

Framing Refuge: Media, Framing, and Sanctuary Cities

Benjamin Gonzalez O'Brien, San Diego State University
bgonzalezobrien@sdsu.edu

Benjamin Gonzalez O'Brien (Ph. D., University of Washington) is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at San Diego State University, USA.

Elizabeth Hurst, University of Oklahoma
ehurst6@ou.edu

Elizabeth Hurst (M.S., University of Tennessee) is currently working on her Ph.D. at the University of Oklahoma in Norman, Oklahoma, USA.

Justin Reedy, University of Oklahoma
jreedy@ou.edu

Justin Reedy (Ph.D., University of Washington) is an assistant professor in the Department of Communication and a research associate in the Center for Risk & Crisis Management at the University of Oklahoma, USA.

Loren Collingwood, University of California-Riverside
loren.collingwood@ucr.edu

Loren Collingwood, (Ph.D., University of Washington) is an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science at UC Riverside, USA.

Abstract

The refugee sanctuary movement in the United States has shifted to include undocumented immigrants fleeing violence and economic strife. Given the negative tenor of coverage of undocumented immigration, and ties between framing and policy views on immigration, how the media frames sanctuary cities is likely to impact public perceptions of these cities and their policies. To assess media coverage of sanctuary policies, we analyzed articles from five national newspapers from 1980 to 2017 with both human content analysis and dictionary-based computational analysis. We find that framing around religion/morality and conflict has decreased, while stories focusing on crime and partisanship have increased. We discuss implications for public opinion and the likelihood that the American public will take their cues from media framing and elite discourse when it comes to sanctuary policies.

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Introduction

The July 1st, 2015 shooting of Kathryn Steinle by Jose Ines Garcia Zarate, an immigrant released by the San Francisco police despite being undocumented, ignited a new public debate around American sanctuary cities. Sanctuary cities had originally come into existence in reaction to the Central American refugee crisis of the 1980s, when a faith-based movement invoked the religious tradition of “sanctuary” to shield asylum seekers from Guatemala and El Salvador from deportation in churches and synagogues. In solidarity, a number of cities around the United States declared themselves “cities of refuge” for asylum seekers, barring local officials from inquiring into the immigration status of residents, and the sanctuary city was born. Sanctuary policies would shift in their intended beneficiaries over the next couple decades, with a second wave of resolutions passed on the heels of the September 11th attacks in response to the Bush Administration’s crackdown on undocumented immigration. These policies sought to protect not refugees, but undocumented immigrants from what was seen as an overly aggressive deportation program. This shift in the intended beneficiaries also changed the context in which the policies would be discussed, as they were now wrapped up in the broader debate around undocumented immigration.

Refugees, though not always welcomed, are often seen as more sympathetic than undocumented immigrants, with media often drawing on a victimization frame in their coverage (Murray and Marx 2013). Undocumented immigrants on the other hand have traditionally been framed far more negatively and are often discussed in terms of criminality and threat (Santa Ana 2002; Chavez 2008; Farris and Silber Mohamed 2018; Gonzalez O’Brien 2018). Thus, though sanctuary policies changed little in practice from the first wave of resolutions in the 1980s and the second wave in the post-9/11 period, media framing of these policies likely shifted as it was

filtered through the lens of their intended beneficiaries.

As policies toward immigration and refugees have become more politically polarized in recent years in the U.S. and elsewhere (Pew Research Center, 2018), and as ethno-nationalism and xenophobia have once again been on the rise around the world (Jylhä et al., 2019), it bears asking how the media has covered this key political topic in the domain of immigration in the United States and how that coverage may have changed over time. Media framing of sanctuary issues may shape the public's view on these policies and immigration more broadly, as well as potentially affect individual vote choices and attitudes toward immigrants and ethnic minority groups (Collingwood and Gonzalez O'Brien 2019; Figueroa-Caballero and Mastro, 2019; Valentino et al., 2013). An analysis of the shifts in media coverage in regards to sanctuary policies could be useful for better understanding similar polarization around issues relating to refugees and immigrants around the world, as well as the differences in the coverage and framing of these two groups.

In this paper, we analyze the media framing of the sanctuary debate from the 1980s, the start of the Sanctuary Movement, through July 2017, using a combination of a dictionary-based computational analysis and a human content analysis of relevant articles from five national news outlets to catalog how the sanctuary movement and sanctuary policies were covered in U.S. media over time. What we find is that media framing has indeed shifted significantly as the target group for these policies changed, and as many sanctuary policies shifted to provide protection for the undocumented community in hopes of fostering cooperation with local officials, media framing increasingly focused on crime and the partisan divide on the issue. These themes become particularly central in the 2010-17 period, with the period immediately following the Steinle shooting seeing the greatest increase in these frames. We discuss the implications of our findings

for immigration attitudes and policymaking, as well as the field of political communication.

Media Effects: Framing, Agenda Setting, Priming, and Politics

Media remains one of the easiest ways for political elites to communicate with the American public, as well as the most convenient source of information about public policy issues. Mass media plays a significant role in setting the agenda in politics by determining what issues are seen as important, linking issues with specific groups in the minds of reader/viewers through priming effects, and in interpreting events through the framing of stories with particular language and visuals used. Globally, the public still relies on media for their understanding of issues and politics, and this has been shown to play a powerful role in public opinion (Zaller 1992).

Past research reveals that media plays a significant role in determining what issues people see as important through the amount of coverage and the way particular issues are discussed (Iyengar and Simon 1993; Scheufele 2000; Scheufele and Tewksbury 2006). For example, the 2015 shooting of Kathryn Steinle served as a focusing event for media and would lead to an explosion in coverage on sanctuary policies with the help of then-candidate Donald Trump (McBeth and Lybecker 2018). Media agenda setting also helps shape the behavior of political elites, potentially driving the consideration of specific policies, which is reflected in the number of Republican candidates and legislators who took up anti-sanctuary positions after the Steinle shooting (Schuck et al. 2016; Collingwood and Gonzalez O'Brien 2019; Collingwood, El-Khatib, and Gonzalez O'Brien 2018).

