ISSN: 1070-8286

Neighborhood Context, Racial/Economic Privilege, and Prominent U.S. Newspaper Coverage of Home Invasion Crime

Reginald A. Byron[1]

Southwestern University

Abstract

While there are a handful of published studies that investigate the role of neighborhood characteristics in newspapers' portrayals of crime, such analyses are largely limited to studying the predictors of one type of crime (homicide) in individual city newspapers and typically decenter neighborhood level demographics by treating them as a set of control variables. The present study advances this work by foregrounding neighborhood context and presenting a large-scale quantitative analysis of how it influences prominent newspaper coverage of violent crime. Specifically, my Ordinary Least Squares and Poisson regression models test whether various zip code level characteristics predict the word counts of initial articles and the overall number of articles published on over 730 incidents of home invasion crime reported across fifteen U.S. city newspapers. I find that home invasion incidents in neighborhoods with a higher percentage of White residents or a lower percentage of Mexican American residents have significantly more words written about them, net of other theoretically important individual and situational variables. I also find that when home invasions take place in higher median income neighborhoods they have more overall articles written about them. These findings align with the 'law of opposites' perspective as increasingly White and wealthier neighborhoods

[1] The author is grateful for the meticulous attention to detail shown by Carmen Hernandez (Southwestern University, Class of 2019) as she helped to match addresses with zip codes during the initial stage of this project. The author also greatly appreciates the constructive and thorough feedback offered by the two anonymous reviewers and Cary Adkinson, the editor of this journal.

receive more newspaper space presumably because violent crimes within them are rare and especially sensational. They are also congruent with the 'normal crimes' perspective that violent crime in racial/ethnic minority neighborhoods will be less newsworthy because it is viewed as routine and reflective of general perceptions about the normalcy of residents' criminal dispositions. By giving more or less published space to home invasion incidents on the basis of neighborhood level race/ethnicity and income, newspapers help to construct perspectives about violent crime in a way that transcends the demographics of individual victims and suspects. Such findings extend our understandings of media bias and highlight the subtle but continuing significance of race and class to news media reporting.

Keywords: Neighborhood Context, Home Invasion Crime, Media Bias

Introduction

Since the 1950s, a large body of scholarship has investigated newspaper coverage of crime in the United States (Chermak, 1994; Davis, 1952; Gruenewald, Chermak, & Pizarro, 2013; Paulsen, 2003; Silva & Capellan 2019; Sorenson, Manz, & Berk, 1998). The majority of this work falls under what scholars call "media distortion" analyses – where researchers study the extent of media coverage of official police reported crimes and the factors that predict such coverage (Gruenewald, Parkin, & Chermak, 2014). From these media distortion analyses, there is strong evidence to suggest that crime news is socially constructed (Taylor, 2014). That is, newspaper editors do not publish crime stories based on the official statistical frequencies of the crimes themselves, but instead choose to publish certain types of crime that reflect established news values – characteristics that predict a crime's newsworthiness and likelihood of being reported – like physical violence, sexual violence, graphic imagery, novelty, and a simple narrative (Chibnall, 1977; Jewkes, 2004). Such conclusions are congruent with notions of market driven journalism, where editors select crime stories that are thought to satisfy the reader's appetite and maximize the sale of newspapers (Beale, 2006; Chermak, 1994; McManus, 1994).

These findings are important, but the scholarly analyses that they are based on are limited in a number of ways. For example, most analyses of media portrayals of crime focus on the relationship between individual or situational characteristics and newspaper coverage of crime. A growing number of scholars, however, suggest that *neighborhood context* may play an essential part of understanding newspaper portrayals of violent crime (e.g., Baranauskas, 2020a). Cronin (2017), in fact, remarks that "there is good reason to suspect that relationships between individual or situational characteristics and media portrayals may be spurious when neighborhood context is not taken into account" (p. 631). Such an emphasis on neighborhood conditions aligns with more general criminological scholarship which persuasively demonstrates how neighborhood level variables either attenuate or interact with individual level variables when predicting phenomena such as self-reported violent crime (Zimmerman & Messner, 2010) or fear of crime (Scarborough, Like-Haislip, Novak, & Lucas, 2010; Yuan, Dong, & Melde, 2017). Still, there are only a handful of published studies that include neighborhood characteristics as predictors of newspapers' portrayals of crime and these studies typically treat them as a set of control variables in media distortion analyses of homicide in individual American cities (Cronin, 2017; see Baranauskas, 2020a for an exception).

The present study seeks to help fill these gaps by foregrounding the role of neighborhood characteristics as possible determinants of prominent newspaper coverage of violent crime. And moving beyond the crime of homicide, this article examines "home invasion" crime which can be defined as a 'crime committed by an individual unlawfully entering a residence while someone is home' (Catalano, 2010, p.2). Importantly, this study is not a media distortion analysis. There are no official police statistics on home invasion crime across the U.S. because it is a crime that is measured inconsistently across jurisdiction (i.e., in some states it is recorded as a separate type of crime and in others it is not; see Byron, Molidor, & Cantu, 2018). Yet by using multivariate regression models to analyze over 730 home invasion incidents reported by fifteen city newspapers spread across the U.S. over five years, my analysis adds to previous research on media bias in other distinct ways (see Gruenewald, Parkin, & Chermak, 2014; Cronin, 2017; and Schildkraut, 2017 for reviews of the literature). This is the first study on how neighborhood context influences media portrayals of the crime of "home invasion" – a crime that has been reported in newspapers since at least 1925 but has only recently (since the 2000s) seen an uptick in both newspaper reporting and subsequent state-level legislation designating it as a distinct and aggravated crime (Byron, Molidor, & Cantu, 2018). The current study addresses two broad but interrelated research questions: (1) Do neighborhood-level characteristics predict prominent newspaper coverage of home invasion crime, after controlling for individual and situational variables? (2) Which theoretical frameworks best explain the observed patterns?

Specifically, my analyses assess whether various zip code level[2] characteristics (e.g., a burglary index, a murder index, 2010 Census median income, and 2010 Census racial/ethnic percentages) predict the length of initial articles and the overall number of articles published about reported incidents of home invasion crime (between 2006-2011) and which theoretical paradigms best align with these trends. I find that when home invasions occur in neighborhoods with a higher percentage of White residents or a lower percentage of Mexican American residents they have more words written about them and when home invasions take place in higher median income neighborhoods they tend to have more overall articles written about them. Such findings, which align with both the "law of opposites" and "normal crimes" theoretical paradigms, hold true after controlling for many theoretically important and statistically significant individual and situational variables. By giving more or less published space to home invasion stories on the basis of neighborhood level race/ethnicity and income, newspapers help to construct racialized and class-based perspectives about violent crime in a way that transcends the demographics of individual victims and suspects. In doing so, newspapers may subtly shape public perceptions of urban and suburban neighborhoods (Baranauskas, 2020b). Such findings extend our empirical and theoretical understandings of media bias and highlight the continuing significance of race and class to the news media.

Individual and Incident Level Media Bias and The Importance of Neighborhoods

In line with established news values, sensational crimes like gory murder stories have increased odds of being published and receive more prominent spatial placement in newspapers (Johnstone, Hawkins, & Michener, 1994; Paulsen, 2003; Sorenson, Manz, & Berk, 1998; Wong & Harraway, 2019). Crimes with female victims, very young or very old victims, White victims and racial minority suspects are also more likely to be covered in newspapers and have more words and articles dedicated to them (Bouchard, Wong, & Gushue, 2020; Boulahanis & Heltsley, 2004; Gruenewald, Pizarro, & Chermak, 2009; Neely, 2015; Paulsen, 2003; Sorenson, Manz, & Berk, 1998; Silva & Capellan, 2019). Such findings indicate a hierarchy of victims and suspects where those that are perceived as worthy victims or ideal suspects reside at the top of the hierarchy and are more likely to receive news coverage (Greer, 2007; Lin & Phillips, 2012). This extensive body of literature on individual and incident-based predictors of media bias is indispensable.

However, more systematic nationwide analyses that center on how neighborhood-level variables may influence newspaper coverage of violent crime are essential. Neighborhoods are often the geographic scale that the news media uses to construct the public's knowledge about crime (Baranauskas, 2020a). In particular, newspapers across the U.S. convey the criminal reputations of neighborhoods through zip codes (e.g., Ellingson, 2013; Gill, 2019; Henning & Frazier, 2019; Hunter, 2019; Miner, 2015) – with some papers running a series of articles profiling violent crime in different local zip codes like the Kansas City Star's "Murder Factory" series (Rizzo, 2009).

