% for Vietnamese.²⁷ In the USA, the Vietnamese have been politically consequential in a few regions due to protest activities, high levels of naturalisation and the sense that their vote is up for grabs for Republican or Democratic parties.²⁸ This activism might help explain why, in the Boston Globe, 'politics' is the primary focus of 14% of articles about the Vietnamese, but only 4% of the articles about the Indian community. Similarly, in the San Jose Mercury News, 25% of articles about the Vietnamese focused on politics, compared to 18% of those about Indians. An ethnic group's local political incorporation appears to be a better predictor of coverage than the group's demographic size in the media market.

A simple national models approach might hypothesise that Canada's multiculturalism and settlement policy would lead to more coverage of immigrant communities. This, however, is not the case: the *Star* and *Sun* do not provide more coverage of the two groups than the US papers.²⁹ A national models framework might also predict more attention in Canada to culture and religion, but there are no striking cross-country differences in topical coverage. There is some difference in topical coverage between groups, with more coverage of religion for the Indian community (16-26% of articles, depending on the paper) than for the Vietnamese (0-6%). This could reflect the search terms we used, which paid attention to religious traditions prominent in the Indian community. It also likely reflects the fact that the Sikh and Hindu religions generate more media attention than immigrants' practice of Buddhism or Christianity, two religions prominent among Vietnamese. In particular, the Sikh turban and kirpan (ceremonial dagger) received media coverage in both countries.

We see slightly more 'business/economic' articles in the USA (3-13%, depending on the paper and group) compared to Canada (0-5%), offering modest support for the argument that US media coverage is more oriented towards business themes (Benson and Saguy 2005; Benson 2013). This finding stands in contrast to discursive support in Canada for the country's immigration 'point system,' which favours economic selection. Overall, however, we conclude that a framework attentive to both the national context of reception and group-level incorporation is more useful than a simple 'national models' framework, at least in North America.

Conclusion

We argue that media scholars and those who study immigrants and minorities should examine more closely the quantity of media coverage devoted to different groups. For immigration scholars, mainstream media reporting offers a new indicator of incorporation. A lack of coverage provides important information about immigrants' invisibility—that is, their lack of civic presence—in the communities where they live. For scholars of politics and inequality, differences in the amount of media coverage raise important questions about the dynamics of civic inclusion or exclusion, especially given the media's critical role in creating a discursive public sphere. Invisibility might result in exclusion from deliberations over resource allocation, political decision-making, and the like. Alternatively, a community may benefit in some cases from being 'below the radar' rather than suffering the media spotlight. An assessment of the costs and benefits of media visibility is beyond the scope of this paper, but the consequences of (in)visibility are clearly a topic for future research, as are analyses of the type of coverage that immigrants receive, including both the topical focus of stories and whether immigrants are portrayed in a positive or negative light.

Our empirical analysis documents substantial variation in the quantity of media coverage, but demonstrates that demographics do little to explain variation across immigrant communities or geographic locations. A large number of immigrants in a metro region does not automatically lead to more local news coverage, except possibly where the growth of a community is rapid and dramatic; indeed, some groups seem to receive more newspaper coverage at the time of their initial arrival rather than later in their settlement, as for the Vietnamese in Canada, even if numbers continue to increase. The amount of coverage of Vietnamese and Indian communities across our four cities also cannot be explained by newsroom diversity or newspapers' political orientation, nor with a simple model of national political or discursive opportunity structures.

Instead, we suggest a framework that recognises the dynamic interplay between national opportunity structures and an immigrant group's mode of incorporation, what we call an embedded context of reception approach. The data lend support for the idea that migrants whose arrival is facilitated and valorised by government—such as official refugees in the USA—or who make their voices heard through political structures—such as those of Indian-origin in Vancouver—gain civic visibility in the local media and, presumably, in the eyes of decision-makers and residents. To the extent that political mobilisation influences media coverage and civic presence, future research should also explore the role of mainstream advocacy organisations or interest groups—both those that support immigrant rights as well as those opposed to immigration—in generating civic visibility of immigrant groups.

Our research compared media coverage of two Asian immigrant groups that largely entered North America legally, as humanitarian, economic or family migrants. Future research should build on this to include a wider variety of immigrant groups, in terms of legal status, socio-economic status and ethno-racial background. Undocumented status, for example, might keep 'illegal' migrants in the shadows, including the shadows of media coverage. Or it might increase civic visibility through media stories that demonise their unauthorised status. Similarly, media coverage of immigrants with lower socio-economic status might disproportionately focus on stories with particular topical foci, such as crime and social problems. The over-representation of Vietnamese vis-à-vis Asian Indians in US papers—which we link to refugees' historic status as 'allied aliens'—might also play out differently in Europe, where worries over 'false' asylum seekers are more prevalent. Our findings underscore how future research on migrants' presence and portrayal in the media would benefit from an embedded context of reception approach that considers the intersection between national opportunity structures and group-specific modes of incorporation.