If the media serves to elevate issues onto the national agenda, it also helps determine how those issues will be framed, which in turn shapes public attitudes (Zaller 1992; Iyengar and Simon 1993; Scheufele 2000; Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007). Media coverage of issues like immigration help to shape the “pictures in our heads” and thus how we interpret both the problem

and its potential solutions (Edelman 1988).

Media framing can also prime racial resentment by creating associations between policies and groups that can have a significant effect on individual attitudes and support for related policies and candidates (Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007; Valentino 1999; Valentino et al. 2013; Iyengar and Kinder 2010). Though we do not examine individual attitudes in this paper, it is important to note that the way the media frames sanctuary policy in terms of its association with refugees or undocumented immigrants is likely to play a role in shaping public attitudes. The linkage with undocumented immigrants specifically is likely to prime prejudicial attitudes since Mexicans are the “iconic” undocumented aliens in the United States (Ngai 2014; Murray and Marx 2013).

Framing Immigrants and Refugees

Existing research on the implications of media framing for public attitudes and agenda setting makes it clear that how the media chooses to discuss sanctuary policies will likely play a significant role in determining individual-level attitudinal support or opposition. For immigration policy broadly and sanctuary policies specifically, many voters are likely to have little understanding of either. Unfortunately, people with low to moderate knowledge about immigration are strongly influenced by negative media coverage (Schemer 2012), showing the potential effect different framings of sanctuary policies could have on public opinion. The media’s ability to affect public behavior go beyond policy preferences and extend to voting behavior and even political violence. An increase in the amount of media reporting on immigration can lead to increases in violence and voting for anti-immigrant parties, an effect that has been found in multiple countries (Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart 2006; Burscher, van Spanje, & de Vreese 2015; Koopmans 1996). How sanctuary policies have been framed thus is important not only to better understand

public attitudes but also political behavior and violence linked to the broader immigration debate. Though this is beyond the scope of our project, it is possible that similar shifts in media coverage of immigration issues in places like the European Union, the site of a major refugee crisis from the nearby Middle East and Northern Africa, have played a role in support for far-right parties and racist violence (Berry et al., 2016).

In the United States, Hooghe and Dassoneville (2018) have shown that racial resentment and anti-immigrant beliefs were significant determinants of the decision to vote for Donald Trump in 2016. Trump was the candidate who capitalized the most on the 2015 shooting of Kathryn Steinle and campaigned on explicitly anti-immigrant and anti-sanctuary themes, which is reflective of the increasing polarization of the two parties over the issue of immigration over the last few decades (Brader et al. 2008; Citrin and Wright 2009; Miller and Schofield 2008). Increasingly, those who hold anti-immigrant attitudes are more likely to identify as Republican, and research has found that vote switching in 2016 from Obama to Trump was explained in large part by racial and immigration attitudes (Reny et al. 2019). In the post-Steinle period, there has also been increased tension between the federal and local governments over the issue of sanctuary. As a candidate, Donald Trump stated he would “end” sanctuary cities and one of his first acts as president was to sign the first executive response to sanctuary policies, Executive Order 13768 (Los Angeles Times Staff 2016). This order directed then Attorney-General Jeff Sessions, also an opponent of sanctuary policies, to strip localities of federal funds if they were not complying with federal immigration policy (Executive Order 13768 2017). Based on the increasing alignment of the GOP with anti-immigrant attitudes, we also expect that this will be reflected in coverage of sanctuary policies in the post-9/11 period. In the 1980s, when sanctuary policies were associated with refugees and churches, we believe there will be less of a focus on partisan

identities in media framing in the form of mentions of Republican or Democratic positions or quotes from sources associated with the parties than in subsequent periods, when the parties had become increasingly polarized on the issue of immigration.

How the media has framed sanctuary policies can also tell us about the evolution of the debate on both the policies themselves, as well as around immigration more broadly. As mentioned earlier, sanctuary policies that were introduced in the 1980s sought to protect refugees, a group that has been shown to attract greater sympathy (Murray and Marx 2013). Though the substance of the policies themselves changed little after the 1980s, the sanctuary resolutions that were passed after the September 11th attacks were no longer intended to specifically protect refugees, but instead a much larger and less popular group: undocumented immigrants. Examining how the media framed what were essentially the same policies, with the only difference being the intended beneficiaries, can thus also shed light on the differences between how refugees and immigrants are discussed in the media.

Murray and Marx (2013) found that public attitudes toward refugees tends to be more sympathetic than they are toward undocumented immigrants and some research has suggested that a victimization frame is frequently referenced when covering refugees, which portrays them as needing help and works to elicit compassion, and which is lacking in the coverage of undocumented immigrants (Eberl et al. 2018; Goetz et al. 2010; Lecheler et al. 2015; Horsti 2008; van Gorp 2005; Vligenthart and Roggeband 2007). Hickerson and Dunsmore (2016) found that U.S. media coverage of World Refugee Day tended to feature quotes from the refugees themselves, thus humanizing them and allowing them to tell their own story, and focused on frames of “needing” or “giving” care, as well as praising refugees for their “commitment to making it in America.” Similarly, other research has found that refugees are often painted in humanistic terms in

media coverage that focuses on the situations they are fleeing and their individualism and hard work to achieve the American Dream (Robins 2003; Steimel 2009). The tendency of media to frame refugees in more sympathetic terms leads us to expect that newspaper coverage of sanctuary in the 1980-1989 period will draw on the victimization frame, emphasizing the need to protect Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees and the conditions they were fleeing. We should note, however, that this pattern might change in later years, since recent refugee crises in the U.S. and Europe have featured more polarized media discourse about refugees, with some political figures and news outlets depicting refugees as undeserving of sympathy and support (Berry et al., 2016; Chouliaraki and Zaborowski, 2017; Holmes and Castañeda, 2016; Huber, 2016).

