We thank each of the authors for sharing their work in this issue of the journal. Please consider submitting your work for future issues of the journal. The Journal is open to all theoretical and methodological approaches, as long as the paper has some relationship to Spanish Language media, either in the United States, Latin America or Spain. Submissions must be in English.

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**Submission Guidelines**

1. Submit an electronic version of the complete manuscript with references and charts in Microsoft Word along with graphs, charts to the editor. Retain a hard copy of reference.

2. Please double-space the manuscript. Use the 5th edition of the American Psychological Association (APA) style manual.

3. All authors must provide the following information: name, employer, professional rank and/or title, complete mailing address, telephone and fax numbers, email address.

**Review Guidelines**

Submissions normally take 4-6 weeks for review. Publication in the Journal does not preclude the author(s) from presenting their work at a conference or publishing in another journal. The authors retain copyright for their work.

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Center for Spanish Language Media  
University of North Texas  
1155 Union Circle #310589  
Denton, Texas 76203  
940-565-2756  
[spanishmedia@unt.edu](mailto:spanishmedia@unt.edu)
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Hispanic TV advertising, where did all the mariachis go?

Maria Inglessis  
*Florida State University, FL*  
minglessis@gmail.com

Holly McGavock  
*Florida State University, FL*  
hmcgavoc@hotmail.com

Felipe Korzenny  
*Florida State University, FL*  
felipe.Korzenny@comm.fsu.edu

Abstract

Based on the assumption that marketers have begun to represent the Hispanic market in a less stereotypical fashion, this content analysis examines the frequency and nature of the value orientations represented in U.S Hispanic television commercials. The most commonly occurring value orientations dealt with enjoying life, collectivism, and wisdom/education. Notably less frequent were value orientations referring to luxury/social status, respect for the elderly, and nurturance, among others. Implications and recommendations for the industry are discussed.
Hispanic TV advertising, where did all the mariachis go?

Introduction

The vigorous growth of the Hispanic advertising industry has brought about concomitant sophistication in research approaches and account and media planning. This evolution is expected to result in increased advertising effectiveness. Industry representatives feel that Hispanic television advertising now has higher production value than ever before. They also claim that messaging has become more insightful, more sensitive to the needs of different consumer segments and more representative of US Hispanics.

Specialists emphasize the importance of using culturally relevant messages to reach the Hispanic market (Korzenny & Korzenny 2005, Valdes 2000; Valle and Mandel 2005). It is suggested that messages and strategies that are culturally aligned are the key to successful positioning because they create a deeper emotional connection with the consumer (Korzenny & Korzenny 2005). Scholars have also suggested that cultural values communicated in advertising messages are a potent force shaping consumers’ motivations, lifestyles, and consumption choices (Chen, 1997). A poor choice of cultural values can result not only in wasted budgets but also in unpleasant advertising, which consumers might find demeaning, negatively stereotypical or offensive (Roberts & Hart 1997).

Despite a vast interest in the growing US Hispanic market and its underlying cultural values, little scholarly attention has been given to the cultural values reflected in advertising aimed at Hispanics. Are the cultural values reflected in US Hispanic advertising representative of the values and beliefs of the Hispanic culture?

This study consists of a content analysis intended to provide a preliminary examination of the prevalent cultural values in Hispanic television commercials. The study has implications for students of cultural communication and for advertising and marketing practitioners.

Cultural traits and the Hispanic consumer

Previous empirical studies suggest that advertising messages which emphasize cultural values consistent with the value orientation of the local culture tend to be more persuasive than those emphasizing inconsistent values (Gregory and Munch 1997; Han and Shavit 1994).

From the Hispanic marketing research perspective, having a cultural understanding is one of the most important concerns. Research and strategy which are culturally contextualized are “more likely to indicate the issues involved in attracting the interest of the Hispanic consumer and the potential appeal to the product” (Korzenny & Korzenny 2005, p. 216).

Hispanic advertising experts generally agree upon the significance of understanding the cultural values and beliefs of the Hispanic consumer. This awareness has lead to the growth of ethnographic market research and more sophisticated segmentation approaches that consider psycho-socio-cultural factors. Marketers need not only demographic, psychological and sociological information, but also *culturgraphics* (Korzenny & Korzenny 2005).
Experts have discussed numerous cultural values which characterize the Hispanic market. One of the most commonly discussed cultural dimensions used to characterize the Hispanic consumer is collectivism. Hispanics rely heavily on each other for emotional and economic support, leading to the importance of family life and friends (Korzenny & Korzenny 2005; Valdes, 2000).

Another dimension which figures prominently in discussion is time orientation. Hispanics are more oriented toward the present and the past (Tharp 2001), explaining why traditions and celebrations are so important to them. Furthermore, Hispanics tend to attribute the cause of their behavior, success and failure to others or to external factors. This external attribution combined with the weak time orientation toward the future results in a fatalistic perception of life. The assumption is that if they cannot control the future, they will simply enjoy the present and accept what comes as fate. Furthermore, Hispanics can be characterized by their perception of time. Hall (1989) describes the two time dimensions, monochronism and polychronism. Korzenny and Korzenny (2005) explain that most Westerners are monochronistic, dealing with time in a very linear way, one event at a time. Hispanics, however, are described as polychronistic, often engaging in multiple activities at the same time with no problems.

In terms of gender roles, marianismo and machismo define the traditional cultural roles for females and males in the Hispanic culture. Marianismo refers to the obedient, powerless woman who responds to the requirements of her husband in a traditional wifely role, but also to the nurturer female that is devoted to her husband and children. Machismo refers to the harsh and insensitive male, but also to the responsible provider of the family (Korzenny & Korzenny 2005). Moreover, Korzenny and Korzenny (2005) have hypothesized that Hispanic men and women are more androgynous than their non-Hispanic counterparts. According to the authors, Hispanics tend to show strong masculine and feminine traits simultaneously. For instance, a typical macho may exhibit very masculine traits but at the same time become highly emotional. Likewise, a typical mariana suffers and laments but is at the same time tough when it comes to running the home and protecting the family.

In addition to these cultural values, which have their roots in Catholic Latin America, US Hispanics share other cultural traits—the aspiration for a better future for their children, nostalgia for their country of origin, the desire and need to learn about products, services and institutions, to get rid of uncertainty and reach stability—which differentiate them from their Latin American counterparts.

Clearly, some experts have a deep understanding of the cultural aspects that characterize the Hispanic market. Therefore, some questions should be addressed: Do Hispanic TV commercials reflect those cultural insights? What is the variety of cultural values reflected in Hispanic TV commercials? Furthermore, is advertising meeting the needs and expectations of the Hispanic consumer? This last question is a subject of future research.

