Volume 7 Editor’s Note
Kenton T. Wilkinson

Acculturation Effects on Consumers’ Attitudes Toward English or Spanish-Language TV Commercials: The Moderating Role of Bilingualism
John M. Burton and Kenneth C. C. Yang

State Lawmakers and Spanish-Language Media: Developing Hispanic/Latino Issue Agendas in the States
D. Xavier Medina Vidal

Spanish, English or Spanglish? Media Strategies and Corporate Struggles to Reach the Second and Later Generations of Latinos
Viviana Rojas and Juan Piñón

Understanding News Media Consumption Among Latinos in the United States
Ryan Salzman and Catherine Salzman

The “Captured-Liberal” Model: Media Systems, Journalism and Communication Policies in Latin America
Manuel Alejandro Guerrero and Mireya Márquez-Ramírez
It is a privilege to publish Volume 7 of the International Journal of Hispanic Media, formerly the Journal of Spanish Language Media. The Thomas Jay Harris Institute for Hispanic and International Communication in the College of Media and Communication at Texas Tech University assumed stewardship of the journal in 2013, following six years of dedicated development by Dr. Alan Albarran, Ms. Christine Paswan and others at the Center for Spanish Language Media at the University of North Texas. We are grateful for their founding work and their confidence in us to carry the torch.

The journal’s name change reflects our effort to encourage and accommodate research focused on English-language and bilingual media directed to Hispanic audiences in the United States while maintaining an international orientation. We seek to publish work that employs a broad range of research methods and epistemologies while pursuing our primary objective of disseminating engaging, quality research that increases knowledge of the Hispanic and Iberoamerican media world.

Readers who are familiar with prior volumes of the journal will notice other changes besides the name and headquarters. The journal has a different look and new web and email addresses. Editorial policies have changed as well. Most notably, we will begin publishing some manuscripts written in Spanish. We also encourage the participation of industry practitioners through articles, interviews or guest commentaries. These changes are not yet reflected in the present volume, but are in process. The journal’s new digital platform also accommodates still and moving images, animation and audio. We hope that potential contributors will keep these options in mind as they consider material to submit.

The efforts of various people smoothed the editorial transition and made this publication possible. First and foremost, Dr. Sallie L. Hughes of the University of Miami, the journal’s associate editor, has worked diligently and counseled thoughtfully. I look forward to continuing our collaboration. Ms. Crystal Price developed the journal’s document management system and organized our manuscript review process, among other contributions. Mr. Drew Byrne and Ms. Clara McKenney developed the new website and meticulously formatted content. Mr. Rubén Varona and Ms. Daniela Contreras Díaz provided Spanish translations. Ms. Melissa Wofford designed promotional material and the journal’s logo. Former dean Jerry Hudson and current dean David D. Perlmutter of Texas Tech’s College of Media and Communication have provided essential institutional support for this initiative.

Of course no peer-reviewed journal survives without the efforts of anonymous reviewers who take time from their crowded schedules to provide valuable feedback on colleagues’ work. Some of the reviewers for this volume also serve on the journal’s editorial board, which provided helpful feedback during the editorial transition and name change. We deeply appreciate the board members’ contributions.

We hope that you find Volume 7 valuable, that you will help inform others about the journal and will consider submitting your own work. We welcome your comments so that we may improve the journal in future volumes.
Acculturation Effects on Consumers’ Attitudes Toward English or Spanish-Language TV Commercials: The Moderating Role of Bilingualism

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Abstract
The growth of the U.S. Hispanic population and its purchasing power over the past twenty years continues to be monitored closely by corporate interests anxious to gain market share and brand loyalty of this important ethnic segment. However, will Hispanic and non-Hispanic consumers respond differently to language used in advertising? This study focused on the historically dominant mass medium of television and explored whether acculturation theory and its sub-dimensions account for consumers’ attitudes toward Spanish and English language television commercials. Our empirical results found that ethnic identity as an acculturation sub-dimension did not predict consumers’ attitudes toward language in television commercials. However, language use and preference as an acculturation sub-dimension did predict consumers’ positive and favorable attitudes toward Spanish language television commercials. The moderating role of bilingualism, however, was not found to be statistically significant. The empirical results imply that, contradictory to what advertisers may speculate, ethnic identity as a segmentation variable may not predict how consumers will respond to television commercials.

Keywords: Acculturation, Language Use and Preference, Ethnic Identity, Attitude toward Ad Language, Bilingualism

Introduction
Since Spanish-language television began its rise to viability in the United States in the mid-1970’s and 1980’s (Albarran, 2009; La Ferle & Lee, 2005; Strategy Research Corporation, 1991; Yankelovich, Skelly & White, Inc., 1981), its competitive battle against the well-established English-language networks for a larger share of advertising revenue has been primarily waged over the fastest-growing segment of the Hispanic population – the bilinguals. Concurrent with advertising researchers cited above, the Spanish-language networks and affiliates have often claimed that English-only audiences are diminishing rapidly in many markets and are being replaced by bilingual Hispanics through more rapid acculturation (Morgan, 2011; Pardo & Dreas, 2011). Similarly, qualitative academic research also supports these arguments that the growing number of bilinguals and Spanish-dominant Hispanics are worthy of advertiser interest due to increased buying power, family size, and more active consumer behaviors (La Ferle & Lee, 2005; Pew Hispanic Center, 2003; Roslow & Nicolás, 1996; Scarborough Research, 2000-2011). Recent industry data gathered by Kantar Media also supports the growing importance of Spanish language television media, with Spanish language ad spending increasing 13.5% from January to March, showing a consecutive seven-quarter growth in double digits (Sebastian, 2013).

Many advertisers and advertising agencies fuel the belief that the optimum way to effectively reach Hispanics is in Spanish (Noriega & Blair, 2008; Strategy Research Corporation, 1991; Subervi & Eusebio, 2005; Ueltschy & Krampf, 1997). However, as the body of research on Hispanic consumers has increased, many now contend that this view is an oversimplification, claiming the best choice of language and models depends on the target audience’s level of acculturation (Lebrón, 2002). Recent immigrants, or those considered to be low in acculturation, may respond more comfortably to advertising messages in their native language. On the other hand, subsequent generations and those who move from low to high acculturation through accumulated exposure to the host culture may prefer to use the host language.

The debate over advertising language preference of bilingual Hispanics has grown in proportion to the growing influence of Hispanic consumers both in numbers and in economic influence...
throughout the U.S. Our research attempts to add some new perspective to the discussion by exploring the relationship between acculturation, language use and preference, and attitudes toward English or Spanish language television commercials. Level of bilingualism among the respondents was also explored to test its moderating effect on the relationships between acculturation and advertising language preference.

**Literature Review**

**Applying Acculturation Theory to Advertising Research**

In consumer behavior literature, acculturation is often defined as “a process by which an individual raised in one culture acquires through first-hand experiences the consumption-related values, behavior and customs of another culture” (Khairullah, 1995, cited in Ueltschy & Krampf, 1997, p.89). However, acculturation involves more than simply becoming knowledgeable of the language, norms, and values of the new culture; the process can involve a fundamental change which includes relearning the meaning of symbols, readjusting to a new value system, and letting go old beliefs, customs and behaviors (Burnam, Telles, Karno, Hough, & Escobar, 1987). Consumers who transit from monolingual Spanish to bilingualism present a unique challenge to better understand the acculturation effect on advertising language preference. Previous advertising studies have explored the impact of the acculturation process on language preference and advertising effectiveness in radio (Newton, 1986) and print (Dolinsky, 1984; Dolinsky & Feinberg, 1986; Lebrón, 2002), but language preference in the consumption of television commercials has often been ignored.

Media deregulation in the 1980s led to changes in the media landscape in the United States (Fellow, 2012; Musser, 2003). New broadcast and cable channels (such as Fox Television Network, CNN, MTV, etc.) gave viewers more options and also enabled the industry to provide segmented and targeted media contents. The changing social milieu has encouraged broadcasters to better understand different viewer segments (Musser, 2003). Previous research has presented numerous perspectives to explain why language can make a difference in the effectiveness of an advertising message targeting ethnic minorities. Feinberg (1988), for example, used slide screen media with a sample of bilingual college students to suggest that Hispanics paid more attention to ads in Spanish than in English, preferred ads in Spanish over English, and had better recall of ads in Spanish than in English. Also, the perception of linguistic similarities relies on the level of acculturation among Hispanic consumers (Deshpande, Hoyer, & Donthu, 1986; Giles, Coupland & Coupland, 1991) and acculturation is often employed to examine the perception of linguistic similarities and the outcomes on advertising effectiveness. Guernica and Kasperuk (1982) found that, in general, those Hispanic participants considered to be of lower acculturation (older, less affluent and less educated) were more likely to watch Spanish-language television than those of higher acculturation. O'Guinn, Faber, and Meyer (1985) surveyed Mexican-Americans in San Antonio on preference for Spanish-language TV over English-language TV and their discriminant analysis of multiple demographic characteristics further suggested that less acculturated Hispanics preferred Spanish-language television, as well as Spanish-language radio, movies and print media.

Based on previous literature regarding the effects of acculturation and its sub-dimensions on multicultural consumer behaviors, our study selected two acculturation variables to develop research questions.

**Language Use and Preference as an Independent Variable**

Language is an integral concept in acculturation theory and the most commonly used variable in multi-dimensional measures that assess consumers’ acculturation levels (Burnam et al., 1987; Cuellar, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995; Ueltschy & Krampf, 1997). As a sub-dimension of acculturation in commonly used acculturation scales (such as Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans/ARMS and The Los Angeles Epidemiologic Catchment Area/LAECA Acculturation Scale), language use and preference has been employed by a number of researchers as a measure of advertising effectiveness. Conceptually defined, language use is the verbal or written form of language employed in different communicative interactions and language preference is an individual’s simple choice to speak or write a particular language in different communicative interactions. Together, they help to define an individual’s level of language acculturation as a dimension of the overarching acculturation process.

Previous studies have espoused language as the most common indicator of acculturation. Using a composite acculturation index (high, medium/bicultural, or low), Ueltschey and Krampf (1997) tested, among 501 Mexican American subjects, the relationships between the levels of acculturation, positive attitudes toward print advertisements, and average recall of the ads when presented in English or Spanish with Hispanic models or characters. Using the 26-item LAECA Acculturation Scale by Burnam et al. (1987), their study found that marketers should advertise in English to highly acculturated Mexican Americans and use Hispanic or Anglo models. Hispanic Americans with lower acculturation levels can be reached more effectively by print advertisements written in Spanish and using Anglo models. Bicultural/bilingual Mexican Americans have the most positive attitude toward print ads written in English and using Anglo models, but have highest ad recall when the ads are written in English and use Hispanic models. This and other studies have demonstrated language use and preference as an important predictor of advertising effectiveness.
Ethnic Identity as an Independent Variable

Ethnic identity refers to the positive identification with indigenous cultural roots and with the use of the native tongue (Reich, Ramos, & Jaipal, 2000) and represents the degree to which one feels connected to an ethnic group (Phinney, 1989). Ethnic identity has been explored along with language use and preference as the most pertinent of “other dimensions of the acculturation process” (Ruggiero & Yang, 2005, p.2). In another exploration of ethnic identity as a significant predictor of media preference, Villarreal and Peterson (2008) found that across the media investigated – television, radio, newspapers and magazines – different sub-groups of the Hispanic population tended to generally engage the media in both English and Spanish.

Attitude toward Ad Language as a Dependent Variable

Attitude toward the ad language has been defined as a predisposition to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner to the language used. In this study, we specifically focused on attitude toward language in television commercials. Citing literature dating back to 1929, Silk and Vavra (1974) explored affective reactions or ratings of the “likeability” of advertising materials evoked by exposure to an advertising message (p. 157). We adapted Wells’ (1964) 12-item emotional quotient scale to measure an ad’s affective appeal using descriptive statements such as “This ad is very appealing to me,” “I dislike this ad” and “This ad leaves me cold.”

On the basis of the acculturation literature that found a close relationship between acculturation and affective reactions to language used in television commercials, we proposed the following research questions:

RQ1: Does acculturation affect consumers’ attitude toward language in TV commercials?

RQ1-1: Does language use and preference as an acculturation dimension affect the attitude toward language in TV commercials?

RQ1-2: Does ethnic identity as an acculturation dimension affect the attitude toward language in TV commercials?

Bilingualism as a Moderating Variable

Early communication studies on acculturation often used demographics of age, gender, education and household income, along with a variety of acculturation indicators such as years of residency, country of origin, and language preference for multiple media, to explain the relationship between acculturation and media language preference (Dunn, 1975; Guernica & Kasperuk, 1982). Bilingualism has been previously defined as the comfortable use of both Spanish and English in the communicative activities of one’s normal daily life (Barea, Torrico, Lepe, Garzon, Llorente, & Dietz, 2010). In the present study, we extended their definition to refer to bilingualism as a tendency for an individual to choose to use either Spanish or English or both in different social settings and communicative interactions during the course of any given day. On the basis of the literature review, we proposed the following research questions:

RQ2: Does bilingualism affect the relationship between acculturation and the attitude toward language in TV commercials?

RQ2-1: Does bilingualism affect the relationship between language use and preference as an acculturation dimension and the attitude toward language in TV commercials?

RQ2-2: Does bilingualism affect the relationship between ethnic identity as an acculturation dimension and the attitude toward language in TV commercials?

Methodology

Our study employed a questionnaire survey to recruit 351 participants from a large public university in the Southwestern United States located on the Texas – Mexico border. Human subjects approval was obtained from the university. The IRB-approved questionnaires were distributed in several classes to ensure quick data collection. The survey questionnaire included standard human subject protection instructions, a brief statement of study purposes, explanation of the research, an invitation to participate, and an incentive to assist with snowballing distribution to other students in return for a chance to receive a $50 gift card from a local electronics retailer.

Instrumentation

Acculturation sub-dimension scales were adapted from ARSMA, LAECA, and ARSMA-II. Seven questions measured language use and preference (3-point nominal scale – Both, English, or Spanish). Participants were instructed to select one option from the question that measured ethnic identity (5-point nominal scale – Hispanic or Latina/o, White or Anglo, Black, Asian, or Other). Attitude toward language in television commercials (or attitude toward ad language in television commercials) was measured by 5-point Likert scales anchored on Strongly Disagree and Strongly Agree). Examples of the questions include “In general, I really like TV commercials in English/Spanish,” “In general, I find TV commercials in English/Spanish to be good,” and “In general, I truly enjoy TV commercials in Spanish.” Factor analysis was conducted using Principal Component Analysis to extract two common factors: Attitude toward English language television commercials (α=0.88) and Attitude toward Spanish language television commercials (α=0.93). Bilingualism was measured by five language items indicating respondents’ preference for language at home, at...
work/school, for reading, writing, and for watching television (3-point nominal scale – Both, English, or Spanish). Pretesting of the questionnaire was conducted among fourteen university graduate students to refine the instrument for ease of use and clarity.

**Sampling Plan and Characteristics**

A total of 379 surveys were distributed and 351 surveys were returned at the end of the 9-day collection period in 2012. A total of 312 valid surveys were entered into SPSS data analysis software. Average age of the sample was 25 and gender division was 42% male (N=131) and 58% female (N=180). Eighteen students (5.8%) were between 18 and 19 years old, while 243 students were between 20 and 29 years old (78.1%). Fifty of them were above 30 years old. 16% of the sample (N=50) self-described as first generation in the U.S. and the largest percentage (54%) indicated second generation (N=169).

**Findings**

**Preliminary Data Manipulations**

The study examined the relationship between language use and preference, ethnic identity, and attitude toward ad language (in television commercials). Preliminary data manipulations were required to create composite scores from multi-item scales for acculturation variables of language use and preference and ethnic identity, and a moderating variable of bilingualism in order to test these relationships.

Derived from ARSMA-II (Cuellar et al., 1995) and Ruggiero and Yang (2005), a composite mean from seven language use and preference items was computed to form a new language variable, language use and preference (Mean=0.97, SD=0.31). The variable was then used to median split (Median=0.95) the sample into 2 groups: English dominant (means ranging from 0 to .95) and Spanish-dominant (means ranging from .96 to 2) to test effects on the dependent variables.

Participants were originally asked to self-identify their own ethnic identity (Hispanic/Latino, White/Anglo, Black, Asian, or Other). The ethnic identity item was then recoded to collapse some categories in order to create an Ethnic Identity Index. Ethnic identity was recoded into two levels of “Hispanic/Latino” and “Non-Hispanic/Latino.” As expected for the sample, a high majority (93%) self-identified as Hispanic/Latino and 7% identified as non-Hispanic/Latino.

Bilingualism was computed to produce a composite score by averaging five language scale items indicating respondents’ preference for language at home, at work/school, for reading, writing, and for watching television (Mean=0.95, SD=0.38).

**Acculturation Effects on Attitude toward Ad Language in TV Commercials**

To examine the effects of two acculturation sub-dimensions (i.e., language use and preference and ethnic identity) on participants’ attitude toward ad language in television commercials, MANOVA procedures were run. With correlated dependent variables, MANOVA was selected to run multiple tests on variance in two dependent variables simultaneously and to avoid Type I error. Results of the MANOVA found that Wilks’ Lambda for language use and preference (Wilks’ Lambda=1.46, F(2, 306)=7.91, p<.001)
Table 3: MANCOVA Model

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Hypothesis df</th>
<th>Error df</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Observed Power</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Wilks’ Lambda</td>
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<td>305</td>
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<td>.43</td>
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<td>1.19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>305</td>
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Note: *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Table 4: ANCOVA Model

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<th>Source</th>
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<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
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Note: *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

significantly predicted the difference between English-language dominant and Spanish-language dominant groups in responses to the dependent variables. However, our empirical results showed no interaction effect on attitude toward ad language in television commercials (Wilks’ Lambda = 1.00, F(2, 306) = 1.46, p > .05). Our study also showed no main effect of ethnic identity (Wilks’ Lambda = 0.95, F(2, 306) = .60, p > .05) (Refer to Table 1).

One-Way ANOVA demonstrated that language use and preference significantly predicts Attitude toward English language television commercials (F = 15.53, p < .001), but not attitude toward Spanish language television commercials (F = 0.36, p > .05). Neither ethnic identity nor interaction effects of language use and preference and ethnic identity showed any significant effects on the dependent attitudinal variables. As a result, RQ1 was only partially supported (Refer to Table 2). We further examined the descriptive statistics and found that, in terms of language use and preference, no significant difference in attitude toward English television commercials was observed between English-dominant and Spanish-dominant Hispanics (Mean English-Dominant = 4.01 vs. Mean Spanish-Dominant = 3.91). However, a significant mean difference in attitude toward Spanish television commercials was observed (Mean English-Dominant = 2.75 vs. Mean Spanish-Dominant = 3.70). In other words, less acculturated Hispanics tend to have more positive attitudes toward Spanish language television commercials than more acculturated individuals (Refer to Table 2).

Moderating Effect of Bilingualism

MANCOVA was conducted to remove the influence of the covariate, bilingualism, on the relationship between language use and preference, ethnic identity and attitude toward either English or Spanish language television commercials. The results of the MANCOVA conducted on the two independent variables did not yield any significant main effects of ethnic identity (Wilks’ Lambda = 1.00, F(2, 305) = 0.24, p > .05) and language use and preference (Wilks’ Lambda = 0.99, F(2, 305) = 2.09, p > .05). The covariate, bilingualism, yielded no statistically significant result (Wilks’ Lambda = 0.98, F(2, 305) = 2.96, p > .05). The interaction effect between ethnic identity and language use and preference was also not statistically significant (Wilks’ Lambda = 0.99, F(2, 305) = 1.19, p > .05) (See Table 3).

At the uni-variate level, One-Way ANCOVA did not observe any statistically significant relationship between language use and preference, ethnic identity, and two dependent attitudinal variables. The interaction effect between language use and preference and ethnic identity was also not found to be significant. However, a significant relationship was found between bilingualism and attitude toward Spanish language television commercials (F = 5.56, p < .05), but not between bilingualism and attitude toward English language television commercials (F = 1.11, p > .05). Therefore, RQ2 was partially supported (Refer to Table 4).
Discussion and Conclusion

Acculturation and Attitude toward Ad Language

The study explores the relationship between acculturation and attitude toward ad language in television commercials. We examined if consumers’ ethnic identity and language use and preference predict their attitudes toward ad language. We also explored if their bilingualism moderates the above relationship. As observed in our empirical data, we found that consumers’ language use and preference as a sub-dimension of acculturation influences their attitude toward ad language in television commercials, and the effect is stronger in the heritage/Spanish language than in the host/English language. There was no significant difference in consumers’ attitude toward English language television commercials between English- and Spanish-dominant groups, while a significant difference can be observed in the attitude of these groups toward Spanish language television commercials. The partial and limited support of our first research question suggests that the predictability of this acculturation variable, language use and preference, brings up both theoretical and practical implications that warrant further discussion.

First, language use and preference, commonly employed as a sub-dimension of acculturation, demonstrates consumers’ level of acculturation in the host culture. English-dominant consumers are categorized as more acculturated than those whose dominant language remains Spanish. The presence of statistical significance and numerical difference in terms of attitude toward Spanish language television commercials between the more and the less acculturated groups suggests that advertisers cannot assume acculturated/English-dominant consumers will hold a more favorable attitude toward the English language television commercials. Instead, acculturated consumers whose dominant language is English are found to perceive Spanish language television commercials more favorably than Spanish-dominant consumers.

Our results confirmed recent debates and criticism on the “uni-directional acculturation school of thought” that assumes that immigrants to the U.S. would be assimilated into the American culture in every aspect of their lives (Ngo, 2008). Ngo (2008) alleged that “the monolithic view of culture……refuses to examine the diversity within cultural groups in terms of gender, age, sexual orientation, ability and so forth.” It is likely that the more acculturated consumers, in spite of their dominant use of English in their lives, maintain awareness of their heritage and feel more affinity toward television commercials produced in their heritage language.

Hispanic marketers have attempted to understand and apply this phenomenon to create more effective advertising campaigns. The accommodation theory helps explain the favorable perceptions among Hispanic consumers when they feel that advertisers are willing to adjust their advertising campaigns to address the linguistic needs of their sub-culture (Koslow, Shamdasani, & Touchstone, 1994). In other words, in spite of their acculturation level as measured by language use and preference, Hispanic consumers are likely to be better targeted with Spanish language advertising because it demonstrates advertisers’ effort to accommodate and is likely to lead to positive perceptions and feelings of both advertisers and their advertising campaigns. Among Hispanic consumers, perceptions of the advertiser’s sensitivity to Hispanic culture are associated positively with their attitude toward Spanish advertisements (Koslow et al., 1994). Although some scholars (Platt & Weber, 1984) have warned that a sense of linguistic inferiority and insecurity among Hispanic consumers might emerge as a result of Spanish television commercials, our data from college students do not support this. For marketing communication professionals, language use and preference as a sub-dimension of acculturation is useful to understand how Hispanic consumers will respond to Spanish language television commercials.

Although ethnic identity is commonly used in advertising literature to predict consumer attitudes (Elias, Appiah, & Gong, 2011), this demographic variable is often found to generate inconclusive and non-significant outcomes. Our findings point to similar results that Hispanics’ ethnic identity does not predict their attitude toward language in television commercials. In our research, we asked consumers to identify themselves as Hispanic or Latina/o, White or Anglo, Black, Asian, or Other. We later categorized participants into two categories (i.e., Hispanic/Latino vs. Non-Hispanic/Latino). Using consumers’ self-identification to assess their acculturation level, we intended to examine the relationship between their acculturation and attitude toward ad language. Numerically, non-Hispanic/Latino consumers hold a more favorable attitude toward English language television commercials than their Hispanic/Latino counterparts; the pattern is reversed when it comes to their attitude toward Spanish language television commercials. Although the numerical variations seem to show a consistent and predictive trend that more acculturated consumers prefer English over Spanish language in television commercials, these differences do not generate statistically significant findings.

Our non-significant findings are likely to attribute to the conceptualization of this variable. Villareal and Peterson (2008) argued that there was a difference between being Hispanic and possessing Hispanicness (Hispanic ethnicity) and that the difference between the two had important media preference and behavior implications. To address this important difference, scholars have developed revised instruments to better measure ethnic identity such as Phinney’s (1992) Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure and Villareal’s (2004) Pan-Hispanic Familial Scale. These scales employed more refined categorization of the Hispanic identity to show various levels
of their acculturation. For example, Villarreal (2004) divided the sample into four acculturation groups: A-Symbolic Hispanics with relatively weak ethnic identity, Symbolic Hispanics with the strongest ethnic identity, Strong Hispanics with the second highest strength of ethnic identity, and Weak Hispanics with the weakest ethnic identity. Mean responses of the four ethnicity groups were related to 12 media preference and behavior items using both within-group and across-groups analysis. The results suggested that across the media investigated – television, radio, newspapers and magazines – the four ethnic groups tended to generally use media in both English and Spanish. Although the less acculturated Strong Hispanics group showed a slightly greater preference for Spanish-language media than the other groups, there was no strong preference by any one group for being exposed to only English-language or Spanish-language media contents. Indeed, all groups tended to watch more English-language television which proved counter to previous findings of O’Guinn et al. (1985) and others who reported that Spanish-language preferred Hispanics only tend to watch Spanish-language television. With no effect of ethnic identity on attitude toward ad language in television commercials, our study more closely aligns with Villarreal and Peterson (2008) who found no strong preference by any one ethnic acculturation group for being exposed to only English-language or Spanish-language media contents. The contradiction of findings in one study and complementary support of findings in another appear to be another example of the often conflicting nature of the ethnic identity variable as a sub-dimension of acculturation.