Undocumented immigrants on the other hand are not framed in the same generally sympathetic tones. Past research has found that mainstream media sources have increasingly tended to frame discussions of undocumented immigration in terms of crime, with both cable news and print media often featuring stories focusing on crime committed by immigrants or on arrests, raids, and the pursuit of the undocumented by immigration enforcement (Uwimana 2012; Kim et al. 2011; Masuoka and Junn 2013; Drier and Tabak 2009). Media coverage of undocumented immigration is largely negative in tone and relies on words that either directly or indirectly reference threats to American culture and identity, public safety, health, or economic well-being (Chavez 2008; Santa Ana 2002; Kim et al. 2011; Masuoka and Junn 2013; Abrajano and Singh 2009; Ono and Sloop 2002; Cisneros 2008; Farris and Mohamed 2018). Chavez (2008), for example, found that news magazines often presented Latino immigrants as threatening invaders because of their high birthrate and inability (or refusal) to assimilate, and Santa Ana (2002) found that Latino immigration tended to be characterized as a “flood” or “wave” threatening all before it. Both Chavez (2008) and Santa Ana (2002) also found that the threat from Latino im-

migrants was also often characterized as a criminal one. This leads us to expect that media framing will become less positive in the post-1980s period overall and particularly negative in tone after the shooting of Kathryn Steinle in 2015. Because of the shooting, and the existing tendency of media to frame undocumented immigration in terms of a crime-control issue, we expect that as sanctuary policies shift in their intended beneficiaries, they are also more likely to be framed in terms of crime or the potential criminality of undocumented immigrants.

To recap, we pose four predictions about shifts in media framing of sanctuary policies over time, based on the changing political context around the issue and the previous research on framing of immigration and refugees. *(H1)* First, media framing over time should decreasingly emphasize the victimization frame as the intended beneficiaries of the policies changed. Discussions of religion/morality or the conditions those protected by the policies were fleeing are expected to drop off significantly after the 1980s. *(H2)* Next, we believe the framing of sanctuary policies will become more partisan over time, especially following key events, such as the Steinle shooting in 2015. We predict the articles will more frequently mention Republican/Democratic positions on sanctuary, or the stances of political elites from the parties. *(H3)* Lastly, we expect that crime will become more of a focus of media coverage of sanctuary policies after the 1980s as the intended beneficiaries of the policies shifted. We expect a particular upsurge in crime narrative following the Steinle shooting in 2015 because of the increasing association of sanctuary policies with undocumented immigrants.

Methods

The data for this study is based on a content analysis of a sample of news articles from four major national news outlets from the beginning of the Sanctuary movement in the U.S. in 1980 to the origination of this study in 2017. We conduct both computational and human-coded

analyses. Because news articles often cover multiple topics and discuss multiple sources and perspectives in our human coding, we chose to code at the paragraph level, rather than at the sentence or article level, allowing for the observation of nuances within articles without being too narrow of a scope. The following sections describe the creation of the corpus of articles for our computational analysis, sampling procedure for selecting articles for the human-coded analysis, the creation and refinement of the codebook for the human-coded analysis, and a description of reliability testing for the human-coded analysis.

Corpus and Sampling Methodology

We selected all newspaper articles from the *Washington Post* (WaPo), *New York Times* (NYT), *USA Today* (USAT), *Christian Science Monitor* (CSM), and *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ) from January 1, 1980, to July 18, 2017, in which the word “sanctuary” appeared. Lexis-Nexis Academic sourced the first four sources, whereas ProQuest sourced WSJ. As explained in Lacy and colleague’s article on content analysis best practices, “Getting a complete collection of content with keyword searches depends on the terms used” (p. 794). This broad search term allowed for a large, representative sample of sanctuary discourse in prime news outlets. All hits were entered into an dataset that included meta-data (i.e., date, newspaper name). The selected outlets provide some ideological diversity (e.g. a conservative outlet in WSJ, more centrist outlets in USAT, WaPo, and CSM, and a more left-leaning outlet in the NYT), as well as some diversity in profile (e.g. industry leaders like the NYT and WaPo, the widely read USAT, the business- and economics-oriented WSJ, and a non-profit source in CSM).

We then read this corpus into our statistical software, refining our search to include at least one of the following words typically related to the sanctuary debate in the U.S.: city; cities; town; Central America; Mexican; Mexico; movement; police; immigrant immigration; illegal;

enforcement; alien; refugee; campus. This produced a final corpus of 1,365 articles which we base our keyword dictionary search on, as well as our human-coded content analysis. Our dictionary approach is based on expert knowledge and qualitative review, which generates four themes we quantify in the text and then examine the prevalence of across time. The themes (and search terms) include the following:

1. **Crime:** crime, criminal, murder, rape, kill, killed, gang(s)
2. **Fleeing War:** flee, fleeing, fled, war-torn, war, civil, oppression, persecution, persecute
3. **Religion and Morality:** religious, religion, religiosity, moral, morality, catholic(s), church(es)
4. **Partisanship:**

Democrat: democrat(s), democratic

Republican: republican(s)

Trump: trump

To bolster our analysis of the news content, we supplemented our computational analysis with a human-coded analysis of a sample of the articles. This allowed us to ensure that this portion of our analysis focused entirely on relevant articles, as the human coders were able to screen out content that was not relevant (e.g. obituaries and entertainment articles connecting tangentially to the sanctuary movement, or news articles about wildlife sanctuaries). We base our human-coded analysis off a stratified random sample from the 1,365 documents. To ensure adequate representation of both time period and source, we first divided our corpus into four periods based on decades, which broadly document the shift in the intended beneficiaries of sanctuary policies. In the 1980-1989 period, these policies were largely meant to benefit Central American refugees. By the 1990-1999 period, there was a shift away from refugees as the Sanctuary Movement came

to an end and the flow of refugees of Central America eased. The 2000-2009 period marks an uptick in the number of policies passed specifically to protect undocumented immigrants on the heels of immigration crackdowns resulting from the September 11th attacks. The 2010-2017 period is split for some of our analysis into two sub-periods, 2010-14 and 2015-17. In 2010-14, there was both an uptick in anti-immigrant attitudes in the United States, leading to policies like Arizona's SB1070, as well as a shift of Democrats to the left on immigration issues, underlined by Barack Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) in 2012 and Deferred Action for Parents of Americans (DAPA) in 2014. The 2015-17 period covers the candidacy of Donald Trump, the shooting of Kathryn Steinle, and part of the first year of Trump's presidency, all of which focused media attention on sanctuary policies and linked these to crime in a way they had not previously been.