**Hispanic Ads and content analysis**

The small body of research about Hispanic TV commercials focuses on portrayals and representations. However, few of the existing studies exclusively address the cultural values reflected in Hispanic TV commercials.
Fullerton and Kendrick (2000) conducted a content analysis on gender depictions in Spanish language television commercials. They found that men and women were mainly depicted in traditional sex-stereotypical roles similar to portrayals in U.S general market commercials. However, the authors point out that the stereotypes of men and women did reinforce images that Hispanics might already have, such as women in motherly roles taking care of the family and males in professional roles.

Roberts and Hart (1997) conducted a content analysis and found significant differences among the cultural value orientations in advertisements directed at the general U.S market, the U.S. Hispanic market, and the Mexican market. The authors hypothesized that the cultural value orientations of the advertisements targeting U.S Hispanics should fall between those same value orientations of Mexicans and the general market reflecting the cultural transition. This hypothesis was only partially supported, since only some of the analyzed cultural dimensions resulted as expected. This study is significant especially because it is one of the few and more recent research studies addressing cultural values in Hispanic TV commercials.

The current study, however, focuses exclusively on TV commercials intended for Hispanics. By reaching a deep understanding of the values reflected in Hispanic TV commercials, a baseline for future cross-cultural or longitudinal studies can be created. In addition, this study attempts to provide guidance to the Hispanic advertising industry about the homogeneity or heterogeneity of the claims they use for reaching US Hispanics.

**Cultural dimensions, cultural values and content analysis.**

Content analysis has been broadly used in the analysis of advertising and consumer research (Kassarjian, 1977; Sayre, 1992). However, most content analysis studies investigating cultural values in advertising focus on cross-cultural differences (Callout and Mueller 1996; Chen, 1997; Cho et al. 1999; Mueller, 1987; Roberts & Harts, 1997). Other studies examine cultural values in the advertising of particular local cultures (Chen, 1997; Wang et al. 1997; Zhang & Shavitt, 2003).

Various approaches to cultural dimensions have been used in content analyses of advertising. The 42 cultural appeals proposed by Pollay (1983) have been used extensively, sometimes with modifications (Albers-Miller and Gelb, 1997; Cheng and Schweitzer, 1996). Other studies have used more limited sets of cultural dimensions (for a comprehensive list see Cho et al. 1999). The variety of dimensions among studies is large and includes individualism/collectivism (Cho et al. 1999; Han and Shavitt 1994); informational/emotional appeals (Cutler and Javalgi 1992); and relationship with nature and time orientation (Cho et al. 1999).

Pollay (1983) developed a method for measuring the cultural values reflected in advertising. His approach was based on the emphasis placed on the cultural consequences of advertising. In this influential work Pollay formulated a coding framework consisting of forty-two cultural values. His framework has proven to be applicable to all media (Chen, 1997). For this study we adapted Pollay’s appeals. In addition, we added two more dimensions: the locus of control (internal and external attribution) and time-orientation (monochronism and polychronism) as defined by Korzenny & Korzenny (2005) (see Appendix I).
In 1986 Pollay reviewed the work of important humanities and social science scholars for their thoughts and theories about advertising’s social and cultural consequences. The author stated that advertising is a “distorted mirror” because:

Not all values are equally suited for use in commercials. Some are more plausibly linked to the products in current production, some are more dramatically visualized, and some are more reliable responded to by the consuming public. Thus, in the aggregate, some of our cultural values are reinforced far more frequently than others. Hence, while it might be true that advertising reflects cultural values, it does so, on a very selective basis, echoing and reinforcing certain attitudes, behaviors, and values far more frequently than others. Thus, it becomes a serious research question, which values are subjected to this selective reinforcement, and which suffer from neglect, however benign? (p. 32-33).

Following this line of thinking, the main purpose of this study is to describe the variety of cultural values reflected in Hispanic TV commercials. A clear description of the cultural values utilized by advertisers can lead to a better understanding of the cultural relevance, effectiveness and persuasiveness of Hispanic TV commercials. Our aim is to provide scholars and the Hispanic marketing industry with a portrait of their approaches so that they can reflect on their courses of action. Many marketers complain that Hispanic advertising is very homogenous and that creativity in Hispanic executions is very limited. This study will provide empirical evidence to substantiate or negate these claims.

Method

Data collection

Our goal was to identify an ample universe of television commercials directed at Hispanics. We concluded that the ads Hispanic ad agencies post in their websites as examples of their work would be a sufficient universe. Given the relatively small size of the universe, we decided to use it in its entirety. We collected all the commercials available in the web pages of agency members of the Association of Hispanic Advertising Agencies (AHAA) between the 1st of April and the 1st of June of 2005. Thirty nine (39) of the 73 agencies had TV commercials uploaded and active in their web pages. Various computer software programs were used to download and capture the spots. Commercials not advertising U.S. products were excluded from the analysis. The final sample was of 369 spots.

Coding

The unit of observation and analysis was each television commercial. The coding design was based on categories and coding schemes adapted from previous studies on cultural values (Albers-Miller and Gelb 1997; Cheng, 1997; Pollay, 1983; Cho et al.
Categories were chosen by taking into consideration which aspects were relevant for Hispanic culture.

In addition to the coding sheet, a codebook with operationalizations for all the categories was prepared (see Appendix I). All categories were defined as manifested in visuals, audio messages and captions. Several evaluations and discussions of the coding sheet and codebook were necessary. Because more than one cultural value could be present in each commercial, the coding sheet was designed so that the coder could check all applicable. Two bilingual coders coded the commercials independently. Intercoder reliability was 80%.

**Analysis**

Of the 363 commercials that were coded, 312 (86.0%) contained at least one cultural orientation representation. The 51 commercials that did not have at least one cultural orientation were excluded from the analysis, resulting in a final population of 312 commercials.

In addition, 12 product categories were created and all commercials were given a code corresponding to a product category. The product categories used were: Entertainment (60 commercials), Automotive (52 commercials), Food/Beverage (39 commercials), Technology (35 commercials), Alcohol (30 commercials), Public Service Announcements (29 commercials), Household/Personal Care Products (27 commercials), Financial Services (26 commercials), Restaurants/Fast Food (18 commercials), Airlines (10 commercials), Utilities/Telecommunications Services (7 commercials), and Other (30 commercials).

The commercials analyzed for the present study make up a population, so statistical analysis was not suitable. For this research, only descriptive analysis was used. Cultural orientations (dependent variables) were analyzed as represented in the various product categories (independent variable).