The Moderating Role of Bilingualism

The MANCOVA showed no significant moderating effect of bilingualism on relationship between either language use and preference or ethnic identity as independent variables and the dependent variables of attitude toward ad language in television commercials (The p-value is at .53). Measurement of bilingualism as a moderating variable was accomplished by averaging consumers’ language use at various settings and situations. Approximately 75% of respondents indicated that they used English or both English and Spanish in their daily communicative activities, indicating a high degree of bilingualism in the Hispanic sample. Therefore, treating bilingualism as a covariate in the MANCOVA enabled the researchers to assess if the relationship between two acculturation variables and the dependent attitudinal variables remain statistically significant when the effect of covariate is adjusted and removed from the model. Despite the non-significant result in the MANCOVA, the ANCOVA showed bilingualism significantly predicted consumers’ attitude toward Spanish language in television commercials. Consumers who categorize themselves as Spanish-only or bilingual hold more favorable attitude toward Spanish in television commercials, when compared with those who are English-only. Our findings are particularly useful in understanding the behaviors of Hispanic consumers who increasingly become bilingual and use both English and Spanish interchangeably. According to Google, over 30% of online media consumption is done by audiences who use English and Spanish interchangeably (Sagin, 2013). With bilingual and Spanish-speaking consumers currently controlling $1 trillion in spending power in the United States, a figure expected to grow by 42% by 2017 (Sagin, 2013), it is clearly important to better understand the moderating role of bilingualism.

The effect of bilingualism has attracted the attention of advertising scholars to examine if it will influence the processing of advertising to better persuade the audience. For example, Roslow and Nicholls (1996) presented one of the most commercially relevant quantitative studies of bilingual processing of television commercials broadcast in Spanish and English. They focused on purchase intent as the key variable and established an “effectiveness differential” to index the persuasiveness of commercial messages in Spanish and English. Their study found that ads in Spanish showed greater increases in persuasion means for Spanish-dominant Hispanics and that, even among bilinguals, Spanish ads were notably more persuasive than English ads for the same brands.

We speculate that the absence of moderating effect by bilingualism in our study may be a result of the lack of respondents’ actual exposure to an ad or ads which was an integral part of the studies cited above. In other words, we asked about their general attitude toward language in television commercials, rather than their reactions toward a specific television commercial. While language use and preference was shown to have an effect on consumers’ attitude toward language in TV commercials, it encourages the possibility for an experimental study to be conducted in the future. It is likely, therefore, that the study’s bilingualism index did not present enough dimensions of the variable to register a significant effect on the attitudinal variables.

Theoretical Implications

Drawing its measure of acculturation variables from a revised composite of three complementary scales, ARSMA (Cuellar et al., 1980), LAECA (Burnam et al., 1987) and ARSMA-II (Cuellar et al., 1995), the study provides support for previous research on acculturation as a multidimensional concept encompassing behavioral, affective and cognitive dimensions. The study builds on the legacy of earlier research on acculturation variables and scales as measures of media language preference, advertising effectiveness, and other dimensions of multicultural marketing, and extensive study of demographics as moderators of those measures.

Providing additional theoretical implications, Jun, Gentry, Ball, and Gonzalez-Molina (1994) investigated the acculturation processes of Hispanic Americans, finding that acculturation
rates appeared to be very sensitive to how the acculturation construct was measured. If the common approach of using a language usage measure was taken, there was evidence for assimilation, as language usage appears to improve in a linear fashion over time. On the other hand, a very different pattern of results was found when cultural identity was used to measure acculturation. The acculturation process starts from the heritage culture but does not proceed linearly to the host culture, as it may progress rapidly under some circumstances, or it may move backward at any time during the process.

Oberg (1960) and Penaloza (1989) presented a more cyclical process, in which the immigrant is initially fascinated by the host culture (the honeymoon stage) and then experiences a rejection stage as he/she finds that the new culture may not be accepting or that he/she does not like several aspects of the new culture. Eventually there is a tolerance stage, followed by an integration stage. The honeymoon stage and the rejection stage may occur more than once until the person (or, if the process takes generations, the person’s family) is ultimately integrated into the host culture. These interpretations may help us understand why language use and preference in our study showed a significant effect on attitude toward language in television commercials, but ethnic identity did not. The university student sample may have been at different stages or cycles of the acculturation process, which has been shown to be present when ethnic identity is used as a measure of acculturation. Furthermore, the U.S.-Mexico border region presents a unique case in studying the acculturation process because of its geographical proximity to Mexico and the minority majority environment. These environmental factors whereby Hispanic consumers constitute the majority ethnicity in the study population and the Spanish language is more widely-used compared with other regions of the U.S., warrants further exploration of these variables in our predictive model.

Managerial Implications

For marketing communication professionals, our study intends to encourage a better understanding of how to create more effective television advertising campaigns directed at Hispanics. As media technologies and consumer choices change at a rapid pace, multicultural marketers must have insights into the array of multidimensional factors affecting consumer and media use behaviors. Effective advertising messages to Hispanics would likely be enhanced by an understanding of what factors are most predictive of consumers’ attitudes toward advertised brands. And while not specifically included in the present study, use of advertising models and characters, imagery, music, symbols and other creative advertising elements that produce both cognitive and affective responses should also be considered in future studies.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study surveyed a university student population, using a convenience, non-probability sampling method. Student populations have been shown to have different characteristics than a non-student population, including demographics, language use in different settings, media use and preference, and generational proximity defined by similar age (Dolinsky, 1984; Dolinsky & Feinberg, 1986). As such, age as a moderating variable was not included in the study. University students in general are from higher socio-economic strata and U.S. university classes generally use English as the dominant instructional language. Future research should expand beyond the student population to produce a broader range of characteristics that are more representative of the U.S. Hispanic television audience, and provide a more robust and diverse sampling of age and other demographics such as generation in the host culture, number and proportion of years in the host culture, geographical location, and country of origin. Also, the study was conducted on a campus with predominantly Hispanic students. To avoid the lack of representation of the non-Hispanic population and subsequent effects on statistical results, future research should also collect data on a campus with a predominantly non-Hispanic population to generate equal and balanced sample sizes.

Previous acculturation research has used a wide variety of measures with which to explore the multidimensional nature of the topic. In this study, we treated ethnic identity as a nominal scale. However, as a consumer’s own ethnic identity is fluid and contingent upon situations such as the concept of situational latinidad (Subervi & Rios, 2005), future research should use other types of scales to better assess the effects of this important variable. Future research using additional measures of generation, ethnic interaction, country of origin, language competency and cultural behaviors would also add more dimensions to the analysis. If additional demographic variables (e.g., social class, education attainment, type of education received, employment type, socioeconomic status, and age) are included, it will provide a wider array of variables with which to explore possible interactions and provide further guidance to researchers and marketing professionals.

References


Padro, C., & Dreas, C. (2011). Three things you thought you knew about U.S. Hispanic’s engagement with media... and why you may have been wrong. The Nielsen Company.


Abstract
This study illustrates the Spanish-language media's impact on the behavior of lawmakers with large Hispanic constituencies through an analysis of the level of agreement on policy issue salience between these legislators and their mostly Hispanic constituents. I analyze original data from the Media and Public Policy in the States: 2011 Survey which reports the policy preferences of state legislators with large Hispanic constituencies and the degree to which they use Spanish-language media in their representative role. I operationalize the Spanish-language media environment as a set of independent variables affecting policy issue agreement. I find the presence of Spanish-language radio and television in state legislators' districts has independent and conditional effects on predicting issue priority agreement between lawmakers and constituents. In identifying a relationship between the presence of Spanish-language media and policy agreement among lawmakers and their mostly Hispanic constituents, I reveal evidence of the Spanish-language's function as an informational link between this population of lawmakers and their constituents along with preliminary evidence of the Spanish-language media's potential to influence Hispanic policy agendas in the states.

Keywords: Spanish-Language Media, State Legislators, Policy Issue Agreement, Issue Salience

Introduction
The Spanish-language media environment in the United States plays an important role in shaping mass- and elite-level behavior.
media’s role in facilitating policy priority agreement between legislators and constituents. Local and national media outlets help to shape dialogue and the preferences of policy elites in ways Shudson (2008) calls the media’s functions as analyst of government activity and as facilitator of political dialogue, as well as what Arnold (2004) describes as an arbiter role for opinion leaders seeking to inform and influence representatives’ policy views. In studies of the interactions between the national and local press corps and the U.S. Congress (Cater, 1959; Cook & Skogan, 1991; Trumbo, 1995; Bartels, 1996; Baumgartner, Jones, & Leech, 1997; Vinson, 2003; Arnold, 2004), the president (Gilberg, Eyal, McCombs, & Nicholas, 1980; Wanta & Foote, 1994; Wood & Peake 1998), and other national-level opinion leaders and policymakers, students of political communication have identified a strong relationship between media coverage and the substance and tone of policy agendas.

It is reasonable to expect lawmakers and other policymakers who conceptualize their representative role as that of a delegate of their constituents would reject the notion of the news media as a policy agenda setter. Yet, the news media serve an important representative function even for policymakers we might expect to have the most direct, unadulterated contact with their constituents. The information lawmakers acquire from the news media, though it reflects some combination of objective reporting and media opinion, can often be interpreted by policymakers as the reflection of public opinion—or the voice of the people—its (Herbst, 1998). Coupled with evidence that the public's evaluation of politicians is often primed on the basis of the issues advanced, discussed, and promoted by the news media (Iyengar & Reeves, 1997), the notion that the news media influence policymakers to the point that they wield considerable agenda-setting power is not far-fetched. Thus, scenarios in which policymakers adopt issues advanced in the news media and follow the news media's lead on various issues are certainly plausible (Walgrave & Van Aelst, 2006), and perhaps even prevalent. From the view that the news is an institutionalized coproduction of journalists and public officials (Cook, 1998; Vinson, 2003), I now turn to the policy issues that may be considered “newsworthy” by the Hispanic public and their state legislators.  

**Toward a Hispanic Policy Agenda**

This article is designed as a test of the theory of the Spanish-language media as an informational link between state legislators and Latino constituents, one with meaningful implications for the substantive representation of Latinos in state legislatures. In the process of developing the phenomenon under investigation here—issue priority agreement—we also learn a great deal about the policy issues of concern to state legislators and their largely Latino constituencies. While my discussion and analysis are geared toward developing an understanding of the policy priorities shared by these groups, policy preferences and priorities are typically studied empirically in isolation. In the empirical test anchoring this article's discussion I analyze only the effects of the Spanish-language media on the degree to which state legislators and their largely Hispanic constituents agree on what policy issue is most important. In this section I briefly review the evolution of Latino mass opinion on the important policy issues facing their communities and the nation before revealing findings from the MPPS survey of elite opinion of policy issue priorities.

Identifying issues that constitute a Hispanic policy agenda is a necessary first step in an inquiry into whether Hispanic state lawmakers and constituencies agree on the salience of different policy issues. Language access policies such as bilingual education and policies affecting immigrants from Latin America continue to be important to U.S. Latinos, and are perhaps most likely to be the issues that come to mind when analysts of U.S. Hispanic politics, myself included, make assumptions about the development of a U.S. Hispanic policy agenda. These assumptions are, to be sure, grounded in decades’ worth of opinion data. Historically, U.S. Hispanics have held views of policy issues that differ significantly from those of other racial and ethnic groups. Bilingual education and immigration policy are examples of policy issues where Hispanic opinion deviates significantly from the views of Whites, African Americans, and Asian Americans (Cain & Kiewiet, 1987). Latinos consistently support bilingual education while support among whites and African Americans for bilingual education programs has been less consistent (Uhlman, 1991).

Keeping in mind that Latinos and so-called “Hispanic issues” must compete with a multitude of interests to get on policymaking agendas, they can potentially be divisive. Bilingual education, for example, is a policy issue that can be interpreted as symbolic by some ethnic, economic, or national origin groups, and as a policy tied to material interest by others (Schmidt, 2000). Even on the issue of immigration, studies of Hispanic mass opinion reveal that while immigration is important to all Latinos, opinion is divided among the different Latino subgroups (Michelson, 2001).

In a recent Noticias Univisión/Latino Decisions (2012) national survey of Hispanic registered voters, the most important issues influencing Latinos’ decision of which party they would vote for in 2012 were the economy (36%), jobs/employment (25%), immigration reform (24%), healthcare (16%), and education (14%). As we will see, these top five issue priorities for a national sample of Latinos are five of the top six policy issues state legislators reported in 2011 as their top legislative priorities and the issues they believed were most important to their constituents. A dearth of knowledge about Hispanic elites’ policy preferences and priorities creates much of the difficulty in identifying Hispanic elite-Hispanic mass agreement on issue saliency, as well as a Hispanic policy agenda. What we do know about Hispanic elites’ assessments of what constitutes “Hispanic issues” is limited to a thin understanding provided by national advocacy groups’ evaluations of U.S. Congressional performance. The National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA), a nonpartisan association...
of 40 national and regional Hispanic advocacy organizations, develops and publishes annually a “Hispanic policy agenda” that covers a broad range of “Hispanic” policy issues including civil rights, immigration, economic empowerment, health, and government accountability. While NHLA asserts that the set of issues they deem important to the U.S. Hispanic community are those that “serve the [Hispanic] community,” the organization also claims that these issues “enable the community to better serve the nation” (NHLA, 2008). The NHLA also issues “scorecards” for all members of Congress, evaluating their support of legislation classified by the NHLA as a part of the Hispanic policy agenda. The National Hispanic Leadership Agenda and their scorecards are, to my knowledge, the closest analysts have come to an understanding of what constitutes a consensus Hispanic policy agenda from the perspective of elites (i.e., advocacy organizations). By focusing on issues and legislation before the U.S. Congress, the NHLA’s evaluations are directed at Latino policy matters facing the nation, but many matters included in these scorecards may be of concern only to Latino elites rather than Hispanic mass publics. Furthermore, we still know relatively little about the opinions of individual members of Congress with respect to what constitutes a Hispanic policy agenda at the national level.

The process through which constituent interests are transformed into substantive policy representation (Bratton & Haynie, 1999; Rouse, 2013) lies at the center of Hispanic policy agenda setting. In examining the factors influencing Latino interest representation at the subnational level, Rouse (2013) notes that much Latino agenda setting takes shape as a function of the institutional characteristics of state legislatures and the work of Latino legislators on important committees.

**Methodology**

**The Media and Public Policy in the States: 2011 Survey**

Motivated by the fact that very little is known about the opinions and orientations of Latino public officials at the subnational level, in spring 2011 I fielded a survey of the attitudes and policy orientations of state legislators with large Hispanic constituencies in which I inquired about the state of the Hispanic policy agenda in the U.S. states. Table 1 is a report of party and Hispanic demographic characteristics of the Media and Public Policy in the States (MPPS) survey respondents as they compare to those of their respective state legislatures.

The overall response of 100 returned surveys is 26% of the total recruitment effort in the MPPS survey. The 29 responses from non-Hispanic legislators were 20% of the 143 non-Hispanic state legislators recruited as a comparison group. The response rate of 72 surveys from Hispanic state legislators is 30% of the population of 242 Hispanic state legislators in the U.S. in 2009. These 100 responses comprise the elite survey data used in the empirical analysis.

<table>
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<th>Sample Hispanic (%)</th>
<th>Pop. Non-Hispanic (%)</th>
<th>Sample Non-Hispanic (%)</th>
<th>Pop Democrat (%)</th>
<th>Sample Democrat (%)</th>
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Table 2: District-Level and State Legislator Policy Issue Priorities (MPPS: 2011 Survey)

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Seventy-two (72%) of the survey responses are from Hispanic state legislator respondents and 29 (29%) from non-Hispanic legislator respondents. Over two-thirds (68%) of survey respondents were legislators, not legislative staff. By completing 32% of the surveys returned, constituting one-third of the sample, legislative staff made a significant contribution to this study. Nonetheless, it is also important to note that “almost without exception, staff mirror the member’s philosophy, approach, and values” (Kedrowski, 1996, p.18).

The average size of the 19 state legislatures (both upper and lower chambers combined) from which the survey respondents hail is 143 members. On average, Hispanic state legislators account for 7.7% of the total state legislator population in those 19 states. Hispanic MPPS respondents represent, on average, 87.3% of the sample in the 19 states. In the 6 states in which both Hispanic and non-Hispanic legislators were recruited, Hispanic legislators are, on average, 59.7% of the sample. Non-Hispanic legislators account for 83% of state legislators in the six states from which they were sampled. In those same six states, non-Hispanic legislators in the MPPS sample—representatives of large Hispanic constituencies—account for 40.3% of respondents.

The percentage of Democrats in the state legislatures (50%) from the 19 states represented is a lower proportion than that of the 76% of MPPS respondents who are Democrats. Although these differences in Hispanic/non-Hispanic and party affiliation potentially introduce bias to the sample, given the small, relatively homogeneous nature of the population of Hispanic state legislators, I analyze the sample understanding this potential for biases. Still, the results I present are generalizable to the population of interest, given that the key variables (e.g. Hispanic ethnicity, gender and party affiliation) are distributed similarly among survey respondents and non-respondents alike.

In the survey I asked state legislators two quasi-open-ended questions aimed at revealing their own legislative priorities as representatives in the state house and their perceptions of their constituents’ preferences. They were asked:

**Issue Priority Question # 1:** If you were serving in the state legislature during the last session, what three pieces of legislation debated during the last legislative session were most important to you?

and

**Issue Priority Question # 2:** What are the three most important policy issues affecting your district?

Although the questions were open-ended, I asked respondents to rank their answers in order from 1-to-3, thereby structuring responses in order to facilitate the current analysis of top policy issue agreement and delegate-style representation. Similar to McCombs & Shaw’s (1972) interview questions administered in the context of campaign issue importance, these questions are aimed at revealing issue importance in a manner guided by the significance of the news media to the agenda-setting process. Recording legislators’ perceptions of the policy issues affecting their districts proved to be more straightforward than coding the pieces of legislation most important to them in the previous legislative session because in several cases the latter involved the additional step of translating reported bill numbers into the substantive meaning of the legislation. Legislators—both Hispanic and non-Hispanic—reported a total of 52 unique policy issues as legislative priorities and/or district issue priorities, which are reported in Table 2. Education policy was, by a wide margin, the most frequently mentioned policy issue (117 mentions) among state legislators, followed by healthcare, jobs, the state budget, and the economy. The issues of immigration and driver licenses for undocumented immigrants occupy the sixth and seventh most frequently mentioned policy issues, while taxes, housing, and water round out the top ten issues most important to legislators and their largely Latino districts. Because the sample of state legislator respondents represent largely Latino districts in which their constituencies were on average 50.1% Hispanic, and as much as 96.4% Hispanic (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009), we might interpret these top five legislative issue preferences and perceived district priorities as the beginnings of a Hispanic policy agenda in the states from the state legislators’ perspective.

In a separate, structured survey question I asked legislators to indicate how important ten different policy areas are to their district’s constituents. The average levels of importance legislators assigned to these policy areas are reported in Figure 1. Here we observe that education, healthcare, and jobs/economy are the three issues receiving the highest average rating of importance among both Hispanic and non-Hispanic state legislators (all approaching “5” or “Very Important”), which is consistent with the top mentions by legislators in the semi-structured questions. On average, Hispanic legislators assign slightly more importance to these issues than non-Hispanic legislators. Immigration policy is of considerable importance to all state legislators; they assign an average level of importance equal to just above “4” or “Important” on the scale. On this question non-Hispanic legislators, on average, assign slightly more importance to immigration. Trade issues, agriculture, and language access earn the lowest evaluations of policy area importance from legislators. Both Hispanic and non-Hispanic state legislators assign, on average, agriculture and trade issues as somewhere between “2” (“Not Important”) and “3” (“Neutral”) with non-Hispanic legislators caring slightly more than Hispanic legislators about these issues. We see the most significant disagreement between Latino and non-Latino legislators on the issue of language access, an issue to which non-Latino legislators are virtually indifferent, but that Latino legislators find to be important. The weight assigned by Hispanic legislators and non-Hispanic legislators with largely Hispanic constituencies to this selection of
policy areas also helps us to begin identifying a Hispanic policy agenda from the point of view of Latino political leaders with the power to promote these issues to state legislative agendas.

Given the challenges of gathering valid, independent data on estimates of constituents’ issue priorities and preferences on state-level policy, this study depends on legislators’ own perceptions of these preferences. Although lawmakers’ legislative priorities are often related to the characteristics of their respective legislative institutions (including their own committee assignments) and the behaviors of their fellow legislators and other agenda setters, an important job of every lawmaker is to be familiar with district priorities and reconcile her institutional functions with her representative ones. I argue here that issue priority agreement—when a legislator’s top issue priority is the same as her perception of constituent preferences—represents the reconciliation of these functions.

Building on our understanding of the news media’s agenda-setting role (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Cook, 1998; Iyengar & Reeves, 1997; Arnold, 2004; Schudson, 2008), Latino legislative agenda setting (Rouse, 2013), the Spanish-language media’s relationship to Latino group consciousness (Kerevel, 2011), and Hispanics’ policy preferences (Uhlman, 1991; Uhlman & Garcia, 2002; Schmidt, 2000; Michelson, 2001; Sánchez, 2006; Dunaway, Branton, & Abrajano, 2010), I argue here that the Spanish-language media play an important role in facilitating agreement between state legislators’ and Latino constituents’ policy issue priorities. In what follows I present a set of research hypotheses aimed at situating this study of issue priority agreement in a broader framework, portraying the Spanish-language media as an informational link between state legislators and their constituents.

### Hypotheses and Variables

To test my argument that the Spanish-language media environment contributes to the congruence of district (constituent) policy preferences and individual state legislator policy preferences, I advance these hypotheses:

*H1a:* The presence of Spanish-language print media in a state legislator’s district has a positive effect on issue priority agreement between legislator and district preferences.

*H1b:* The presence of Spanish-language television in a state legislator’s district has a positive effect on issue priority agreement between legislator and district preferences.

*H1c:* The presence of Spanish-language radio in a state legislator’s district has a positive effect on issue priority agreement between legislator and district preferences.

Because news media effects often interact with other environmental factors, I argue that Hispanic state legislators draw upon group affinity/group consciousness (Fox, 1996; Sánchez, 2006; Kerevel, 2011) in their use of, and interactions with, Spanish-language media in ways that differ from their non-Latino counterparts in the state capitol. To test for this effect, I offer the following hypotheses of the conditional effects of Spanish-language media on issue priority agreement:

*H2a:* The effects of Spanish-language print media in a state legislator’s district on issue salience agreement between legislator and district preferences are stronger for Hispanic legislators.

*H2b:* The effects of Spanish-language television in a state legislator’s district on issue salience agreement between legislator and district preferences are stronger for Hispanic legislators.

*H2c:* The effects of Spanish-language radio in a state legislator’s district on issue salience agreement between legislator and
district preferences are stronger for Hispanic legislators.

In addition to my expectations of the independent and conditional effects of the media environmental variables, I also argue legislators’ individual behavior is central to the Spanish-language media’s effectiveness as an informational link between state legislators and Latino constituents. Building on the postulation of an informational link, it follows that we ought to observe a relationship between the amount of Spanish-language media that legislators use and the level of issue priority agreement between legislators and Latino constituents. Thus, I propose the following hypothesis:

**H3: Legislators’ frequency of Spanish-language media use has a positive effect on legislator-constituency issue priority agreement.**

**Factors Predicting State Legislator-Constituency Issue Priority Agreement**

The degree to which legislators “make present” the views of their constituents in the state capitol, and where state legislators fall in the “mandate-independence controversy” (Pitkin, 1967), both inform my conceptualization of Latino constituency representation by state legislators. In this analysis of Spanish-language media’s impact on early stages of the policymaking process, I examine Spanish-language media effects on state legislator-constituent issue salience agreement, the dependent variable. I operationalize state legislator-constituent issue salience agreement as the degree to which a legislator’s responses to **Issue Priority Question #1** matched the responses to **Issue Priority Question #2**. Thus, I estimate the level of agreement between legislators’ policy issue priorities and those of their districts by examining the top-ranked district and legislative policy issue priorities. These policy issues are reported in columns 1 and 2 of Table 2. I code top issue priority agreement—the measure of issue salience agreement between legislator preferences and perceived constituent preferences—as a dichotomous (0,1) variable, where 1 = a legislator reporting the same policy issue as the top legislative priority and top district priority, and 0 = a legislator reporting different policy issues as the top legislative and top district priorities. Thus, if the top-ranked response to **Issue Priority Question #1** is the same as the top-ranked response to **Issue Priority Question #2**, I observe state legislator-constitueny issue salience agreement—the dependent variable under scrutiny in this study. To operationalize the role of the Spanish-language media environment on agreement, I employ the following independent variables.