We also divided the corpus into news source, as variation may exist at the outlet level. However, because the source sample size varies significantly (CSM=108 articles, NYT=412, USAT=66, WaPo=666, and WSJ=111), we applied a differential random sampling strategy to source article selection (Lacy et al., 2015). Thus, we want to capture both time and source-varying information. We aimed to sample and hand-code about one-quarter of all newspaper articles, which in our case is about 340-350 articles (or about 70 articles per source). However, source size is not the same, so we sample all USAT articles (n=66). We sampled 78 CSM articles, but the sample size by time period varies, which results in 51, 13 (all), 5 (all), and 39 articles selected across each of the respective time windows. Finally, we sampled 84 articles each from the larger NYT, WSJ, and WaPo groups. This provided an overall sample of 396 articles, which was more than our target of one-quarter of the overall pool of articles.

Content Analysis

The coding instrument used in our human-coded analysis contains two coding frames: Source (e.g. partisan sources, immigrants/refugees and their advocates, etc.) and Topic (e.g. religion/morality, crime, economic, etc.), with each paragraph receiving one code for each, as well as the emergent variable Fleeing War, which was coded as present or absent for each paragraph.¹ All articles were entered into Atlas.ti, a textual analysis program which allows for both qualitative and quantitative content analysis. Before full coding began, it was important to test inter-coder reliability, which was initially measured through percent agreement. Two coders, one a co-author of this article (also the primary coder) and the other a graduate student volunteer, were trained on the study codebook during multiple sessions. During the sessions, coders worked with a pilot sample of 60 articles. They completed an initial content analysis of 10 units of text and discussed their findings and the codebook. They then coded 60 units of text (from four articles), and initial agreement was fairly low (46%). They again discussed their findings and the codebook before going through additional training on the codebook. The two coders then content analyzed a larger pool of 133 text units and achieved a satisfactory level of agreement (87.5%). The primary coder then completed coding the full sample. An additional reliability test was also conducted using ReCal, an online reliability calculator (Freelon, 2010). Two researchers (the primary coder, and another coder who is also a co-author of this manuscript) coded a random sample of 363 coded units of text (i.e. paragraphs) (Lacy et al., 2015).² Reliability was very high (Co-

¹ For a full description of the codebook, see Appendix 1.

² The Wall Street Journal articles were added to the corpus at the revision stage, after the initial round of reliability testing had been completed. To include some of the Wall Street Journal articles in reliability testing, and to ensure the testing was sufficiently robust, this second round of reliability analysis was conducted. All results of the human-coded analysis reported below are based on the coding results from the primary coder.

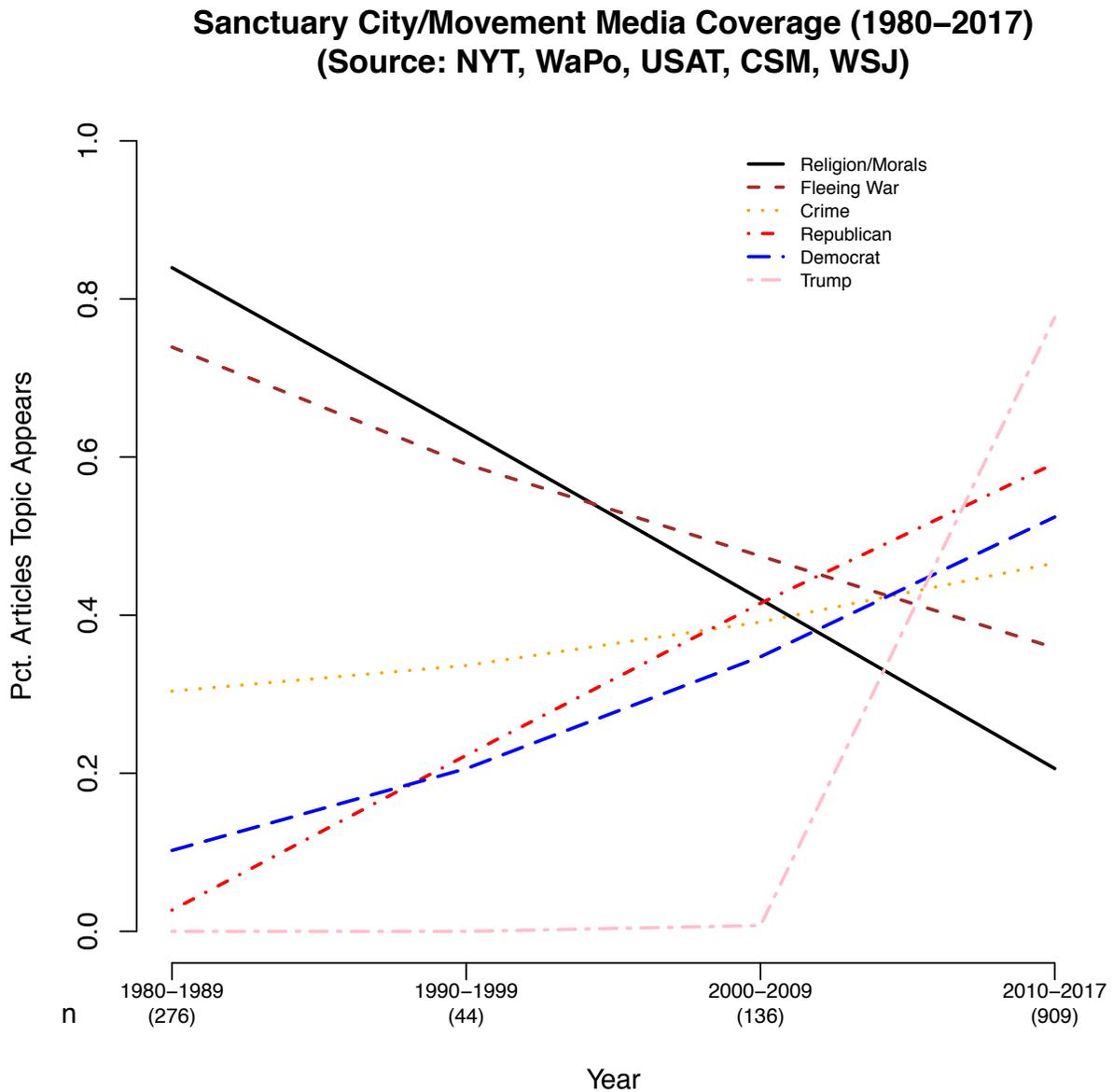
hen's Kappa = 0.885; Krippendorff's Alpha = 0.885).