**Results**

Table 1 shows how often the cultural orientations appeared in commercials by percentage and frequency. As shown in the table, the cultural orientation which appeared most frequently was *Enjoy life*, which was found to be present in 53.8% of the commercials, followed by *Collectivism* (21.2 %) and *Wisdom* (20.2%). Other values which were represented a moderate amount (from 10% to 20% of commercials) include: *Sex appeal* (15.7%), *Goal achievement* (13.8%), *Choose lifestyle* (12.8%), *Health and Wellness* (12.5%) and *Traditions and Celebrations* (11.9%). Occurring infrequently (in less than 10% of cases) were *Hispanicness and Patriotism* (9.0%), *Nurturance* (8.3%), *Work* (6.4%), *Individualism* (5.4%), *Masculinity* (5.4%), *Femininity* (4.5%), *Modernity* (4.5%), *Popularity* (4.2%), *Beauty* (3.2%), *Luxury and Social Status* (3.2%), *Respect for Elderly* (1.9%), *Uniqueness* (1.3%), and *Youth* (1.3%)
### Table 1

**Appearances of cultural orientations in commercials**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Orientation</th>
<th>Percentage of Commercials in which cultural orientation appeared</th>
<th>Number of commercials in which cultural orientation appeared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enjoy life</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collectivism</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisdom</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex appeal</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal achievement</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choose lifestyle</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Wellness</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditions, celebrations</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanicness, Patriotism</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurturance</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualism</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculinity</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Femininity</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modernity</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popularity</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauty</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxury, Social Status</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for Elderly</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniqueness</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 presents the most frequent cultural orientations (those appearing in at least 15% of commercials) presented in each product category. Some product categories’ commercials, like the Food and Beverage category, had numerous cultural orientation representations (Enjoy Life, Tradition, Collectivism, Health/Wellness/Hispanicness and Sex Appeal), while others, like the Entertainment category, showed few of them (Enjoy Life).

### Table 2

**Appearances of cultural orientations in commercials by product categories**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Category</th>
<th>Cultural Orientation</th>
<th>Percentage of Appearances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entertainment commercials</strong> (60 commercials)</td>
<td>Enjoy Life</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automotive (52 commercials)</td>
<td>Enjoy Life</td>
<td>51.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Choose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lifestyle</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sex Appeal</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food/Beverage commercials (39 commercials)</td>
<td>Enjoy Life</td>
<td>51.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collectivism</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HealthWellness</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanicness</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sex Appeal</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology (35 commercials)</td>
<td>Enjoy Life</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Modernity</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individualism</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collectivism</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol (30 commercials)</td>
<td>Enjoy Life</td>
<td>73.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sex Appeal</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collectivism</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanicness</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSAs (29 commercials)</td>
<td>Wisdom</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HealthWellness</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collectivism</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nurturance</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household/Personal Care Products (27 commercials)</td>
<td>Enjoy Life</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HealthWellness</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Services commercials (26 commercials)</td>
<td>Enjoy Life</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Goal Achievement</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wisdom</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Choose Life</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nurturance</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurants commercials (18 commercials)</td>
<td>Enjoy Life</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HealthWellness</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airlines (10 commercials)</td>
<td>Enjoy Life</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collectivism</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wisdom</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanicness</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nurturance</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Choose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lifestyle</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities/Telecommunications Services (7 commercials)</td>
<td>Enjoy Life</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wisdom</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

What was there

This study, with its particular universe of commercials and the set of cultural orientations analyzed, is the first of its kind. Therefore, it is impossible to identify an appropriate point of reference for comparison. Our comparisons are based on existing research dealing with Hispanic cultural orientations in general, and not on what has appeared in Hispanic television commercials in the past or in other studies.

By far the most frequently appearing cultural orientation was Enjoy Life, which appeared in over half of commercials (53.8%). As one of the most prevalent cultural dimensions used to characterize Hispanics, it is not surprising to see these results. This reflects a Hispanic reality which emphasizes living in the present. The fatalistic orientation of Hispanics means that every day is seen as a gift to be cherished and appreciated (Korzenny and Korzenny, 2005). However, we should also note that a common theme of advertising is enjoyment. Therefore, these results may also indicate a general theme in advertising in which most advertisements show people having a good time and enjoying the advertised product.

Probably more significant is the second-most represented cultural orientation, Collectivism, which appeared in slightly more than one out of five (21.5%) commercials. Marketers seem to have recognized the importance of the family and reference groups when advertising to Hispanics. In contrast, only a small percentage (5.4%) of commercials showed Individualism as a cultural trait. This supports what research has shown about the collectivistic nature of Hispanics.

As Hispanics come to the United States and begin to acculturate, they place great importance on gaining knowledge and education. These characteristics, which they believe will help them succeed in the United States, were found to be widely represented in Hispanic commercials. One out of five commercials (20.2%) contained the cultural orientation Knowledge and Education. This category not only referred to formal knowledge and education, but also to the desire for learning in everyday life. For example, a Wal-Mart commercial created by Lopez Negrete showed a mother talking about her daughter learning to cook. She is preparing a cookbook for her and of course the retail store is the place to find the necessary ingredients. So, commercials often use knowledge, education or wisdom to transmit information about the product or service. This is also the case of a financial service commercial for Capital One created by Arvizu that emphasizes the importance of being knowledgeable about the use of credit in the United States and at the same time explains the different aspects of it. This same commercial shows one more layer of the value of knowledge and education when the spokesperson refers to how credit might enable parents to give their children the opportunity of a good education.

Sex appeal also appeared frequently in the commercials, but as was the case with Enjoy Life, this may be more an indication of general market trends which tend to advertise certain product categories, such as alcohol and automotive, by using sex appeal. These product categories typically sell their products by showing how the product will make you look or feel. For this reason, it is difficult to conclude whether or not these results demonstrate a trend specific to Hispanic commercials. On a side note, it would be interesting to compare the Latin American and US Hispanic commercials in terms of the
use of sex appeal. In general, the regulations for TV commercials tend to be less rigid in Latin America than in the US, and Hispanics that are familiar with Latin American television might be used to more recurrent and audacious sexual appeals in commercials.

**What was not there**

Numerous other cultural orientations appeared, but much less frequently. Based on the existing research about Hispanic cultural orientations, we would have expected some of these traits to occur more often in the commercials analyzed. For example, only 1.9% of commercials showed *Respect for Elderly*. Respect for elderly in our coding scheme referred to the positive representation of older people giving opinions and recommendations. The lack of this value doesn’t mean that the elderly are negatively represented, but rather that they are represented in a neutral or passive way, as part of the background or family group. It is known that Hispanics stress hierarchies including, among others, age hierarchy. The notion of *respeto* plays an important role in the Hispanic family. Elderly are highly valued for their ability to contribute their knowledge and experience to their society. In the Hispanic community it is very common to seek out the elderly for advice in many matters, particularly in those related with family relations (Paz & Applewhite 1988). Marketers could take advantage of this value orientation by using the wisdom of the elderly, a truly persuasive force, more often. However, they also need to consider that portrayals of authority and obedience could also have a negative effect on younger generations who may have been born in the US and who are in the process of acculturating.