Moreover, because some research suggests that reading about local violent crime stories from credible news sources can increase fear of crime, especially amongst White Americans (Callanan, 2012; Callanan & Rosenberger, 2015; Heath, 1984; Liska & Baccaglini, 1990; Koomen, Visser, & Stapel, 2000, Williams & Dickinson, 1993), if newspapers skew violent crime representations by neighborhood type, this practice might subtly shape citizens' understandings of and reactions to crime. There is evidence that articles written about

[2] Recognizing that there is scholarly disagreement about how "neighborhoods" should be defined and that many factors matter, I use postal zip codes as a proxy for neighborhoods because they play a significant role in how residents demarcate their communities (Billingham & Kimmelberg, 2018) and how newspapers make meaning of crime frequencies (Ellingson, 2013; Gill, 2019; Henning & Frazier, 2019; Hunter, 2019; Miner, 2015; Rizzo, 2009).

violent crime in more economically privileged neighborhoods and those with larger percentages of White residents use qualitatively different language to describe the shocking nature of crime in these typically safe areas (as opposed to the language of constant violence which plagues racial minority neighborhoods) (Baranauskas, 2020b). If such articles written about violent crimes in privileged neighborhoods are systematically longer and more frequently published, this could serve to amplify readers' views.

Media portrayals of "home invasion" as a type of crime, in particular, may elicit intensified anxieties because when someone invades our home they endanger our American ideals of family, security, and privacy possibly leading residents to the perception that 'no place is safely sacred' (Katz, 1987; p.52). In fact, nearly 60% of urban residents in one recent survey admit to being at least somewhat worried about home invasion crime (Lai, Ren, & Greenleaf, 2017). These concerns are also either directly or indirectly expressed in a host of qualitative research where White men (who largely live in predominantly White higher income suburban neighborhoods) admit to arming themselves with guns in order to protect their families and homes from the possibility of violent intruders (Shapira & Simon, 2018; Stroud, 2012). In one example, Brad (a middle-aged White male participant in Shapira and Simon's study) describes that purchasing a gun was a responsibility to keep his home safe from these hypothetical incidents.

> "Brad remembers his gun-owning friend asking him what he would do if someone broke into his house at three in the morning. Brad recounts, in a tone that mocks the ostensible naivete of his former self, telling his friend that he would hit the intruder on the head with a large flashlight. '[My friend] looks at me square in the eye,' Brad recalls, 'and says, I don't know about you, but I really don't want to engage in hand-to-hand combat with some meth-head that just broke into my house during the middle of the night'. The next day Brad bought a shotgun..." (as quoted in Shapira & Simon, 2018; p.8-9).

Although such violent crimes are statistically rare in these participants' neighborhoods, when asked to elaborate, they often refer to stories circulating in the news (Shapira & Simon, 2018). Gun rights groups like the National Rifle Association (NRA) similarly draw upon these feared scenarios in political commercials that depict White women being home alone in tree-lined neighborhoods but seemingly helpless against fated home invasions unless they vote for the correct pro-gun candidate (see Byron, Molidor, & Cantu, 2018). Violent home invasion narratives, in fact, are common material for NRATV and guns are touted to be (gendered) equalizers which grant their largely suburban owners assurance against cautionary tales of being "absolutely defenseless at home" (Carlson, 2014; p.71; Schwartz, 2019). An understanding of newspaper skews in home invasion crime reporting by neighborhood type could shed some light on these worldviews and reactions.

In spite of compelling arguments about the importance of assessing the role of neighborhood context in newspapers' portrayals of violent crime, however, there are only a handful of existing studies that do so and none which focus specifically on home invasion crime. This scarce extant literature yields countervailing results. When assessing social class, some studies find that wealthier neighborhoods experience greater coverage of homicide in newspapers (e.g., Johnstone et al., 1994; Paulsen, 2003; Schildkraut & Donley, 2012; Sorenson, Manz, & Berk, 1998). Child abductions that occur in affluent White neighborhoods also receive disproportionate coverage – a pattern which may explain the proliferation of crime laws named after these particular victims (Kulig & Cullen, 2016; Moscowitz & Duvall, 2011). In line with these results, Peterson (2014) finds that when homicides occur in economically disadvantaged Black and Latino neighborhoods they have lower rates of coverage. Baranauskas (2020a) adds to this by showing that disadvantaged neighborhoods experience lower rates of newspaper coverage of robbery and assault as well. These findings all seem to support the view that violent crime is covered by the media in a pattern that contrasts official police statistics.

On the other hand, there are also studies that suggest that neighborhoods with higher percentages of Black residents increase the prominence of homicide coverage (e.g., Lundman, 2003; Lundman, Douglass, &

Hanson, 2004). And is it well known that police reported homicide rates are higher in predominantly Black neighborhoods in the U.S. because of racial segregation, structural disinvestment, and a variety of other historical and contemporary factors (Peterson & Krivo, 2010). Taken side by side, these results seem to support the idea that violent crime, like homicide, is covered in a pattern that is positively correlated with official police statistics.

Still other studies reveal that neighborhood economic (dis)advantage and neighborhood racial composition are not significant predictors of newspaper coverage of violence (Boulahanis & Heltsley, 2004; Paulsen, 2002). The wide variance in the significance of neighborhood context may be the result of the fact that these existing studies each examine newspapers from distinct U.S. cities, the individual newspapers service varying demographic groups, or because they cover different time periods - ranging from Chicago in 1987 (i.e., Johnstone et al., 1994) to Baltimore in 2010 (i.e., Schildkraut & Donley, 2012). It could also originate from diverse sample sizes, inconsistent measurements of the dependent (e.g., coverage versus prominence) and independent variables, or a host of other confounding factors.

While the literature reveals more support for the premise that violent crime news is covered in a manner that does not converge with official police statistics, a systematic analysis that uniformly captures the racial and income composition of neighborhoods, while controlling for other theoretically important factors, would shed much light on these questions. One that does so for neighborhoods across multiple cities simultaneously could also contribute robust empirical evidence to existing theory which is largely based on understandings of how individual (i.e., worthy victim and ideal suspect) or incident level (i.e., news values) factors matter in particular cities. Borrowing from these individual level paradigms, two contrasting theoretical frameworks (i.e., Consonance/Racial Typification and 'Law of Opposites'/ Normal crimes) provide a useful place to start (Cronin, 2017). Both frameworks support notions of market driven journalism and emphasize that newspapers will publish stories that earn them the most readership and sales, especially at a time when newspapers are facing severe competition from other sources of news media (Beale, 2006). Yet they fundamentally disagree on the underlying mechanisms ostensibly at the root of these market driven patterns.

Theoretical Frameworks

Consonance/Racial Typification

Scholars in the consonance/typification camp propose that crime that occurs at the hands of the poor or racial minorities will receive more coverage than comparison groups (Gruenewald, Parkin, & Chermak, 2014). They argue that stories that are consistent with preconceived beliefs about criminal propensities (i.e., consonance) or that uphold stereotypes of White victimization and racial minority criminality in particular (i.e., racial typification) will be more likely to be covered in newspapers because they fulfill generally believed assumptions about crime– and especially violent crime (Gruenewald, Chermak, & Pizarro, 2013; Lundman, 2003). This framework proposes that readers will prefer simplified and predictable understandings of criminal behavior and that the media has relied on the ideological links between racial minority status and crime for so long that "discourse about crime is discourse about race" (Barlow, 1998, p.178). Supporting this paradigm is work revealing that minority status suspects receive more prominent and more negative coverage than White suspects (Buckler & Travis, 2005; Lundman, 2003). Some studies have provided nuance about racial typification by showing that homicides involving Latino offenders receive even more coverage than those involving Black offenders (Gruenewald, Pizarro, & Chermak, 2009). Aggregated to the neighborhood level, a larger number of racial minorities is often associated with actual and perceived levels of neighborhood crime (Peterson & Krivo, 2010; Quillian & Pager, 2001) and newspapers may play on these commonsense notions by providing more prominent coverage to crime in these areas.