During the coding process, some articles were determined to be not relevant. The irrelevant articles primarily included book reviews and obituaries that mentioned the sanctuary movement. These were excluded, leaving 282 articles in the final analysis. No variables were deemed to be insufficiently reliable, so all remained throughout the coding process and are included in the results reported below (Lacy et al., 2015). Results of the content analysis were then exported for further statistical analysis and hypothesis testing. Differences in the presence or absence of themes found in the computational analysis were compared using *t*-tests, whereas differences in proportions of articles with particular source and topic codes were compared using chi-squared tests, and the results of these tests appear below.

Results

Figure 1 shows the total number of articles from the original full corpus (n=1,365) used in our computational analysis relying on a key-word dictionary search of terms associated with religion or morality, fleeing war, crime, Republican sources, Democratic sources, or specific mentions of the position of President Trump, a vocal opponent of sanctuary policies.

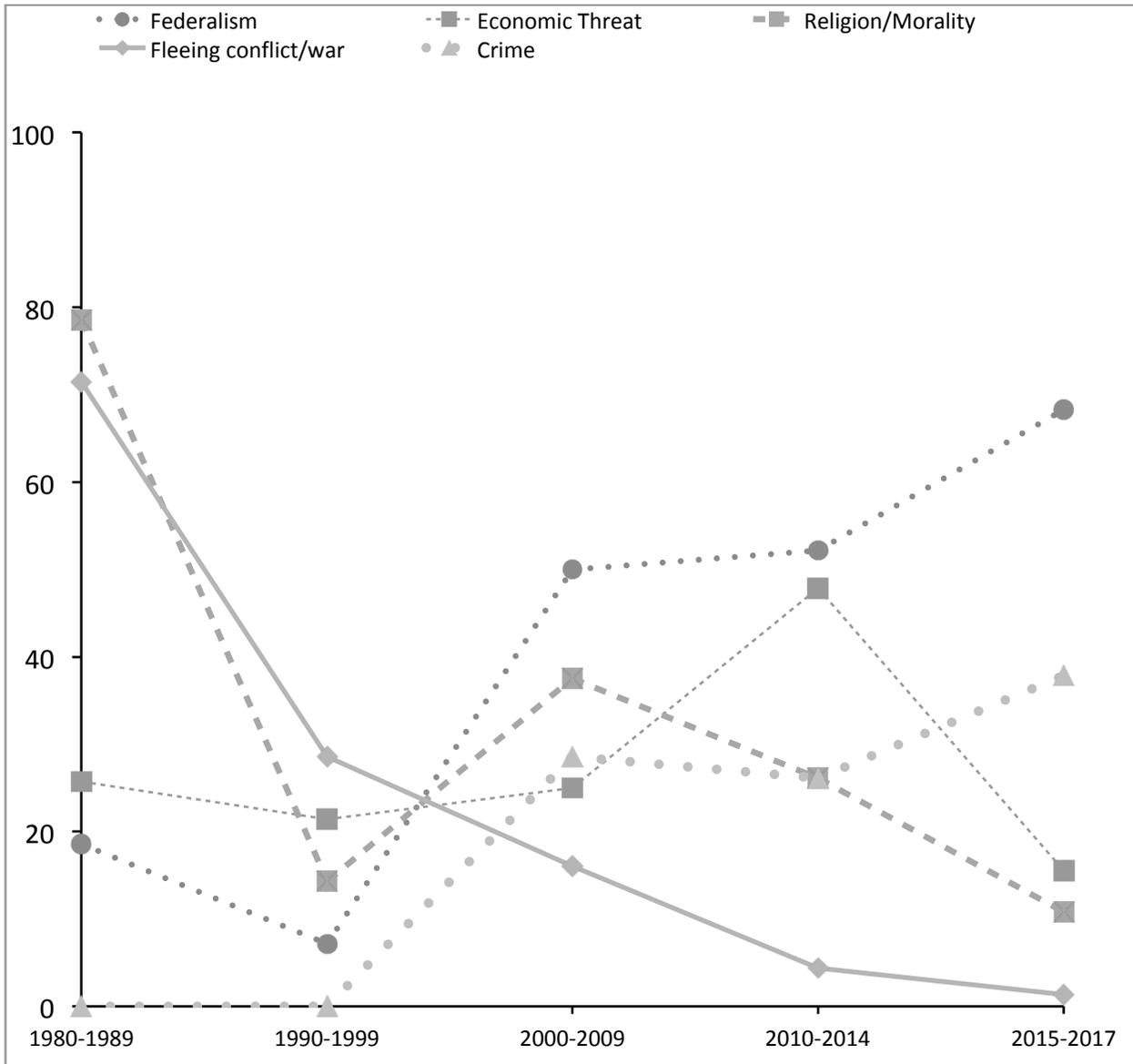
Figure 1: Media framing of sanctuary cities, 1980-2017, based on computational analysis



Our human-coded content analysis provides a more nuanced look at this data and here we found two additional themes, federalism and economics, that were not part of our computational analysis. Thus, we look at five issue framings for sanctuary policy in our human-coded analysis in addition to partisanship: religion/moral reasons for sanctuary; mentions of violence or war leading to seeking sanctuary; the economic effects of sanctuary; discussions of crime and sanctu-

ary policies; and coverage of the tension between federal and local officials. After a discussion of the findings regarding our key hypotheses we analyze how two of these issue framings, federalism and economic effects, have shifted over time. Figure 2 shows how prevalent these framings have been across the four time periods in our study.