Issues of femininity and masculinity are prevalent in traditional Hispanic cultural orientations, as seen in the previously mentioned concepts of *machismo* and *marianismo*. However, these traits were not found to be present in the Hispanic television commercials that we analyzed. There were a very low percentage of commercials which showed *Masculinity* (5.4%) and *Femininity* (4.5%). This may indicate reluctance on the part of marketers to reinforce what may be seen as outdated stereotypes. It may also represent a shift in these particular cultural orientations among Hispanics. In fact, more Hispanic women than ever are business owners and these women feel a responsibility towards contributing to the family’s income. In addition, other cultural dimensions related to the concepts of femininity and masculinity were also found to be lacking in these commercials.

The value of *nurturance* is related to the value of collectivism and also to the *Mariana* archetype of the Hispanic female. We expected to find a higher presence of commercials showing people helping other people, particularly in the case of the female characters. The depiction of more acculturated consumers helping less acculturated consumers understand a new product or service could potentially help to establish a deep connection with consumers. It would serve not only as a way to convey information about the product, but it would also portray the reality of the communication network, in which those who understand more help those who understand less, both within the family and within the community. An example of how *nurturance* can be executed is the Bank of America commercial created by Lopez Negrete in which a man, with a caring attitude, explains to his friend how easy it was for him to buy a house, encouraging the friend to think about it.
Other cultural orientations which were lacking in these commercials included Social status/Luxury, Goal achievement, Choose lifestyle and Popularity.

Research has shown that Hispanics tend to purchase products which will enhance their social status (Hoyer and Deshpande, 1982; Valdez et al. 2006, and many others). Marketers can take advantage of Hispanics’ aspiration to improve their standing in society and make a better life for themselves and their families by showing their product as one that will help Hispanics get ahead.

We mentioned previously that some Hispanic cultural orientations come into being as Hispanics adjust to life in the United States. In addition to trying to gain knowledge and education that will help them succeed, acculturating Hispanics also place great importance on goal achievement. Most Hispanics came to the United States for a chance at a better life. Many had little or no money when they arrived and worked hard to achieve something in their new life in the United States.

We expected commercials to reflect more frequently the values of goal achievement and choose lifestyle. There is a lot of room for marketers to connect their products/services with the ideas of freedom of choice and opportunity of achievement in the consumer’s mind. These ideas are at the core of what the US means to Hispanics. Those Hispanics who have migrated to the U.S because of obstacles and difficulties in their countries of origin will particularly connect with these values. Also, those Hispanics of later generations who are aware of their family history and have visited or lived in Latin America could also appreciate this insight more than those who are highly assimilated and take goal achievement and freedom of choice for granted. For bicultural Hispanics, achievement and choosing lifestyle might be related to having the best of both worlds.

The AARP commercials created by Headquarters, for example, are good illustrations of the value Choose lifestyle. These commercials suggest that the benefits of being a member of this group allow people to choose the lifestyle they want, even after their retirement.

An example of a commercial that reflects Social status and Goal achievement is the KIA commercial created by Al Punto Advertising. This commercial shows Hispanics in different stages of their lives aspiring to various things, such as education and love. Aspiration becomes achievement when a man gets a new car and stops looking up, realizing that he is already there. The main message is that it is no longer just a dream to get the kind of car that can give you the social status and satisfaction that you have dreamed of and worked for.

The infrequent use of luxury as a value might also reflect practitioners’ accurate understanding of the mindset of less acculturated/less affluent Hispanics. As Korzenney and Korzenney (2005) highlight, Hispanics fighting for economic achievement might undergo difficult and frustrating times, and ads making use of cosmopolitan and luxurious imagery have little meaning to them. The commercials that showed the trait luxury seem to be directed to more affluent Hispanics and many times included celebrities as characters.

In reference to popularity, Hispanics tend to place importance on the recommendation of friends and family when making purchase decisions (Webster 1992 and others). Positioning the product as one that all Hispanics use or using marketing techniques which rely on reference groups, such as word-of-mouth, can add credibility to
the product. To give an example, the Bank of America commercial mentioned above reflects this cultural orientation by simulating word of mouth and interpersonal influence among friends. Another way to apply popularity as an appeal is used by the Lopez Negrete agency in a Visa credit card commercial. In this spot, the universal acceptance of the card is used to emphasize its convenience. Hispanics will certainly value the reassuring feeling and advantages of using a popular credit card.

Finally, it is necessary to mention here that some variables could not be measured and interpreted properly through content analysis. Commercials by nature are short, usually not more than 30 seconds in length. They are often composed of numerous short scenes which have been heavily edited. Due to the nature of commercials, it was impossible to accurately measure the time orientation variable (monochronism vs. polychronism) and the locus of control (internal or external). Furthermore, because commercials are so short, it was not possible to see whether the ideas were presented in a linear (monochronistic) or nonlinear (polychronistic) manner. The locus of control was largely absent in most commercials. Again, this could be due to the fact that most commercials are 30 seconds or less in length, making it difficult to incorporate a locus of control.

**Appearances of cultural orientation by Product Category**

As mentioned in the Results, some product categories were rich in cultural orientations. Two product categories which contained numerous cultural orientation representations were Food and Beverage and Airlines.

Interestingly, two of the most often seen cultural orientations in the Food and Beverage category were Tradition (28.2%) and Hispanicness (25.6%). Food and beverage products are often advertised as a way for Hispanics to maintain the connection with their home country, even though they are living in a new country. Marketers seem to understand that they can reach Hispanic consumers by positioning their product as one that allows Hispanics to keep traditions alive or connect with their own Hispanicness. In addition, some companies have realized the importance of the market and have formulated products specifically for Hispanics. Collectivism was also prevalent (28.2%) in this product category. Meals and food are a way for Hispanic families and friends to spend time together and the meal is seen more as a social event than a physical necessity.

However, the importance of good food as a means for staying healthy is recognized by Hispanics, and we found that Health and Wellness also appeared frequently (28.2%) in this product category. This comes as no surprise, because marketers frequently position their product as one which will keep the entire family and the children healthy. The health and wellbeing of the family and children is of utmost importance to Hispanics, especially mothers (Korzenny & Korzenny, 2005).

Other frequently appearing, but possibly less significant, cultural orientations in this product category were: Enjoy Life (51.3%) and Sex Appeal (17.9%).