"Law of Opposites"/Normal crimes

The "law of opposites"/normal crimes paradigm presents a contrasting perspective. Both of these paradigms garner support from studies showing that White victims and those who are violently victimized in predominantly White neighborhoods receive more coverage and prominence in media portrayals, despite their disproportionate protection from violent crime (Schildkraut & Donley, 2012; Neely, 2015). It is also reinforced by research which suggests that White suspects receive more coverage and have longer articles written about them than racial minority suspects (Boulahanis & Heltlsley, 2004; Paulsen, 2003; Pritchard & Hughes, 1997; Sorenson, Peterson, & Berk, 1998). Here, newsworthiness is understood to follow a 'law of opposites' whereby atypical individuals, incidents, and neighborhoods will receive more coverage because of their novelty when compared to police statistics (Baranauskas, 2020a; Pollak & Kubrin, 2007). This framework proposes that readers will prefer to read stories that violate conventional norms either because of the (a) "rarity" of the crime or because (b) individuals who have lower status deviance (i.e., those who embody hegemonic norms) are particularly interesting when involved in crime because they are so different from habitual criminals (Baranauskas, 2020a; Pritchard & Hughes, 1997).

Correspondingly, to the extent that crime appears to be frequent and fit the norm (i.e., 'normal crimes'), it is deemed less sensational and newsworthy (Sudnow, 1965; Cronin, 2017). Applied to the neighborhood level, the normal crimes perspective is said to operate on one of two mechanisms (a) newspaper readers may not be interested in reading about a place with many crimes because it is commonplace in these locales or (b) certain neighborhoods are considered less worthy and cannot garner coverage by the media because of neighborhood stigma and societal power differentials (Cronin, 2017).

In sum, though the "Consonance/Racial Typification" and "Law of Opposites/ Normal Crimes" paradigms are both compelling, existing findings from studies that measure neighborhood level variables tend to fall more in line with the conclusion that more privileged contexts - wealthier neighborhoods and those with fewer racial minorities – will receive more news coverage of violent crime (e.g., Baranauskas, 2020a; Johnstone et al., 1994; Paulsen, 2003; Peterson, 2014; Schildkraut & Donley, 2012; Sorenson, Manz, & Berk, 1998). This neighborhood level pattern aligns more closely with the "law of opposites"/normal crimes perspectives. Therefore, I hypothesize that *home invasion crimes that take place in more privileged neighborhood contexts – wealthier neighborhoods and those with higher percentages of White residents – will receive enhanced newspaper coverage as denoted by the number of words in the initial story and the overall number of published stories; whereas less privileged contexts – those with more racial minorities – will receive less voluminous newspaper coverage.*

Data

The data are composed of 1,011 home invasion cases published in fifteen daily US newspapers between June 1, 2006 and June 1, 2011 (see Byron, Molidor, & Cantu, 2018). The newspapers in the analysis include the *Albuquerque Journal*, *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, *Boston Globe*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Detroit News*, *Houston Chronicle*, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, *Miami Herald*, *Star Tribune (Minneapolis)*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *The News & Observer (Raleigh)*, *The Sacramento Bee*, *The Salt Lake Tribune*, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, and *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (See Table 1 for a breakdown of pertinent newspaper characteristics). These fifteen papers were chosen to provide a geographically and racially diverse sample of U.S. cities. This diversity captured cities with different population sizes and crime rates, in line with the goals of previous studies of newspaper coverage of homicide (e.g., Chermak & Chapman, 2007).

Table 1[a]
Descriptive Information about the Fifteen Newspapers

Newspaper	Parent Media Company	Metro Area Serviced	Average Six Month Circulation [b] (2006-2011)	Total "Home Invasion" Cases Coded
Albuquerque Journal	Journal Publishing Company	Albuquerque, NM	100,630	29
Atlanta Journal Constitution	Cox Enterprises	Atlanta, GA	281,475	106
Boston Globe	New York Times Company	Boston, MA	314,692	57
Chicago Tribune	Tribune Company	Chicago, IL	513,737	132
Detroit News	MediaNews Group	Detroit, MI	188,546	46
Houston Chronicle	Hearst Corporation	Houston, TX	441,050	92
Las Vegas Review-Journal	Stephens Media	Las Vegas, NV	172,551	35
Miami Herald	McClatchy Company	Miami, FL	221,866	86
Star Tribune	Star Tribune Media Company	Minneapolis, MN	323,928	27
Philadelphia Inquirer	Philadelphia Media Network	Philadelphia, PA	337,337	67
The News & Observer	McClatchy Company	Raleigh, NC	159,487	46
The Sacramento Bee	McClatchy Company	Sacramento, CA	251,597	83
The Salt Lake Tribune	MediaNews Group	Salt Lake City, UT	120,538	78
Seattle Post-Intelligencer	Hearst Corporation	Seattle, WA	129,781	53
St. Louis Post-Dispatch	Lee Enterprises	St. Louis, MO	244,547	54
Total			3,801,762	1,011

a: Table amended from Byron, Molidor, & Cantu, 2018
b: Data are from Burrelles*Luce* (2006-2011) tabulations, Data for Detroit News and Seattle Post-Intelligencer were not available for all 5 years.

Home invasion articles were selected using two electronic newspaper archives: ProQuest and Newsbank (i.e., nine papers were found on Proquest and six papers were found on Newsbank). The choice was made to select these two archives because ProQuest does not house papers like the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* or *Miami Herald* and Newsbank does not house the *Chicago Tribune* or *Boston Globe.* Both archives have also been used in previous analyses of crime news (e.g., Kupchik & Bracy, 2009; Gruenewald, Pizarro, & Chermak, 2009). And although ProQuest and Newsbank sometimes contained different newspapers, when these two archives housed the same newspapers scholars found minimal variability (89% agreement) in the uploaded articles and both had a similarly high (88-90%) synchrony with the articles that were published in print versions of the papers (Ridout, Fowler, & Searles, 2012).

Methods

Before beginning the analysis, I set the filters of Proquest and Newsbank so that if the term 'home invasion'[3] was located *anywhere* within the text of the article, it would appear in the sample. Data collection was initiated in June of 2011. Therefore, June 1, 2011 was the latest date available to collect a published article at the time. After deciding to capture a five-year time frame, the dates June 1, 2006 – June 1, 2011 were also used as part of the electronic filter. In total, there were 3,152 electronic records using the term 'home invasion' during this time span. Each newspaper article was downloaded and printed one at a time. This allowed for the sub-grouping of any follow-up articles matched by the name of the parties involved or the address of the invasion and the removal of electronic records pertaining to Hollywood movies about 'home invasion' or any others (e.g., 'home invasion' by raccoons) that did not fit the scope of this study. A more detailed account of the specific methodology used to get to the final sample of 1,011 can be found in Byron, Molidor, and Cantu (2018).

Content analysis was chosen as the first part of the methodology because it allows researchers to create systematic and descriptive quantitative data from news articles (Gruenewald, Parkin, & Chermak, 2014). The articles were read by the author of this manuscript and two trained undergraduate students. Our first goal was to assess what common information could be yielded across newspapers. We independently read a random 10% of articles and came together to create a uniform coding sheet. The coding sheet captured variables such as: the address of the home invasion; number of words in the initial (first chronological) news article; the frequency of articles published on a particular incident, characteristics of victims and perpetrators; and forms of physical injury to the parties involved. After completing the coding sheet, we read and content coded all articles before entering the data into spreadsheets. One undergraduate student and I used this coding, entering, and checking process for half of the data and the other undergraduate student and I used the same process for the remainder of the articles.

I worked with a third trained undergraduate student to use the city and address of the home invasions to identify the matching zip code via Google searches. Zip codes were missing for 8.2% of the data (or 83 incidents). In these cases, addresses were either not reported by the newspapers or were not specific enough (e.g., "Bell County." "Northwest side of [particular city]," or "near Alton") to find a valid zip code. After the zip code variable was completed, I merged zip code level demographic variables from the 2010 U.S. Census into the dataset and manually added zip code level burglary and murder indices using ADT's online Crime Map (https://www.adt.com/crime). According to ADT's website, these data were originally sourced from ATTOM Data Solutions. Burglary was chosen as the closest proxy for "home invasion" because home invasion is not an official crime in all jurisdictions, although there is disagreement about whether they capture the same crime or not (Hurley, 1995; Catalano, 2010). Murder was chosen as a parallel indicator of violent crime in these neighborhoods. Importantly, crime data at the neighborhood level likely face serious biases and were notoriously hard to find (Quillian & Pager, 2010) because federal agencies either did not collect them or make them available to the public. To my knowledge, no other sources of zip code level crime data existed. I

[3] Although I did initially try other search terms like 'violent break-in' and 'home invasion robbery,' I decided to use the search term 'home invasion' because of the desire for high reliability. Redefining this primarily media constructed crime to match my definition of what I infer it should be (e.g., a 'violent break-in,' 'home invasion robbery,' or 'home assault') rather than abiding by the news media's delineation of it through their use of one specific term seemed problematic. Admittedly, this more conservative approach may omit incidents that otherwise fit the prevailing patterns.

nonetheless chose to include these ADT crime indices rather than not having a neighborhood level crime predictor variable[4] at all.