Figure 2: Issue framings (by percentage of articles in each time period) in media coverage of sanctuary cities, 1980-2017, based on human-coded content analysis



As Figure 1 shows, when the sanctuary movement began in the 1980s, the issue was

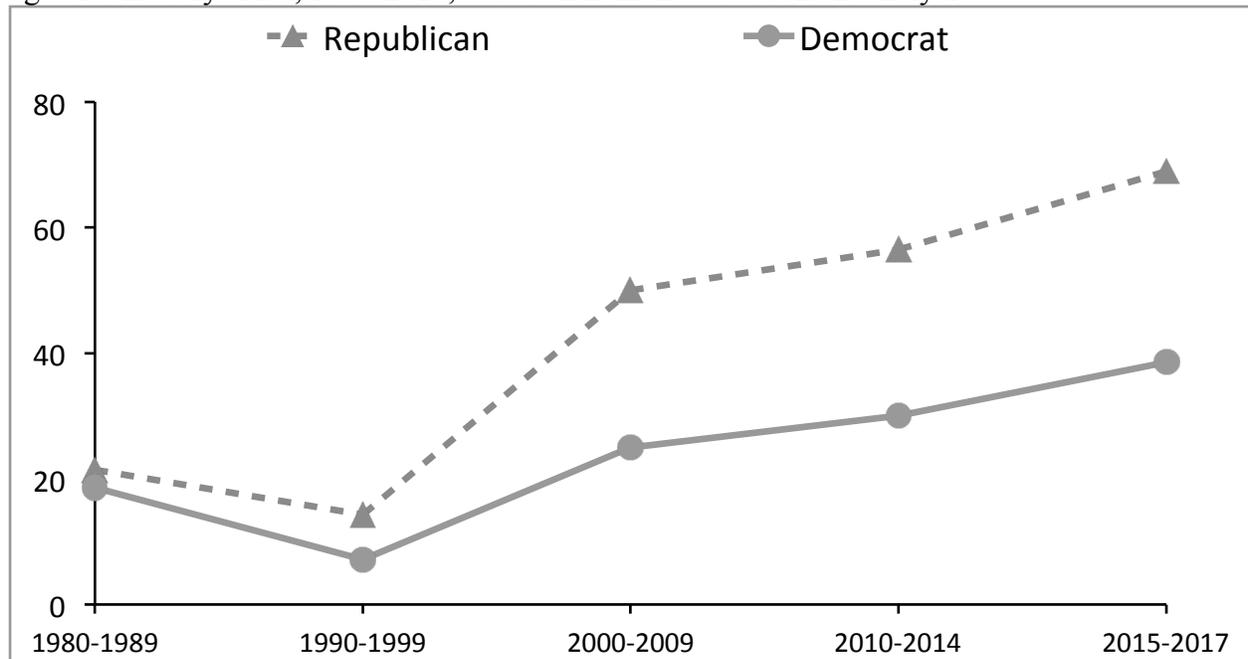
framed primarily as one of people fleeing war, and a matter of religion and morality. The religion/morality and fleeing war themes appeared in about 80% of newspaper articles, but by 2017, these themes had fallen to below 50% coverage, a statistically significant difference (Religion/morality: $t = 23.263$, $df = 490.16$, $p < .001$; Fleeing war: $t = 12.316$, $df = 490.23$, $p < .001$). This provides empirical support for *H1*. We find further support for this in our human-coded content analysis, as shown in Figure 2. Religion or moral reasons for offering sanctuary was the most frequent issue frame in the 1980-1989 period when sanctuary policies were largely meant to protect Central American refugees, often women and children, who were fleeing war. This isn't surprising, considering media coverage of sanctuary policies focused on the Sanctuary Movement and city-level policies passed in support of it. However, as the Central American refugee crisis eased, our analysis shows a clear decrease in the focus on the religious and moral components of sanctuary policies in all subsequent periods. This movement away from discussions of the moral imperative to provide sanctuary was statistically significant ($\chi^2(4, N=311)=104.21$, $p < .000$) and is reflective of the shift away from the victimization frame as the intended beneficiaries of sanctuary policies changed. Similarly, mentions of the violence faced by the beneficiaries of sanctuary policies also dropped across time, from approximately 71 percent of articles mentioning this in the 1980-1989 period to just over one percent in 2015-2017 ($\chi^2(4, N=311)=145.75$, $p < .000$).

In addition, media frames increasingly mention the positions of the parties on the issue over time (Democrats mentioned: $t = -12.657$, $df = 633.89$, $p < .001$; Republicans mentioned: $t = -20.124$, $df = 875.17$, $p < .001$), providing support for *H2*. Mentions of Trump, both as a candidate and then as president, also increased over time ($t = -56.195$, $df = 908$, $p < .001$), giving further support for *H2*. As reflected in Figure 2, the content analysis supports the findings of the compu-

tational analysis regarding partisanship. The number of partisan sources mentioned in media grew substantially between 2000 and 2017, revealing the increasing partisan divisions on undocumented immigration more broadly during this time. In the 1980-1989 period, only 14 percent of articles featured a Republican source in the article; this increased to approximately 17 percent in the 1990-1999 period, 46 percent in 2000-2009, and finally to 60 and 74 percent between 2010-2014 and 2015-2017. Based on a chi-squared test, these changes across the five periods were statistically significant, $X^2(4, N=311)=51.36, p < .000$.

As Figure 3 reflects, the percentage of articles featuring a Republican source increased 60 percent from the earliest to latest time-period. The representation of Democrats in articles on sanctuary cities also increased between 1980 and 2017, though this was a more modest increase of 25 percent, but nonetheless was still significant based on a chi-squared test ($X^2(4, N=311)=16.70, p < .008$).