Commercials for airlines were also rich in representations of cultural orientations. Only 10 commercials fell into the airlines category, but all of these commercials contained numerous cultural orientation representations. Air travel usually falls into one of two categories, either pleasure or business, and the cultural orientations seen in these commercials reflect these two reasons for travel. As was typical of most categories, the airlines category had a high percentage of commercials representing the orientations of
Enjoy Life (70.0%), and Collectivism (40.0%). The collectivism orientation in this
category supports the well-known fact that for most Hispanics vacation means returning
to their home country to see family and friends. Hispanicness, Nurturance and Tradition
were each seen in two of the ten commercials, supporting the same idea of using air
travel as a way to connect with the home country and family.

Business is another common reason for travel. Airlines and their Hispanic
marketing agencies recognize that Hispanics are not just traveling for vacation.
Hispanics are also businessmen and women who have reached success in the United
States. Cultural orientations like Knowledge and Education (30.0%), Work (20.0%),
Goal Achievement (20.0%), and Choose Lifestyle (20.0%) reflect the values of Hispanics
who have come to the United States looking for a better life and now have achieved that
goal.

The product categories that presented less value orientations were Entertainment
and Household/personal care. The categories Telecommunications and Technology
presented a moderate use of value orientations. There are two possible explanations for
this reduced presence of values. First, if the product is new to the Hispanic market, the
commercial might be focusing on facts such as product attributes and product
information. Secondly, if the product is well known and there is no need for information,
or the appeal is more emotional than rational, the commercial might be very abstract and
aesthetically oriented, like a collection of audiovisuals that create sensory appeal.

Highly abstract or visual oriented commercials make the identification of values
more difficult. Interestingly enough, this is the case of the Financial Services category. In
this category, one would expect to easily recognize values such as goal achievement,
choose lifestyle, health, and wisdom/education, just to mention some. Moreover, since the
assumption is that Hispanics are less familiar with US financial services, one would also
expect to find more informational commercials in this category. However, commercials
in this category were mostly abstract and had little information about the service itself.
Further exploration of the informational/rational versus emotional aspect of Hispanic TV
 commercials is a topic for further research.

Recommendations
The ultimate goal of marketers is to create meaningful and lasting relationships with
consumers. One way to connect with Hispanic consumers on a deeper level is to make
use of the Hispanic cultural orientations presented here in advertising and marketing
strategies. However, as mentioned in the analysis section, numerous commercials
(14.0%) showed a complete lack of cultural orientation representation. Using these
cultural orientations signifies to Hispanic consumers that someone understands them,
cares about forging a relationship with them and knows how to relate to them. Companies
which don’t consider the culture of Hispanics are missing out on a great opportunity to
create meaningful relationships with their consumers.

Using cultural orientations doesn’t necessarily mean creating stereotypical
representations, either. Practitioners seem to understand that formulaic imagery is no
longer plausible because the Hispanic market has become savvier and more sophisticated.
An example of how agencies and their creatives are reinterpreting Hispanic cultural
values can be seen in a Heineken commercial created by Vidal Partnership, in which the
value patriotism/Hispanicness is used in a humorous and updated way. Instead of using,
for example, mariachis to evoke Hispanicness through music, the commercial uses “La Macarena”. The commercial simulates in a comical way how the Macarena’s world famous dancing step was born in a party of young and vibrant Hispanics.

Marketers could also benefit from utilizing some of the underused cultural orientations. As seen in earlier sections, certain themes, like Collectivism, for example, are being widely used by Hispanic advertising agencies to reach Hispanic consumers. Companies can differentiate their products from other similar products by connecting with Hispanics in a way that other agencies and companies are not. Cultural orientations like androgyny, polychronism, polymorphic leadership and nurturance are largely absent in these commercials. Marketers must consider new and original ways to connect with these consumers, who are becoming increasingly sophisticated and discriminating.

**Significance of this study**

This study is an innovative exploratory analysis of cultural orientations in Hispanic TV advertising. A study which allows for an understanding of the variety (or lack thereof) of values used to connect with Hispanic consumers fills an important gap in studies about Hispanic advertising. It constitutes an important base for further studies in the same area.

Moreover, this study provides useful information for marketers. Because TV is an important medium for reaching Hispanics, an understanding of the cultural orientations which are or should be represented in TV advertising will assist practitioners in creating persuasive and relevant messages for Hispanic consumers. In addition, TV advertising plays a role in self-awareness and self-esteem. If advertisers can represent Hispanic values and beliefs in an accurate and relevant way, they will not only increase sales, but also help Hispanics build a positive self-image.

**Limitations/Direction for Future Studies**

While this study aimed to present a comprehensive picture of how marketers are targeting Hispanic consumers, interesting and valuable comparisons could also be made with general market commercials or with Hispanic television commercials from the past. Therefore, one limitation of this study is the lack of a comparison group.

Another limitation is the variability in the number of commercials from each agency and each product category. Some agencies have more commercials than others in their web pages, so that agencies with numerous commercials had more of an effect on the results than agencies that had posted fewer commercials. Moreover, some agencies had more than one commercial advertising the same product. Due to this and the fact that the study was a population and not a sample, commercials were not evenly distributed among product categories. This made a comprehensive analysis of cultural orientations across product categories difficult.

For future research, further investigation of the cultural orientations contained in Hispanic television commercials is critical. We also recommend a comparison of current Hispanic television commercials with past commercials. This would allow researchers and marketers to see if progress is indeed being made in effectively marketing to Hispanic consumers. Finally, a comparison study with general market commercials is recommended.
References


Appendix I. Cultural traits (as detailed in the book of operationalizations)

- **Collectivism**: emphasis on the individual in relation to others
- **Individualism**: emphasis on self-sufficiency, self-reliance of the individual, product benefits to an individual consumer
- **Enjoy life**: when the values of pleasure, gratification and satisfaction are prevalent and inherent to the product. Enjoy the present.
- **Tradition**: refers to celebrations such as quinceañeras, cinco de mayo, Christmas, but also to respect and veneration for the past, customs, legends.
- **Patriotism** (“hispanicness”): any reference to the fact of being Hispanic, love and loyalty to origins. Nostalgia for what was left behind.
- **Modernity**: emphasis on the notion of being modern, contemporary, up-to date.
- **Social status (luxury)**: desire for what is expensive, exclusive (or unnecessary items), according to the context of the message; product is shown as elevating the position of the user in the eyes of others. It is conveyed that using the product gives a feeling of prestige and pride.
- **Popularity**: emphasis on acceptance and recognition of the product by other consumers
- **Uniqueness**: emphasis on the incomparable nature of the product.
- **Respect for elderly**: old age models that give opinions and recommendations.
- **Youth**: devotion and adulation of youth
- **Wisdom**: emphasis on the importance of knowledge, intelligence, education, experience
- **Health**: emphasis on wellness, fitness, vigor; being free from disease, illness, infection, and addiction.
- **Beauty**: emphasis on attractiveness, elegance of an individual
- **Work**: respect for dedication of one’s labor and skills
- **Achievement**: referring to the will to succeed, goal achievement, dream fulfillment, strong wishes, building a future, a sense of accomplishment.
- **Lifestyle choice**: individuals choice of the manner in which they live
- **Sex appeal**: flirting, situations of sexual tension
- **Relationship with nature**: suggestion of spiritual harmony between man and nature. Reference to elements, animals, plants, minerals
- **Masculinity**: when tough values, including success, money, assertiveness and competition are dominant (Hofstede’s cultural dimensions)
- **Femininity**: importance on tender values, such as personal relationships, care for others, quality of life and service. (Hofstede’s cultural dimensions).
- **Androgyny**: presence of relatively strong masculine and feminine traits simultaneously (K&K p179).
- **Nurturance**: stress of giving to charity, help, protection, sympathy for the weak