Our Cohen's Kappa interrater reliability statistics for our coding ranged from .868 (for our five-option physical harm variable that we recoded into the dichotomous 'victim fatality' independent variable) to 1 (for our word count dependent variable which was explicitly listed either at the top or the bottom of the articles). The Kappa values for other principle variables such as the zip code variable (Kappa =.969) and the variable capturing the frequency of published articles (Kappa =.908) were similarly high. Additionally, we met regularly over two summers to clean the data and settle any remaining coding issues.

Descriptive statistics and regression analyses were the main analytic strategies. Descriptive statistics were used to contextualize the neighborhood variables in relation to aggregate national trends. I ran ordinary least squares regression (OLS) to measure the predictors of my first dependent variable (the natural logarithm of the number of words in the initial article). I then ran Poisson regression to measure the predictors of my second dependent variable (a count of the number of newspaper articles per incident). Poisson was used because Goodness of Fit parameters show that the data were not overdispersed (e.g., deviance ranged from .492 to .497; Pearson Chi-Square ranged from .620 to .636). Multi-level models, which typically measure analyses of smaller units nested within larger ones, were not used because the average number of incidents per zip code was 2 and the median was 1. Therefore, there was simply not enough variability at the neighborhood level of these data for multi-level models to be suitable (Quillian & Pager, 2010).

Because the first dependent variable had a positive skew, I transformed it by taking the natural logarithm so that the variable became more normally distributed and better fit our model (Buckler & Travis, 2005). I labelled this transformed dependent variable as 'LN # of words'. I also used the natural log of the Median Income variable for the same reason. I included a variety of dummy variables in the models as well. I used the following referent categories (victim sex = male; victim age = 'middle' aged or 43–55 years old; suspect sex = male; suspect age = 'young' or under 30 years old; suspect race = White; weapon = gun; time of incident = night; newspaper = *Houston Chronicle*).

I also accounted for a variety of characteristics of the newspapers themselves. I controlled for whether there is a follow-up article or a brief style of article (known as news briefs but named different things across newspapers such as 'In Brief' or 'Community News'). Holding these (news brief style) articles constant was important because they noticeably provide less information than standard-length articles. Finally, I attempted to capture unknown differences between newspapers by using dummy variables for each paper. I controlled for some of these differences because the newspapers in this sample had unequal circulation rates (see Table1), varying staff sizes, and represented a broad spectrum of political leanings - all of which could have affected crime reporting (Schildkraut, 2017). The *Houston Chronicle* was chosen as the referent newspaper because its published stories exhibited increased amounts of skew (e.g., it had the highest percentage of home invasion related victim fatalities (34.8%), despite Houston not having the highest murder rate of the cities in the data) and because of its documented history of media distortion (see Buckler & Travis, 2005; Lin & Phillips, 2012; Paulsen, 2003).

In order to reach a decision on modeling, I first ran the main effects of each neighborhood race variable (i.e., Percent White, Percent Black, Percent Latino of any race, Percent Asian, and Percent Native American) independently. Based on significance levels and being mindful of variance inflation, I then began to introduce

[4] Supplementary correlational analyses revealed expected relationships between these crime indices and neighborhood racial demographics from the 2010 Census (see Peterson & Krivo, 2010; i.e., the correlation between neighborhood percent black and the ADT murder index is moderate and positive, r=.511).

two race[5] main effects variables into the model simultaneously until I found the models with the best fit. Because of theoretical interest, I also ran models with each Latino group separately (e.g., Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban etc.). I finally ran all possible two-way interactions between the neighborhood racial percentage variable and the suspect's race (see Cronin, 2017) and they were not significant.

The adjusted R-squared values for the displayed OLS models were .39 (see Table 3), suggesting that nearly 40% of the variance in the number of words in the initial article can be explained by the included variables. I also checked for collinearity by running a variance inflation factor (VIF) diagnostic. Model 1, 2, and 3 had average VIFs of 1.59, 1.60, and 1.64. The highest VIF for any variable in these models was 3.30. With all VIFs lower than 4, I did not have concerns about multicollinearity.

Results

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of the neighborhood level variables along with the control variables. Among the neighborhood level variables, the average percent White is 56.72 and the average percent Latino and Mexican American is 21.61 and 11.33, respectively. Although these proportions do not reflect the demographic makeup of the U.S. as a whole, they are strikingly similar to estimates of neighborhood racial make-up for large metropolitan areas – where 56% of residents identified as White and 20% identified as Latino (Frey, 2016). The average median income of the neighborhoods in the data is $53,473 (range = $9,554 – $139,454). This approximates the median household income ($49,445) in the U.S. in 2010 (Census, 2011). The wide variability (ranges) of these variables also provide evidence that the neighborhoods captured in this study are, on average, representative of the diversity of large metropolitan areas in the U.S.

The burglary and murder indices are parameters that norm the burglary and murder rates within a given zip code to the overall U.S. burglary and murder rates. The average burglary index value of the neighborhoods in the sample is 131.68 and the average murder index value is 170.91. Therefore, the average burglary and murder rates are about 1.32x (32% more than) and 1.71x (71% more than) the national average for each respective crime. Because these data represent urban contexts, higher than average property and violent crime indices are reasonable (Peterson & Krivo, 2010).

The remaining variables suggest that a victim is killed in 21% of home invasion incidents and a suspect is killed 6% of the time. The average number of victims and suspects in these incidents are 2.25 and 2.34, male suspects are named in the majority (83%) of these cases and guns are used in a large proportion (58%) as well. Regarding the race of the suspects, it is notable that 86% of cases are missing a description of the suspect's race and the next largest group is Black suspects (7%). The race of the victim is missing in 99% of the cases (not shown in Table 2). Such patterns suggest that we have to interpret any individual level race variables with extreme caution. The many missing values could result from either victim choosing to withhold their race or the race of the suspects being unknown, as some of the victims described the suspects of home invasion being masked. It is also possible that journalists are less likely to publish the race of victims or suspects in the text of newspaper articles in order to avoid being called racist (Boulahanis & Heltsley, 2004), because of guidelines within the Associated Press' Stylebook to only include racial identifiers when it's clearly pertinent (Diadum, 2014; Tenore, 2012), or because they can use pictures to more subtly accomplish the same purpose (Greer, 2007).

[5] When Neighborhood Percent White and Neighborhood Percent Black were included in the same model the highest VIF increased to 9.04, which indicates that these two variables are collinear.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations (SD) of Variables