**The Spanish-Language Media Environment.** This paper’s central concern with the role of Spanish-language media in the development of Hispanic issue agendas among state legislators is grounded in the dual notion that the news media play an important role in shaping individuals’ information environment (Prior, 2007) and that the presence of and access to news media are essential to the interpretation of their effects on political phenomena (Mondak, 1995). I hypothesize that three types of media directly and independently affect the likelihood of state legislator-constituency issue priority agreement. To test the independent effects of the Spanish-language media environment, I operationalize the media environment as the number of Spanish-language print, Spanish-language radio, and Spanish-language TV outlets in a state legislator’s district. These are ascertained by using geographic identifiers to match the locations of the Spanish-language media outlets reported in the New America Media National Online Directory of Ethnic Media (2010), with the state legislative districts corresponding to the legislator respondents to the MPPS so as to create a virtual Spanish-language media environment for each state legislator. The average state legislator’s Spanish-language media environment consists of five Spanish-language newspapers, five (4.9) radio stations, and two (1.6) television stations.

**Hispanic Legislator.** Drawing from my postulation of the Spanish-language media acting as an informational link between state legislators and Hispanic constituents, I argue that descriptive Hispanic representation, **Hispanic Legislator**, is an important independent predictor of the relationship between legislators and Latino constituencies. Recalling that representation of largely Hispanic constituencies is a key characteristic of the sampling frame of the MPPS, the survey-based empirical work presented here is grounded in the argument that the presence of Latinos in state legislatures leads to greater welfare benefits at the state level (Preuhs, 2007), and I situate this analysis in the debate around whether descriptive representation produces better substantive representation for minorities (Mansbridge, 2000; Preuhs, 2006; Gay, 2007). Descriptively Hispanic state legislators account for 71% of MPPS survey respondents. **Hispanic Legislator** is coded dichotomously (1 = Hispanic, 0 = non-Hispanic).

**Conditional Effects Variables.** To test for the effects of descriptive Hispanic representation on issue priority agreement when conditioned by the different Spanish-language media environment indicators, I construct multiplicative interaction terms. Treating the number of **Spanish-Language Print**, **Spanish-Language Radio**, and **Spanish-Language TV** as modifying variables of the relationship between **Hispanic Legislator** and issue priority agreement yields the variables **Hispanic Legislator X Spanish-Language Print**, **Hispanic Legislator X Spanish-Language Radio**, and **Hispanic Legislator X Spanish-Language TV**.

**Frequency of Spanish-Language Media Use.** In addition to their independent and conditional effects on issue agreement, the effects of Spanish-language media on all aspects of representation and policymaking play out through the amount of Spanish-language media lawmakers use in their representative roles. In Figure 2 I report summary response data for the question in the MPPS that asks state legislators how often they make use of Spanish-language media as tools for communication.
Legislators were asked how often they use Spanish-language media outlets (1 = Almost Never, 2 = A Little, 3 = Some, 4 = Often, 5 = Very Often). The variable *Frequency of Spanish-Language Media Use* is the average frequency of use of the Spanish-language media: appearances on TV, appearances on radio, writing op-ed pieces, issuing newsletters, and issuing press releases in Spanish. From the average frequency of use of the individual Spanish-language media tools I generate a variable accounting for the average of all Spanish-language media use.

**Control Variables.** I include *Frequency of English-Language Media Use, Professionalism, Tenure* in the legislature, gender (Male), Democrat, and District Hispanic Population as statistical controls in this analysis. *Frequency of English-Language Media Use* is scored in the same manner as *Frequency of Spanish-Language Media Use*—as an average frequency of using all media tools in that language. I report the average use frequencies of individual English-language media tools in Figure 3. I include *Frequency of English-Language Media Use* as a means of identifying differences in the effects of English- and Spanish-language media on issue priority agreement.

Legislative Professionalism is the Squire Index (2007) professionalism score, which accounts for legislative salaries, benefits, time demands of service, and staff and resources. I expect legislators in more professional legislatures to present more state legislator-constituent issue priority agreement than legislators in less professional legislatures. Informed by prior evidence that the frequency with which legislators employ media tactics can be a function of the resources at their disposal (Cooper, 2002), and that media entrepreneurial legislators will use whatever tools are available to them to influence the legislative agenda (Kedrowski, 1996), I expect legislative Professionalism to facilitate legislators’ overall engagement with their constituents, and to play a positive role in informing issue priority agreement. *Democrat* is the legislator’s political party affiliation (1 = Democrat Party member, 0 = not a Democrat). Evidence suggesting that Democrat state legislators are more aggressive than their Republican counterparts in engaging their constituents via Spanish-language political communication (Medina Vidal, Ugues, Bowler, & Donovan, 2009), signals that Democrat state legislators are somewhat closer to their Hispanic constituents’ interests. With this in mind, I have a cautiously optimistic expectation for Democrat legislators to be more likely than Republicans to have issue priority agreement with their constituents. *District Hispanic Population* is the percent Hispanic population of a legislator’s district, *Tenure* is the number of years the legislator has served in the state legislature,
and Male is the legislator respondent’s gender (1 = male, 0 = female). In a delegate model of representation, we might predict a positive relationship between District Hispanic Population and issue priority agreement. Further, the positive relationship between state Latino populations and descriptive Hispanic representation in state legislatures (Casellas, 2009) leads me to reasonably expect a positive association between District Hispanic Population and issue priority agreement.

**Model Specification and Results**

With the dependent variable Top Issue Priority Agreement coded dichotomously, I specify a probit regression model of estimates for predictors of state legislator-constituent issue priority agreement with standard errors clustered by state. The results of a probit model specification are reported in Table 3. Recalling the hypothesized positive relationships between the Spanish-language media environment variables—the numbers of Spanish-language print, television, and radio outlets in a legislator’s district—we observe mixed results from the estimation of their independent effects on issue priority agreement. In the base model, the presence of Spanish-Language Radio ($p < .10$) and Frequency of Spanish-Language Media Use ($p < .01$) have positive and statistically significant effects on issue priority agreement. In the full model specification, beginning with the presence of Spanish-Language Print media in a legislator’s district, we observe a positive, albeit not statistically significant, effect of this Spanish-language media environment indicator. However, the other media environmental indicators, the presence of Spanish TV-Language and the presence of Spanish-Language Radio, do have statistically significant independent predictive effects on policy agreement between state legislators and perceived constituent priorities. The statistically significant effects of the presence of Spanish-Language TV ($p < .05$) and Spanish-Language Radio ($p < .01$), however, suggest the presence of reliable evidence in support of my hypothesized relationships between Spanish-language media presence and legislator-constituent issue priority agreement.

I find support for Hypothesis $H_{1c}$, which predicts a positive effect of Spanish-Language Radio presence on legislator-constituent issue priority agreement. However, the statistically significant independent relationship between the Spanish-language media indicator, Spanish TV, and issue priority agreement is negative, and thus opposite my theoretical expectation that more Spanish TV presence contributes to issue priority agreement. Thus, I find no support for Hypothesis $H_{1b}$.

Using CLARIFY software package tools (Tomz, Wittenberg, & King, 2001) on the probit model specification, I estimate the predicted effects (probabilities) of the two statistically significant Spanish-language media environment predictors of issue priority agreement, Spanish-Language Radio and Spanish-Language TV. To interpret the predicted effects of Spanish-Language Radio

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$‡ p<.10$, $* p<.05$, $** p<.01$; standard errors clustered by state. SE in parentheses

Source: Media and Public Policy in the States: 2001 Survey,
presence on top issue priority agreement, I offer Figure 4, which illustrates the probability of issue priority agreement increasing as the number of Spanish-Language Radio outlets available to state legislators increases. The solid black line illustrates the predicted probabilities of issue priority agreement with the Spanish-Language Radio condition for a legislator in the full sample of legislators with a 95% confidence interval represented by the spikes. The red dashed line illustrates the predicted effect of the number of Spanish-Language Radio outlets for Latino legislators, which goes from about a 20% probability of issue priority agreement at two Spanish-Language Radio outlets to about an 85% probability at 12 outlets. The blue dotted line illustrates the predicted effect for a non-Latino legislator, which tapers off significantly when the number of Spanish-Language Radio outlets goes above 12 outlets.

Recalling my expectation set forth in Hypothesis H1b of a positive effect of Spanish-Language TV presence on issue priority agreement, I find that the number of Spanish-Language TV outlets does have a statistically significant effect on agreement, but that this effect is negative. In Figure 5, an illustration of the predicted effects of Spanish-Language TV presence on the probability of issue priority agreement, we see this negative effect at play for a legislator in the partial Latino sample and for a legislator in the sample of non-Latino legislators. The strongest effect of Spanish-Language TV presence on the likelihood of issue priority agreement between legislators and constituents is when there is one Spanish-Language TV outlet in a legislator’s media environment. Among legislators with one available Spanish-Language TV outlet, there is a 40 percent probability that their top legislative priority is the same as the policy issue that is most important to their district’s constituents. The addition of a second, third, fourth, and fifth Spanish-Language TV outlet to the media environment, however, pulls this probability closer to a zero probability, or a null effect of Spanish-Language TV presence on issue priority agreement. As with the effects of Spanish-Language Radio presence on issue priority agreement, the predicted effect of Spanish-Language TV presence on the probability of top issue priority agreement is generally higher for a legislator in the Latino sample than for one in the non-Latino sample.

While a media environment that includes Spanish-language media is essential to the effects that Spanish-language media can have on politics, I also allow space in this analysis for individual legislator behavior to play a role in informing our understanding of the Spanish-language media’s effects on legislator-constituent issue priority agreement. In the full model reported in Table 3 we observe Frequency of Spanish-Language Media Use having

**Figure 4: Predicted Effect of Spanish Radio Presence on Issue Priority Agreement**

**Sources: Media and Public Policy in the States: 2001 Survey, CLARIFY.**

**Figure 5: Predicted Effect of Spanish Television Presence on Issue Priority Agreement**

**Sources: Media and Public Policy in the States: 2001 Survey, CLARIFY.**
a positive and statistically significant effect ($p < .01$) on issue priority agreement, suggesting evidence in support of my prediction in Hypothesis $H_3$. As a measure of the average use frequency of five types of Spanish-language media tools (Figure 2), an increase in Frequency of Spanish-Language Media Use predicts a higher probability of issue priority agreement. In Figure 6 I illustrate the probability of issue priority agreement more consistently than non-professional legislatures, I anticipated the independent effect of legislative Professionalism on agreement to be positive. Instead, Professionalism in the multivariate probit model of issue priority agreement (Table 3) has a negative and statistically significant ($p<.05$) effect on agreement. The independent predicted effects of Professionalism on issue priority agreement evident in Figure 7 illustrate this negative association. The 70% probability that a legislator in the least professional legislature in the sample (New Hampshire) achieves issue priority agreement is nearly 10 times greater than the probability of agreement for a legislator in the most professional legislature (California). Finally, and also contrary to my expectation, the probit model reveals a Democrat legislator to be less likely ($p < .10$) than a GOP counterpart to exhibit issue priority agreement.

Turning to the effects of the Spanish-language media environment on issue priority agreement when conditioned by whether a legislator is Hispanic, I construct multiplicative interaction terms—Hispanic Legislator X Spanish-Language Print, Hispanic Legislator X Spanish-Language Radio, and Hispanic Legislator
Spanish-Language TV—of the different Spanish-language media environment indicators (Spanish-Language Print, Spanish-Language Radio, and Spanish-Language TV) and Hispanic Legislator and, as we observe with the independent effects, the results are mixed. Without a statistically significant finding for the effects of Spanish-Language Print media presence on issue agreement in the Spanish-Language Radio environment, the marginal effect of “Hispanicness” on agreement with changes in the Spanish-Language TV environment decreases as Spanish-Language TV presence increases. However, these marginal effects become negative with an even less-robust Spanish-language TV environment, when the number of Spanish-Language TV outlets is two or greater. Still, I find support for the conditional effects hypothesis, \( H_{2b} \), and evidence that Spanish-Language TV presence affects the relationship between descriptive Hispanic representation and issue policy agreement.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

**Understanding Legislator-Constituent Relationships through the Spanish-Language Media**

As a study of legislator-constituent issue priority agreement, this analysis informs our understanding of Spanish-language media’s role in shaping the interests and preferences of state legislators and their constituents. Beyond exploring the relationships among the state legislators’ policy preferences, constituent preferences, and the media, this paper also contributes to our understanding of early-stage Hispanic policy agenda development in the states. Specifically, the evidence presented here suggests that the policy issues U.S. state legislators and their Latino constituents deem important are well within the
“mainstream” of public opinion. With education, healthcare, jobs, the economy, and immigration policy at the top of legislators’ policy priority lists, and their perceptions of Hispanic constituents’ priorities—as reported in the MPPS—we can begin to envision an agenda of important issues for U.S. Hispanics.

The empirical findings I present here reveal that Spanish-language radio and television outlets play a significant role in driving agreement between lawmakers’ legislative priorities and the policy issue preferences of their constituents. We discovered that the likelihood of issue priority agreement increases when more Spanish-language radio stations are available to legislators and their constituents. Having seen Spanish-language radio play a critical role in mobilizing Hispanics toward political protests of proposed reforms to immigration policy (Félix, González, & Ramírez, 2009; Barreto, Manzano, & Rim, 2009), we can use this new understanding of Spanish-language radio’s effects on driving issue priority agreement to suggest that state lawmakers might share the views of the Latino public. Further, given that Hispanic and non-Hispanic legislators alike use Spanish-language media tools—including Spanish-language radio—we might begin to develop some expectations that state legislators could be similarly mobilized by Spanish-language radio to take action on an issue like immigration policy reform and other issues important to potential Hispanic voters. The finding that the presence of Spanish-language television has a strong independent effect on issue priority agreement between state lawmakers and their constituents only at low levels of television presence is less encouraging. Further, the null finding of print media effects in the statistical models suggests evidence of the general decline of print media influence. This presents an interesting puzzle worthy of further inquiry given that since 1990 the most dramatic increase in the presence of Spanish-language media in the United States has been among Spanish-language newspapers. From 1990 to 2010 there was a nearly ten-fold increase in the number of these publications (New America Media, 2010). The fact that Spanish-language print media presence has grown is quite impressive given that it took place in spite of the economic crisis that began in 2008 and led to a significant number of newspaper organizations closing or consolidating their operations. Thus, this set of distinct effects among different Spanish-language media remind us that because of the unique qualities of these media, their effects should not be compared wholesale (Graber, 1990).

Beyond identifying the independent effects of Spanish-language media presence on issue priority agreement, I find evidence suggesting that the degree to which state legislators use all Spanish-language media tools is a good predictor of coherence between their top policy preferences and what they perceive to be the most important issues facing their constituents. I find that legislators who use the Spanish-language media often are nearly four times more likely to experience issue priority agreement. This identification of a strong relationship between Spanish-language media use and issue priority agreement suggests that the more state lawmakers use Spanish-language media tools, the more they seem to be in touch with their constituents’ policy concerns. Looking only at Hispanic state legislators, the evidence of a strong effect of Spanish-language media use and issue priority agreement suggests that Latino state legislators may be using the Spanish-language media as a proxy for Latino public opinion in a manner similar to legislators substituting news media reporting of public opinion as true public opinion as described by Herbst (1998). This relationship between Spanish-language media use and issue priority agreement also contributes to the view that Spanish-language media serve as an important informational link between lawmakers and their constituents.

In treating the Spanish-language media environment as a feature of the information environment that conditions the effect of descriptive Hispanic representation on issue priority agreement, I find that the presence of Spanish-language radio and Spanish-language television does, in fact, have an intervening effect on issue priority agreement. However, the marginal effect of descriptive Hispanic representation on the likelihood of issue priority agreement is positive only at lower levels of Spanish-language radio and Spanish-language television presence in legislators’ districts.

Finally, although outside the framework of the Spanish-language media’s independent and conditional effects on issue priority agreement, my discovery that legislative professionalism suppresses the likelihood of policy issue agreement contributes to our understanding of Hispanic representation in the U.S. states. Research about institutional design in the states playing an important role in predicting levels of Hispanic descriptive representation in the statehouses suggests that the Arizona and California legislatures’ designs are most conducive to achieving descriptive representation for Hispanics, while the New York state legislature is among the least conducive (Casellas, 2009). As MPPS survey data from 19 different states show, an important institutional characteristic of state legislators, legislative professionalism, plays a significant role predicting an important aspect of substantive Latino representation—policy issue agreement among Latino lawmakers and their largely Latino constituents. Whereas Casellas (2009) identifies the California and Arizona legislatures as most similar in their favorability to Hispanic descriptive representation, I identify these states—because of their very different levels of legislative professionalism—as potentially very different in the level of Hispanic substantive representation they provide through issue priority agreement. If we were to use only institutional arrangements to predict Hispanic substantive representation, the effects of professionalism on issue priority agreement I identify here actually predict New York and California as less likely than Arizona to yield issue priority agreement and, thus, meaningful substantive policy representation for Hispanics. While I do not argue here that the institutional characteristics of state legislatures are unreliable predictors of substantive
representation, this finding suggests the area is still fertile ground for studies of Latino representation in U.S. state legislatures.

While indicative of Spanish-language media’s significant role in predicting agreement among state lawmakers and their constituents as to what policy issues are most important, the findings herein suggest that we are still at an early stage of understanding the policy preferences of state legislators—Latino and non-Latino alike—and of the impact that Spanish-language media have on the development of state legislative agendas. This area of investigation is fertile ground for more in-depth analysis of these phenomena. To be sure, a more refined study of issue priority agreement would match Hispanic preferences and attitudes gleaned from public opinion data matching the preferences and opinions of state legislators, under the same media environment conditions, and at the same time. To my knowledge, a single study meeting all these criteria does not exist. Here, using available resources, I present findings indicating that we are moving in the direction of a comprehensive understanding of unified policy agendas as envisioned by Hispanic public officials and Hispanic constituencies. My approach in this initial effort to advance an understanding of Hispanic policy agenda development is grounded in the notion that, just as the mainstream media inform policy agendas, the Spanish-language media play an important agenda-setting role for Latino public officials and the Latino public.

The findings presented here raise the question of whether the Spanish-language media are the best venue through which Hispanic lawmakers and the Latino community can come to agreements as to what constitutes a “Hispanic agenda” to promote in the statehouses. To be sure, a deeper analysis of Spanish-language media’s agenda-setting effects on elite- and mass-level agreement regarding salient issues requires investigation into the print and broadcast messages that reach Latinos in Spanish. Another meaningful way of advancing our understanding of Spanish-language media’s agenda-setting effects is via a content analysis of these media’s coverage of statehouse politics. Other questions concerning the direction of the relationship between Spanish-language media, Hispanic constituencies, and state lawmakers, which are commonly of concern to observational media studies, can be addressed through an experimental lens. Here I present evidence of a significant relationship between the Spanish-language media and the degree to which state lawmakers’ policy issue priorities match those of their largely Latino constituencies. Highlighting Spanish-language media's function as an agenda setter, I explore the relationships between the Spanish-language media environment and the policy issues state lawmakers deem as important to the Hispanic community. The relationships I identify contribute to an appreciation for Spanish-language media's potential effects on policymaking at varying levels of access to these media, and for the media role’s as an important social institution linking Hispanic constituents with their political representatives.

Endnotes

1 The terms Hispanic and Latino are used interchangeably in this article.
2 Descriptive statistics for the dependent, independent, and control variables in this analysis are reported in the Appendix.

References


### Appendix: Descriptive Statistics

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*Sources: Latino National Survey, New America Media, Media and Public Policy in the States: 2011 Survey*
Abstract
The shifting demographics of Latino populations in the United States, coupled with television strategies of narrowcasting and the search for new niche markets, have opened the possibility of commercially exploiting the rising yet underserved young bilingual and bicultural Hispanic audiences. These commercial strategies have defied a long-established dichotomy along linguistic lines represented by Spanish-only language media and English mainstream media. The fact that 40% of Hispanics are below 21 years old clearly defines a desirable market of young bilingual-bicultural Latinos, triggering the creation of new television networks. This paper discusses the emergence and growth of mun2 (NBC/Comcast), NuvoTV and Tr3s (MTV/Viacom) as they position themselves in the changing field of the U.S. Latino television. The new networks offer a competing cultural and commercial hybridity by presenting an array of Latino identities that until recently had been neglected and unexplored in network television.

In this article we discuss the roles that language and culture play in the market strategies developed by mun2 (NBC-Telemundo), Tr3s (MTV-Viacom) and NuvoTV (SíTV Media) to target young Latino or Hispanic audiences. In this comparative analysis we argue that these networks have engaged in the construction of bilingual and bicultural audiences with linguistic models that break away from the traditional Spanish/English language binary established several decades ago by Univision and Telemundo. The main focus here is on the linguistic strategies developed by the new cable networks as they connect to larger issues of cultural identity, biculturalism and cultural hybridity. We suggest that these networks are helping manufacture a new Hispanic bilingualism which is heavily supported by the resources and long-term strategies developed by the parent companies in their quest to reach Latinos. This is the case of mun2 and Tr3s which belong to global conglomerates. NuvoTV, as we will...
discuss below, offers a more dynamic model to address young Latinos which is characterized by continuous changes in the programming and a strong presence of Latino celebrities (e.g. Jennifer Lopez) in marketing and programming decisions. The article starts with an industry analysis of transformations in the Latino television field, continues with a discussion of the role of English and Spanish on Latinos' cultural hybridity and concludes with an analysis of five reality shows to illustrate the bilingual and bicultural modes of representation used by the networks. Throughout the analysis, we discuss the new opportunities presented by these networks in terms of Latino agency, negotiation and resistance. We argue that the new networks—through competition and market fragmentation—are providing opportunities to represent Latino/a identities previously neglected in U.S. Spanish and English-language television.

The Newcomers

In the past 13 years we have witnessed the creation of LATV2 (2001), mun21 (2001), NuvoTV3 (launched in 2004 as SiTV and renamed as NuvoTV in 2011), Tr3s4 (formerly MTV Tr3s in 2006), Fusion5 (2013), and El Rey6 (2013). These fairly recent networks—whether independently owned or properties of global conglomerates—have expanded the spectrum of television programming for Latinos with alternative discourses, focusing more on cultural hybridity, as compared to content presented by Univision and Telemundo or the Latino-themed programming on English mainstream networks (Piñón, and Rojas, 2011). In this study we focus specifically on mun2, Tr3s and NuvoTV, leaving for future analysis the networks Fusion (ABC News/Univision) and El Rey (Troublemaker Studios/Univision) which launched in October and December 2013, respectively. More data on the performance of the latter two networks must become available before we can evaluate them effectively.

During the past decade, the bilingual networks have struggled to position themselves in the Latino market niche and to obtain advertising. Experimentation with formats, genres and name changes have characterized the initial years when the networks sought to define the exact dose of cultural hybridity and bilingualism they would incorporate into their programming. Some networks, such as LATV, went from having a bilingual orientation in 2001 to being a mostly Spanish-language network in the course of six years. In this new scenario it becomes relevant to ask: What types of Latino representations are these networks delivering? To what degree do these networks provide alternative and competitive programming for U.S. Latinos? What image or version of the audience do these networks have in mind when developing their programming strategies? What types of linguistic flexibility do they use in their programming? We argue that in the commercial construction of the new Latino audiences, the emergent networks have taken a more flexible position on language use, spreading their programming and advertising across the linguistic spectrum. Code-switching between English and Spanish language within shows, in advertising, and even in telenovela dialogues, is a normal occurrence. Mixing English words into Spanish, or vice versa, appears to be “a deviation from the traditional industry practice of advocating for the superiority of Spanish over English language among Latinos” (Chávez, 2013, p. 9). However, departing from Spanish as the central marker of cultural distinction is part of the new scenario of post-network television and the newly defined Latino audiences. Chávez’s (2014) concern for understanding “how the nature of competition changes when language is not the defining characteristic of the Hispanic market” is central to our problem (p. 40). It appears that the new networks are addressing the linguistic complexity of U.S. Latinos and, consequently, have developed more flexible positions on language.