**Characters’ locus of control**
- **In control**: Characters control the situation, individuals are responsible their destiny; self-reliance
- **Not in control**: Individuals point to outside influences as the cause of their success or failure

**Time Orientation**
- **Monochronism**: Characters clearly handling only one event at a time
- **Polychronism**: Characters clearly handling multiple events at the same time

*Cultural traits adapted from Pollay’s values (1983)*
Cognitive Consistency and Other-Person Perceptions: Hispanics and Anglos Estimate Effects of Spanish Language Messages in the U.S.

Don Umphrey, Ph.D.
Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX
dumphrey@smu.edu

Abstract

A sample of both Hispanics and Anglos judged the effects of two advertisements on themselves, each other and other groups of people. One of the messages supported legislation to make English the official language of the U.S. Government and the other was a Spanish-language advertisement for a dishwashing detergent. As anticipated by cognitive dissonance theory, Hispanics were more apt to believe the language legislation would cause discrimination and this was reflected in differences between the two ethnic groups in their perceptions of the effect of the advertisement on themselves and others. An acculturation measure based on language usage had little to do with Hispanic other-person perceptions.
Cognitive Consistency and Other-Person Perceptions: Hispanics and Anglos Estimate Effects of Spanish Language Messages in the U.S

A cultural conflict in the U.S. has been gaining steam as the ratio of Hispanics to the rest of the population continues to grow (Carroll, 2006; Sullivan, 2000). This dissension centers on the wide-spread use of the Spanish language, even among Hispanics born in the U.S. (San Juan Cafferty, 2000). In comparison to other immigrant groups, Hispanics are much more apt to retain use of their native language (San Juan Cafferty, 2000). Illegal immigration has become a focal point in this issue because the estimated 10,000,000 illegal immigrants in the U.S. from Mexico often do not become fluent in English. (Jetton, 2007)

Critics have charged that the failure of Hispanics to assimilate is dividing the U.S. both culturally and linguistically (Huntington, 2004). Backed by proponents of limited immigration, 25 states have official English laws, and similar federal legislation passed in the U.S. House but failed to get Senate approval (Crawford, 2007). Some English-only statutes have been called “thinly disguised attacks on race, religion and ethnicity…” (Baron, 1990, p. 8) and the one-language movement has been associated with discrimination (Baron, 1990; Pierpoint, 2001).

Concerns about conflicts between ethnic groups are found at the roots of two theories frequently used by mass media researchers that will be used as tools in the present inquiry.

One of these theories was partially inspired by Lazarsfeld’s (1942) examination of the listening audience of a weekly educational radio program aimed at promoting tolerance between ethnic groups. Each episode featured the cultural contributions made by a specific ethnic group. It was found, though, that individuals actively sought out programming related to their own ethnicity and avoided others. This study was among those cited in Festinger’s (1957) formulation of cognitive dissonance, a theory that not only accounts for selective exposure and selective avoidance of media messages (Cotton, 1985; Frey, 1986) but other “inconsistencies between people’s attitudes and their behaviors and behavioral decisions and commitments…” (Eagly & Chaikin, 1993, p. 470)

The second theory deals with third-person effects. In the article that introduced this idea, Davison (1983) reported that a possible incident of racial stereotyping in the military was one reason he was prompted to formulate the theory. According to the researcher, some African-American U.S. soldiers were stationed on Iwo Jima during World War II. The Japanese learned the location of these troops and dropped propaganda leaflets urging these men to either desert or surrender because it was a white man’s war. Despite the fact that the unit had already distinguished itself in battle, it was withdrawn the following day. Did this occur because the unit’s white officer’s thought that while they could see through the propaganda, the African-American soldiers might not have the same ability? If yes, it would be a third-person perception because it includes individuals believing others are more susceptible to the influence of a message than themselves.

Davison’s theory is now well established in the literature (Paul, Salwen & Dupagne, 2000) as studies (Atwood, 1994; Driscoll & Salwen, 1997; Rucinski & Salmon, 1990) have also identified first-person perceptions as individuals perceiving they
are more impacted by a media message than others. Second-person perceptions occur when individuals estimate the effects of a message on self and others are equal (Neuwirth & Frederick, 2002).

Research in this tradition (Driscoll & Salwen, 1997; Perloff, 1989) has examined the polarized attitudes of ethnic groups toward specific news-related issues and how they are reflected in other-person perceptions.

This study focuses on Hispanic-Anglo differences in other-person perceptions to two advertisements: one advocating adoption of the English Language Unity Act which would make English the official language of the U.S. government and the other a Spanish-language advertisement in the U.S. for a dish-washing detergent. A goal of this study is to explore the role of cognitive dissonance in other-person perceptions of Hispanics and Anglos.

**Literature Review**

**Hispanic Characteristics**

Strength of ethnic identity has been identified as a motivating factor among Hispanics (Deshpande, Hoyer & Donthu, 1986; Donthu & Cherian, 1992). This includes a knowledge of belonging and the value/emotional significance the individual places on this membership (Phinney, 1992). In some circumstances cultural reasons have outweighed economic rationale in the buying process among Hispanics with higher ethnic identification (Donthu & Cherian, 1992).

According to Deshpande, Hoyer & Donthu (1986), strength of ethnic identity was a factor in Hispanic attitudes toward government and business, use of Spanish-language media, and loyalty to ethnically advertised brands. Hispanic ethnic identity also played a role in being influenced by targeted media and to brands used by family and friends (Donthu & Cherian, 1992).

Focusing on media usage, Fujioka (2005) discovered that Mexican-Americans viewing television news stories featuring other Mexican-Americans exhibited higher levels of arousal and greater recall than whites (Fujioka, 2005), the findings attributed to the self-referencing nature of the content.