Finally, media coverage is just one among a host of possible indicators of civic presence. Scholars could examine correlations between media coverage and other possible measures, such as invitations to participate in local decision-making bodies, allocation of public funding, celebration of cultural festivals, recognition in local officials' speeches and the like. Researchers can then more fully interrogate the determinants of an immigrant community's civic presence, as well as the possible consequences. Such an agenda encompasses the broader premise behind our attention to civic presence: it is hard to make claims on others in the community or be seen as a full member of society or the polity if you and those like you are invisible to fellow residents.

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Notes

- [1] Advertising revenue for US newspapers peaked in 2005 at over US\$49 billion, then plummeted to just over US\$22 billion in 2012. The number of paid newsroom staff, relatively constant from 1984 through 2006 at about 55,000 workers, was projected in 2013 to fall below 40,000 for the first time since 1978 (Edmonds et al. 2013). Of course, even before the advent of social media, newspapers competed with radio and television as a source of news. Newspapers, however, often validate what is newsworthy for other media outlets and are more likely to attract policy-makers' attention (Benson 2013; Ferree et al. 2002).
- [2] All data are from the 1990 and 2000 US Census and 1996 and 2001 Canadian Census to match the time frame of the newspaper coverage. At the metro level, statistics are for the Boston and San Jose 'urbanised areas' and the Toronto and Vancouver Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs). The Canadian Census distinguishes between foreign-born residents who are permanent residents and those who are not (e.g., those on temporary visas or with pending refugee claims). Because the US Census makes no similar distinction, where possible the Canadian figures include all foreign-born individuals.
- [3] Their first place ranking in Toronto is based on distinguishing migration from Hong Kong and the People's Republic of China. If these two are combined, Chinese migrants are the most numerous.
- [4] The Canadian immigration system allocates the majority of permanent residence visas to migrants selected for their potential contribution to the economy; in the USA, the majority of legal permanent residents are family-sponsored migrants.
- [5] The first ever Vietnamese American elected to San Jose City Council, Madison Nguyen, won in 2005, and was re-elected in 2006.
- The first Indo-Canadian elected to federal office from Vancouver was Herb Dhaliwal, who [6] represented Vancouver South from 1993 to 2004. The seat was subsequently held by another Punjabi Sikh immigrant, Ujjal Dosanjh, who was also the first Indo-Canadian premier of a Canadian province, from 2000 to 2001.
- [7] Estimates of Monday-Saturday circulation run a bit above 400,000, with an average daily readership of almost 1.2 million people. Sunday circulation estimates are about 650,000 with 1.8 million readers (Gallup Poll on Media Usage and Consumer Behavior 2006).
- [8] Monday-Friday circulation is about 350,000, with an estimated 980,000 readers, while on Saturday (the main weekend issue), circulation climbs to over 500,000 with close to 1.3 million readers (NADbank 2006).
- [9] The average circulation Monday-Saturday was just under 250,000 in 2005, with a readership of 670,000 (Gallup Poll on Media Usage and Consumer Behavior 2006).