The pan-ethnic model long espoused by Univision and Telemundo, based on one language and one culture, and characterized by a “transnational and transcontinental approach to Hispanic culture,” is revealing some cracks (Dávila, 2001). The model remains strong, but the Hispanic broadcasters are now forming alliances to create their future English-language audiences beyond immigrants and Spanish-speakers. The Latino television field is in constant flux and it seems relevant to question and investigate how these new networks are appropriating the cultural space created in the intersection between Spanish- and English-language media. We see networks testing programming and changing lineups from one season to the next in a continuous effort to align content with imagined audiences’ interests. And without underestimating the power to represent and to “institutionally define the Latino audience” (Chávez, 2013, p. 11; Ang, 1991), we see in these transformations an opportunity to include other Latino identities that have previously been neglected and unexplored in network television. Culture, specifically the Latino culture—and not the Spanish language—is now at the center of the Latino television battlefront (Dávila, 2000).

In order to understand the growth and cultural positioning of these networks, we first need to discuss the larger television environment they operate in and, in some cases, their connections with parent companies.

A Blossoming Latino-oriented Television Industry

Paradoxically, one of the most telling aspects of the increasing Latino-oriented television industry’s growth and vitality is the emergence of the English-language and bilingual national television networks. They are challenging the hegemony of the Spanish-language networks but, at the same time, they are creating opportunities to expand their reach by luring audiences away from the mainstream television networks. Some of the new networks broadcast in English but are still catering to Latinos with themes and topics rooted in the culture. Following demographic
trends and marketing research, the industry is eager to access the growing English-speaking and bilingual young Latino population. Drawn by U.S. Census numbers\textsuperscript{10}, and supported by marketing research on the evolving Latino audience profile, the television industry is working on developing new televisual modalities to address but, most importantly, to successfully attract and engage Latina/os. Although in 2014 the ratings of bilingual and English language Latino-oriented networks lagged far behind their Spanish-language and mainstream English counterparts, the challenge to the industry is clear: Broadcasters have to be effective in appealing to the new Latino demographics and must produce a marketable space of bicultural and bilingual televisual Latinidad.\textsuperscript{11} This will expand the advertising space in which Hispanics can be addressed in both languages.

These new corporate linguistic ventures need to be situated within the overall expansion of the Hispanic television industry, which as stated above, is still under the hegemonic control of Spanish-language television. During the 2000s, the growth and viability of the Spanish television networks were cemented by increasing ratings, in contrast to the shrinking numbers for their English language counterparts. The rise from two to seven national broadcasting\textsuperscript{12} television networks underscores the still hegemonic role of Spanish language media as the main driver of televisual Latinidad\textsuperscript{13}. However, the push for new linguistic and cultural approaches in the construction of new markets has also been embraced by powerful Spanish language media corporations and global conglomerates such as NBC-Comcast (owners of Telemundo & mun2), Disney/ABC & Univisión (owners of Fusion), Twenty Century Fox (owner of MundoFox & Fox Deportes), Viacom/MTV (owners of Tr3s), and TimeWarner (owner of CNN en Español and HBO Latino) which see increasing opportunities among the younger, bicultural and bilingual Latino populations. All of these corporations have developed localized English or bilingual cable networks and programming for Latinos (Piñón & Rojas, 2011).

The entry of transnational media corporations based in the U.S. and Latin America to the Hispanic TV market has been accentuated through the launching of new networks and/or acquisition of significant shares of the largest Spanish language broadcasting networks: NBC bought Telemundo in 2001; TV Azteca established Azteca America in 2001; Univision (while still under Televisa's partial ownership) launched UniMás in 2002; Vme was unveiled in 2007 and later acquired by the Spanish group Prisa in 2009;\textsuperscript{14} Liberman Broadcasting Inc. launched Estrella in 2009; and MunfoFox was established by Twenty Century Fox and Colombia-based RCN in 2012.

While the Spanish-language broadcasting television industry became more populated in the last decade, Univision still holds a decisive hegemony over the market followed by distant second-rated Telemundo. In 2012, Univision and UniMás (formerly Telefutura) had a combined 70 percent of the U.S. Spanish-language television share. Telemundo followed with 22 percent, and Estrella TV, Azteca America and MundoFox had a combined 7 percent (Piñón, Manrique, and Cornejo, 2013). By June 2013, Univision had the extraordinary achievement of becoming the most watched U.S. network in any language among 18-to-49-year-old viewers (De la Fuente, 2013).

Mapping the transformation of U.S. Spanish-language television, Wilkinson (2002) has identified three main media-industrial stages: the first phase, from 1961 to 1985, marked the period in which Univision (formerly SIN) launched and grew to a national network under the leadership of Mexico's Televisa. During the second phase, from 1986 to 1992, Televisa was forced to divest from Univision under allegations of illegal ownership, during which time Hallmark Cards Corp. owned the company. The third phase started in 1992, when Televisa returned to Univision in partnership with Venevision, and with Jerrold Perenchio as the major investor. As these ownership changes occurred, Latino advocacy groups resisted the repeated transfer of Latino-oriented media companies to non-Latino and/or foreign owners. Advocates fought for greater Latino visibility on camera and off, as well as for the construction of a Pan Latino identity reflecting the population's multiplicity of talents, national cultures and accents.

We argue that the transition to a fourth phase began in 2001, and continues today with a twofold media development: first, the incorporation of U.S. Latino media into the portfolios of global media corporations, which flourished first with cable networks, and was later cemented by NBC's acquisition of Telemundo in 2001. Second, fragmentation of the Latino television offering, with narrowcasting strategies that enabled the rise of bilingual and English language networks (Piñón and Rojas, 2011). While the authenticity of English speaking Latina/os has largely been questioned by Spanish language television executives, ad agencies, sponsors and advertisers, the rise of the bilingual networks expands the horizon of Latinidad. Wilkinson (2002) argued that in Spanish language television struggles for visibility and representation among Hispanic subgroups were based on ethnicity and national origin. In contrast, in the bilingual and bicultural networks, these struggles are located in linguistic and cultural hybridity, which is contextually more fluid. Thus, the inclusion of second and third generations of English speaking Latinos to the corporate strategies of the Latino-oriented television industry established the conditions for a new battle in which the reconfiguration of a bilingual Latinidad is at stake, although largely shaped by commercial incentives.

**Language and Cultural Hybridity**

With slogans such as “Speak English, Live Latin” from SíTV (now NuvoTV), the new networks are trying to reach the U.S.-born Latino/a demographic (Ordoñez, 2005). The imagined audience is constituted by the children of immigrants who are
fluent English speakers, are unlikely to view Spanish television and who feel underrepresented by English-language television (Moran, 2011). Broadcasters and marketers have developed typologies to describe different segments of this young bilingual-bicultural population and locate them according to their degree of acculturation\(^5\) to the U.S. society (e.g. Americanizado, Nueva Latina, Bi-cultural, Hispano and Latinoamericana) (Jacobson, 2011). In all of these categories, language is a marker of cultural identity but it does not exclusively define Latinos. Values, religion, history, traditions, music and food, among other factors, are part of Latinos’ cultural hybridity. Latinos are bicultural and can be multilingual, but may not be bilingual. Many bilingual Latinos can “move fluidly between not just Spanish and English, but also the standard and vernacular varieties, a movement that is call *translanguaging*”\(^6\) (García, 2009, cited in Sayer, 2013, p. 63). The Spanish language provides a connecting bond among first generation Latinos. However, what ties second and later generations “is the common experience of being the children of Latina/o immigrants, not necessarily the Spanish-language, although they may use it too” (Moran, 2011, p. 47). Ethnic loyalty—or the commitment to ethnic heritage—is promoted by parents and grandparents who practice dual-cultural socialization with their children (Padilla, 2006). However, the maintenance of a bicultural lifestyle originates with the individual who pursues it by choice and often sees the original culture “as a benefit rather than a liability” (p. 479).

Having a bicultural identity also encompasses cultural links to different social codes or languages. It is well documented that many Latinos lose their Spanish language competency (language attrition) by the third generation (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Bean & Stevens, 2003; Rumbaut, 2011). Ninety-six percent of third generation Mexican Americans (with both parents born in the U.S.) prefer to speak English at home (Rumbaut, 2011). Scholars agree that it is the second generation that defines the form of assimilation to the mainstream culture, and also embraces bilingualism to different degrees (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Rumbaut, 2011). According to Burrows (2010), bilingualism is a byproduct of language contact and is typically developed by second-generation immigrant families (p. 57). Language contact inevitably brings language change and may create tensions in largely monolingual societies which struggle to reserve a mythical pure form of the dominant language, such as Standard English, and distrust any attempt to promote bilingualism or the use of other languages, like Spanish in this case (Burrows, 2010; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Scholars report that bilingualism “is most likely to be a stable feature of Hispanic American identity rather than a step along the way to English monolingualism” (Linton & Jimenez, 2009, p. 985). The growth of bilingualism in the United States has resulted from a large influx of Spanish-speaking immigrants; the transnational ties among immigrants, their children and other family members; and the labor-market rewards for being bilingual (p. 985). Even though there are national and institutional forces working against bilingualism, researchers argue that other factors counterbalance the “fears about non-English languages tearing […] the American national fabric” (p. 986).

### Language Mixing and the Valorization of the Vernacular

When two cultures enter into contact, their languages also experience changes over time, and whenever different language speakers share social settings for extensive periods of time, the two languages will mix to some degree (Stavans, 2000). The extensive use of Spanish in the predominantly English-speaking U.S. Southwest represents a case of “language contact” although it is unclear whether Spanish will gain or lose vitality in relation to English in Latino communities (Sayer, 2008, p. 95). The mixing of English and Spanish in the borderlands has resulted in a quotidian practice of a mixed language – Spanglish—used mainly by Mexican American bilinguals (p. 95).

In spite of its widespread use, scholars argue that it is not clear whether Spanglish “is a dialect, a variety, or even a new hybrid language” (Sayer, 2008, p. 97). Some think that Spanglish is “an interlanguage or an Anglicized Spanish dialect” (Ardila, 2005, p. 61). Others see it as a corruption of Spanish and English, a “linguistic pollution” or “the language of a ‘raced,’ underclass people” (Dávila, 2001, p. 168). The fusion of English and Spanish can assume three main forms: borrowing nouns and verbs from English and/or Spanish (i.e. troca, líder, wachear, parquear\(^7\)); switching from one language to another between or even within sentences; and mixing the grammar of one language with the words of another (Sayer, 2008, p. 97). Placed in a continuum, Spanglish operates between monolingual Spanish speakers on one extreme and monolingual English speakers on the other, alternating the main language base, i.e. Spanish as a superstrate with English influence or English superstrate with a Spanish influence (p. 98).

Languages convey power and ideologies. Flores and Yúdice (1990) state, “Latino identity is mediated and constructed through the struggle over language” (p. 59; see also Flores, 1993, 2000 for the role of language in Puerto Rican identity). When Latinos use language in their everyday lives—their “interlingual border voice”—they are challenging what Flores and Yúdice call the “monocultural dictates of the official public sphere” (p. 60). After race, language is a domain in which Latinos negotiate value and attempt to contest institutional discrimination. Relegated to the private sphere by the current sociopolitical structure of the U.S. and together with other matters such as sexuality, body and family definitions “becomes the semiotic material around which identity is deployed in the public sphere” (p. 61). For Anzaldúa (2007), ethnic identity cannot be separated from linguistic identity—which she subsumes in the statement “I am my language.” She asserts, “Until I take pride in my language,
I cannot take pride in myself” (cited in Flores & Yúdice, 1990 p. 73). Language, then, is a tool of resistance and negotiation and is crucial for self-worth and self-determination (p. 73).

The linguistic flexibility exhibited by the new television networks may not have this citizenship focus, as discussed by Yúdice and Anzaldúa, and they may not address all the possible discursive positions of Latinidad (“the state of being Latina/o” as described by Laó-Montes & Dávila, 2001). Linguistic flexibility does, however, expand the spectrum to include other cultural dynamics not represented in Hispanic TV before. The networks are moving beyond language to capture Latinos’ cultural hybridity. Yes, it is another strategy of corporate cultural commodification, but this time practiced by media actors who are new to the field and are pushing the traditional actors to expand their reach and participate in the cultural struggles to represent Latinos.

Migration and language contact have gained Spanglish more visibility, and controversy as well. It is commonly perceived as a “bastard jargon” with neither gravitas nor a clear identity (Stavans, 2000). Spanglish has been accused of corrupting the standard or “real” Spanish and blamed for holding children back and condemning them to second-class citizenship (Sayer, 2008). Sayer states that in the linguistic sense “there is no such a thing as a ‘pure’ language” (p. 96), adding that sociolinguistics have long taken a relativistic approach: “No language is better or worse than another, and all languages are equally capable of expressing whatever their speakers need or want to express” (p. 96). Sayer concludes that from a sociolinguistic perspective, “languages don’t ‘get corrupted,’ they simply change” (p. 96).

Spanglish, which is highly controversial in educational settings, is being celebrated on the Latino bilingual networks and, to an extent, in Latino trade magazines and media publications. Writers capture the new bilingual-bicultural context in their headlines and texts and with phrases such as “playful Spanish-English fusion,” “bilingual reality,” “biculural can-do” and “Planet Spanglish.” The following headline summarizes the emphasis on cultural hybridity expressed through language: “Dr Pepper learns how to speak a third language: Soft drink’s Vida23 targets biculural youth with Spanglish effort” (Wentz, 2009). We have seen that language is central to the cultural hybridity process (mestizaje) in which Latinos are simultaneously assimilating and resisting their integration to the new society. Scholars see Spanglish both as a communication strategy linked to their hybrid identity (Betti, 2011) and as an “ideological contestation” of dominant language ideologies (Martínez, 2013, p. 276). From this perspective, the bilingual-bicultural networks appear to display a multicultural project that, in spite of its commercial nature, still allows some spaces of agency to specific actors represented in the networks. Recognizing and valuing linguistic hybridity is also a focal point in new research trends in multicultural education (Sayer, 2008).

García-Canclini (1995) used the term hybrid cultures to comprehend the complex social, political and cultural dynamics between processes of modernization and tradition that produce the discontinuities of a multi-temporal heterogeneity in Latin America. He underscores the key role of the “transnationalization of symbolic markets and migration” in the processes of detrerritorialization that have profound impacts on the transformation of contemporary culture (1995). The rise of a bilingual Latinidad speaks to the hybrid nature of this new cultural formation, and the “loss of the ‘natural’ relation of culture to geographical and social territories, and, at the same time the partial territorial relocational of old and new symbolic productions” (García-Canclini, 1995, p. 229). Considering the heterogeneity of the U.S. Latino population, Spanglish is also a diverse phenomenon that has developed unevenly in different areas of the country. Some scholars argue that Spanglish is part of a larger phenomenon, the globalization of Spanish, as reflected in a decision by the Real Academia Española (RAE) to include Estadounidismos in the 2014 edition of its dictionary (Bazán-Figueras & Figueras, 2014).

In many ways, the rise of the bilingual networks seems to follow these complex new hybrid cultural processes. On one hand they “relocalize” young U.S.-born Latinos within the industry’s new category of “bilingual audience” as a market to be exploited and, on the other hand, they create and use a “new television lexicon” on the basis of language hybridity—Spanglish—that reflects current cultural dynamics and tensions among the diverse geographic, national and racial Latino groups and their identities. To some extent, the contents of the new networks, while driven by profits, demographic trends, and shaped by their specific corporate structures and ownership, are also the reflections of this “multi-temporal heterogeneity;” one in which language and cultural diversity play central roles. From this perspective, cultural and linguistic assimilation is not understood as a linear process, but as a discontinuous, multi-temporal and heterogeneous process across different Hispanic populations in the U.S.

Manufacturing Hispanic Bilingualism

The programming strategies and brand identities of the Spanish-language television networks are heavily dependent on their parent corporations and their links to transnational Latin American corporations. Historically, Univision has been heavily dependent on programming from Televisa which, over the years, has been a full or partial owner of the network (Wilkinson & Saragoza, 2012). Even more profound is Azteca America’s dependence on TV Azteca for programming and production formats (Piñón, 2011). MundoFox shows a similarly structural dependency, relying on the programming from its parent corporations and subsidiaries such as Colombian network RCN, FoxTeleColombia and Twenty Century Fox. Finally, Telemundo follows a different path of dependence. The network relies heavily on NBC’s structural support to enhance its own production and
help the conglomerate reach global audiences (Chávez, 2013).

Similarly, the surge of English and bilingual television networks has been shaped by their own corporate structures and institutional relations with the Hispanic television industry. The brand identities and marketing strategies used by the new bilingual networks have been largely defined by the know-how (expertise) and programming resources of their parent corporations and specific media owners. Examples can be seen in the programming lineup of mun2 (owned by NBC-Telefúndido), in the branding and genre-oriented programming of Tr3s launched by MTV in 2006, and the linguistic and programming approach of NuoTv, which has its roots in the programming produced by independent producer SITV, which became a national cable network in 2004. Access to resources from parent companies, (e.g., talent, industry professionals, successful formulas, programming, technology, facilities and financial support) is central to the new bilingual Latinidad being forged by the networks.

If we look at the brand identity and programming offer of mun2 in contrast to Tr3s, we find a very distinctive television content, primarily resulting from their positioning within their parent companies, NBC-Telefúndido and Viacom-MTV respectively. For instance, MTV Tr3s has been part of a large transformation process whereby MTV has reimagined itself as a global network with localized versions around the world. While the MTV brand was launched with great fanfare to global audiences, initially in a mostly homogeneous fashion (Banks, 1997), the necessity to localize and adapt to audience tastes around the world triggered one of the most interesting and widespread localization efforts of any network. MTV’s localization process strikes a balance between English-language anchors, music and programming versus local language content, according to the socio-cultural and economic conditions offered by each market (Fung, 2006). Viacom’s experience with MTV around the world is reflected in the network’s strategies to access U.S. Hispanics as a unique form of localization within national borders. As part of this internal localization process, Tr3s went through several name changes and brand identities before targeting bicultural-bilingual Latinos. In 1999, it was introduced as MTV S, only to be renamed MTV en Español in 2001, and then, become MTV Tr3s in 2006 (Del Moral, 2006). When Viacom acquired Más Music later in 2006, the network was renamed Tr3s (Higgins, 2006; Mahmud, 2010). Tr3’s long transformation has also been affected by the multicultural template MTV uses which, in turn, permeates and enhances the new bilingual approach of Tr3s. The casting and programming strategies targeting young multicultural Americans through music and reality TV seems to fit very well the multicultural and bilingual landscape of the new Latinidad pursued by Tr3s, as discussed below. Thus, the network’s diet of reality shows and select music videos reflect the ideas, casting template, and narratives already pursued by the MTV brand. Particularly, the reality TV subgenre of “docu-series” in Tr3s’ shows such as Quiero mi Baby, Quiero mis Quince or Quiero mi Boda—discussed below—follows the cultural template and formula established by My Sweet 16, or 16 and Pregnant, Teen Mom. Thus, the ethnic and cultural modalities of the shows broadcast on Tr3s are preceded by production decisions made to fit the multicultural global template of MTV. The successful MTV template for multicultural shows is the foundation from which bilingualism—with English predominance—arises as a natural fit for the kind of linguistic Latinidad produced by Tr3s. Locating the Tr3s studios in Miami helped produce a specific bilingual and multicultural Latinidad while also strategically positioning the MTV brand within the preferred node of connection with Latin America.

Similarly, as indicated above, the resources of the parent companies NBC and Telefúndido shape the bilingual content proposed by mun2. Telefúndido’s decision to move mun2 from Miami to Los Angeles in 2005 marks a distinction between the two NBC-affiliated networks. Two major reasons prompted the move: first, the technological infrastructure mun2 enjoys at NBC-Universal Studios clearly indicates how the parent company’s assets can shape the fate of a new bilingual network. Second, the cultural and linguistic advantages offered by Los Angeles, a multicultural and multinational market in which the majority of a large Latino population is of Mexican descent. This underscores both the crucial role of Mexicans as an audience for the new network, and the opportunity to benefit from the largely bilingual-bicultural character of this population.

The cultural template of Latinidad offered by mun2, then, is heavily influenced by Telefúndido’s position as a Spanish language network and as a regional broadcaster with strong connections to Latin America. While mun2, like Tr3s, has followed a trend of music videos and reality TV as part of the network programming diet, mun2 has relied heavily on Telefúndido’s Spanish-language telenovelas, with English subtitles, to fill up the weekday schedules. The Mexican-origin population represents 63% of all U.S. Hispanics (U.S. Census, 2010), and based on that demographic reality, Telefúndido consistently introduces content elements that resonate with the Mexican audience (themes, narratives, music, filming locations or casting decisions), particularly in fictional production. Sometimes the shows allude to the Mexican experience in the United States. In contrast, primetime schedules at mun2 reflect a Latinidad largely grounded in the Mexicanness of its intended audience, with shows such as Larrymania, I Love Jenny, Chiquis and raq c, and Chiquis ‘n Control, among others. These reality shows reflect the Mexican-American audience’s influence at the network. However, the content strategies followed by mun2, not only reflect the corporate and location resources of this bilingual network; they are also an example of how “television networks have necessarily reconstituted Latino identity in ways that correspond with their expanding portfolios” (Chávez, 2013, p. 11) Figure 1 describes the perceived cultural identity that shapes the type of bilingualism shown in Tr3s and in mun2.
In contrast to the corporate origins of mun2 and Tr3s, NuvoTV was born as an independent production company in 1997 under the name of SÍTV. Founded by Jeff Valdez, a Mexican-American native from California, SÍTV produced English-language programs targeting Latinos. Valdez saw that English-speaking and bilingual Latinos of second and later generations were not addressed by either mainstream or Hispanic television networks. SÍTV is credited with developing the first all-Latino cast speaking English with *The Brothers García* broadcast on Nickelodeon from 2000 to 2004. The lack of English-language programming oriented to Latinos triggered the idea of launching SÍTV as a network in 2000, but the financial support did not materialize until February of 2004 (Schodolski, 2004). By that time, mun2 and MTV en Español were already on the air. However, among the new networks SÍTV can be credited with creating the most English-intensive approach which departs from the bilingual—mostly Spanish-oriented—approach of the competing networks. In terms of content, SÍTV focuses more closely on the reality of U.S-born Latinos and their cultural hybridity.

SÍTV (NuvoTV) started with investments from larger cable and satellite companies (such as Time Warner Cable and EchoStar Communication) as well as several private equity investors. The fact that SÍTV lacked a parent media corporation shaped its development of a more aggressive and distinctive in-house production. In the first years of SÍTV, Jeff Valdez produced shows such as *Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner* (2004), *The Drop* (2004), *The Rub* (2004), *Urban Jungle* (2005) and *Unacceptable Behavior* (2006). However, the network also depended on other providers of English language programming geared to Latino audiences to fill its schedule. This was the case of independent producer American Latino TV, the production arm of AIM-Tel-A-Vision, which produced *LatiNation* and *American Latino*. Jeff Valdez left his production post in 2006 to direct Quepasa, a bilingual Latino-oriented website then, in 2007, joined Moctezuma Esparza at Maya Productions, a new independent production house. Valdez remained as chairman of SÍTV until 2009 when he left the network. In 2011, SÍTV was rebranded and named NuvoTV, and in 2012, Jennifer Lopez took over, and her production house, Nuyorican, assumed a larger role in the creation of news shows for NuvoTV. The network balances in-house and outside programming produced by other independent networks such as Original Media (e.g. *LA Ink, Miami Ink, NY Ink*; Stage 3 Productions with *Curvy Girls*), and 51 Minds Entertainment (*House of Joy*). As this article went to press the network was increasingly reliant on cable television programs showcasing Latinos in leading roles like *Dexter* from ShowTime, *The Shield* from FX, and *Anjelah Johnson* from Comedy Central. NuvoTV uses a more mainstream programming strategy that targets not only Latinos but also English-dominant audiences in general.

While the marketing discourses of the new television networks and their television brands tout the ideas of bilingualism and an English savvy audience, this cultural-linguistic reality is clearly demonstrated by the bilingual continuum chart which provides “a general idea of the range of language mixing subsumed under the label *Spanglish*” (Sayer, 2008, p. 98). In this chart bilingualism is built across two opposing extremes from monolingual Spanish to monolingual English, with a variety of linguistic positions in between. Sayer uses the term superstrate (base or matrix language) to indicate the language that contributes more syntax and lexis explaining, “it is a sociolinguistic term used to describe the generator language of a Creole” (p. 98). The first line in Figure 2 provides the range of Spanglish, from a code-switching perspective, which includes the grammatical union of matrix and embedded languages (p. 98). The second line expands this range to monolingual Spanish and English because for some linguists Spanglish is broader than code-switching (p. 98). The new networks’ linguistic and cultural offering can be located within this continuum as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2 identifies how the bilingual networks position themselves within the linguistic spectrum. LATV has become predominantly a Spanish-oriented network with a strong reliance on the
bicultural environment. NuvoTV has aggressively embraced an English-language only approach to Latinidad. Located in-between, with subtle but important differences, mun2 and Tr3s occupy a mostly bilingual approach in which mun2 relies more on Spanish and Tr3s on English, even though both employ Spanglish as their most distinctive characteristic.