Associated with ethnic identity is acculturation (Berry, 1980). This process of adaptation to a cultural environment by an individual from another country (Penaloza, 1994; Penaloza & Gilly, 1999) has been tied to both social interaction and language (Phinney, 2003; Marin & Marin, 1991). Among Mexican-Americans it was associated particularly with language spoken in the home (Marin & Gamba, 2003). Hispanic acculturation has been measured in terms of language used when speaking and reading, at home, with friends, and when thinking (Marin & Gamba, 2003).

Marin and Gamba (1996) have linked acculturation with the concept of familism, strong family ties which are a distinctive characteristic of the Hispanic subculture. Greater levels of acculturation have been associated with aspects of family life in Mexican-descent families (Vega, et al., 1986) and perceptions among Mexican-descent youths of lower levels of family support when they speak more English (Barrett, Joe & Simpson, 1991). More acculturated Mexican-descent teens were found to have greater susceptibility to peer influence (Wall, Power & Arbona, 1993) and among males, to be
less involved with family (Brooks, Stuewig & Lecroy 1998). Padillo (2006) discussed the stress faced by Hispanic teens who may be exposed to one culture at home, another at school and who often must serve as interpreters to their elders of the U.S. culture.

**Other Person Perceptions**

In reviewing third-person literature Perloff (1993) concluded that “what a person brings to the mass media is frequently more important than the content that appears on the screen... paper... or airwaves” (p. 168).

Existing attitudes are among the things people bring with them to the mass media, and this fact has been reflected in studies dealing with other-person perceptions. For example, Cohen and Davis (1991) discovered third-person perceptions of negative political advertising among both Republicans and Democrats in the 1988 U.S. Presidential election. The third-persons identified by each group were other like-minded supporters.

Similarly, but based on ethnicity of the perceiver, two other studies demonstrate perceiver attitudes impacted other-person perceptions.

Driscoll and Salwen (1997) discovered that African-Americans were more apt to believe O.J. Simpson was not guilty of the 1994 murder of his ex-wife and her friend and demonstrated a third-person perception of a measure that implied Simpson’s guilt. Whites, on the other hand, were more apt to believe in the guilt of the former football star and registered third-perceptions of a measure that implied his innocence.

Perloff (1989) found that both pro-Israelis and pro-Palestinians perceived that the same news story was biased against them. Both also believed that as a result, attitudes of neutral others would sway again them and result in more positive feelings toward their antagonists.

Some other perceiver personal factors producing variance in other-person perceptions have included attitudes toward the message content (Chapin, 2000), strength of personal beliefs (Duck, Hogg & Terry, 1999), involvement with the issue under consideration (Perloff, 1989), perceived intentionality of the message (Gunther & Thorson, 1992), perceived desirability of the message (Park & Salmon, 2005), perceived dispositions of the groups in question (Meirick, 2005) and group identification (Duck, Hogg and Terry, 1999).

Issue salience would seem to be a factor in the above findings and has impacted other-person perceptions (Milkie, 1999; Mutz, 1989; Price, Tewksbury & Huang, 1998; Vallone, Ross & Lepper, 1985).

Besides the attitudes of actual respondents, Meirick (2005) concluded that the process involved in estimating media effects also includes respondent perceptions of the attitudes of perceived others. This would seem to have been the case in a study by Neuwirth and Frederick (2002) where race of perceived groups produced variance in other-person perceptions of media influence. Subjects were presented with a news story about residents who were upset about prostitution in their neighborhood. In conditions where the race of the prostitute was African-American (in comparison to white) and where the neighborhood was depicted as being minority, subjects were more apt to believe that African-Americans would be more influenced than themselves.

A psychological principle guiding other-person perceptions (Brosius & Engle, 1996) is an assessment of similarity between self and others, conceptualized by Mutz
as social distance. The greater the dissimilarity between self and others, the wider the gap in perceived effects (Lasorsa, 1992). Greater social distance has resulted in linear increases in third-person findings (Cohen, et al. 1988; Scharrer, 2002; White, 1997). Research using social distance to explain third-person perceptions has included actual geographic distance (Gibbon & Durkin, 1995; Hoffner et al. 2001; Mutz, 1989; Wu & Koo, 2001) and levels of education (Eveland, et al., 1999); Peiser & Peter, 2001; Scharrer (2002), Tiedge, et al. 1991). Research also has scrutinized social distance in terms of “other peers” compared to “best friends” (Henriksen & Flora, 1999), non-peers in comparison to peers (Gunther, 1991), “others” compared to “best friends” (Chapin, 2000) and the out-group in comparison to the in-group (Duck, Hogg & Terry, 1999; Lambe & McLeod, 2005; Meirick, 2004).

In a study of first and third-person perceptions, Atwood (1994) linked self-serving biases and downward comparisons, a phenomenon in which individuals attempt to enhance their own feelings of self-esteem and well-being by comparisons with less fortunate others (Wills, 1981). “In-group protection and out-group negative stereotyping” were used by Scharrer (2002) to explain third-person findings of the poor, racial minorities, urban residents and teens. Umphrey and Robinson (2007) associated stereotyping of the elderly with variance in other-person perceptions.

In a few instances measures of social distance have been negated by what Meirick (2005) labeled as “the target corollary” whereby other-person perceptions are impacted by respondent notions of whether the “others” in question will be exposed to that particular type of message. Social distance based on age was overridden in a study of other-person perceptions when college students perceived that people age 40 and over were less apt to be exposed to “death metal music” than younger individuals (Eveland et al., 1999) and when older individuals made estimations of message impact of anti-social messages on 18 to 24-year-olds (Lambe & McLeod, 2005). A similar phenomenon was measured when both high school and college students perceived effects of advertisements for products aimed at different age groups on people in their mid-40s and 70s (Umphrey & Robinson, 2007).

**Cognitive Consistency**

Festinger’s cognitive dissonance theory (1957, 1964) was one of several cognitive consistency theories introduced between the mid-1940s and late 1960s (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). The basic notion behind all of these theories is that people seek consistency between their attitudes, beliefs and behaviors (Black, 1981; Kallgren & Wood (1986).