Figure 3: Partisan sources (by percentage of articles in each time period) in media coverage of sanctuary cities, 1980-2017, based on human-coded content analysis



Narratives of criminality have featured regularly in discussions of undocumented immigration since illegal entry was criminalized for the first time in 1929 under S. 5094, which made it a misdemeanor and reentry after deportation a felony (Gonzalez O'Brien 2018). These same narratives are not frequently used in media coverage of refugees, particularly in the pre-9/11 period. In line with *H3*, media mentions of crime increased from 33% to 48% ($t = -3.381$, $df = 474.94$, $p < .001$) based on our computational analysis, which not only links the policies themselves increasingly to crime, but also undocumented immigrants. In our human-based analysis, we found no mentions of immigrant criminality in the 1980-1989 and 1990-1999 periods. By the 2000-2009 period, criminality had begun to enter the conversation and approximately 28 percent of articles mentioned crime in their coverage of sanctuary cities. This would dip a little in 2010-2014, only to rise to almost 38 percent by the 2015-2017 period as a result of the Steinle shooting ($X^2(4, N=311)=41.31$, $p < .000$). This suggests that as sanctuary policies came to be less associated with the Sanctuary Movement and refugees, media framing also shifted away from narratives that painted the issue in more sympathetic terms relating to morality or the situation beneficiaries of sanctuary policies were fleeing. From 1990-2017, media stories on sanctuary increasingly focused on crime and partisan stances as undocumented immigration became intertwined with the sanctuary city debate.

We now turn to two issue framings that emerged in our human-based analysis. Between 1980 and 2017, an increasing number of articles mentioned the clash between local/state and federal power that these policies represent. States are not required to participate or cooperate with federal immigration operations, though they cannot obstruct them, and sanctuary policies exist exactly because of this independence that cities, counties, and states have from federal policy. States cannot make immigration policy, but they also are not required to use their resources

to enforce it. Recent attempts by the Trump administration to deny federal grant money to sanctuary cities has thus far been blocked by the federal courts, though it has yet to be taken up by the Supreme Court so the ultimate resolution of this conflict is still unclear. Because of this conflict between the federal and state/local governments under the Trump administration, the number of articles mentioning the “federalism fight” skyrocketed. Only 17 percent of articles in 1980-1989 mentioned this tension, but this would steadily increase over time. By the 2015-2017, this frame was referenced in 68 percent of articles ($X^2(4, N=311)=57.69, p < .000$).

Finally, in our examination of issue framings, the economic burden of refugees or undocumented immigrants also came up. In the 1980-1989 period, one-quarter of all articles mentioned the economic impact of sanctuary policies. This remained relatively consistent across until the 2010-2014 period, where it would increase, before decreasing again in the 2015-2017 period to the lowest percentage of the five periods we examine. The economic issue frame works for both refugees and undocumented immigrants since it in most cases stresses the potential cost to American taxpayers of the target population. Both refugees and undocumented immigrants are often portrayed as the disproportionate beneficiaries of social welfare programs, with the latter group also characterized as taking from this system without paying into it via taxes. However, increasingly it is not the economic cost of refugees or immigrants that is referenced, but the criminal threat they pose to the nation, the partisan conflict over the issue, or the tension between federal and state officials. It is therefore not surprising that there was a drop in the percentage of articles mentioning the economic costs of sanctuary in the post-Steinle period when much of the focus shifted to the physical, rather than economic, threat that undocumented immigrants posed to America ($X^2(4, N=311)=13.31, p < .01$).

Discussion

We find that there were some significant changes in how sanctuary policies were framed in U.S. media coverage as the intended beneficiaries of these policies shifted. First, there was a significant increase in partisanization of the debate, with more Republicans and Democrats mentioned in articles discussing sanctuary policies after the 1980-1989 period. In the post-9/11 era the Republican Party took a much more restrictionist and law-and-order approach to undocumented immigration. During the 1980 Republican primary debate between George H.W. Bush and Ronald Reagan, the former praised undocumented immigrants as "...really honorable, decent, family-loving people," while the latter argued that undocumented immigrants just wanted to work and suggested open borders as a solution (CSPAN 1980). By 2015, then-candidate Donald Trump was proclaiming that, "They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people" (Trump 2015). While Trump's rhetoric on undocumented immigration may be the most vitriolic, it was safe language to use with the Republican base by 2015.

Members of the public tend to take their cues on policy-related issues from elites, such as party representatives and politicians (Gabel and Scheve 2007; Iyengar and Simon 1993; Zaller 1992), and the modern GOP, particularly post-9/11, has taken policy positions that are strongly anti-immigrant (Brader et al. 2008; Citrin & Wright 2009; Miller and Schofield 2008). As sanctuary policies came to be more associated with this population and less associated with refugees, more Republicans tried to attack these policies to show their commitment to law-and-order, as well as to tap into nascent nativism and racism in some segments of their base.

Democrats, however, face a dilemma on sanctuary policy that is reflected in the smaller percentage of articles referencing Democratic sources compared to Republicans. By the 2015-

2017 period, approximately 69 percent of articles mentioned members of the GOP, while only 38.5 percent mentioned Democrats. Though it was largely Democratically-controlled cities that passed sanctuary resolutions in the 1980s, as well as the period following this, Democrats have remained wary of the potential political costs of being seen as soft on immigration. The party has, since the 1990s, moved left on immigration to appeal to Latinos as they became a more significant part of their base (Barreto and Nuño 2011; Barreto et al. 2010; Collingwood et al. 2014). However, at the same time, outreach to Latinos can also alienate White voters (Ostfeld 2018; Reny et al. 2019). Brown (2016) argues that immigrants have supplanted Blacks in racially-divisive rhetoric amongst Republicans meant to appeal to White voters. The Steinle shooting, and more recently the case of Mollie Tibbetts, who was allegedly killed by an undocumented immigrant in Iowa, make support for sanctuary policy a difficult issue for Democrats.

Policymakers have now essentially divided into two camps on sanctuary policy (Wong 2017). In today's debate, GOP lawmakers profess that sanctuary policies reward criminal behavior and threaten the safety of U.S. citizens. Democrats, who have become more reliant on the Latino vote as well as more vocal advocates of racial justice, argue that these policies are necessary to protect an already vulnerable population and allow them to access basic services like health care or law enforcement. For both Democrats and Republicans, sanctuary policies have become part of the broader debate on undocumented immigration, with the respective shifts of both parties influencing how vocally they challenge or defend sanctuary.