**Cultural Hybridity and Reality TV: From Mainstream to Niche Networks**

Reality TV is a basic programming staple for young television audiences, and we found an important presence of it in the new bilingual networks' offerings. The lineup of these networks offers a variety of reality TV (RTV) subgenres such as gamedoc, which focuses on competition; docusoap that follows the “real” lives of regular people or famous people; and makeover shows which aim to transform the physical appearance or improve the psychological well-being of individuals (see Murray & Ouellette, 2009; Orbe, 2008). Celebrity based shows are particularly prevalent on these networks.

In Tr3s’ programming lineup we find the docusoaps *Quiero Mis Quince* and *Quiero Mi Boda*. In these shows, both the cultural variety of the Latino experience in the U.S. and linguistic diversity are exposed as teenagers and brides, usually from the second or third generation, negotiate the preparation of these important social events with family, friends and distant relatives. Although focused on the cultural frictions right before the quinceañera or the wedding day (e.g. battles over the dress, cake or music selection), the shows offer representations of cultural hybridity that respond to the broader model of global multiculturalism promoted by MTV. Cultural clashes become more evident when the bride and groom belong to different cultural groups, sometimes forces the couple to conduct two wedding ceremonies to please each side of the family. In one episode aired in 2011, Juan, a Mexican-American born in Guadalajara, met strong resistance from the Indian parents of his fiancé Swati first to approve their wedding, and later to plan the ceremony. The bride’s father could not cope with the idea that it would not be an arranged marriage with an in-group member (“You know we always have arranged marriages in our families”). The groom’s mother could not accept that he would not have a Catholic wedding. The couple’s conversations are stressful because he is torn between her requests “this is between you and me and not our parents” and his mother demands (“Bueno Juan Pablo, te vas a tener que poner un poquito fuerte pues no todo puede ser la tradición de ellos. Y tu qué? Y tu familia qué? Y tus amistades qué? Y tu cultura qué?”). All dialogues between Juan and his parents and friends were presented in Spanish with English subtitles, while the statements from the Indian family were all in English with Spanish translations. However, when Juan narrates the story for the audience, he does so in English and Spanish subtitles appear. Code-switching flows throughout the show, allowing both English and Spanish speakers to follow the story. Juan’s pleas for cultural blending did not sit well with either family, and the couple resorted to having two different weddings enacting both cultural traditions. In spite of the stress they experienced, they concluded that this outcome would help them to achieve a successful integration in their married life.

The mun2 programming lineup is filled with productions already aired by Telemundo, such as telenovelas and series that are subtitled in English. Music television is central to the audience strategy with major emphasis given Caribbean and regional Mexican music. The latter expands beyond music videos to several reality shows in which the dialogues are bilingual but the music is generally in Spanish. Following the corporate strategy of Mexicananness (see endnote # 20), both mun2 and Telemundo have afforded high visibility to regional Mexican music in music videos, musical events, interview shows and other programs. The conflation between Mexican music and themes permeates the programming offered by both networks. For example right after Telemundo’s nightly newscast, there is a 30-minute segment featuring news from Mexico. Also, the prime time sports program Titulares y Más always showcases a Mexican singer or banda, usually playing norteño, conjunto or grupero music. Mexican music is also inserted in the telenovelas as part of the dramatic plot (e.g. *Marido de Aquiler*). The high visibility of Mexican music in mun2 and Telemundo programming allows for spaces of political agency and also disruption of typical industry definitions of what is or should be considered Latin music (Pacini Hernández, 2007). The reality show *The Twins* portrays the efforts of the twin brothers Adolfo and Omar Valenzuela, born in Sinaloa and raised in Los Angeles since the age of 14, to transform their city into a production hub for regional Mexican music. The show not only highlights the crossover of several Mexican singers which became famous first in Southern California before conquering the Mexican market (e.g. Thalia, Paulina Rubio, Jenni Rivera) but it also gives insights into the profound transformations that have occurred in music production for Latinos. The Twins navigate through the protagonists’ lives as they produce new hits, discover talent, prepare for upcoming concerts or radio interviews, and make dramatic business decisions. The brothers switch back and forth between English and Spanish changing the linguistic code throughout the show. Subtitles are included only for their statements in English. In a public relations release, mun2 declared that the show’s goal was to “put Mexican regional music front and center and take the experience beyond a half-hour Saturday show” (Martinez, 2010). Flavio Morales, senior vice president of programming and production, acknowledged that mun2 had to do some tweaking “as associating a brand with a genre that is often times related to drugs, violence and illegal immigration is no easy task” (Martinez, 2010). Some aspects of the Valenzuela brothers’ businesses, such as a controversial clothing line featuring shirts with images of guns and the names of drug lords, had to be eliminated. *The Twins* has produced such successful artists as Paulina Rubio, Calle 13, Jenny Rivera and La Banda del Recodo in addition to other regional...
Mexican bands such as Los Buitres de Culiacán, Sinaloa, El Chapo de Sinaloa and El Komander, participants in El Movimiento Alterado, a musical trend related to narco music which started in Sinaloa, Mexico. As immigration issues surfaced in 2006, the brothers focused on producing pro-immigrant protest songs featuring the biggest names in the genre. As they posed it, “We decided we needed to get together to make a musical statement about what’s happening in this country” (cited in Kun, 2006).

Similarly, Larrymania, a reality show on mun2 centered on the life of singer Larry Hernández, also contains spaces to negotiate the immigration experience in the United States. Hernández was born in Los Angeles and raised in Sinaloa, Mexico, since age four. In season 1, episode 10, at a concert recorded live in Las Vegas, Hernández addressed the audience saying “A todos los gobiernos, y a todas las personas que están atrás de un escritorio haciendo leyes para no dejarnos trabajar, que ching……tu madre”26 Larry Hernández, who sings corridos, ballads and other genres such as bachata delivered record ratings to mun2 in 2012—the largest audience for any original program among adults 18-49 and the largest audience for any reality show premiere in key demographics, according to Nielsen Research. Commenting on the success of Jenni Rivera and Larry Hernández, the general manager of mun2, Diana Mongollon, stated, “they are business people and they understand the TV platform really well…it’s a win-win, for our brand but also in terms of what their goals are in expanding and launching new businesses” (Cobo & Cantor-Navas, 2013, p. 31). In this commercial manufacturing of a bilingual Latinidad, the networks are not only experimenting with language use, but also with cultural referents as to what constitutes Latinidad. Quiero Mis Quinces and Quiero Mi Boda always portray characters living in transnational and multicultural spaces in which the Latino/a character is always in tension regarding values, traditions and geographical spaces. In The Twiins and Larrymania, the central topic is using Mexican regional music as space for dialogue and internal cultural consumption among Mexicans and Mexican-Americans. This is one more site of the many places provided by Telemundo to strategically enact Mexicanness (see also Premios Billboard de la Musica Mexicana)

NuvoTV produces reality shows, but also buys a significant amount of programming. As discussed above, not having a parent company could put the network at a disadvantage as regards production costs. However, by being independent, the network can test more programming and be more adaptable to change from one season to the next. This is the case of the celebrity show Pastport that was broadcast for only one season in 2012 and was subsequently archived. In a series of six shows, NuvoTV explored the transnational connections that U.S.-born Latino celebrities have with their parents’ homeland. The shows used varying combinations of English and Spanish, depending on the competences of the artists and celebrities portrayed. The main focus was on children’s encounters with their parents’ culture of origin and the ensuing reflection processes when the main characters interacted with the new location. Language, cultural identity, family connections and reconnections are the main topics. The first episode presented the case of Nicole Di Rocco, owner and designer of Nicolita, an apparel and fashion industry located in California. Di Rocco was depicted during her first trip to Cuba in the company of her younger sister and her parents who had not returned to the island since Castro’s revolution. She wanted to explore “what [it really mean[s] to be Cuban, because that’s who I am.” Besides the emotional aspects of her parents’ re-encounter with the homeland, she reflects on how the trip will help her “figure it out what it is that I feel missing in my life...It’s like all these crazy emotions and feelings…I don’t feel complete, because I’ve never been.” Di Rocco also discusses the loss of Spanish and the peer pressure to not speak it at school “cause it’s embarrassing.” Her mother agreed, “that’s the peer pressure they felt on the school side, but we wanted to still keep our culture, which I felt [was] the only identification they had.” Nicole Di Rocco closes the episode reflecting on the importance of making the trip to Cuba: “What I found was myself….Now that I’ve been, I can embrace my culture and I can embrace my heritage. And now, I just, I really do feel complete.”

Carlos Alazraqui, an American actor, comedian, impressionist, voice actor and singer is featured in episode 3 of Pastport. Born to Argentinean parents in New York, Alazraqui moves comfortably in both languages and cultures. However, he acknowledges that growing up in Concord, California, “a White suburban neighborhood,” nobody called him Carlos—“they called me Carlos sup, los man, Carlos.” He said his parents stopped speaking Spanish when he was a kid because the prevalent attitude at the time was, “you better not speak Spanish to your kids in the house because they’ll grow up with funny accents; they’ll have trouble learning English.” He says “growing up was a bit schizophrenic, Am I Argentine?, Am I American?, Who am I man?” Alazraqui highlights a sense of ethnic pride when he states that the biggest reason he goes to Argentina “is because I want my baby to be proud that he or she has a Latin American background. And then, when our baby is born, to bring them back again to say this is your people, this is your family, this is where you come from.”

The stories of Di Rocco and Alazraqui, which were mainly told in English with Spanish subtitles, share a core similarity with the other four celebrities presented in the series. They are all children of immigrants and they exist in transnational spaces in which they negotiate their bicultural identity. Family connections, language use, ethnic pride, sense of belonging, but above all, identity questions permeate these one-hour shows. The characters—all second generation immigrants—always examine their cultural hybridity and what it means to be American, Cuban, Argentinean, Colombian, Panamanian, Venezuelan and Puerto Rican. The series is available on NuvoTV’s website under the label “classics,” but as this article went to press it was not clear whether the network would develop another season.
Conclusions

The Latino media environment is changing at a fast pace, aided by the rapid growth of the Latina/o population (through both birth rate and immigration), which according to the 2010 U.S. Census grew almost four times faster than the U.S. population. In contrast with previous decades, the big driver of Latinos’ growth is births as immigration slowed following the economic downturn beginning in 2007. In 2012, almost a quarter of the nation’s births were to Hispanic women (Lilley, 2013). As a result of this population growth, Hispanic purchasing power is surpassing one trillion dollars (Waldman, 2012). This has triggered increased interest from corporations and media conglomerates eager to participate in this progressively more valuable Hispanic market. Both Spanish and English language media target Latinos and, in the 2010s, a group of networks have created a new hybrid proposal in which English and Spanish are mixed in their Latino-oriented programming. This linguistic strategy deviates from the monolingual Spanish-language networks’ traditional effort to target recent immigrants and their families. It also deviates from the mainstream media, which pursue assimilationist approaches in terms of language and culture. The bilingual networks are targeting the cultural and linguistic realities of many young Latinos who constantly move between two languages and operate in two cultural worlds. Language continues to be a cultural identity marker, but the networks have developed new strategies which focus not only on language, but the cultural hybridity that connects Latinos. As Fernando Gaston, the brand manager of Tr3s stated, “in the Hispanic world there is no division between English and Spanish...our programming is not based on language...it’s about what connects with our public” (cited in Cobo & Cantor-Navas, 2013, p. 29). We are witnessing the disarticulation of the traditional binary of English or Spanish language media, and the incorporation of linguistic variations that more closely reflect the acculturation processes of second and later generation Latinos, as well as the experience of immigrant children growing up in the United States. The battle is not over the language per se, because there is room for any combination of Spanish and English in the programming as we described above regarding the range of Spanglish. The competition is to create products that are culturally relevant to younger audiences, and each network is developing cultural and linguistic formulas that are likely to evolve over time. In an environment where the majority is bilingual and more than half of Latinos speak English very well, the use of Spanish “[is] not a clear-cut solution anymore” (Cobo & Cantor-Navas, 2013, p. 28). Broadcasting in Spanish is no longer a unique “profit of distinction” (Bourdieu, 2000) for the Spanish-language networks. Expanding the linguistic range carries implications not only for the TV industry in general, but also for Hispanic advertising firms which may find “new opportunities to compete with general market agencies to create advertising in English” (Chávez, 2014). The negative net migration from Mexico (in 2012) and the accelerating growth of U.S.-born Latinos have profound implications for marketers. The majority within this young population—the current mean age for Latinos is 27 years old—is going to be bilingual and bicultural. This is what is pushing the trend towards bilingualism, and consequently towards biculturalism, in the media.

The multichannel TV environment has opened new possibilities to target bicultural and bilingual Latinos through narrowcasting. While the programming at networks such as mun2 or Tr3s is shaped by the commercial goals of parent companies, the shows have created spaces for Latinos, whether as producers or talent, to exercise a certain level of agency—within the boundaries defined by the media structures. Such agency is defined by the very structures that have been set up for Latinos commoditization. In contrast, the commercial Latinidad presented by NuvoTV emerges from the efforts of an independent production house marked by the vision of its founder Jeff Valdez and the new leadership of Jennifer Lopez. While lacking a corporate parent places the network in a more precarious position, it also allows NuvoTV to more aggressively target English-speaking Latinos, bypassing Spanish to focus on cultural elements connecting younger generations. Across these networks, we found spaces for transgression and resistance within the analyzed shows. However, a more comprehensive comparative analysis, including the El Rey network, would provide a clearer picture of how language articulates with culture in Latino-oriented cable networks.

The efforts of global media corporations to reach young U.S. Hispanic acculturated and bilingual audiences mimics the processes of localization deployed for specific audiences around the world. In both cases, the corporations create opportunities to develop new hybrid cultural products. Even though the networks rely heavily on proven formats, media corporations such as MTV/Viacom and NBC/Comcast offer culturally-distinctive new content that departs from the English-only and Spanish-only language cultural routines in order to attract an elusive bilingual audience. These corporations are invested in the process of creating and shaping new markets based on their executives’ assumptions about the cultural and social character of their imagined audiences (Havens, 2002) while at the same time they work under a logic of profit maximization. With the exception of NuvoTV, these emergent networks depend on the programming, formats and expertise of their parent companies, which ultimately ends up shaping the varieties of cultural hybridity offered in their programs. However, the need to deliver programming that is relevant to bicultural-bilingual Latinos, albeit in the context of a highly commercialized process, offers areas of opportunity and visibility for a long-excluded sector of the Latino population. The fact that second and third generation Latinos have become the majority among U.S. Hispanics provides the context for larger representation in television. However, the representations, the genres in use, and the space they occupy in the programming mix are anchored to large discursive formations in specific social contexts (Mittell, 2001). In this study we focused on reality TV and music as the primary spaces to explore the perceived
cultural hybridity of young Latino audiences. We found spaces of resistance, but we acknowledge that the manufacturing of a linguistic and cultural hybridity also provides opportunities to exploit Latinos’ commodified hybrid bodies for global consumption, as argued by Valdivia (2004). The emergent cable networks discussed in this paper are exploring which social, economic and cultural resources they require in order to challenge the hegemonic positions of dominant English and Spanish language networks. Instead of attracting audiences away from Univision and Telemundo, they have acted as the catalyst for these networks to embark on the larger project of conquering audiences in Spanish and English simultaneously to keep their hegemony.

A more comprehensive study of the programs offered by the networks to embark on the larger project of conquering audiences in Spanish and English simultaneously to keep their hegemony. Uncompromising with the Spanish language, these networks have acted as the catalyst for these networks to embark on the larger project of conquering audiences in Spanish and English simultaneously to keep their hegemony.

Endnotes

1 In this article we use the terms Latina/o and Hispanic interchangeably. We are aware that both labels have contested histories and that some scholars have criticized the term Hispanic for its economic and institutional origin (U.S. census-sanctioned category). However, as pointed by Dávila (2001), Hispanic/Latino are commonly used in the advertising/marketing industry as well as in Latino media scholarship.

2 Considered one of the pioneers in bicultural youth broadcasting, LATV was launched in Los Angeles, California in 2001 with a target audience of 12-to-34-year-old Latinos. Its initial identity of bilingual and English-language cable network has given way to a more Spanish-based programming. Since 2007, LATV is distributed throughout the United States and Puerto Rico; programming includes multi-genre music, film, entertainment, sports, drama series, variety shows, journalistic programs and infomercials.

3 Mun2 is a national cable network owned by NBCUniversal/Comcast Corporation, which is aimed at young Latinos. It was launched in 2001 as the sister network of Telemundo. Originally, the channel was called GEMS (launched 1993) which was known as the Latino version of Lifetime. The channel was rebranded in 2001 and its programming changed to attract both the Latino and the English language market. The network labels itself as “the preeminent voice for bilingual (YLAs) Young Latinos Americans” (Hispanic Tips, 2010), and “the lifestyle cable network for today’s cultural connectors (C2s)-bicultural Latinos 18-34”... “that amplifies the Latino experience...” (Mun2 cable, n.d.).

4 NuvoTV is the new name of SITV, an independent production company launched in 1997 to create English-language Latino-themed programming. In 2004, SITV became a cable television network catering to 18-to-34-year-old English speaking Latinos. In 2012, the network was relaunched as NuvoTV with a premier partnership with American entertainer Jennifer López who is in charge of the creative production and marketing of the network through her production company Nuyorican Productions.

5 Tr3s is the localized version for U.S. Latinos of the global brand MTV, owned by Viacom. Tr3s describes its philosophy as the product of three cultures: Latin American, American and U.S. Latino. The network was launched in 2006, when MTV En Español evolved from a Spanish language musical channel to MTV Tr3s with a bilingual approach and was revamped in 2010 as Tr3s. The network is targeting 12-to-34-year-old bilingual Latinos with a pop-urban rock format.

6 Fusion is a news and lifestyle English-language cable network for Latinos and millennials (15-34 years old) launched as a joint venture between ABC News and Univision Communications. The network began broadcasting on October 28, 2013.

7 El Rey is an English-language general entertainment network, launched on December 15, 2013 by Robert Rodriguez in a deal with Comcast Corporation and Univision. El Rey targets second and third generation bilingual Latinos who speak English as their primary language.

8 Nielsen ratings for 2012-2013 indicate that during primetime, mun2 ranked third among the cable networks for Latinos after Galavisión and Discovery en Español, with a daily average audience of 39,000 viewers. Tr3s was ranked eighth while NuvoTV did not make the listing.

9 Latino-oriented television is a broader concept compared to Spanish or Hispanic television. It includes all Latinos independently of their linguistic competences in Spanish or English. It is more inclusive of the cultural elements that connect the Latino populations in the United States, and comprises elements of the Latinidad identity category.

10 The U.S. Latino population grew 48 percent between 2000 and 2011. As of 2011, two thirds of Latinos were of Mexican origin (33.5 million), followed by 4.9 million Puerto Ricans, 2 million Salvadorans, 1.9 million Cubans, 1.5 million Dominicans and 8 million from other countries (see http://nbclatino.com/2013/02/16/latinos-in-u-s-reach-52-million-but-growth-is-from-births-not-immigration/)

11 The Spanish language network Galavisión is still the dominant force in Latino-oriented cable television, and Mun2 which was ranked second has fallen to third place, outpaced by Discovery en Español and threatened by the growing popularity of Spanish-language sports networks. Tr3s occupies a distant 8th place in the ranking. NuvoTV does not appear on the Nielsen rankings (Piñón y Cornejo, 2014)

12 Azteca America, UniMás (formerly Telefutura), V-me, Estrella TV and Mundo Fox, joined Univision and Telemundo. None of these networks are pay TV networks—they broadcast over the air and rely on local TV stations, either owned or affiliated, to deliver their signals. Univisión, Unimás, Telemundo and Estrel-
la TV have owned and operated stations as well as affiliates. Because Azteca America and MundoFox are restricted from owning TV stations, they rely on chains of affiliated stations across the country. Vme is based on a hybrid model, mainly relying on local PBS stations across the U.S. In many cases, the signals of these networks are transmitted through digital broadcasting employing subchannels.

18 Derivatives of truck, leader, to watch and to park, respectively.

13 We understand Latinidad as defined by Frances Aparicio, Ang-harad Valdivia, Isabel Molina-Guzmán, Laó Montes and Arlene Dávila. Latinidad is a “social construct that is shaped by external forces, such as marketing, advertising, popular culture, and the U.S. Census, and internally through the individual subjectivities and communal cultural expressions of people who identify as Latina/o” (Aparicio & Chávez-Silverman, 1997 cited in Molina-Guzmán, 2010, p. 3). We also subscribe to Laó-Montes and Dávila’s (2001) definition, which conceives Latinidad as an analytical concept functioning as an identity category, “a noun that identifies a subject position (the state of being Latina/o) in a given discursive space” (p. 3). As a concept, Latinidad is at the center of the construction of notions of cultural citizenship for ethnic minorities in the political project of multicultural societies. Media in general have an important role in the construction of discourses of Latinidad targeting regional, national and global audiences (Dávila, 2001; Molina-Guzmán, 2010).

14 The Venezuelan Miami-based investor group Cedetel acquired Vme in April 2013.

15 Acculturation refers to the process of adaptation to a new culture. According to Kim (2002), it refers to the dynamic process by which individuals, upon relocating to an unfamiliar cultural environment, establish (or reestablish) and maintain a relatively stable, reciprocal, and functional relationship with the environment. The process implies psychological and cultural changes that can expand over generations (see Berry, 2012). It can have harmful effects on bilingual children because the educational system forces them to choose between their native language and their host cultural language (Jackson & Hogg, 2010). Acculturation also implies that individuals must unlearn old norms associated with the original culture and internalize elements of the new culture (Jackson & Hogg, 2010). There are four levels in the acculturation process: assimilation, integration, separation and marginalization and not all individual acculturate in the same fashion. In this article we assume that U.S.-born children will have more contact with the U.S. culture than their immigrant parents, and their biculturalism is driving industry interests and decision-making.

16 Translanguaging describes the “multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage in order to make sense of their bilingual worlds” (Sayer, 2013, p. 68).

17 Derivatives of truck, leader, to watch and to park, respectively.

19 Telemundo initially pursued a U.S. Latino-based identity which also included Caribbean-oriented programming to distinguish it from the mainly Mexican-oriented programming offered by Univision (Rodriguez, 1999). However, in the 1990s, the network engaged in joint ventures with TV Azteca (1996) and later with the production houses of RTI in Colombia and Argos in Mexico to develop a sustainable production model. This led to the creation of a pan-ethnic model at their facilities in Miami, but that also strategically highlighted Mexican elements as crucial cultural markers. Mexican actors were positioned in key roles and were always surrounded by multinational casts. Rivero (2005, p. 179) discussed this strategy of including Mexicans within Puerto Rican fictional production on the island. Acosta-Alzuru (2009) indicates that this strategy is part of what scholars describe as the Miami and Telemundo models of production. Piñon (2014) argues that this strategy was originally developed as a production template for the U.S. Hispanic market, but it has evolved into a regional and global model for consumption. Currently, the inclusion of popular Mexican talent into Telemundo’s fictional programming is a central element in the appeal and success of the network’s shows.

20 I want my Sweet 15th http://www.tr3s.com/shows/quiero-mis-quinces-season-9/quincesglam/

21 I want my Wedding http://www.tr3s.com/shows/quiero-mi-boda-season-3

22 The traditional and formal coming-of-age party for a 15-year old girl in many Latin American countries.

23 Available at Hulu: http://www.hulu.com/watch/459203

24 Translation: OK, Juan Pablo, you are going to have to get a little bit more determined because not all [the arrangements] can be based on their traditions. What about you? What about your family? What about your friends? And what about your culture?

25 http://www.mun2.tv/shows/larrymania/episodes

26 Translation: To all the governments and to all the people sitting behind desks making laws that don't let us work, F...You).

27 http://www.mynuvotv.com/show/about?name=pastport&season=3#.U1R7A6LEHQg

28 Although targeting a younger audience, MundoFox, the newest Spanish-language broadcasting network still offers programming in Spanish. Its main providers are RCN and FoxTeleColombia—it has been importing Brazilian fiction from Rede Globo and Rede Record which is dubbed into Spanish.

29 A Pew Report from 2012 indicates that what had been the largest wave of immigration of Mexicans to the United States has come to a standstill as the result of several factors including the weakening of the U.S. job and housing markets,
heightened border enforcement and a rise in the deportations. The United States has more immigrants from Mexico than any other country in the world (12.0 million) and about 30 percent of all current immigrants in the U.S. were born in Mexico (Passel, Cohn, & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2012).