	Operationalization	Mean	SD	Range
Number of Words	Continuous Count	255.64	206.27	30 – 2196
LN # of Words	Natural Log*Count	5.30	.68	3.40 – 7.69
Frequency of Articles	Limited Count	1.65	2.29	1 – 44
Neigh. % White	Percentage	56.73	26.45	.5 – 98.00
Neigh. % Mexican Amer.	Percentage	11.33	14.49	.1 – 78.30
LN of Median Income	Natural Log*Median	10.81	.40	9.16 – 11.85
Burglary Index	Rate/National Average	131.68	94.22	2 – 589
Murder Index	Rate/National Average	170.90	184.52	1 – 1286
Victim Fatality	0=no; 1=yes	.21	.41	0 – 1
Number of Victims	Count	2.25	1.63	1 – 20
Only Female Victims	0=no; 1=yes	.20	.40	0 – 1
Youngest Victims	0=not; 1= 0-16 years old	.12	.32	0 – 1
Young Adult Victims	0=not; 1= 17-29 years old	.11	.31	0 – 1
Adult Victims	0=not; 1= 30-42 years old	.05	.21	0 – 1
Middle Aged Victims	0=not; 1= 43-55 years old	.03	.18	0 – 1
Oldest Victims	0=not; 1 =56+years old	.08	.27	0 – 1
Suspect Fatality	0=no; 1=yes	.06	.23	0 – 1
Number of Suspects	Count	2.34	1.32	1 – 10
Only Female Suspects	0=no; 1=yes	.01	.10	0 – 1
Only Male Suspects	0=no; 1=yes	.83	.37	0 – 1
Mixed Sex Suspects	0=no; 1=yes	.08	.27	0 – 1
Young Suspects	0=not; 1= 13-29 years old	.25	.43	0 – 1
Mature Suspects	0=not; 1=30+ years old	.11	.31	0 – 1
Black Suspects	0=no; 1=yes	.07	.26	0 – 1
Non-Black Minority Suspects	0=no; 1=yes	.03	.16	0 – 1
White Suspects	0=no; 1=yes	.03	.16	0 – 1
Mixed Race Suspects	0=no; 1=yes	.01	.10	0 – 1
Gun	0=no; 1=yes	.58	.49	0 – 1
Knife	0=no; 1=yes	.07	.26	0 – 1
Other Weapon (e.g., bat)	0=no; 1=yes	.06	.23	0 – 1
Two Different Weapons	0=no; 1=yes	.05	.22	0 – 1
No Weapon	0=no; 1=yes	.02	.16	0 – 1
Morning	0=not; 1= 5am-1pm	.15	.36	0 – 1
Daytime	0=not; 1= 1pm-9pm	.14	.35	0 – 1
Nighttime	0=not; 1= 9pm-5am	.38	.49	0 – 1
Weekend	0=weekday; 1=weekend	.12	.32	0 – 1
Any Follow-Up Article	0=no; 1=yes	.23	.42	0 – 1
News Brief Style Article	0=no; 1=yes	.26	.44	0 – 1

Multivariate Analyses

Utilizing a final sample of 733 cases across all models because of listwise deletion, the multivariate analyses generally confirm my hypothesis. After controlling for various individual, incident, and neighborhood level variables, neighborhoods with a higher percentage of White residents receive significantly more word space in the initial newspaper article on home invasion crime incidents, whereas neighborhoods with a higher percentage of Mexican American residents receive significantly less word space (see Table 3). When both burglary and murder indices are controlled for, the 'neighborhood percent White' variable becomes marginally significant (p=.063).

Table 3 specifically shows that, even after a variety of influential control variables, each one percentage increase in the percentage of White residents in the neighborhood of the home invasion increases the word count in the initial story by .2% (that is, 100**B* for Models 1 through 3, based on a log-linear approximation for small coefficients) and each one percent increase in Mexican American residents decreases that word count in initial home invasion stories by .4%. To put this into more concrete terms, compared to neighborhoods that are 30% White, if a home invasion takes place in a neighborhood that is 70% White, the latter home invasion story will have on average 20 more words written about it merely based on this locational difference (.002 x 40% increase =8% more words; 8% x 255 or the average word count = 20.4 words). The effect is even larger if we apply this scenario to Mexican American neighborhoods. Compared to neighborhoods that are 30% Mexican American, if a home invasion takes place in a neighborhood that is 70% Mexican American, the latter home invasion story will have on average 41 fewer words written about it merely because of the type of neighborhood where the home invasion occurred (-.004 x 40% increase =16% fewer words; 16% x 255 or the average word count = 40.8 words). The other neighborhood types are not significant. There are also no significant effects for either the 'log of median income' variable nor various interaction terms between the neighborhood percent racial group variables and median income variable.

Given Petersen's (2014) finding that a higher percentage of Black residents in a neighborhood decreases the prominence of homicide reporting in Los Angeles newspapers, it is surprising that no effects were found for the 'neighborhood percent Black' variable. One possible explanation for this pattern is that some of the fifteen newspapers and cities under exploration in this study (e.g., Albuquerque or Sacramento) have very small populations of Black residents and this could reduce the neighborhood variability in the final sample. To test this speculation, I ran a similar OLS regression after selecting out seven newspapers from cities with Black populations that are at least twice the national average (i.e., Detroit, Atlanta, St. Louis, Philadelphia, Chicago, Raleigh, and Boston) and replacing 'neighborhood percent White' with 'neighborhood percent Black'. The coefficient for 'neighborhood percent Black' in that model is negative and marginally significant (p<.10; not shown). Therefore, particular subsamples of these fifteen newspapers could produce a pattern for 'neighborhood percent Black' that mirrors the pattern for 'neighborhood percent Mexican American.'

Table 3
OLS Regression Predicting the Natural Log of the Number of Words in Initial Stories

	Model 1 *B(s.e.)*	Model 2 *B(s.e.)*	Model 3 *B(s.e.)*
Neigh. Characteristics			
Neigh. % White	.002(.001)*	.002(.001)†	.002(.001)†
Neigh. % Mexican Amer.	-.004(.001)*	-.004(.002)*	-.004(.002)*
LN of Median Income	-.062(.075)	-.059(.075)	-.068(.076)
Burglary Index	.000(.000)		-.000(.000)
Murder Index		-.000(.000)	-.000(.000)
Victim/Suspect Controls			
Victim Fatality	.166(.050)**	.168(.050)**	.167(.050)**
Number of Victims	.064(.013)***	.063(013)***	.063(.013)***
Only Female Victims	.013(.052)	.016(.052)	.014(.052)
Youngest Victims	.273(.060)***	.271(.060)***	.251(.061)***
Young Adult Victims	.175(.061)**	.170(.062)**	.173(.062)**
Adult Victims	.150(.088)	.148(.089)	.150(.089)
Oldest Victims	.174(.083)*	.169(.082)*	.173(.083)*
Suspect Fatality	.159(.082)†	.156(.082)†	.158(.082)†
Number of Suspects	-.025(.018)	-.023(.018)	-.024(.018)
Only Female Suspects	.140(.168)	.145(.168)	.140(.168)
Mixed Sex Suspects	.105(.076)	.101(.076)	.102(.076)
Older Suspects	-.018(.068)	-.020(.068)	-.018(.068)
Black Suspects	-.020(.071)	-.021(.071)	-.022(.071)
Non-Black Minority Suspects	.083(.119)	.087(.118)	.086(.119)
Mixed Race Suspects	.039(.200)	.040(.200)	.040(.200)
Incident Controls			
Knife	.101(.073)	.111(.073)	.110(.073)
Other Weapon (e.g., bat)	.056(.087)	.054(.087)	.055(.087)
Two Different Weapons	.217(.086)*	.225(.087)*	.220(.087)*
No Weapon	.097(.123)	.099(.123)	.099(.123)
Morning	.024(.054)	.024(.055)	.023(.055)
Daytime	-.027(.055)	-.027(.055)	-.028(.055)
Weekend	-.166(.060)**	-.170(.060)**	-.168(.060)**
Newspaper Controls			
Any Follow-Up Article	.167(.048)***	.168(.048)***	.167(.048)***
News Brief Style Article	-.717(.051)***	-.715(.050)***	-.716(.050)***
Intercept	6.167(.829)***	6.130(.828)***	6.242(.846)***
Adjusted R^2	.390	.390	.390

Table 3 continued (Additional Newspaper Control Variables)

	Model 1 *B(s.e.)*	Model 2 *B(s.e.)*	Model 3 *B(s.e.)*
Newspaper Controls			
Albuquerque Journal	.098(.147)	.088(.147)	.097(.147)
Atlanta Journal Constitution	-.165(.094)	-.171(.094)†	-.167(.095)†
Boston Globe	.001(.20)	.010(.120)	.004(.121)
Chicago Tribune	-.471(.095)***	-450(.095)***	-.462(.097)***
Detroit News	-.163(.124)	-.142(.124)	-.154(.126)
Las Vegas Review-Journal	.311(.139)*	.325(.140)*	.321(.140)*
Miami Herald	-.511(.113)***	-.508(.114)***	-.508(113)***
Star Tribune (Minneapolis)	-.200(.143)	-.197(.143)	-.200(.143)
Philadelphia Inquirer	-.039(.118)	-.009(.117)	-.026(.121)
The News & Observer (Raleigh)	-.485(.121)***	-.500(.121)***	-.491(.122)***
The Sacramento Bee	-.441(.097)***	-.435(.096)***	-.440(.097)***
The Salt Lake Tribune	-.503(.114)***	-.516(.114)***	-.508(.115)***
Seattle Post-Intelligencer	-.576(.112)***	-.589(.112)***	-.581(.113)***
St. Louis Post-Dispatch	-.213(.124)	-.204(.125)	-.206(.125)

Note: †p<.10, *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Table 4 shows that, keeping all else equal, for every one unit increase in the log of median income, the difference in the logs of expected counts of newspaper articles would be predicted to increase between .251 and .287 units. More simply, as neighborhood median income increases the count of articles published about a home invasion incident also increases. The murder index, in contrast, is negatively related to the count of articles published about a home invasion incident. Thus, when home invasions take place in wealthier neighborhoods or those with a lower murder index, they have significantly more newspaper articles published about them.

