

Study: Newspapers located closer to the Mexican border slant news coverage of immigration

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A new study released by Rice University in Houston finds that California newspapers located closer to the border of Mexico routinely provide a more negative slant on immigration in general news reporting and on their opinion pages than the state's newspapers located further away from the border.

The study, "Slanted [Newspaper](#) Coverage of Immigration: The Importance of Economics and Geography," was conducted by Rice University political scientist Regina Branton and Johanna Dunaway of Louisiana State University and published in the *Policy Studies Journal*.

Using content analysis, geographic information systems and contextual data, Branton and her research staff examined 1,227 California newspaper news articles and opinion pieces from 2004-05.

"We found that newspapers located closer to the Mexican border often report the more negative side of the immigration issue," Branton said. "Moreover, we found corporate-owned newspapers are more likely to report a negative slant to the issue than privately owned newspapers."

Branton said that the reason for the difference is that newspapers are trying to please their audience - the readers - and thus maximize profits.

"While all news organizations are driven somewhat by the need to make

profits, a public group of shareholders seeks to maximize profits and considers that the main goal," she said.

"It's been well-documented that the media report heavily on sex, violence and crime to appeal to readers," she said. "The immigration issue is an emotional national issue that newspapers can sensationalize and provide influence on."

While the study looked at California specifically, Branton believes that further studies would likely confirm the same trend in other U.S.-Mexico border states, like Texas and Arizona.

Branton said that while opinion pages are typically used for the publisher's point of view, newspapers closer to the Mexican border rarely call for differing views in column space.

Source: Rice University ([news](#) : [web](#))

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