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Understanding News Media Consumption 
Among Latinos in the United States

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Abstract
Research considering the effects of news media consumption on individuals has proliferated in recent decades. While a good deal is known about general indicators of news consumption, little is known about what dictates news consumption among Latinos. This paper endeavors to address that shortcoming by considering the determinants of news media consumption among Latinos in the United States. Employing a uses and gratifications theoretical rubric that focuses on individuals’ relative abilities, interests, and expectations, the tests of the Latino National Survey dataset reveal some systematic news media consumption behavior for this subset of U.S. residents. In total, this project helps develop a clearer understanding of what determines news media consumption among Latinos in the United States.

Introduction
Research exploring the effect of news media consumption on individual-level attitudes and behaviors has proliferated in recent decades (Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Iyengar, 1987; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Cappella & Jamieson, 1996; Norris, 2000; Prior, 2007; Salzman & Aloisi, 2009). Although understanding how news media consumption affects individuals is undoubtedly an important research focus, comprehending what determines news consumption is a necessary first step. Researchers have made significant progress toward establishing a general body of knowledge regarding what encourages individuals to consume news media. This article seeks to establish the extent to which that understanding applies to a specific group in the United States: Latinos.

Understanding what determines news media consumption among U.S. Latinos is important for a number of reasons. First, isolating a single group type allows for a relatively parsimonious test of what shapes news media consumption. For instance, when testing what affects Latino news consumption, researchers can include potential influences such as English ability and how many generations removed an individual is from initial immigration. These important distinctions may be lost in a general study of all U.S. residents. Second, understanding the influences of news media consumption among Latinos may illuminate the general applicability of uses and gratifications theory for understanding the determinants of news media consumption for all individuals in the United States, and potentially elsewhere as well. Third, identifying the determinants of news media consumption for U.S. Latinos will aid in assessing theoretical expectations in future research that seeks to understand how news media consumption affects other attitudes and behaviors.

Research into why individuals consume media has focused on individual-level motivations and audience members’ desire to satisfy those motivations. Put another way, individuals employ media for a specific use, and then seek gratification. This uses and gratifications approach serves to explain media consumption for all individuals despite the clear individual differences that influence such behavior. Like many theories, uses and gratifications requires that some assumptions about media consumption behavior (Wimmer & Dominick, 1994). First, individuals initiate media selection. Second, audiences are active and their media behavior is goal-directed. Third, individual predispositions, social contact, and context produce expectations that guide media use. This article classifies the potential gratifications Latinos seek into three categories: ability, interest, and expectations.

Focusing on individual-level uses and gratifications helps provide insights regarding the choice and use of media. Although the uses and gratifications theory fell into academic disfavor several decades ago, it has experienced a renaissance with the increased pluralism of media options in the Internet age. For example, one
recent analysis found that predictors of news media consumption among college students were dictated by habit, surveillance and escapism (Diddi & LaRose, 2006). Research like Diddi and La Rose's illustrates the need to differentiate among demographic groups (i.e. college students) within larger social contexts (i.e. the United States). Such differentiations are appropriate as groups like college students and Latinos vary markedly in many behavioral categories, including news media consumption.

Much academic attention has been dedicated to understanding the behaviors and attitudes of various cultural groups in the United States. This is particularly true for the subject at hand as “Latina/os studies span the major areas of the communication and media studies interdisciplines” (Valdivia, 2004, p. 110). There have been numerous studies that focus on media use effects among Latinos, including whether Latino media serve to sustain Latino ethnic identity as well as the roles of non-Latino media use in stimulating acculturation and assimilation (see Subervi-Velez, 2008). For instance, Rios (2003) found that telenovela viewers used those programs to both maintain their Latino identity and learn about their new culture. Similarly, Jeffres (2000) found that ethnic media use could help strengthen ethnic identity over time. Salzman (2014) found that the preferred language for news media consumption among Latinos is closely related to various measures of Latino identity. Although these studies have focused on the relationship between identity and media use, they have been restricted to Latino-specific media. Thus, a gap remains in the literature concerning what determines decisions to consume news media in general, whether Latino-oriented or not. To address the gap, this seeks to understand the central research question, what determines general news media consumption by Latinos?

The data employed herein focuses on individuals born in the United States as well as those born in Latin America who immigrated to the United States. The diversity of our sample allows us to identify influences deriving from differences in media context per country of origin. In general, research has shown that variation in context can cause variation in individuals' attitudes and behaviors (Almond & Verba, 1963). Adopting this assumption, that context can affect all types of behavior, our research design includes a test of a contextual measure that captures the relative press freedom levels of the country from which the individual originated.

**Key Concepts: What determines news media consumption amongst Latinos in the United States?**

To understand what determines Latinos' news media consumption in the United States requires that we consider some key individual-level differences that reflect audience members' desired use for news media. These differences can be grouped into three dimensions: ability, interest and expectations (Salzman, 2011; Salzman & Albarran, 2011).4

**Ability**

Resources and access are the most basic determinants of Latinos' news media consumption in the United States. For instance, studies have consistently found that individuals with greater income read the newspaper more frequently than individuals at lower income levels (e.g. Bogart, 1989). Political behavior research has theorized—and demonstrated—that individuals with greater amounts of time and resources are more able and willing to engage in various activities such as participate in civil society or vote; activities that may not be possible for those with little free time (Putnam, 1995). This should be true for media consumption as well. That is to say, individuals with more available free time may use it to participate in activities such as reading the newspaper, listening to the radio, or watching TV news. Other resources, besides time, include wealth and regular access to media (i.e. pay television, broadband internet and smartphone). Therefore, individuals with greater resources are expected to consume more news media of all types.

Another potential individual-level determinant of news media consumption for Latinos focuses on English speaking ability. The U.S. news media industry provides news in many different languages. Second in number to English news outlets are those in Spanish. However, the number of English-language news greatly exceeds that of Spanish-language outlets.5 Thus, individuals possessing better English skills should have more options to consume news, and will gratify their desire to consume news more easily than those with more limited or no English.

**Interest**

As Norris (2000) argues, individuals with more knowledge have greater interest in adding to their knowledge base. News media provide the best opportunity to satisfy that interest in knowledge accumulation. Additional research echoes Norris's findings, indicating that interest is a motivating factor for certain news consumption behavior that is highly correlated with political knowledge (Johnson & Arceneaux, 2010). Therefore, individuals with higher levels of knowledge are expected to consume more news media of all kinds than are individuals with less knowledge.

Also reflecting an individual's relative level of interest in seeking information via the news is political participation. People who participate in the political system are more highly educated than nonparticipants (Almond & Verba, 1963; Converse, 1972; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1996). Individuals who are more educated are expected to "research and evaluate the issues and candidates" (Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993, p. 136). Reaching beyond the United States, similar research in Latin America demonstrates that political knowledge and education—representing interest in politics—are positively related to news...
media consumption (Salzman, 2011). Thus, there is good reason to expect that Latinos who participate in U.S. politics will consume more news media than those who do not.

Consuming news of one type may reflect general news media consumption for other news media as well. That is, individuals who read newspapers are likely to watch television news, and vice versa. The substitutability of news media is expected because an individual's motivation to consume news may be consistently expressed regardless of the available medium. Besides indicating an existing interest, consuming one news medium may prompt greater interest, which can subsequently lead to more information seeking behavior that is best satisfied with alternative news sources. Therefore, individuals who consume greater amounts of news from one type of medium are expected to consume more news from other media types as well.

Expectations

Embracing the uses and gratifications theory and combining it with media effects research, Windahl (1981) argued that media perceptions and expectations shape individual behavior. So, we ask, what influences perceptions and expectations for Latinos? The level of press freedom in the individual's country of origin may affect Latinos’ expectations of news media. Countries with poor records of press freedom may find that reality reflected in the expectations of their citizens, expatriates and other members of their diaspora. The presence of a constrained press in a Latino’s country of origin might induce lower levels of news media consumption in the U.S. as the press will generally be unable to provide quality information without systematic bias. Conversely, higher levels of press freedom in the country of origin may increase the perceived reliability of the press and entice greater news consumption in the United States. Therefore, Latinos from countries with greater press freedom should see the news media as more useful and trustworthy, and, consequently, consume greater amounts of news media in the United States.

Another factor that may influence Latinos’ expectations regarding news media is how many generations removed from immigration they are. Many new immigrants to any country have limited knowledge about the host society. Among other things, news media are used to inform new immigrants of the going on in their new country. This expectation of information encourages news media consumption for many Latino immigrants to the United States. As each subsequent generation is born and matures in the United States, the relative level of lack of knowledge is ameliorated by participation in the American education system, and the expectation of novel information provided by news media decreases. Thus, subsequent generations should consume less news relative to the first generation of Latino immigrants. However it is worth noting that the decrease in news media consumption across generations may result from increased new media use (i.e Internet).

Method

In order to test the effects of individual-level characteristics on Latino news media consumption in the United States, this study utilizes survey data from the 2006 Latino National Survey (LNS) (Fraga, et al, 2006). The LNS is a national telephone survey of 8,600 Latino residents of the United States that seeks a broad understanding of Latino political and social life by employing a semi-structured interview with a mix of open-ended and closed questions. Each survey was administered by phone and took approximately 40 minutes to complete, with the exact length and number of questions depending on the respondent’s citizenship, parental status, and state of residence. Interviewing Services of America conducted the surveys in the preferred language of the respondent (English, Spanish, or both languages).6

The survey’s universe was all adult U.S. Latinos (18 years or older); they did not have to be U.S. citizens or voters. The sample was designed and drawn by Geoscape International, a professional marketing research firm that specializes in targeting Hispanics.7 Geoscape’s proprietary NameBase™ includes pertinent information for over 110 million households and over 215 million individuals.8 NameBase™ includes approximately 90% of all Hispanics in the United States. The sample design was stratified to create stand-alone samples in 15 states and the Washington DC Metro area, allowing for statistically sound analysis in each context. To allow national analyses such as those conducted in this study, the LNS weights state-level data using a national estimate or weight derived from state level population estimates according to census projections.9

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables in this project capture self-reported news media consumption measures for newspaper and television news. The TV news and newspaper consumption measures are single item measures consisting of four responses ordered by frequency of use. The response options are: almost never, once or twice a week, most days, and daily.

An ordered logistic model is employed to analyze the dependent variables. Use of the ordered logistic model is justified by the count structure (0, 1, 2, 3) of the dependent variables (Long, 1997). The results of the statistical models reveal the direction and statistical significance of the independent variables’ effect on the dependent variables of interest.

Independent Variables

This research focuses on multiple primary independent variables, all intended to capture the three dimensions that may influence Latinos’ news media consumption behavior. To test ability, the following variables are utilized: English quality, Spanish quality, economic situation better, economic situation worse, economic
situation the same, employed, own home, and income. English quality measures the level of English speaking ability, while Spanish quality measures the level of Spanish speaking ability. The self-ascribed measures are scored 0 (not at all), 1 (just a little), 2 (pretty well), and 3 (very well). All respondents who opted to take the survey in English were assigned a score of 3 for English quality, while respondents who opted for Spanish were assigned a 3 for the Spanish quality variable.

The economic situation variables were derived from a single question then divided into three dichotomous variables measuring whether the respondent considers their financial situation over the past year to have “gotten better”, “gotten worse”, or “stayed about the same.” To code each variable, the positive response, “gotten better,” was assigned a 1, while the other two responses were assigned a 0.

Own home is a dichotomous variable as well with a 0 assigned to those who do not own their home and a 1 to homeowners. Employed is scored 0 to 2 dividing employment into part-time, full-time, and not employed. Income is measured as the self-reported total household income divided into 7 income ranges from 1 equaling below $15,000 to 7 indicating above $65,000.

Interest employs eleven separate variables to test various levels of political interest and knowledge. Interest in politics tests whether the respondent is not interested (0), somewhat interested (1), or very interested (2) in politics and public affairs. Political knowledge is an additive index of various items intended to capture both formal and informal information. The questions asked respondents to identify which party controls Congress, who won their state’s electoral votes in 2004, and which party is more conservative. For each correct response, the respondent receives a score of 1. Incorrect responses receive a score of 0. The scores are then added together to create a political knowledge index that ranges from 0 to 3.

Education measures the degree of formal education that a respondent has received and is assigned scores between 0 (none) and 7 (graduate or professional degree). Civic engagement and contact government measure the frequency of actions taken to participate in civic group activities and contact a government official. Both variables are divided into three levels of frequency: no actions (0), one action (1), and two or more actions (2). Vote is a dichotomous variable measuring whether a respondent has voted in the last presidential election both within the United States and/or in their country of origin. Registered to vote is scored positively (1) only if the person is registered within the United States. If the respondent is not registered to vote in the U.S., they are assigned a coded value of 0. Democrat and Republican are variables used to identify whether a person considers himself or herself a Democrat or Republican. These variables are obtained from a single question within the LNS survey that asks a respondent to identify whether they consider themselves a Democrat, Republican, Independent, or other. Those respondents who answered Democrat were assigned a value of 1; all other responses were assigned a 0 value for the Democrat variable. The same method was used for the Republican variable assigning those who answered Republican receiving a value of 1 and all other responses receiving 0. Independent serves as the excluded category in the model; thus, the results for Democrat and Republican should be interpreted relative to being Independent, the excluded category. Finally, citizenship evaluates whether a respondent is a citizen of the United States. This variable is coded dichotomously with 1 being yes and 0 being no.

Table 1: Press Freedom Scores for Latin America

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Partly Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Partly Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Partly Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Not Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>Not Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Rep.</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Partly Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Partly Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Partly Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Not Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Partly Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Partly Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Partly Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Partly Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Partly Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Partly Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rico¹</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>Not Free</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Freedom House, 2004

¹ Puerto Rico received no score as it is considered the same as the United States

Four variables are used to test expectation. These include generation of residency in the U.S. (second, third and fourth), and the level of press freedom. The generational variables are
Table 2: Ordered Logistic Models of News Media Consumption Determinants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TV News z-score</th>
<th>sig.</th>
<th>Newspaper z-score</th>
<th>sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ability</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Quality</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>7.11</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Situation – Better</td>
<td>-0.89</td>
<td>.371</td>
<td>-1.11</td>
<td>.265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Situation – Worse</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>.941</td>
<td>-1.27</td>
<td>.012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>-2.97</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>.451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own Home</td>
<td>-0.20</td>
<td>.843</td>
<td>-1.36</td>
<td>.172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>-1.29</td>
<td>.199</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interest</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interested in Politics</td>
<td>5.60</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>10.23</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Knowledge</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>.966</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>.646</td>
<td>7.06</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Engagement</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>.694</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact Government</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>.580</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>.012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote</td>
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<td>0.77</td>
<td>.439</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>TV News</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>12.66</td>
<td>.000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Expectation</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>2nd Generation</td>
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<td>.007</td>
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<td>3rd Generation</td>
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<td>4th Generation</td>
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<td>.001</td>
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<td>Press Freedom (Birth Country)</td>
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<td>.033</td>
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<td>6.97</td>
<td>.000</td>
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<td>1.16</td>
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<td>-0.61</td>
<td>.542</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kids?</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>.351</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>.256</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pseudo-R² = 0.047
N = 6,084

Source: 2006 Latino National Survey

A third generation respondent identified at least one grandparent being born outside of the U.S., and fourth generation respondents had all parents and grandparents born within the United States. The system-level variable press freedom is taken from Freedom House’s 2004 press freedom index. Countries of origin were assigned a potential value ranging from 0 to 100. The actual values assigned were four through 87, with four representing the country of origin with the lowest level of press freedom and 87 being the county of origin with the ’most free’ press. Table 1 presents the press freedom scores for Latin American countries and the United States.

Control Variables

Some basic control variables that have been consistently linked to various political behaviors (Almond and Verba 1963) are included to verify correct relationships and increase robustness of the models. Although seeking news content is not explicitly a political activity, individual differences may variably affect that behavior. These variables include sex, age, marital status, and parenthood. The respondent’s sex is coded as either male yes (1) or male no (0). Age is assigned a continuous value in years. The age range obtained in this study is from 18 to 97 years. Married identifies a respondent’s marital status where married is assigned a value of 1 and not married is assigned a value of 0. Kids measures the number of children within a household from 0 (none) to 4 (four or more).

Latino News Media Consumption Analysis Results

Table 2 presents results of the analyses examining the determinants of news media consumption for Latinos in the United States. Each model performed well with a pseudo-R² of 0.113 and 0.047 for the newspaper and television news consumption models respectively. Overall, each type of news media consumption is significantly affected by numerous variables, each representing various uses and gratifications and grouped into three categories: ability, interest and expectation. Because the results were dependent upon the type of news media, we discuss the findings for each variable in turn.

Latino news consumption is expected to be positively affected by an individual’s English speaking ability. The results of the standard ordered logistic model reveal that for both TV news and newspaper consumption, English speaking ability is positively and significantly related to Latinos’ level of news consumption. While one could argue that the increased availability of Spanish-language news media in the...
United States renders the ability to speak English well irrelevant to news consumption behavior, the results seem to suggest that English speaking ability is related to news consumption.

Considering the role of resources in shaping news media consumption behavior, we employed a series of variables. Economic situation better and economic situation worse are insignificant for affecting news media consumption relative to a stable (same) economic situation. Owning a home is also statistically insignificant. Being employed is not statistically related to newspaper consumption. For television news consumption, being employed is negatively related to that behavior. While this finding runs counter to expectations related to resources, it appears reasonable as unemployed individuals typically have more time to watch TV. However, those same individuals should have time to read the newspaper as well, despite the lack of statistical evidence elucidating a positive relationship. This result reflects the need to purchase a newspaper subscription separately from other entertainment whereas TVs provide both and are thus likely already purchased and eagerly maintained. Additionally, increases in the availability of newspaper reports via Internet sources may diminish the statistical relationship. Income has a positive relationship and is statistically significant in affecting newspaper consumption, but has no evident effect on TV news consumption. Therefore, the role of resources is more pronounced for newspaper consumption than for television news consumption. This could be due to the fact that many households may consider television to be a necessity and newspapers a luxury.

Interested individuals are expected to consume news media of various kinds. Interest appears to be a powerful motivator of newspaper consumption, but less so for television news consumption. The most direct measure of interest, political interest, follows the theoretical expectations. Political interest is positive and statistically significant for both newspaper and television news consumption. Individuals with greater political knowledge and education are anticipated to consume more news media. This only appears to hold for newspaper consumption, yet the result is reasonable as newspaper consumption is more active and requires skills provided via education. Television news consumption is a relatively passive activity and places less demand on literacy skills. In general, this study firmly supports the assertion that Latinos having political knowledge and formal education seek more news due to increased interest.¹²

Interest is also conceived via political participation. As with the other interest measures, television news consumption appears to be unaffected by political participation of any kind. Only being identified with the Democratic Party is correlated with greater television news consumption relative to being an independent. A similar result for being Democrat was found for newspaper consumption. While the finding is statistically significant, the reasons why are unclear. For newspaper consumption, political participation has a stronger effect. Civic engagement and likelihood to contact the government have statistically significant, positive parameter estimates. Vote, and registered to vote, are found to be insignificant for newspaper consumption amongst Latinos. Citizenship was unexpectedly negative in affecting television news consumption. Thus is appears that more localized and individualized participation affects some news media consumption whereas engagement in national politics is not correlated with news media consumption.

The expectation that consumption of one news medium is correlated to other news media is strongly supported. To account for the substitutability of news media consumption, the nondependent news media variables (television news and newspapers) are included as independent variables in modeling the others. In each case, the consumption of the alternative news media revealed positive and statistically significant parameter estimates. This finding shows that Latinos who consume news from one medium with greater regularity can be expected to consume more news from other media as well.

Different generations of Latinos were anticipated to have various expectations of news media, thus consuming them dissimilar rates based on those expectations. It was assumed that Latinos who immigrated to the U.S. more recently will consume more news. For newspaper consumption, second or fourth generation status reveals positive and significant parameter estimates for newspaper consumption relative to the first generation. This is counter to what was hypothesized, implying that news consumption is a learned habit instead of one sought out of necessity to learn about the new country of residence. For TV news consumption, only fourth generation Latinos appear to be statistically discernable from their first generation counterparts. Latinos in the fourth generation consume less television news than their first generation counterparts. This is in line with the theorized expectations. However, the lack of statistical significance for second and third generation Latinos renders this finding questionable. Instead, this may actually be an effect of the shifting landscape of news gathering for younger generations where Internet becomes increasingly preferred to traditional news media like television.

The press freedom score of the respondent’s home country is positively related to newspaper consumption.¹³ This means that Latinos born in a country with poor press freedom are less likely to read newspapers than individuals born in countries with better press freedom, which appears to support the contention that expectations of news media are shaped by prior experiences. The results for television news are statistically insignificant.

The control variables in the models performed well. Males are significantly more likely than females to consume newspapers, and less likely to consume television news. Age reveals a positive and significant parameter estimate for both newspapers and
TV. Being married and having children does not correlate with the consumption of either news medium for U.S. Latinos.

The analyses of news media consumption determinants among Latinos reveal, first and foremost, that media types must be considered separately. That is, factors that influence newspaper consumption appear to be unrelated to television news consumption and vice versa. In general, the model analyzing the determinants of newspaper news consumption paints a clearer picture than the model exploring the determinants of television news consumption. Besides the greater number of statistically significant coefficients in the newspaper consumption model, the explanatory value reported in the model (r-square) was twice that of the television news consumption model. In conclusion, newspaper consumption appears to fit well with the Ability-Interest-Expectation analysis of news consumption determinants while television news remains a puzzle.

**Discussion**

Our analyses clarify what is known about Latinos’ decisions to consume news. A few conclusions stand out. First, news media types must be considered separately in any meaningful analysis. Newspaper readership is more clearly related to audiences' desired uses as discussed in the theory section. The relationship between individual characteristics and TV news is less clear, as prior research has found (Salzman, 2011). The conclusion reached in that research, and seemingly applicable here, is that TV news consumption is more passive than newspaper readership. That is, an individual may be watching a program that precedes the news broadcast and when the program ends, the viewer continues “watching” the news. Thus, more people claim to watch the news which muddies the statistical water. Reading a newspaper is usually a stand-alone behavior. As such, those who identify as newspaper consumers constitute a clearer “type” than TV viewers. This is not to say that TV news viewers are not of a specific type, but that they are diluted by individuals who watch TV news passively.

Second, interest is the most nuanced dimension of the three when it comes to variously motivating news media consumption. This lends support to Norris (2000) who found that interest positively affects news media consumption, which then further affects interest to create a circular causal relationship. The present research asserts that Latinos consume news because they are interested in politics and current events. Such desired-use motivation is most evident for newspaper readership. Again, this is likely due to the active nature of newspaper consumption relative to TV news consumption. However, the most explicit statement of interest in politics found very strong, positive results for both types of news media consumption, illustrating that Latinos indeed use news media to gather political and current event information.

Finally, Latinos’ expectations about news media are correlated with newspaper consumption. This has never been tested before. Relative to first-generation immigrants, second and fourth generation Latinos read the newspaper more frequently. This finding is counter to the expectation that first generation Latinos will seek to learn more about their new country through news consumption. However, respondent language skills could be influencing our data and statistical analyses. That press freedom levels in the respondent’s home country are related to newspaper readership meets the expectations laid out herein, indicating that Latinos may carry their attitudes about news media with them when they travel to a new country.

While there are significant differences among news media, it appears that Latinos variably consume news media based on their individual-level characteristics. There is also evidence that context matters as nation of origin press freedom scores are statistically related to newspaper readership. These findings are thus in line with the uses and gratifications literature, illustrating that Latinos seek news media similarly to the general population in the United States. By reaching those conclusions, a gap in the literature is closer to being filled. As communication research continues to differentiate among various sub-groups in societies, research like this will serve to strengthen our understanding and expectations of various groups.

Although strong on the whole, this study has limitations that should be addressed in future research. First among these are the usual shortcomings associated with survey data. All self-reported survey data is imperfect as it seeks to capture the feelings and behaviors of respondents. For this project, the nature of the data gathering methods, although presumed rigorous, is not completely known. As such, executing similar projects using other data sources would be fruitful. Also, the data set employed here lacked questions about radio news consumption. This is an important limitation for future research to consider as large percentages of the Latino population consume radio regularly. Internet and mobile device use should also be included in future studies. Another focus for upcoming research should be refining the variables for each category representing the various uses and gratifications presumed to exist among Latinos. Some variables may be unnecessary while others that should have been included were not. Thus, variable refinement is essential as this area of inquiry moves forward.

In closing, this project should serve to reinforce the generalizability of uses and gratifications theory. While it has not paved a new path to understanding news media consumption, it has certainly smoothed and widened the avenue. Thus, future research may find value in these findings for the applicability of theory, the fruitfulness of group-specific studies for clarifying relationships, identifying points of departure, and generally refining what is known about the effects of news media consumption.
This project does not consider the language of news media. For a thorough exploration of that important topic, see Salzman (2014).