The significant neighborhood level findings in Table 3 and Table 4 all align with the 'law of opposites' perspective as Whiter, wealthier, and less murder ridden neighborhoods receive enhanced newspaper attention presumably because crimes within them are rare and sensational or because the victims who live within them are especially intriguing because of their distinctions from those who are typically affected by violent crime (Baranauskas, 2020b; Cronin, 2017; Pollak & Kubrin, 2007). They are also consistent with the "normal crimes" perspective that violent crime in neighborhoods with higher percentages of Mexican Americans will be less newsworthy either because it is viewed as routine and reflective of more general perceptions of residents' criminal dispositions or because such neighborhoods are deemed less worthy and do not have enough societal power to garner media attention (Brown, Jones, & Becker, 2018; Cronin, 2017; see also Baranauskas, 2020b).

Notably, the control variables behave in ways that fit with the expected and established pattern of a market driven model of news production (Byron, Molidor, & Cantu, 2018). If a victim is killed in the incident, if a suspect dies during the incident, if victims are at the extreme ends of the age range, if there are many victims, and if the victim uses either a knife or multiple weapons (compared to carrying guns alone) – all of which could indicate a either a gorier crime scene or an otherwise more sensational story – the word count of the initial home invasion story and the frequency of articles published on the incident increase significantly. In contrast, home invasion incidents that take place on the weekend receive fewer words, possibly because of

Table 4
Poisson Regression Predicting the Frequency of Articles per Incident

	Model 1 *B(s.e.)*	Model 2 *B(s.e.)*	Model 3 *B(s.e.)*
Neigh. Characteristics			
Neigh. % White	-.001(.002)	-.002(.002)	-.002(.001)
Neigh. % Mexican Amer.	-.000(.003)	-.001(.003)	-.001(.003)
LN of Median Income	.287(.116)*	.259(.114)*	.251(.118)*
Burglary Index	-.000(.000)		-.000(.000)
Murder Index		-.001(.000)*	-.000(.000)†
Victim/Suspect Controls			
Victim Fatality	.397(.066)***	.398(.067)***	.397(.067)***
Number of Victims	.037(.018)*	.032(.018)†	.033(.018)†
Only Female Victims	-.014(.077)	-.004(.077)	-.006(.078)
Youngest Victims	.273(.080)**	.263(.080)**	.263(.080)**
Young Adult Victims	.217(.087)*	.191(.087)*	.193(.087)*
Adult Victims	-.136(.143)	-.150(.143)	-.149(.143)
Oldest Victims	.117(.122)	.099(.121)	.102(.022)
Suspect Fatality	-.067(.133)	-.079(.133)	-.077(.133)
Number of Suspects	.033(.027)	.039(.027)	.039(.027)
Only Female Suspects	-.080(.254)	-.088(.254)	-.090(.253)
Mixed Sex Suspects	.039(.107)	.009(.108)	.011(.108)
Older Suspects	-.044(.102)	-.046(.101)	-.045(.101)
Black Suspects	.140(.098)	.131(.097)	.132(.098)
Non-Black Minority Suspects	-.125(.172)	-.112(.173)	-.112(.173)
Mixed Race Suspects	.667(.204)**	.655(.204)**	.655(.205)**
Incident Controls			
Knife	.267(.095)**	.263(.096)**	.262(.096)**
Other Weapon (e.g., bat)	.015(.132)	.000(.132)	.003(.132)
Two Different Weapons	.003(.130)	.010(.130)	.008(.130)
No Weapon	.052(.231)	.060(.231)	.060(.232)
Morning	-.079(.082)	-.089(.082)	.023(.055)
Daytime	-.150(.084)†	-.155(.084)†	-.156(.084)†
Weekend	-.020(.093)	-.031(.093)	-.030(.093)
Newspaper Controls			
Any Follow-Up Article	1.185(.064)***	1.188(.065)***	1.188(.065)***
News Brief Style Article	.027(.078)	.032(.078)	.031(.078)
Intercept	-3.500(1.283)**	-3.142(1.257)*	-3.054(1.305)*

Pseudo R^2	.277	.278	.278

Table 4 continued (Additional Newspaper Control Variables)

	Model 1 *B(s.e.)*	Model 2 *B(s.e.)*	Model 3 *B(s.e.)*
Newspaper Controls			
Albuquerque Journal	.629(.200)**	.625(.199)**	.629(.200)**
Atlanta Journal Constitution	.047(.167)	.027(.167)	.028(.167)
Boston Globe	.325(.186)	.349(.186)†	.344(.187)†
Chicago Tribune	.116(.158)	.173(.157)	.165(.160)
Detroit News	.361(.207)	.428(.206)*	.419(.209)*
Las Vegas Review-Journal	-.183(.240)	-.136(.241)	-.142(.242)
Miami Herald	.530(.177)**	.561(.178)**	.560(178)**
Star Tribune (Minneapolis)	.638(.200)**	.633(.197)**	.629(.198)**
Philadelphia Inquirer	.443(.187)*	.534(.117)**	.522(.192)**
The News & Observer (Raleigh)	.185(.194)	.162(.194)	.164(.194)
The Sacramento Bee	-.234(.162)	.244(.161)	.240(.162)
The Salt Lake Tribune	.216(.193)	.191(.193)	.193(.193)
Seattle Post-Intelligencer	.350(.180)†	.319(.180)†	.322(.181)†
St. Louis Post-Dispatch	.292(.209)	.349(.210)†	.347(.210)†

Note: †p<.10; *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

'event density' or the incidents being crowded out by other compelling stories during the weekend's busier news cycle (Myers & Caniglia, 2004). Also, 'newsbrief' style articles have smaller word counts and those with a follow-up story were initially written as longer articles (see Table 3). For more information on such patterns please see Byron, Molidor, and Cantu 2018.

Conclusion

While a large body of research investigates newspaper coverage of violent crime (Gruenewald, Parkin, & Chermak, 2014), very few studies assess the role of neighborhood contexts as predictors of newspapers' coverage of crime. The handful of existing studies typically treat neighborhood context as a set of control variables in media distortion analyses of homicide within specific American cities (Cronin, 2017). Given more general criminological scholarship which demonstrates how neighborhood level variables either attenuate or interact with individual level variables when predicting self-reported violent crime (Zimmerman & Messner, 2010) and fear of crime (Yuan, Dong, & Melde, 2017), the current study presents the first quantitative analysis to focus on the role of neighborhoods in the reporting of home invasion crime. And it does so using multivariate regression to analyze hundreds of home invasion incidents reported by newspapers spread across the U.S.

I employ OLS and Poisson regression to reveal the role of neighborhood characteristics in determining the amount of words used to initially describe home invasion incidents and the overall counts of articles for particular incidents. In line with my hypothesis, neighborhoods with a higher percentage of White residents

receive significantly longer home invasion crime articles and wealthier neighborhoods receive more overall article coverage. In contrast, home invasions that take place in neighborhoods with a higher percentage of Mexican American residents are privy to significantly shorter primary articles. These neighborhood level variables achieve significance after controlling for a host of theoretically meaningful and empirically influential control variables. Such findings are in line with the law of opposites perspective because more privileged Whiter and wealthier neighborhoods arguably receive more media attention because crimes within them are infrequent and striking or because the individuals who live within them are appealing because of their dissimilarities from those typically involved in violent crime (Cronin, 2017; Pollak & Kubrin, 2007). The findings are also congruent with the "normal crimes" perspective that violent crime in predominantly Mexican American neighborhoods will be less newsworthy either because it is seen as commonplace or these stigmatized neighborhoods may lack the societal capital necessary to garner proportionate media attention (Cronin, 2017).

