

Some Stuff

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The Effects of Media Coverage of Immigration

- Basically, I'm about to talk about the effect of media coverage of immigration on views about immigration/immigrants and support for anti-immigration parties/policies.
- My concern is that when we have “the effects of immigration” studies, we're essentially looking at environments where everyone is being “treated” by a key mechanism (media coverage) and there's some variation around a high-mean dosage.
- Example: Why are people in Wyoming mad about immigration while also not experiencing inflows of immigrants?

Studies on the Effects of Immigration

- There are a number of studies that look at the effects of immigration on political behavior, e.g.,:
 - Halla, M., Wagner, A. F., & Zweimüller, J. (2017). Immigration and Voting for the Far Right. *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 15(6), 1341–1385. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jeea/jvx003>
 - Mayda, A. M., Peri, G., & Steingress, W. (2022). The Political Impact of Immigration: Evidence from the United States. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 14(1), 358–389. <https://doi.org/10.1257/app.20190081>

Studies on Immigration Coverage

- There have been fewer, but still some, papers on immigration media coverage, e.g.,:
 - Benesch, C., Loretz, S., Stadelmann, D., & Thomas, T. (2019). Media coverage and immigration worries: Econometric evidence. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 160, 52–67. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jebo.2019.02.011>
 - Keita, S., Renault, T., & Valette, J. (2024). The Usual Suspects: Offender Origin, Media Reporting and Natives' Attitudes Towards Immigration. *The Economic Journal*, 134(657), 322–362. <https://doi.org/10.109>
 - Djourelova, M. (2023). Persuasion through Slanted Language: Evidence from the Media Coverage of Immigration. *American Economic Review*, 113(3), 800–835. <https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.20211537>

Main Results and a Concern

- In general, studies are showing that there's immigration into an area increases anti-immigrant sentiment and support for anti-immigration parties. (I am skipping nuance here.)
- Moreover, in general, immigration media coverage is shown to increase concern about migration.
- I'm concerned that a lot of the effect that we're interested in is hiding in the intercept or time fixed effects of these models.

Examples

- Motivating Example:
 - The Austrian Anti-Immigrant Far Right Party went from 15.29% to 30.36% in its vote share from 2014 to 2015. Steinmayr (2021) finds that exposure to passing migrants increases support for the Far Right party by 1.5-2.3 percentage points.
 - Benesch et al. (2019) look at plausibly exogenous changes in media coverage of immigration in Germany via the timing of Swiss immigration-related referenda. They find that an additional news item is associated with a 0.008 point increase in immigration concerns (on a 3 point scale) and a 10 percentage point increase in the percent of news items that are immigration related is associated with a 0.1314 point increase.

The Concern Revisited

- We may be looking at environments where everyone is being “treated” by high levels of immigration coverage, so we’re getting the effect of marginal changes in coverage or inflows (which may adjust coverage) around a high baseline, while being unable to think about the effects of moving from low to high coverage because we lack a good control group.

Thoughts on Addressing This

- I need to identify settings where there is greater variation in the broader media environment.
- Possible Avenues: Looking at earlier American history
 - Something formulation of the rise of telegraph lines, since that gave smaller towns access to Associated Press news wires, which would cover immigration news that the local newspaper may not have otherwise covered.
 - Big endogeneity issues + how to isolate immigration coverage
 - Inflows of immigrants into the headquarters of firms that own newspaper groups in many areas.