For an excellent discussion of uses and gratifications theory and its evolution over time see Ruggiero (2000).

Studies of media consumption in other contexts demonstrate that (non-news) media use is clearly correlated with individual-level attributes (Salzman, 2011). For example, Roberts and Foehr (2008) examine trends in media use among children in the United States. They find clear differences in use that appear dependent on the presence of media (i.e. computer), the child's race and variation in intellect measures (i.e. grades) amongst other attributes that are individual-specific. Trevino, Webster, and Stein (2000) consider what affects communication medium choice in business settings. They find individual-level determinants, such as proximity to other individuals, variably influence media use choices by managers. Although these two examples appear unrelated to understanding news media use amongst Latinos in the United States, the sentiment remains the same. Differences among individuals variably affect decisions about media use.

Researchers who use applications and gratifications often employ typologies to introduce parsimony to what might otherwise be an unmanageable venture (see Finn, 1997; Anderson & Revelle, 1995; Eysenck, 1991; McGuire, 1974).

For a discussion of Spanish-language media expansion see Coffey (2009).

The collection of survey data faces many well-documented challenges (Tourangeau, Rips & Rasinski, 2000). A particularly thorny issue is the use of telephone surveys for data gathering. Although the trend was less pronounced in 2005-2006, the U.S. population has increasingly moved away from land line usage. However, telephones remain one of the most cost effective methods for collecting survey data. The survey administrator claimed to use mobile phones and other methods for collecting data when this article went to press, but little is known about its methods when the survey was administered in 2005-2006. Additionally problematic for a survey focused on Latinos/Hispanics in the United States is the propensity of some potential respondents to avoid participation for fear of revealing their undocumented status.

Although the LNS data was gathered by Geoscape International, the survey itself was designed by university-associated scholars to be used for academic purposes. The study was funded by the Ford Foundation, Russell Sage Foundation, National Science Foundation, Irvine Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, Carnegie Corporation, Joyce Foundation, W. K. Kellogg Foundation, Texas A&M University, Annie E. Casey Foundation, and University of Notre Dame Inter-University Program for Latino Research.

Identifying with a political party is presumed to represent greater political interest although that claim is sometimes contentious in the U.S. where registration, primary election voting, and partisan identification are closely but inconsistently related to one another.

Pseudo $R^2$ scores demonstrate the explanatory value of the model and can be interpreted as a percentage. Thus, a score of 0.113 means that the 11.3% of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables in the model. Although these numbers may seem low, they are average (and even above average) for explanatory values in similar models. The low explanatory values reflect the difficulty in measuring human behavior across thousands of individuals with any semblance of certainty.

It should be noted that identifying causality is difficult. Some contemporary research indicates a circular relationship between political interest and news consumption where increases in one dictates increases in the other with heightened levels of political knowledge active in the circular relationship (Norris 2000).

Respondents who are second generation or later Latinos receive a score for country of origin press freedom that reflects the press freedom of the United States. For this reason the model was also run with the press freedom scores for their family’s ancestral country of origin. The results remain the same.
References


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TV News Consumption</td>
<td>Single Item: How frequently a respondent watches television news. 0 = Almost never, 1 = Once or twice a week, 2 = Most days, 3 = Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper Consumption</td>
<td>Single Item: How frequently a respondent reads a daily newspaper. 0 = Almost never, 1 = Once or twice a week, 2 = Most days, 3 = Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer English News</td>
<td>Single Item: Respondent relies more heavily on English news sources. 0 = No, 1 = Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer Spanish News</td>
<td>Single Item: Respondent relies more heavily on Spanish news sources. 0 = No, 1 = Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish and English News</td>
<td>Single Item: Respondent relies on English and Spanish news sources equally. 0 = No, 1 = Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Quality</td>
<td>Single Item: Quality of respondent's English speaking ability. 0 = Not at all, 1 = Just a little, 2 = Pretty well, 3 = Very well</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic Situation – Better</td>
<td>Single Item: The respondent’s financial situation has improved over the past year. 0 = No, 1 = Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Situation – Worse</td>
<td>Single Item: The respondent’s financial situation has worsened over the past year. 0 = No, 1 = Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>Single Item: Respondent is employed. 0 = Not employed, 1 = Employed part-time, 2 = Employed full-time</td>
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<td>Own Home</td>
<td>Single Item: Respondent owns home. 0 = No, 1 = Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>Single Item: Respondent’s total household income. 1 = Below $15,000, 2 = $15,001-24,999, 3 = $25,000-34,999, 4 = $35,000-44,999, 5 = $45,000-54,999, 6 = $55,000-64,999, 7 = Above $65,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interested in Politics</td>
<td>Single Item: Respondent’s level of interest in politics. 0 = Not interested, 1 = Somewhat interested, 2 = Very interested</td>
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<td>Political Knowledge</td>
<td>Additive index of summed dichotomous variables where 1 = correct answer, 0 = incorrect answer: Asked which party controls the House of Representatives, who won the state's electoral votes in 2004, and which party is more conservative. Range 0-3.</td>
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<td>Education</td>
<td>Single Item: Respondent’s highest level of education completed. 0 = None, 1 = Eighth grade or below, 2 = Some high school, 3 = GED, 4 = High school graduate, 5 = Some college, 6 = 4 year college degree, 7 = Graduate or professional degree</td>
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<td>Civic Engagement</td>
<td>Single Item: The respondent participates in civic group activities. 0 = None, 1 = Yes, one, 2 = Yes, more than one</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contact Government</td>
<td>Single Item: The respondent has contacted a government official. 0 = No, 1 = Once, 2 = More than once</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote</td>
<td>Single Item: The respondent has voted. 0 = No, 1 = Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Registered to Vote</td>
<td>Single Item: The respondent is currently registered to vote in the United States. 0 = No, 1 = Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>Single Item: The respondent considers him or herself a Democrat. 0 = No, 1 = Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>Single Item: The respondent considers him or herself a Republican. 0 = No, 1 = Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizen</td>
<td>Single Item: Respondent is a citizen. 0 = No, 1 = Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Generation</td>
<td>Single Item: The respondent is a 2nd generation citizen. 0 = No, 1 = Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Generation</td>
<td>Single Item: The respondent is a 3rd generation citizen. 0 = No, 1 = Yes</td>
</tr>
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<td>4th Generation</td>
<td>Single Item: The respondent is a 4th generation citizen. 0 = No, 1 = Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Press Freedom (Birth Country)</td>
<td>Taken from Freedom House's 2008 Press Freedom Index. Inverted scale where 0 = no freedom and 100 = completely free (per country)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Single Item: The respondent is male. 0 = No, 1 = Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Continuous value in years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Single Item: Respondent is married. 0 = No, 1 = Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kids</td>
<td>Single Item: Number of children in respondent’s household. 0 = None, 1 = 1, 2 = 2, 3 = 3, 4 = 4 or more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep Spanish</td>
<td>Single Item: How important is it for the respondent and the respondent’s family to maintain Spanish? 1 = Not at all important, 2 = Not very important, 3 = Somewhat important, 4 = Very important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn English to be American</td>
<td>Single Item: How important is it to learn English in the United States? 1 = Not at all important, 2 = Not very important, 3 = Somewhat important, 4 = Very important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino is Distinct</td>
<td>Single Item: Latinos should maintain a distinct culture. 0 = Not important, 1 = Important, 2 = Very important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish Quality</td>
<td>Single Item: Quality of respondent’s Spanish speaking ability. 0 = Not at all, 1 = Just a little, 2 = Pretty well, 3 = Very well</td>
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Introduction

For the past four decades, Latin America has witnessed key institutional and political changes that have greatly impacted media systems and communication policies across the region. As a result, we can observe two contrasting yet overlapping developments: a high degree of media concentration fuelled by market-oriented policies on the one hand, and the re-emergence of state intervention in media reform on the other. Both have operated within the same context of clientelism and discretionary, uneven application of regulation and the law. This results from the way that media systems and politics have been historically intertwined. Although Latin American nation-states each have their own particularities and unique histories, they share a common ground that goes beyond merely linguistic, geographical or cultural affinities.

First, most countries in the region experienced consequential periods of either authoritarian or dictatorial governments whose patronage fostered the rise and growth of media companies. In Brazil and Mexico, these companies transformed into conglomerates of unrivalled proportions, Globo and Televisa respectively. For various reasons, domestic media groups became regime allies in the quest for political power, to build national and hegemonic identities, or in sustaining the status quo for authoritarian regimes and conservative agendas throughout the second half of the 20th century (Trejo Delarbre, 1985; Fox, 1988).

In the context of the Cold War, dictatorships in almost every Latin American state and widespread repression of critical voices, a first wave of Latin American media research denounced private media’s growing power as the ideological branch of repressive dictatorships as well as the United States’ geopolitical interests in the region (Beltrán, 1970; Fox & Schmucler, 1982; Furtado, 1984; Marques de Melo, 1989; Mattelart, Piccini, & Mattelart, 1976; Schiller, 1976; Reyes-Matta, 1979). In fact, beginning in 1976, Latin American scholars were the first of the developing world in gathering to discuss and propose communication policies.

Second, as the 1990s approached Latin America also experienced the global influence of neoliberal policies and economic reforms such as privatization and deregulation of various industries. As market economies became the dominant economic model, media researchers focused their attention on examining the impact of neoliberal policies such as free trade agreements, privatization and/or deregulation in media systems, communications policies and cultural industries across Latin America (Fox, 1988, 1997; Fox & Waisbord, 2002; Sinclair 1996). Overall, their findings show that the established media proprietors expanded both vertically and horizontally and media and cultural sectors concentrated in even fewer hands. Hence media corporations broadened their assets, increased their power and became even less constrained by domestic forces by capitalizing on less vigorous regulation, ventures abroad, and the business opportunities that a more pluralistic political landscape would bring. In this context, the biggest transnational media players gained the most benefits, to the detriment of independent and local production (García Canclini, 2000; Mastrini & Bolaño, 2000; García Canclini & Piedras, 2005; Mastrini, Bizberge, & De Charras, 2013; Sánchez Ruiz, 2012). Another major trend that accompanied the marketization of economies concerned political democratization. After long periods of authoritarian rule, civil upheaval or internal armed conflicts, in the 1980s some Latin American states began to transform political and electoral institutions in order to guarantee fair and
competitive elections. In tandem, the media reporting of political corruption, drug trafficking, human rights abuses, embezzlement and scandals involving high-profile political actors increased in Brazil, Argentina, Colombia and Mexico, particularly during the 1990s (Waisbord, 2000; Hughes, 2006). In fact, a number of scholars argue that these processes of political democratization and economic reform occurred in tandem with the democratization and “opening” of the media, paving the way for the rise of civil society groups and better-informed middle classes.

However, where processes of media democratization occurred, they did not necessarily follow a straightforward path, but took one of two major directions (Lugo-Ocando, 2008). One direction is what some scholars view as the professionalization of journalism across Latin America which, despite continuing obstacles and inertias, achieved an important degree of change stemming mostly from commercial competition. Following this approach, greater financial autonomy and freedom of speech opened the space for more editorial autonomy, investigative journalism increased, more balanced reporting contributed to a more diverse spectrum of opinions, and exposés helped foster a culture of political accountability (Tironi & Sunkel 2000; Waisbord, 2000; Lawson, 2002; Wallis, 2004; Alves, 2005; Hughes, 2006; Matos, 2008; Pinto, 2009). This important strand of research asserted that the gradual transformation of media helped to delegitimize authoritarian governments and their methods as a more legitimate democratic polity emerged.

As structural inequalities and economic divides not only remained but intensified across the region, the consequences of democratization and the marketization of economies have often proven convulsive in social terms. Political polarization is now the norm in many countries, many of the traits of unrestrained presidentialism remain, and the prevailing political culture is shaped by citizen mistrust, politicians’ cynicism, corporatist relations and clientelism (Power & Jamison, 2005; Hallin & Papathanassopoulos, 2002). A democratic press is supported by the actions and policies of strong and legitimate state institutions, from the “observance of press laws that support fair and responsible journalism, to the guarantee of human rights” (Waisbord, 2007, p. 117, see also Hughes & Lawson, 2005; Curran, 2005). However, in a context of “statelessness” (Waisbord, 2007), which includes the feeble institutions and weak rule of law present in much of Latin America, the democratic roles of the media fall prey to private interests.

By the turn of the last century, communication and cultural policies in the region tended to benefit—or at least protect the interests of—the largest media conglomerates such as Globo in Brazil, Televisa in Mexico, Clarín in Argentina or Grupo Cisneros in Venezuela. State policies often failed to restrict concentration or to encourage pluralism and diversity in media. Moreover, in the commercial landscape of the 1990s, political alliances generated economic profit for media proprietors, news became a commodity to be traded and political scandals and conflicts helped boost ratings and increase circulations (Hallin & Papathanassopoulos, 2002; Rockwell & Janus, 2003; Trejo Delarbre, 2005; Hughes & Lawson, 2005). The absence of public broadcasting media that could counterbalance the predominance of private networks and challenge the prevalence of infotainment, the trivialization of politics, and partisan bias in the media are issues of continuing concern.

Latin American media research has been highly critical of media concentration and the negative impact neoliberal politics have on efforts to configure a truly plural, diverse and democratic public space. Some cultural and radical communications scholars even claim that democratization has not brought social justice, but simply replaced delegitimized authoritarianism with a form of political organization that better guarantees the “proper performance of the market” (Alfaro Moreno, 2006, p. 302; see also Bresnahan, 2003; Poblete, 2006).

Thus several unavoidable questions arise. Is the glass half-full or half-empty in regards to media, communication and cultural policies that guarantee freedom of speech, access to information, and the right to communication that is politically plural and socially diverse? How have things changed in the 21st century with digitalization and emerging technologies as major accompanying forces? How is the balance among local, regional and global dimensions, institutions and actors shaping media and communication policies? Our book *Media Systems and Communication Policies in Latin America* (published by Palgrave) addresses these questions with new insights and a proposed theoretical framework that we believe critically describes the prevalent model of media and communications in Latin America: a captured liberal model (Guerrero, 2010).

Our book advances scholarship on Latin American media that primarily focused on the rising influence of both neoliberal economies and democratization processes at the turn of the millennium, moving forward nearly two decades to a context of media reform, digital convergence and technological change. The book introduces an important new political variable in the 21st century: the revival of strong, antagonistic states that hold considerable agency in shaping communication and cultural policies in various Latin American countries. What roles are the markets, the state and local actors playing in these matters? A number of telegenic leaders in the past decade or so—Néstor Kirchner and Cristina Fernández in Argentina, Evo Morales in Bolivia, Rafael Correa in Ecuador and of course, the late Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela—brought into office with them aggressive media reforms that either attempted to tackle media concentration and restrict the power of media elites, and/or proposed a model of public (state) communication, albeit with varying degrees of success and political support.
A common feature in such countries has been that the heads of state have lead the discussions on media reform, prompting criticism from business elites, libertarians, conservatives and advocates of press freedom alike. These disparate interests have tended to view such moves with concern, whereas progressive voices and radical advocates of media reforms have championed the stance, in so far as the reforms actually restrict concentration and guarantee the involvement of marginalized and independent actors in the media landscape. In contexts of polarization that at times have become tense, and even hostile, the powerful media corporations and their allies have played an antagonistic role vis-à-vis the state, raising once again the concepts of press freedom, pluralism or political neutrality, particularly in cases like Venezuela or Bolivia, where leaders publicly single out journalists or media organizations who confront their governments.

Therefore, the question is whether market-oriented and state-protected policies can guarantee pluralism, communication rights and diversity. Apart from the obvious cases in which heads of state call for media reforms, our book shows how in other cases, specific media markets have reacted to transnational forces through locally-led policy and regulation—often directed towards the protection of dominant players and not necessarily in favor of expanding pluralism in those markets. Mexico and Central America are illustrative cases. In another dynamic, the opposite occurs: deregulation or leaving media spaces unregulated makes them the sole domain of economic actors, as in Peru or Colombia. However, in the places where regulation and law enforcement do exist, it has proved to be ineffective and difficult to enforce, or has failed to contain concentration and safeguard media pluralism.

As private media conglomerates, especially broadcasting networks, emerged and consolidated with the support of dictatorships and under authoritarian rule, the long-standing system of symbiotic media-state relations clashed with liberal values held and practiced outside the region. Liberal media theories assert that market forces alone can erode authoritarian media and end governmental control of information, as well as foster policies and cultural goods that promote pluralism, engendering editorial autonomy and a healthier exercise of citizenship. However, contrary trends have prevailed in Latin America, as shown by the ten case studies presented in the book. Family ownership of the media remains, media elites are part of the de facto power structure at national and regional levels, mutual courtship among media and political elites prevail, smaller media organizations continue to be highly dependent on political advertising, making them compliant to political agendas, and generally speaking, in all the countries the media play their watchdog role selectively, particularly at moments when their interests are threatened. As we show in the book, private media in Latin America, ruled by global commercial logics rather than administered by the state, are subject to complicit intervention and interference, thereby preventing the emergence of competitive, healthy, diverse and plural markets, particularly in regard to broadcasting. In fact, clientelism prevails, poor law enforcement leaves journalists unprotected and subjugated to threats and risks, cultural industries appear to be protected only when political actors stand to gain, and the professionalization of journalism has meant superficial change, passive reporting practices, or direct compliance with official and institutional agendas rather than supporting citizens and communities.

**Revising the Liberal Approach to Media Systems**

*Media Systems and Communication Policies in Latin America* features contributions by established and emerging scholars born in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela who discuss the issues at stake in communications and cultural policies in their native countries. The book is not only plural in the number of countries included, but also offers diverse disciplinary and theoretical backgrounds as well as varying epistemological positions. A common theme found across the case studies is that while key cultural industries are entirely left to market forces, there are formal or informal means of intervention and capture of media systems and policies—from political institutions and actors to private interests. In related fashion, the book shows how mere description of media laws and regulations would be of little help in grasping the context wherein the industries operate. A purely instrumental focus on ‘media policy’ as the structural framework that defines media performance may fall in the trap of taking for granted its own operative relevance. In other words, such an approach would assume that policy and regulation, as part of the broader rule of the law, are enabled and enacted in a way that media contents, audiences and actors adhere to it. From this perspective, media freedoms and pluralism are guaranteed and protected by law, and happen by decree and goodwill. In contrast, as observed in the 10 countries explored here, media policy has less to do with global trends than with political actors’ agendas and their discourses that mutate and adapt to local circumstances, often in the contentious environment of highly polarized politics. A common thread of the book is, therefore, that the intentional lack of regulation enforcement, the pragmatic exercise of power, the configuration of mutually beneficial alliances, and complicity between media barons and political elites together explain why private media developed early and why media concentration continues unabated in the region.

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on the political actors in power. In the paragraphs to follow we present the book’s main themes, findings and arguments.

Evidence Against Market Liberalism

One of the most engrained beliefs in liberal conceptions of the media—usually called libertarian—is that because the market is a natural extension of society, as opposed to the state, privately-held media become essential to monitor governmental wrongdoing, uphold journalistic independence and guarantee press freedom. Some press theories recognize the market’s existence as a tenet of autonomy that is essential to opposing government (Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, 1956; Ungar, 1990; Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Christians, Glasser, McQuail, Nordenstreng, & White, 2009). According to this view, the media must operate within the market’s logics, thus necessitating minimal intervention and regulation by the government or the state. It is, therefore, “simply assumed that the market will provide appropriate institutions and processes of public communication to support a democratic polity” (Garnham, 1992, p. 363). Hence, private commercial media are believed to serve the public interest, provide objective information, offer a forum for engaging and contemplating a diverse spectrum of political opinions, and to monitor existing power structures—all relatively free from state interference.

During the 20th century, Latin American media structures and organizations largely developed according to the U.S. commercial private model, both in the press and in broadcasting. However, because Latin American societies, have not followed the same liberal tradition of separating the market and the state as most established democracies, we challenge, in part, the mainstream categorizations of liberal media systems that still view private and commercial media as relatively free from state intrusion and political instrumentalization (e.g. Hallin & Mancini, 2004). In this regard, two trends are clear in the ten countries examined in the book: 1) the transitions from authoritarianism or civil war to democracy did not alter the media’s property structure, so the neoliberal market-oriented reforms ended up benefiting the economic consolidation of local or regional media organizations; and 2) the growth and consolidation of large media corporations has depended on close linkages between traditional media groups and elites—in most cases operating through family structures—and the political groups that have come to power.

In analyzing liberalization and deregulation processes in the Mediterranean countries, Hallin and Mancini (2004) found that the state retired and left spaces so abruptly as to cause “savage deregulation,” borrowing the phrase from Traquina’s (1995) assessment of the Portuguese case. In Latin America, similar features can be observed in the privatization and liberalization processes that ended up favoring the expansion of strong, established corporations. The deregulatory reforms of the late 1980s and 1990s favored local conglomerates that already dominated these markets, transforming them into even larger corporations. Such are the cases of two Mexican broadcaters, Televisa, which until 1993 was the sole national-level private broadcaster in Mexico, and Televisión Azteca, which emerged as negotiations for the Free Trade Agreement with the United States and Canada demanded more competition in the Mexican audiovisual sector. While at first TV Azteca prompted positive expectations of increased competition and content diversity, it ended up repeating the same operational formulae and structures of its larger competitor, Televisa. Together they now form one of the strongest broadcast duopolies in the world. Moreover, we find the cases of Globo in Brazil, Grupo Cisneros in Venezuela, Grupo Clarín in Argentina, Grupo El Comercio in Peru or Grupos Santo Domingo and Ardila in Colombia as examples of media corporations that emerged and expanded with government support and the impulse of the market. In other cases, media reforms created conditions for foreign capital to ally with local corporations, as in Chile’s Megavisión or Colombia’s Casa Editorial El Tiempo. In yet another dynamic, foreign capital (mostly Mexican) directly entered to acquire local corporations, such as Albavisión in several countries of Central America, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador and Peru.

Ultimately, stronger corporations emerged from the process, but not more pluralistic, competitive or open markets. In the Chilean case, the liberalization and deregulatory reforms consolidated the positions of media corporations that were closely linked to the dictatorship, like El Mercurio and Copesa. In Guatemala, the 1996 Telecommunications Law which facilitated privatizations enabled three corporations to control over 90 percent of the country’s commercial broadcast frequencies. El Salvador followed its own path to a similar end; the book presents evidence supporting the thesis that market liberalization and media and telecommunications deregulation have curtailed media pluralism, audiences’ rights and press freedom while strengthening the privileges of private commercial corporations. Brazil and Mexico are also cases in point, where huge broadcasting oligopolies control the media sector.

As discussed above, a central assumption of the liberal approach is that privately owned media are the best situated to resist governmental intrusion and to support pluralism and, ultimately, democracy. The arrival of new political groups to power in Latin America since the 1980s signaled to some observers a renewal of democratic life. However, the conditions of competitive democracy, broadcasting’s influence in countries with low newspaper readership, and the pro-liberal orientation of most governments at the time, created close relations with a traditional media establishment at different levels, both formally and informally. Such relations entailed property and market conditions that have not necessarily favored media pluralism in the region.

In Argentina the Menem administration (1989-1999) promoted the growth of the country’s largest media corporations by modifying the broadcasting Law Decree 22285, which dated from
the military dictatorship. Carlos Menem’s government privatized TV networks and radio stations, and eliminated restrictions to concentration and cross-ownership, which enabled the merging of print and broadcasting media. In Brazil, oligarchic groups in several states, mostly in the North and Northeast, continue to play a dual role as politicians-entrepreneurs. Some of the largest corporate shareholders have also been governors, congressional representatives and senators, in spite of legal precepts intended to prevent conflicts of interest. In Peru, with some exceptions like La República or El Comercio, the national media were quick to throw their support behind the civilian-military regime through which Alberto Fujimori staged his coup d’état and both the entrepreneurial elite and the majority of the public promptly followed suit. After that, the Peruvian government—through its intelligence services—began to subsidize the popular tabloids and to supplement the salaries of some journalists. In Mexico, media proprietors and executives are now playing more direct and active roles in politics. During previous decades, high profile media proprietors and executives generally abstained from running for any public seat or at least would cover their intentions to influence. Not any longer; the 2012 election yielded at least 20 congressmen and women who have been directly or indirectly employed by Televisa and/or TV Azteca. In the latter case, even the daughter of the main shareholder of the network is member of the Mexico’s senate. The Spanish name for this group is the telebancada or “tele-bench” and is found in the legislative commissions of broadcasting, telecommunications and communications in both chambers. The telebancada recently succeeded in altering a 2013 communications reform proposal that was originally designed to create a more plural and diverse landscape, but which a year later was perceived by critics to protect the TV networks’ interests (AMIC, 2014).