Though the current study extends the literature on neighborhood context and media biases in reporting crime news by employing robust multivariate regression analyses on a systematic sample of home invasion incidents, the analysis has at least five limitations. First, these analyses do not assess how the newspapers frame these neighborhoods within their published articles. Such qualitative information could go a long way in contextualizing the quantitative skews in word space and article frequency. Are predominantly White and higher income neighborhoods described as being 'under siege' by particular culprits of home invasion crime (see Baranauskas, 2020b)? If so, does this contribute to why some citizens who live in predominantly White economically privileged neighborhoods are adamant about arming themselves with firearms in order to protect their families and homes from hypothetical intruders (Shapira & Simon, 2018; Stroud, 2012)? Second, I do not control for circulation rates by zip code, therefore I cannot account for how newspapers may circulate more in some areas or over emphasize crime that appeals to their primary subscribers. Third, systematic missing data on the race of victims and the race of suspects restricts my ability to run interaction terms between individual and neighborhood levels to test whether, for example, Black suspects in predominantly White neighborhoods or White victims in predominantly Mexican neighborhoods receive differential media attention (see Cronin, 2017). Fourth, such analyses cannot assess the accuracy of the mechanisms that are speculated to drive either the "law of opposites" or "normal crimes" perspectives. Future ethnographic work would be best at addressing questions about the mechanisms of quantitative results that produce support for these perspectives (Greer, 2007). Finally, the aforementioned findings should be read with the caveat that, while still important, newspapers are losing readership over time as younger cohorts increasingly obtain their news from social media sites (Shearer, 2018).

Despite such limitations, the present study moves the needle forward on discussions of neighborhood context and media portrayals by showing that certain neighborhood level race/ethnicity and income variables matter in predicting prominent newspaper attention for home invasion crimes. The finding that newspapers, on average, enhance coverage of home invasion stories as the percentage of White or wealthy residents increases shows a media preference for advantaged audiences. Moreover, by disproportionately reducing word space as the percentage of Mexican Americans increase in neighborhoods, the media further disadvantages communities that need proportional media attention to bring awareness to their lived experiences with home invasion crime.

Possibly most significantly, newspapers may play a role in shaping the larger public's understandings of residential space through biases in how they cover home invasion crimes that take place in different types of neighborhoods. Even if newspaper journalists are now steering away from reporting the race of individual suspects (as suggested by some; Boulahanis & Heltsley, 2004; Tenore, 2012), their decisions to celebrate home invasion crime stories that occur in economically privileged and predominantly White neighborhoods could possibly have wider implications ranging from inducing fear of crime by race (Callahan, 2012), to persuading some citizens to arm themselves with guns (see Carlson, 2014; Shapira & Simon, 2018), to inspiring racialized crime laws (see Kulig & Cullen, 2016; Moscowitz & Duvall, 2011). If neighborhood level characteristics

systematically influence newspaper coverage of other types of crime or if this pattern is replicated in non-newspaper platforms like television news or social media, such effects may be more profound than imagined.

References

Baranauskas, A. (2020a). Exploring the social construction of crime by neighborhood: News coverage of crime in Boston. *Sociological Focus, 53*(2), 156-176.

Baranauskas, A. (2020b). War zones and depraved violence: Exploring the framing of urban neighborhoods in news reports of violent crime. *Criminal Justice Review* https://doi.org/10.1177/0734016820915638

Barlow, M. H. (1998). Race and the problem of crime in *Time* and *Newsweek* cover stories 1946-1995. *Social Justice, 25*(2), 149-183.

Beale, S. S. (2006). The news media's influence on criminal justice policy: How market driven news promotes punitiveness. *William & Mary Law Review, 48*, 397-418.

Billingham, C.M. & Kimmelberg, S.M**. (**2018). Identifying the urban: Resident perceptions of community character and local institutions in eight metropolitan areas. *City & Community 17*(3), 858-882.

Bouchard, J., Wong, J.S., & Gushue, K. (2020). The differential portrayal of sympathetic homicide victims in the media. *International Review of Victimology* https://doi.org/10.1177/0269758020916650

Boulahanis, J. G., & Heltsley, M. J. (2004). Perceived fears: The reporting patterns of juvenile homicide in Chicago newspapers. *Criminal Justice Policy Review, 15*(2), 132-160.i

Brown, H.E., Jones, J.A., & Becker, A. (2018). The cacialization of Latino Immigrants in new destinations: Criminality, ascription, and Cocntermobilization. *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences 4*(5), 118-140.

Buckler, K., & Travis, L. (2005). Assessing the newsworthiness of homicide events: An analysis of coverage in the Houston Chronicle. *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture, 12*(1), 1-25.

Burrelles*Luce*. (2006 – 2011). Top media outlets: Newspapers, blogs, consumer magazines & social networks. Retrieved from http://www.burrellesluce.com/resources/top_media_outlets/archived_top_media_outlets

Byron, R. A., Molidor, W.S., & Cantu, A. (2018). US newspapers' portrayals of home invasion crime. *The Howard Journal of Crime and Justice 57*(2), 250-277.

Callanan, V. J. (2012). Media consumption, perceptions of crime risk and fear of crime: Examining race/ethnic differences *Sociological Perspectives 55*(1), 93-115.

Callanan, V., & Rosenberger, J. S. (2015). Media, gender, and fear of crime. *Criminal Justice Review, 40*(3), 322-339.

Carlson, J. (2014). The equalizer? Crime, vulnerability, and gender in pro-gun discourse. *Feminist Criminology, 9*(1), 59-83.

Catalano, S. (2010). National crime victimization survey: Victimization during household burglary. *Bureau of Justice Statistics* Retrieved from: http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/vdhb.pdf

Chermak, S. M. (1994). Body count news: How crime is presented in the news media. *Justice Quarterly, 11*(4), 561-582. doi:10.1080/07418829400092431

Chermak, S. and Chapman, N.M. (2007). Predicting crime story salience: a replication. *Journal of Criminal Justice, 35*(4), 351–63.

Chibnall, S. (1977). Law and order news: An analysis of crime reporting in the British press. London: Tavistock.

Cronin, S. (2017). Neighborhood context and media representations of crime. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Crime, Media, and Popular Culture*, edited by Michelle Brown. New York: Oxford University Press.

Davis, F. J. (1952). Crime news in Colorado newspapers. *American Journal of Sociology, 57*(4), 325-330. doi:10.1086/220967

Diadum, Ted. (2014). The complex issue of identifying suspects by race. *Cleveland Plain Dealer* Retrieved from http://www.cleveland.com/readers/index.ssf/2014/07/the_complex_issue_of_identifyi.html

Ellingson, A. (2013). The most dangerous zip codes in L.A. *Los Angeles Business Journal (L.A.Biz)* https://www.bizjournals.com/losangeles/news/2013/05/03/the-most-dangerous-zip-codes-in-la.html

Frey, W.H. (2016). White neighborhoods get modestly more diverse, new census data show. *The Avenue* Brookings Institute. Retrieved from: https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2016/12/13/White-neighborhoods-get-modestly-more-diverse-new-census-data-show/

Gill, J. (2019). The most homicide-prone ZIP codes in Houston. *Houston Chronicle* Retrieved from https://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Houston-homicide-rates-Harris-County-murders-13513660.php

Greer, C. (2007). News media, victims and crime Pp. 20-49 in *Victims, crime and society* edited by P. Davies, P. Francis and C. Greer. London: Sage.

Gruenewald, J., Parkin, W., & Chermak, S. M. (2014). Quantitative studies on media and crime. *Encyclopedia of Criminology and Criminal Justice,* 4228-4235.

Gruenewald, J., Chermak, S. M., & Pizarro, J. M. (2013). Covering victims in the news: What makes minority homicides newsworthy? *Justice Quarterly, 30*(5), 755-783. doi:10.1080/07418825.2011.628945

Gruenewald, J., Pizarro, J., & Chermak, S. M. (2009). Race, gender, and the newsworthiness of homicide incidents. *Journal of Criminal Justice, 37*(3), 262-272.

Heath, L. (1984). Impact of newspaper crime reports on fear of crime: Multimethodological investigation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 47*(2), 263-276.