- [10] Monday-Thursday circulation numbers are about 190,000, increasing to 220,000 on Friday and 250,000 on Saturday. Readership estimates are about 480,000 Monday-Friday and 510,000 on Saturday. The Vancouver Sun does not publish a Sunday edition (NADbank 2006).
- [11] See http://www.sfu.ca/cmns/research/newswatch/monitor/issue6.html, accessed 9 November 2014.
- [12] Most Vietnamese- and Indian-origin residents in the four cities are foreign-born, but since newspapers often lump generations together, we refer to 'Vietnamese-origin' and 'Indian-origin' individuals to capture first- and later-generation residents.
- [13] For Indians, our search terms were: (i) 'Indo American' or 'Indo Canadian', (ii) 'Indian' AND 'immigrant', (iii) 'Indian descent', (iv) 'Sikh' NOT 'Indian', (v) 'Hindu' NOT 'Indian' and (vi) 'Jain' NOT 'Indian.' For Vietnamese: (i) 'Vietnamese American' or 'Vietnamese Canadian', (ii) 'Vietnamese' AND 'immigrant', (iii) 'Vietnamese' AND 'refugee', (iv) 'Vietnamese descent' and (v) 'Indochinese.'
- [14] We used the LexisNexis search engine for all newspapers except the San Jose Mercury News, for which we used Access World News. For the Boston Globe, Toronto Star and San Jose Mercury News, online access dates back to 1985; for the Vancouver Sun, it starts in July 1991.
- [15] The final sample was slightly less than 10% because of stratification by year.
- [16] Over a third of excluded articles (37.1%) were entirely about foreign affairs, such as Hong Kong's decision to repatriate Vietnamese refugees or religious violence in India. We retained such stories if they included a comment from someone in North America or made a link, however slight, to migrant communities in North America. Another quarter of exclusions (26.5%) were features or other stories with no link to North America, such as articles about tourism in Vietnam. A fifth of exclusions occurred because the search term 'Indian' referred to Native Americans in Canada and the USA (17.5%) or West Indians (2.2%). The remaining exclusions (less than 17%) ranged from articles where 'Jain' was a person's name rather than a religious affiliation to book reviews mentioning a Sikh character. To ensure inter-coder reliability on exclusions, at least two and often three coders did preliminary coding on all articles for each newspaper article published in 1985, 1990 and 1995. Agreement on exclusions averaged 88% across all coders; adjudication of differences led to further standardisation in exclusion rules, which were subsequently applied to all years of data.
- [17] Our coding used a two-digit system with the first digit indicating a broader topical focus (e.g., religion, education), and the second indicating sub-topics within the broader one (e.g., stories about religious institutions as distinct from stories about religious practices). Designation of broad categories, used in the analysis here, largely came from theoretical concerns; the fine-grained topics were often generated from the data during early, exploratory coding. The detailed coding schema is available upon request.
- [18] For example, a story about a Vietnamese lawyer using his bilingual and bicultural skills to fight for Vietnamese tenants' rights was coded 1; a story about a mental health facility that served a number of Asian groups, including the Vietnamese, was coded 2; and a story that focused on a church's resettlement of Bosnian refugees, with one sentence reporting that the church had helped Vietnamese refugees 15 years earlier, was given a 3.
- [19] All three authors were fully involved in the coding process. Bloemraad oversaw the selection of search terms, determination of inclusion criteria, the creation of coding categories and early cross validation of coding. de Graauw and Hamlin did almost all of the ensuing content coding. During coding, all three authors read initial samples of articles and met weekly to identify and refine coding categories, agree to standard rules and adjudicate coding differences. Coding rules were written up immediately after each meeting and circulated among the research team to ensure uniform application.

- [20] We present results by topic only for articles assigned a '1' or '2' centrality score; otherwise the link between the article topic and immigrant group is too tenuous. For most group/ newspaper combinations, the frequency of topics was robust to excluding the least central stories. The main exception is for Vietnamese coverage in the Vancouver Sun. Because the number of stories is so low, small variations produce large percentage swings.
- [21] US data come from the census 'race' question, which includes the option of 'Vietnamese' and 'Asian Indian' as racial categories. Canadian data are from the census 'ethnicity' question, which includes the categories of 'South Asian (e.g., East Indian)' and 'South-east Asian (e.g., Vietnamese).' To maximise comparability, we only count those who reported a single race or ethnicity.
- [22] The smaller number of people reporting Vietnamese ethnicity than birth in Vietnam for Vancouver and Toronto likely reflects the presence of Sino-Vietnamese.
- [23] This figure does not adjust for the original 1 in 10 random sampling. The actual incidence of stories would be about 10 times greater.
- In her analysis of the Sun's coverage over the 1967-1976 period, Indra (1979) also [24] concludes that reporting on South Asians far exceeded the community's relative size.
- [25] In his analysis, Benson (2013) also finds that coverage of immigration is spread over a large number of reporters, few of whom have Spanish surnames and even fewer have Asian
- The analysis of topic excludes articles with only a passing reference to the immigrant [26] community, as explained in our discussion of centrality coding.
- [27] We employed two types of coding that might be considered 'politics,' one identifying articles about social policy, such as food stamps, unemployment insurance and the like, and a second coding the practice of politics, from elections to contentious protest. We refer here to the second coding.
- [28] First-generation Vietnamese have tended to support the Republican Party, partly because of its perceived toughness against Communism. The second generation is more likely to support the Democratic Party.
- [29] Indeed, the Toronto Star gives relatively little coverage to either community. Perhaps Toronto's hyper-diversity makes coverage of any particular community unlikely.

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