Thus, Latin American media developed under private and commercial patterns that accelerated with neoliberal reforms in the late 1980s and 1990s. However, liberalization of Latin American media markets in most cases did not fit the libertarian model. The reforms benefited traditional media elites through property concentration, created oligopolies in most countries, and shifted (while also strengthening) formal and informal linkages between political actors and media entrepreneurs. The accumulated evidence thus strongly challenges the liberal assumptions that private media are best equipped to serve the public interest by offering politically plural and socially diverse information content, or to monitor the use of power relatively free from political interference.

In Latin America, unlike the United States, the local private advertising markets were never strong enough to independently support complex media structures. Exacerbating this situation is the printed press, whose penetration and readership is considerably smaller per capita and mostly directed to the wealthier and more educated social classes. Such an elite-oriented press could hardly survive from private advertising or subscription revenues alone. As a result, many Latin American private media have depended on political favors to ensure governmental advertising and other funds. Although the powerful private television networks are commercially successful market-driven enterprises with international reach, there is considerable political and economic gain to derive from advertising deals with state agencies, especially during election seasons. As in every corner of the world, Latin American politicians court eager TV channels in order to maximize their visibility and gain votes through political advertising. Beyond formal advertising through print ads or radio and TV spots, politicians and media executives find other ways to seal under-the-table business deals that often imply favorable coverage of political activities.

**Clientelism and Weak Regulatory Enforcement**

Two related aspects that define the media landscape in Latin America include a historical tendency towards political clientelism and informality, and partly as a consequence, an uneven and ineffective application of the formal rules and norms. It is no secret that in many respects Latin American states have developed strong clientelistic relations with diverse groups and sectors. Clientelism fosters relations of informal exchange, thus affecting the efficacy and effectiveness of legal frameworks (Eisenstadt & Roniger, 1984). Regarding the media, clientelism opens spaces for negotiating the application of the law, forging alliances with political actors and reducing or avoiding any consequence of regulations that are contrary to corporate interests. Hallin and Papathanassopoulos (2002) identified clientelism as a defining feature in the relations between the political system and the media in Latin America.

An example of such distortions can be seen in Mexico, where the 2006 Media Law, the so-called “Ley Televisa,” spawned loud and sustained criticism of perceived bias in favor of the largest media conglomerates. In Colombia, the National Television Commission (NTC) was characterized as “held hostage by a sector of the corporations,” particularly when a third private channel put up for bidding during President Álvaro Uribe’s administration in 2010 (Bonilla Sebá & González, 2010). Apparently due to its inefficiency, in 2012 the NTC was replaced by a new National Television Authority, which according to one expert, still lacks proper funding and may resort to clientelistic practices (Rey, 2012). Perhaps the clearest case of blatant capture of both regulatory and political spaces by the media is exemplified by the Mexican tycoon Ángel González, the proprietor of Albavisión, who has managed to increase his assets in Central America with nearly no opposition. For example, in Guatemala, poor regulatory capacity and obsolete normativity combine to generate an environment in which media and political power maintain a relationship of mutual convenience. The effects are not the distortion of enforcement, but also creation of conditions that undermine professional
journalistic practices. We return to the latter aspect below.

Another clear manifestation of clientelist distortions in Latin America is the discrentional use of governmental public spending, as underscored by O’Donnell (2007). Waisbord notes,

Despite the development of the media under market and commercial designs, governmental propaganda continues to be a substantial source of revenue...Thus, government officials and politicians woo the media as they look for favorable coverage, whereas those media closest to power obtain economic benefits, including major public advertising investment, tax breaks, import permits, and broadcasting licenses. (2008, p. 4)

Vivid examples of clientelism emerged in Peru during the Fujimori administration as intelligence services funded and supported certain types of media. Argentina and Mexico are also cases in point, where in spite of certain regulations that restrict the diversion of public funds, politicians and the media find ways to circumvent the rules.

In the context of a weak and/or inefficient rule of law that has characterized most of Latin America (Waisbord, 2007), the existence of media regulation and policy frameworks does not automatically translate into effective performance and application.

A case in point are formal legal precepts regarding freedom of expression and of the press, which at various times have not been effective or have been hindered through informal mechanisms in many countries, from Mexico to Argentina. Another example are the recent developments regarding community media in Bolivia and Venezuela, where new regulations have mostly served governments' political purposes in efforts to consolidate alternatives to private media organizations, often through coercion or seizing of property. While reforms offer significant potential for civic participation and widespread access to the media in remote communities that have long demanded self-managed spaces for expression, operations still greatly depend on oversight and approval by governmental regulators and even by the executive branch itself.

Even the work of community radio is hindered by on-the-ground practices that continue to replicate vertical communication models and professional discourses offering little chance of community empowerment, as shown in the cases of Chilean community radio and the survival of post-authoritarian journalistic cultures within professionalization discourses in Mexico. Yet another example comes from recent Argentinian media law reform. In spite of its most progressive features, which on paper looked promising for media pluralism as well as access and ownership concentration, in practice it has been used by the Kirchner government as an excuse to confront a single corporation, the powerful Clarín group, and not necessarily to promote true media pluralism.

To summarize, in a context of weak rule of law and a sustained history of clientelism, the tendency towards deregulation and the arrival of new political actors competing for power have combined to enable policy capture by media elites and political leadership.

Journalistic Practice, Culture and Autonomy

Concerns about the future of journalism worldwide have focused on shifting business models, new platforms for news production and distribution, and the impact of technology and media convergence on journalistic practices. Yet many Latin American countries remain anchored to unresolved press issues including lack of autonomy, passive reporting, conflicts of interest, political advertising, threats to press freedom, weak, even dangerous conditions for investigative journalism, and political polarization. According to Hallin and Mancini (2004), four dimensions define media systems: the first is the level of development of media markets and the mass circulation press, which, for the Latin American case, means massively popular private television networks and an elite-oriented printed press. The second dimension is the degree to which individual media outlets reflect the espoused ideology of a political party, also known as political parallelism, as well as how general political divisions and social strata are represented in the media. The third dimension concerns the development of journalistic professionalism, including journalists’ degree of autonomy, their training patterns, the professional norms they embrace, and the presence of a “public service orientation,” as opposed to the “instrumentalization” of news media as vehicles for political intervention. Finally, a fourth dimension analyzes the degree of state intervention in the media system through ownership, regulation, subsidies, or public service broadcasting orientation, which we discussed above. These variables are important for Latin America because they allow us to illustrate how the captured-liberal model impacts journalism, including its practices and discourses.

Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela all have long histories of political and economic instrumentalization—or capture—that have undermined the watchdog role of their presses and, most importantly, greatly limited the autonomy of journalism. This may be due in part to the democratic deficit of news organizations that, immersed in new commercial logics of competition, business pressures, and the challenges posed by digitalization, are confronted by constant pressures from the political world. Such pressures combine with factors exogenous to the media system such as unstable political environments, political polarization, economic crises, weak rule of the law, and in some countries drug violence and organized crime. In such conditions, it is perhaps not surprising that endogenous factors such as reporting practices that serve elites and not citizens, and tensions in the definition of the professional norms and values, are also part of the problem.

Consequently, journalistic performance is under the constant
threat of capture by the illegitimate and undue influence of corporate and political interests not only in terms of topics, tone, and frames, but also in the most basic issues regarding journalists’ freedom of speech and personal security. Such interference can be assessed in two critical areas: the difficulties in conducting investigative journalism, and the lack of adequate protection for journalists. Investigative exposés have prompted calls for greater political accountability and fostered debate in Latin America about corruption and wrongdoing, but this type of journalism has been inconsistent and has not fostered more active investigations or improved reporting techniques. Waisbord (2000) documented how most watchdog journalism in Argentina, Colombia and Brazil heavily relied on leaks, fragmentary and unverified information, and the crossfire of denunciations between competing elite sectors.

Political scandals have intensified across Latin America since Waisbord’s study. While select cases of high-profile watchdog journalism have fueled democratic aims, many only fed short-term news cycles and even helped advance particular political agendas, thereby yielding political cynicism rather than accountability. Some reporting has relied on what Waisbord (2000) calls denuncismo, where politicians are trapped in verbal accusations against each other. Furthermore, in many countries an authoritarian reporting culture centers on oficialismo. By following the president and ministers through their work days, covering officials’ ceremonious actions and speeches prevails as a reporting methodology and news topic. The news across the region is full of political diatribes, the result of reporting practices known as declaracionismo, declaracionitis or declaraciocracia (Lichfield, 2000; Bastenier, 2009; Márquez-Ramírez, 2012). Although partisan parallelism has weakened in countries like Colombia, the news media still reflect a country’s prevailing political forces. Some investigative reporters in the region excel in their work, of course, consistently illuminating cases of corruption and bringing new angles to the longstanding problems of migration, war, violence, and human rights abuses. These journalists masterfully tell the stories of previously unheard voices with in-depth reporting published in investigative magazines, blogs, and occasionally in books. Sometimes, in polarized countries like Colombia under the Uribe administration, reporters become controversial and garner widespread criticism for their interventionist and so-called protagonistic style of reporting on sensitive issues, as occurred with Colombian journalist Hollman Morris and his Contraviña TV program.

Journalists’ organizations have appeared across the continent, some organizing training sessions or seminars funded by regional and international organizations such as the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas, Fundación para el Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano, or the International Center for Journalists, to name a few. A new cadre of journalists, photojournalists and documentarians has emerged in countries such as Mexico, Colombia, Guatemala, El Salvador and Argentina, earning praise and prizes for their reporting. Financially and editorially independent digital outlets like El Faro in El Salvador, Plaza Pública in Guatemala, The Clinic in Chile, Animal Político in Mexico, La Silla Vacía in Colombia and El Puercospeín in Argentina have emerged or consolidated in the last decade. Not only have they organized themselves to share staff training, content and news coverage, but many are paving the way with innovative business models that no longer depend on government advertising, but instead rely on crowdfunding or direct subsidizing from non-governmental organizations or universities. Those outlets exemplify the best journalism of Latin America, and, along with collegial organizations that support journalistic professionalisation—Periodistas de a Pie in Mexico is an example—not only advocate for the integration of narrative and literary resources in reporting, but also provide training, participate in open data movements and develop crowd-sourced publications.

These are examples of good news in an otherwise somber landscape. It is important to stress that such media have not emerged as a result of government policies aiming to foster better journalism. Rather, they represent the exception to the rule, reporting stories about victims and ordinary citizens who are all but ignored by traditional news outlets, leaving the “serious” newspapers to continue focusing on the political elite and their statements.

The region’s traditional media have made important advances in hiring professionals with higher education in journalism and media communication, particularly in newspapers serving urban areas. Examples are Argentina’s Grupo Clarín and La Nación, Brazil’s O Globo and Folha de São Paulo, Peru’s El Comercio, Colombia’s El Tiempo, Mexico’s Reforma and El Universal, and Chile’s El Mercurio. Most of them have undergone newsroom restructuring to adapt to the challenges posed by digital production as well as new content platforms, means of distribution and consumption technology. In this sense, Latin American news websites and resources do not differ much from those in other world regions. Yet the higher educational levels of journalists do not necessarily translate into deep and consistent coverage or high quality journalistic debate over the most pressing issues. In fact, calls have increased for higher ethical standards and basic fact-checking, verification and accuracy in digital platforms. New business models initiated by digital environments that shortened news cycles, journalists’ excessive workloads, and the poor or uneven working conditions for journalists across countries only offer a partial explanation for the various challenges that contemporary Latin American journalists face. Censorship and self-censorship, pressure from political and economic interests, as well as dangerous reporting conditions persist as obstacles to journalistic autonomy and quality.

Although in theory most countries have protections for freedom of speech and legal guarantees of journalists’ access to information, actual conditions of censorship and insecurity
in the field constantly curtail those protections. Recent debates in Latin America about the state's role in assuring journalists' safety and content regulation as a form of censorship demonstrate the importance of domestic legal frameworks on media performance. International bodies can only monitor, make recommendations, and develop press freedom indexes; they have no power in holding authorities accountable.

For their part, local authorities have not only failed in enforcing laws intended to protect journalists, but have themselves become the sources of threats, as has happened in Mexico, Colombia, Central America, Venezuela and Bolivia. In some cases, this has been due to the establishment of parasate forces such as guerrillas, drug cartels and organised crime, while in others, formal political actors who hold office directly threaten journalists or publicly single them out for criticism or confrontation. In Bolivia, for instance, recent legislation prohibiting “racism” has been welcomed by indigenous groups who have long suffered from discrimination in media images and other content. However, the downside is that President Evo Morales publicly complained of unjust criticism by the same media elites accused of endemic discrimination against the indigenous majorities, and even singled out some journalists by name. Some media have subsequently refrained from criticizing the country's first indigenous president, for fear of being labeled a racist under the new law. In Venezuela, Hugo Chavez took matters in his own hands by performing journalistic roles as host of his own TV show, Aló Presidente, on which he interviewed ordinary citizens, interpreted public affairs, and provided the sole face of his government. This move was intended to counteract messages in the private media, particularly radio and television, and to reinforce the official media machinery that managed his personal image. Indeed, Chávez's government eventually succeeded in creating a legal framework to control critical private media—some of which he accused of actively supporting a failed coup d'état in 2002—while consolidating an extensive system of official media to spread the government’s Bolivarian principles.

Another critical problem is the persistence of laws that criminalize libel and impose heavy fines on reporters and publishers found guilty of offending public officials. In many Latin American countries, criminal codes on freedom of expression are not adjusted to international standards, thereby giving officials the upper hand vis-à-vis journalists. For example, countries like El Salvador or Guatemala establish the government's obligation to convene special courts and juries to resolve disputes over freedom of expression. In reality, however, their ruling often benefits private interests rather than the public interest. The barriers to the protection of freedom of speech have various origins: clientelistic exchanges between media elites and politicians, the weakness of legal protection for freedom of expression and the press under authoritarian rule, the lack of proper protection for journalists in many countries, the power of corporations to block the effects of regulation both through formal (the courts) and informal (discrete political interference) means, or blatant efforts by the state to selectively advance only certain aspects of media regulations. Thus, there also few legal channels to ensure press accountability to the public.

Besides the visible instances where press freedom is compromised, journalistic autonomy is severely undermined by the very core of media organizations: their (political) business models. Because countries like Mexico, Argentina, Guatemala, El Salvador and Colombia lack proper regulations on government advertising, the distribution of these lucrative contracts is often discretionary. Not surprisingly, with the exception of Peru—where the popular press has gained considerable circulation by exploiting political scandals and crises—readership is low and reporting is aimed at educated and politically-engaged middle classes.

The governmental allocation of advertising budgets or the negotiation of huge sums of money are often exchanged for positive coverage of political actors and their activities, particularly in the run-up to elections. Apart from the governmental advertising openly acknowledged as such,1 cases of “paid” coverage (or hidden advertising) may include first-page interviews with political actors, or prominent and recurrent featuring of positive news about minor-ranked politicians. In Mexico, the best known examples are gacetillas, news-like items which look genuine but have slightly different font size and often contain a photograph. In fact, commentators have noted that from his early days as a relatively unknown politician, to his run for party nomination and throughout the electoral campaign and his current administration, president Enrique Peña Nieto has been strongly supported by small and large media organizations alike due to open and hidden advertising contracts worth millions of dollars (Espino, 2009; Juárez Gámiz, 2009; Villamil, 2012).

It is worth noting, therefore, that the complicity between media and political groups in many Latin American countries is grounded in a historical context wherein media developed with the aim of mediating between political factions and interests, unfettered by civic norms or a monitoring citizenry. Without strong, persistent calls for information access and citizen debates lead by civic groups, media accountability to audiences has remained weak. Despite major improvements with respect to political discussion and mobilization through social media in recent years—some examples include student activism in Chile, social protests in Brazil and Venezuela or the #YoSoy132 student movement in Mexico—audience input in the public agenda, and especially civic claims from below—remains relatively absent, leaving the media and political actors and institutions to continue shaping the majority of news content. Thus privatization and electoral democracy has not lived up to the ideals of classic liberalism.
The Captured-Liberal Model of Media in Latin America

Unlike the classical liberal philosophy that envisioned the media as a marketplace for diverse ideas that had to operate beyond the reach and control of the state, a pervasive element has shaped the historical development of media systems in most Latin American countries. Under authoritarian regimes, governments used a double standard with the media: pestering, or even forcefully repressing, the critical press on the one hand, while forging close-knit relations with entrenched media owners whom political elites favored with protections, subsidies, and contract awards and the like on the other (Fox, 1988; Fox & Waisbord, 2002; Sinclair, 1996).

Following widespread authoritarian rule, some 30 years ago a majority of Latin American countries began to move away from such regimes and turned toward more democratic and politically pluralistic models (Malloy & Seligson 1987). By recognizing— at least de jure—the existence of fundamental guarantees, including freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom to own property, the post-authoritarian governments of the 1980s and 90s refrained from the direct exercise of violence and open censorship as recurring and explicit mechanisms of power. Latin America approached the 21st century with a strengthened (neo-) liberal discourse that in theory would reinforce media competition and plurality, as well as greater financial and editorial autonomy, but in practice mostly benefited the largest media corporations. Neoliberal reforms, in fact, had ambiguous consequences not only for media systems, cultural industries and the frameworks regulating them, but also for journalism practices and news media business models.

Thus, in many instances media policy has been used as a political tool—through blackmailing, threats, or domination— for the benefit of media groups or political elites, often in the countries with the most partisan or highly polarized politics, like Venezuela, Argentina and Bolivia. Even when created with the best of intentions, the multiple loopholes in the laws and reforms, confusing or contradictory secondary legislation that sets the actual rules and norms, or the lack of objective institutions that oversee the laws together continue to threaten effective media regulation in the region. This problem was exemplified in Mexico’s July 2014 reforms wherein the powerful lobbyists and congressmen with connections to TV networks worked hard to ensure that no media policy jeopardized their interests.

All these trends fall under what we call the “captured liberal media system model,” a common theoretical umbrella—without normative intentions—that helps explain the extent to which factors such as globalization, marketization and commercialism, regional press bodies and national governments all play contesting roles in redefining the media’s role in Latin American societies. The term “captured liberal” refers to a predominantly liberal commercial model whose regulations and/or policy-making process is biased in favor of specific economic and political interests and thus challenges existing assumptions about how media should operate in apparently liberal markets.

The term “captured” has been linked to what is referred to as “state capture” in studies that have analyzed how certain powerful groups in society—mostly, but not exclusively big corporations and firms— affect the outcomes of the policymaking process or the shaping of rules and regulations in their own benefit and at the expense of the broader social interest (Laffont & Tirole, 1991; Hellman, 1998; World Bank, 2000). A large number of studies, mostly focused on Eastern European countries, have used the concept of “state capture” to assess how diverse interests penetrate and control supposedly public spaces of law and policymaking (Begovic, 2005; Omelyanchuk, 2001; Pesc, 2007). In Latin America, Guerrero (2010) has used the concept to analyze three cases where big media corporations shaped broadcasting policymaking in Mexico at the expense of the social interest.

We should emphasize that we use the term in a slightly different manner. Whereas “state capture” refers to a condition where some aspects of the policymaking process and of the design of the rules of the game are twisted in favor of certain specific private interests—a phenomenon that we fully acknowledge continues to happen in media and communication policy—the term “capture” extends further in our chapter authors’ analyses. It refers to a situation where, in a context of weak regulatory capacity, powerful extra-journalistic influences shape, determine, and limit the watchdog role of the media. These external influences may derive from global discourses of professionalism, from market logics, from politicians and state agencies, or from the political or economic interests of media proprietors and editors. We therefore discuss the negative, and undue, impact of two elements: states’ regulatory weaknesses and the watchdog role of journalism, which is under constant challenge.

Whether addressing the configuration of media systems, communication policies, journalistic practices and discourses, or cultural industries, conditions in Latin America today favor capture either by corporate interests whose loyalties may change depending on who is in power, or by political groups in a media context dominated by private commercial media organizations. We are neither proposing a normative model, nor presenting a homogeneous, all-encompassing and static picture of Latin American media systems. The transitions away from authoritarianism in Latin America have generated different settings and terms of capture. Although in general we find contexts of regulatory incapacity in a media landscapes dominated by commercial corporations, the capturers may vary. In Central America, Brazil, Mexico or Colombia, the weight of media corporations or of certain political groups acting in their own interest may be strong enough to favor certain regulatory or policy outcomes at certain times, or to shape the topics of the public agenda in certain ways. By contrast, in Argentina, Venezuela or Bolivia it is the state—not necessarily acting on
behalf of a wider social interest, but against specific private groups—that hinders the media’s monitoring role and favors a discretionary application of the state regulations and norms.

As Carolina Matos reminds us in her contribution for the book, in Brazil, although experts have criticized the Lula da Silva and Dilma Roussef administrations for failing to propose communication policies to tackle concentration akin to their neighboring countries, the unification of various state and educational channels and the granting of some funds to support regional players are seen as positive steps towards democratic policies. However, even though the Brazilian government has granted hundreds of permits for community media, at least half of them are somehow linked to regional politicians. Moreover, Lula’s government implemented a program aimed at supporting cultural production by marginalized groups and communities, who were traditionally excluded from mainstream media production and diffusion, which includes distribution and access provisions to the groups and communities for their own cultural production. However, as César Bolaño argues in his chapter, these are minor policy steps when we consider that the Globo corporation’s powerful “cultural factory” has heavily influence viewers’ tastes through its ability to commodify national popular culture and identity.

Final Remarks

The critical tradition of media political economy has repeatedly highlighted flaws in the liberal conception of the press by debunking the assumptions that commercial media intrinsically enable journalistic autonomy, public service, pluralism or equitable access to the media content, production of content, or media property (Herman & McChesney, 1997; McManus, 1994; McChesney, 1999). As Curran observes, “the market can give rise not to independent watchdogs serving the public interest, but to corporate mercenaries which adjust their critical scrutiny to suit their private purpose” (2002, p. 221).

A vocal group of scholars, some of whom collaborate in this book, are similarly reluctant to connect Latin America’s neoliberal reforms with citizen empowerment. They argue that the structural conditions of post-colonialism in Latin America mean that the communicative nature of contemporary democracy is not in the service of the citizens, but of the elites, even while the media and political elites replicate global discourses of press freedom or journalism professionalism. Thus, the formally liberal model consisting of private media remains constantly—and implicitly—captured either by corporate or political interests.

In the second decade of the 21st century, we witness a region in which the state, especially through regulatory frameworks and media policies that it fails to enforce, has developed ambiguous relations with media conglomerates. In some cases, the state restrains its power and influence, while in others, it maintains a favorable environment for media concentration. In all of this, national and intra-regional politics still play an important role in the creation of media regulatory policies and their effective reach.

Even though Mexico and Brazil host the largest media conglomerates of the Spanish and Portuguese languages, Televisa and Globo respectively, it was not only globalization and neoliberalism that catapulted them to their transnational domains, but national politics—even while they were under authoritarian rule. Therefore, an important difference to be found in Latin America is that despite the widespread use of globalization as the analytical lens to assess or explain media policy change worldwide, national and regional forces still hold considerable weight. Despite emerging challenges posed by technological advances, digitalization and changing global markets, one thing remains crucially clear: to speak of media policy—whether in the global or local scope, in the digital or analog media—still requires discussion of domestic conditions and the specific weight, maneuverability and accountability of the various actors in the media policy game. Much like 40 years ago, Latin American media observers remain deeply concerned that media systems truly deliver and enable pluralism, diversity of voices, freedom of speech, access to information, fair news coverage, the right to communication, media accountability, audiences’ rights, and, at the core of all these, the construction of an engaged and informed citizenry.

Endnote

1 During the 2012 presidential elections in Mexico, The Economist ran a story on the subject, which read: “This is the front page of the March 26th [2012] issue of El Universal, one of Mexico’s most influential newspapers. The entire page—as well as page two, the back page and the inside-back page—is taken up by a giant advertising for the federal government. This isn’t at all unusual. If you listen to the radio in Mexico, no commercial break is complete without an ad for the government or one of its various agencies. The Senate of the Republic is working for you! The Federal Electoral Institute is organising a fair election! The army is keeping you safe! Last year I received a nuisance call from the president himself, who boasted via a recorded message about how many hospitals he had built. The same issue of El Universal also contains federal-government advertisings for the Institute of Social Security (half a page), the economy ministry (a full page), the social-development ministry (half a page), the tax agency (half a page), the Institute of Social Security for State Workers (half a page), the state oil monopoly (a full page), the national development bank (half a page), the state-run postal service (half a page), the energy ministry (half a page), the interior ministry (a quarter-page) the state housing provider (a quarter-page), the
interior ministry again (an eighth of a page), the state housing provider again (a quarter-page, with the same advertising as before), the environment ministry (a quarter-page), the foreign ministry (a quarter-page), and the health ministry (a full page). That is just in the 42-page main section” (The Economist, 2012).

References


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