Media framing has shifted significantly not only in terms of the frequency with which partisan sources are mentioned but also in how the policies themselves are framed. In the 1980-1989 period, topics like the religious or moral imperative to provide sanctuary, or the conditions Central Americans were fleeing were common. Many articles from the period similarly dis-

cussed the tension between what was legal and what was just when it came to offering safe harbor to undocumented immigrants, who had not entered the country legally but were fleeing war and the threat of death in their home countries. At the time, the Reagan administration was providing aid to regimes in both El Salvador and Guatemala who were in part responsible for the violence in these countries that was leading to the refugee crisis in the United States. Despite the attempts by the Reagan administration to reframe the sanctuary debate (and the Central American refugee crisis more broadly) around economic issues (Ridgley 2008), nearly 80 percent of the coverage in 1980-1989 mentioned the conflicts in the refugees' countries of origin. This created a more sympathetic environment in which members of the Sanctuary Movement, and the cities that supported them, could be compared to Martin Luther King, Jr., and others who saw a moral obligation to defy unjust laws, in this case U.S. immigration policy.

By the 2000-2009 and 2010-2014 periods, framings around crime had become much more common, with about one-third of all articles during these two periods mentioning crime in their coverage. This has become a common part of the modern debate, with opponents of sanctuary policies frequently citing examples of immigrant crime as representing the dangers of sanctuary policies. By the 2015-2017 period, more articles came to feature crime framings as the shooting of Kathryn Steinle became a talking point for Republican candidates in the lead-up to the 2016 election. Between 2015 and 2017, 38 percent of all articles drew on the crime frame in some way.

Both the increasing media coverage, increasing partisanization of sanctuary policy, and increasing focus on crime since the 1980s are likely to impact public opinion since most members of the public have little detailed knowledge of sanctuary cities (Oskooii, Dreier, and Collingwood 2018), making media framing and elite opinions much more influential than they

would otherwise be (Schemer 2012). These policies are also not inextricably linked to the broader debate around undocumented immigration, which narratives of crime and criminality have been commonplace (Gonzalez O'Brien 2018). With the GOP increasingly "owning" the issue of sanctuary, these policies have become more and more divorced from their intent, which in many cases is to promote cooperation between local law enforcement and immigrant communities in the city. Research has found that sanctuary policies lead to greater Latino voter turnout and higher Latino participation in the police force, suggesting that they have positive benefits beyond encouraging immigrants to report crimes against themselves or others (Collingwood and Gonzalez O'Brien 2019). However, with media framing increasingly focusing on the partisan and sensationalized aspects of these policies it is unlikely there will be a balanced debate that measures the benefits against potential costs.

Though our findings provide some useful insight into how sanctuary policies have been framed in U.S. media discourse, we should note that there are some limitations to this study. First, our analysis relies entirely on print media outlets, and does not include network or cable TV news, both of which are important sources of information and public discourse on political issues. In addition, our analysis covered five national news publications, and no regional or local news outlets. Future research on media framing of sanctuary would do well to examine how this issue has played out on TV news and in a wider range of print publications. Our analysis was also focused specifically on the sanctuary movement and related policies, and though there has been much analysis of the immigration debate overall, it might be useful to conduct a comparative study that looks at how sanctuary policies and other immigration-related topics have been covered in the media. Last, our study examined media coverage, which is often driven by the framing of political elites and public officials (Bennett et al. 2006). Future analyses of this topic

could instead focus directly on how politicians talk about sanctuary in public remarks, independent of media coverage, to help disentangle media discourse from that of political leaders.

Support or opposition to sanctuary policies is increasingly based on partisanship for both Republicans and Democrats (Collingwood and Gonzalez O'Brien, 2019), and similar dynamics are also seen in European political parties in regards to immigration and refugees (Burscher et al., 2015). Media coverage is helping to entrench this trend, as well as to increasingly link sanctuary and other immigration policies to crime, which will make level-headed discussions about the benefits and potential drawbacks of these policies difficult to have, particularly across party lines. This likely means that sanctuary policy, like so many other areas of American government, will become more and more hyper-partisanized as both Republicans and Democrats “learn” the correct positions based on their party affiliation. In light of similar polarization on immigration policy and refugee acceptance in other areas of the world, we may also see other nations and regions struggle to have reasonable discussions and thoughtful policy solutions on these issues. Media coverage and the way that sanctuary policies, refugees, and immigrants are framed plays a significant role in the polarization of this debate and the promotion of sensationalized accounts of immigrant crime, all of which make it easier for right-wing groups to weaponize these issues and puts a balanced debate further out of reach.

Appendix 1

Codebook

The coding instrument used in our human-coded analysis contains two coding frames: Source and Topic, with each paragraph receiving one code for each. The coding instrument was created through a broad review of news sources and relevant scholarly literature related to the sanctuary debate and immigration issues in the U.S. The final codes were culled multiple times before coming to a consensus on the final codebook.

The Source code includes Church Figures (churches or religious organizations, or individuals representing them), Democrats (that is, people identified as a Democratic political figure in the text, or Democratic presidents), Republicans (the equivalent for Republican political figures), Government Non-Partisan (non-partisan government entities or people representing them), Immigrants/Refugees (including people representing immigrants or refugees), Other (organizations, entities, or individuals not fitting the preceding categories, such as universities or non-profits), and Informative (providing information not attributed to a specific source, such as when a newspaper article provides background on an issue without source attribution).

The Topic code included several different options: Religion/Morality (discussing the religious reasons for providing sanctuary to immigrants, including moral and religious obligations to care for those fleeing war), Government Policy (discussion of government entities from the local to federal level adopting policy related to sanctuary), Federalism Fight (discussion of state or local laws coming into conflict with federal laws), Crime (discussing crime committed by immigrants and refugees, the immigrant crime myth, or changes to crime rates related to sanctuary

policy)³, Legality (discussion of the legality/illegality of an immigrant/immigrants' status), Economic (discussion of the role immigrants play in the economy and economic effects of sanctuary policies), and Other (discussion regarding any topic not included in the preceding categories).

One additional code, Fleeing War, arose through discussion between researchers. This was seen as distinct from the Religion/Morality code, which in many instances featured discussion of a moral reason for supporting refugees without explicitly mentioning violence or war. The original coding scheme did not change, however; all articles were retroactively reread and coded as needed with Fleeing War, and the variable was included in the reliability test reported below. Because this code did not come from the original codebook, the code could be overlapping with original codes.

³ We exclude mentions of the potential criminality of providing sanctuary.

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