Henning, A. & Frazier, F. (2019). Deadliest Area of Jacksonville Remains 32209 ZIP code. *News4Jax.* Retrieved from: https://www.news4jax.com/news/2019/01/02/deadliest-area-of-jacksonville-remains-32209-zip-code/

Hurley, J.T. (1995) Violent crime hits home: home invasion robbery. *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, June 1.

Hunter, G. (2019). Once Detroit's deadliest zip code, 48205 sees progress. *The Detroit News*. Retrieved from: https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/detroit-city/2019/09/30/citizens-cops blight-removal-reduce-violence-48205-zip-code/2364954001/

Jewkes, Y. (2004). *Media and crime*, London: Sage.

Johnstone, J. W., Hawkins, D. F., & Michener, A. (1994). Homicide reporting in Chicago dailies. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 71*(4), 860-872.

Katz, J. (1987). What makes crime 'news'? *Media Culture & Society, 9*(1), 47-75.

Koomen, W., Visser, M., & Stapel, D.A. (2000). The credibility of newspapers and fear of crime. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology 30*(5), 912-934.

Kulig, T. C., & Cullen, F. T. (2017). Where is Latisha's law? Black invisibility in the social construction of victimhood. *Justice Quarterly, 34*(6), 978-1013.

Kupchik, A., & Bracy, N. L. (2008). The news media on school crime and violence: Constructing dangerousness and fueling fear. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice, 7*(2), 136-155. doi:10.1177/1541204008328800

Lai, Y-L., Ren, L., & Greenleaf. (2017). Residence-based fear of crime: A routine activities approach. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology 61*(9), 1011-1037.

Lin, J., & Phillips, S. (2012). Media coverage of capital murder: Exceptions sustain the rule. *Justice Quarterly, 31*(5), 934-959. doi:10.1080/07418825.2012.682601

Liska, A. E. & Baccaglin, W. (1990). Feeling safe by comparison: Crime in the newspapers. *Social Problems 37*(3), 360-374.

Lundman, R. J. (2003). The newsworthiness and selection bias in news about murder: Comparative and relative effects of novelty and race and gender typifications on newspaper coverage of homicide. *Sociological Forum, 18*(3), 357-386.

Lundman, R.J., Douglass, O.M., & Hanson, J.M. (2004). News about murder in an African American newspaper: Effects of erlative frequency and race and gender typifications. *The Sociological Quarterly 45*(2), 249-272.

McManus, J. H. (1994). *Market-driven journalism*. Thousand Oaks, CA:Sage.

Miner, B. (2015). A closer look at Milwaukee ZIP Code 53206. *Milwaukee Magazine* Retrieved from: https://www.milwaukeemag.com/milwaukee-zip-code-53206/

Moscowitz, L. & Duvall, SS. (2011). "Every parent's worst nightmare": Myths of child abductions in US news. *Journal of Children and Media, 5*(2), 147-163.

Myers, D. J., & Caniglia, B. S. (2004). All the rioting that's fit to print: Selection effects in national newspaper coverage of civil disorders, 1968-1969. *American Sociological Review, 69*(4), 519-543. doi:10.1177/000312240406900403

Neely, C. L. (2015). *You're dead—so what?: Media, police, and the invisibility of Black women as victims of homicide*. Michigan State University Press.

Paulsen, D. J. (2002). Wrong side of the tracks: Exploring the role of newspaper coverage of homicide in socially constructing dangerous places. *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture, 9*(3), 113-127.

Paulsen, D. J. (2003). Murder in Black and White: The newspaper coverage of homicide in Houston. *Homicide Studies, 7*(3), 289-317.

Petersen, N. (2014). Neighborhood context and media constructions of murder: A multilevel analysis of homicide newspaper coverage in Los Angeles County. *Homicide Studies 20*(1), 25-52.

Peterson, R. D., & Krivo, L. J. (2010). *Divergent social worlds: Neighborhood crime and the racial-spatial divide*. Russell Sage Foundation.

Pollak, J. M., & Kubrin, C.E. (2007). Crime in the news: How crimes. offenders and victims are portrayed in the media. *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture, 14*(1), 59-83.

Pritchard, D., & Hughes, K. (1997). Patterns of deviance in crime news. *Journal of Communication, 47*(3), 49-67. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.1997.tb02716.x

Ridout, T. N., Fowler, E. F., & Searles, K. (2012). Exploring the validity of electronic newspaper databases. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 15*(6), 451-466. doi:10.1080/13645579.2011.638221

Rizzo, T. (2009). Murder Factory, Part 1: 64130, The ZIP code of notoriety in Missouri. *The Kansas City Star* Retrieved from: https://www.lakeexpo.com/news/top_stories/murder-factory-part-the-zip-code-of-notoriety-in-missouri/article_3bb8b205-5d6a-59ee-ae87-f0e93e93a5e8.html

Scarborough, B.K., Like-Haislip, T.Z., Novak, K. & Lucas, W.L. (2010). Assessing the relationship between individual characteristics, neighborhood context, and fear of crime. *Journal of Criminal Justice 38*(4), 819-826.

Schildkraut, J. (2017). Crime news in newspapers. In *Oxford Encyclopedia of Crime, Media, and Popular Culture*, edited by Michelle Brown. New York: Oxford University Press.

Schildkraut, J., & Donley, A. M. (2012). Murder in Black: A media distortion analysis of homicides in Baltimore in 2010. *Homicide Studies, 16*(2), 175-196. doi:10.1177/1088767912438712

Schwartz, N.S. (2019). Called to Arms: the NRA, the gun culture & women. *Critical Policy Studies* https://doi.org/10.1080/19460171.2019.1697892

Shearer, E. (2018). Social media outpaces print newspapers in the U.S. as a news source. *Pew Research Center* https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/12/10/social-media-outpaces-print-newspapers-in-the-u-s-as-a-news-source/

Shapira, H. & Simon, S.J. (2018). Learning to need a gun. *Qualitative Sociology,* 41, 1-20.

Silva, J. R. & Capellan, J.A. (2019). The media's coverage of mass public shootings in America: fifty years of newsworthiness. *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice* 43(1), 77-97.

Sorenson, S. B., Manz, J. G., & Berk, R. A. (1998). News media coverage and the epidemiology of homicide. *American Journal of Public Health, 88*(10), 1510-1514. doi:10.2105/ajph.88.10.1510

Stroud, A. (2012). Good Guys with Guns: Hegemonic Masculinity and Concealed Handguns. *Gender & Society 26*(2), 216-238.

Sudnow, D. (1965). Normal crimes: Sociological features of the penal code in a public defender office. *Social Problems, 12*(3), 255–276. https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.1965.12.3.03a00010

Taylor, R. (2014). Mass media and crime. *The Encyclopedia of Theoretical Criminology*, 1-5. doi:10.1002/9781118517390.wbetc128

Tenore, M.J. (2012). AP Stylebook updates entry on racial IDs in news stories. *Poynter.* https://www.poynter.org/reporting-editing/2012/ap-stylebook-updates-entry-on-racial-ids-in-news-stories/

Terrill, W. & Reisig, M.D. (2003). Neighborhood context and police use of force. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency 40*(3), 291-321.

Quillian, L., & Pager, D. (2001). Black neighbors, higher crime? The Role of Racial Stereotypes in Evaluations of Neighborhood Crime. *American Journal of Sociology 107* (3), 717-767.

Quillian, L. & Pager, D. (2010). Estimating risk: Stereotype amplification and the perceived risk of criminal victimization. *Social Psychology Quarterly 73*(1), 79-104.

U.S. Census. (2011). Income, poverty and health insurance coverage in the United States: 2010. Retrieved from: https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/income_wealth/cb11-157.html

Williams, P., & Dickinson, J. (1993). Fear of crime: Read all about it? The relationship between newspaper crime reporting and fear of crime. *British Journal of Criminology, 33*(1), 33-56.

Wong, J. & Harraway, V. (2019). Media presentation of homicide: Examining characteristics of sensationalism and fear of victimization and their relation to newspaper article prominence. *Homicide Studies* https://doi.org/10.1177/1088767919896391

Yuan, Y., Dong, B., & Melde, C. (2017). Neighborhood context, street efficacy, and fear of violent victimization. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice 15*(2), 119-137.

Zimmerman, G.M. & Messner, S.F. (2010). Neighborhood context and the gender gap in adolescent violent crime. *American Sociological Review 75*(6), 958-980.