As a student of Kurt Lewin during the 1940s, Festinger was influenced by the Gestalt School of Psychology (Rogers, 1994; Schultz, 1975). Another Lewin protégé, Fritz Heider, introduced balance theory, the first cognitive consistency theory, in 1946. Taking a holistic Gestalt approach in 1948, Krech and Crutchfield explained how individuals could perceive the same thing differently. Festinger’s (1957, 1964) contribution to cognitive consistency had greater explanatory power than Heider’s (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993) and gave one explanation as to why individuals might have different perceptions of the same message.
According to Festinger, dissonance (or imbalance) between cognitions is psychologically uncomfortable which prompts individuals to seek consonance (or balance). Further, individuals actively avoid dissonance-producing situations. The researcher also assumed that dissonance would vary in magnitude. Selective exposure, attention, perception, judgment and memory are also functions of cognitive dissonance (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Tellis, 1988) and are means used by individuals seeking to avoid or reduce dissonance (Cummings & Venkatesan, 1976; Greenwald, 1981; Robertson & Kasarjian, 1991).

Cognitive dissonance theory was cited by Tan (1978) to explain why African-Americans and Hispanics avoided entertainment programming that contained negative ethnic portrayals.

H1 Hispanics are more apt than Anglos to believe that the English Language Unity Act will cause discrimination.

This is based on issue salience, the self-referencing nature of the message, and a need for cognitive consistency,

H2 A comparison of Hispanic and Anglo other-person perceptions will reflect differences in attitudes from H1 when estimating effects of an advertisement supporting the English Language Unity Act on other groups of people.

The “others” used in this study include “the majority of” Anglos; Hispanics; Hispanic teenagers, based on effects of acculturation on young people (Brooks, Stuewig & Lecroy, 1998; Padillo, 2006; Wall, Power & Arbona, 1993); African-Americans (Neuwirth and Frederick, 2002; Scharrer, 2002); “very wealthy people,” in comparison to findings regarding the poor (Scharrer, 2002), and people with “very little or no formal education” (Eveland, et al, 1999; Peiser & Peter, 2001; Scharrer, 2002; Tiedge, et al,1991).

Brosius and Engel (1996) concluded that attempts to maintain a positive self-image via attributions of in-group superiority play a part in determining the direction of self-other differences. Similarly, Gunther and Mundy (1993) observed that the direction of other-person perceptions comes from assessments of whether it is “smart to be influenced” by a particular message; of course, the “smart” perception could vary between perceivers.

Research has identified variables which determine the direction of other-person perceptions. Messages producing first-person perceptions include those that are credible (Andsager & White, 2001) or pro-social, such as anti-smoking (Henriksen & Flora, 1999) or wearing seatbelts (Gunther & Mundy, 1993). On the other side, third-person perceptions resulted from messages that are not credible (Lasorsa, 1992), persuasively weak (White, 1997), anti-social (Eveland & McLeod, 1999), defamatory (Cohen, et al., 1988), biased (Brosius & Engel, 1996; Gunther & Mundy, 1993; Gunther & Thorson, 1992) and communications advocating negative products, such as gambling services, cigarettes and alcohol (Banning, 2001; Henriksen & Flora, 1999; Shah, Faber & Youn, 1999).

Considering such factors, Henriksen & Flora (1999) concluded, “the magnitude and direction of self-other differences depend on the advocated message and how individuals assess the desirability and relevance of the message” (p. 652).
This phenomenon seemed to have been at work in the previously cited Driscoll and Salwen (1997) study with African-Americans and whites perceiving the same event differently and registering opposite-direction other-person perceptions.

**H3** Following their differences in attitudes towards the English Language Unity Act being associated with discrimination, Hispanics and Anglos will differ in the what is “smart” in terms of estimating effects on the aforementioned groups, prompting Hispanics to register third-person perceptions and Anglos first-person perceptions of an advertisement supporting the unity act.

**RQ1** To what extent will cognitive dissonance play a role in the direction and magnitude of Hispanic other-person perceptions of the previously mentioned comparison groups in conjunction with measurements of acculturation, ethnic identification and an attitudinal measure linking the English-Language Unity Act to discrimination?

**RQ2** To what extent will cognitive dissonance play a role in the direction and magnitude of Anglo other-person perceptions of the previously mentioned comparison groups in conjunction with attitudinal measures focusing on the following issues: illegal immigration from Mexico, the contributions of Hispanics to U.S. culture, Spanish language usage in the U.S., and the English-only movement being tied to discrimination?

Differences in other-person perceptions of advertising have been measured on the basis of neutral compared to emotional messages (Gunther & Thorson, 1992) and neutral compared to negative products (Banning, 2001). However, as we may conclude from the literature above, groups may differ in their perception of what constitutes a neutral message and assign different meanings to the same message.

**RQ3** What differences, if any, will emerge in the previous measurements of attitudes and pre-dispositions of both Hispanics and Anglos in conjunction with the other-person perception scales for the ad supporting the English Language Unity Act ad in comparison to similar measurements with an advertisement for a neutral product?

**Method**

Pre-tested self-administered questionnaires were given to a convenience sample of adults (18+) who identified themselves in a screening question as either “Anglo” or “Hispanic or Latino.” Questionnaires were distributed in Dallas, Texas and its immediate suburbs from November, 2003 to February, 2004 by trained university students compensated either with pay or extra credit in a junior level course. Members of the sponsoring university’s Hispanic Student Association were among those who were paid to administer questionnaires to Hispanics with the money earned going to their student organization. Not eligible to participate as respondents in the survey were individuals connected with the sponsoring university, either as students or faculty/staff.

Hispanic respondents were given a choice between taking the questionnaire in English or in Spanish and queried as to whether they were Mexican-descent, Central and South American descent, Puerto Rican descent, Cuban, or “other,” (Sullivan, 2000).

Both Hispanics and Anglos were asked about gender, age and education (in years excluding kindergarten). Household income for 2002 was measured on a scaled item; choices were in 12 equal increments: “$0 to $14,999,” “$15,000 to 29,999,” etc. and concluded with a 13th choice, “$180,000 or more.”
Survey instruments for both ethnic groups included the two full-page print advertisements.

The first was a “mock” ad set up to look like it had run as a full page in a magazine and containing a notification at the bottom that it was an advertisement. This message supported the English Language Unity Act that would declare English the official language of the United States. Copy points were taken from an online article supporting the act (Mujica, 2003). In the Spanish language version of the instrument, this ad was first presented in English and was followed by a translation of the ad in Spanish. The ad copy read as follows:

Take a Stand for the English Language. 8% of the population of this country (21.3 million people) are classified as “limited English proficient.” (Source 2000 U.S. Census) More than 5 million of these people were born in the U.S. Consider These Facts: * Hispanics are now the nation’s largest minority group. *They make up the bulk of our legal and illegal immigrants. *They comprise a majority or near majority of many U.S. cities. * They account for half of the increase of the U.S. population during the last 3 years. Expect continued growth among non-English speakers. What are the costs? * Bilingual education. *Multi-lingual ballots and driver’s license exams. *Government-funded translators in courts, schools and hospitals. Many other costly government programs. Not to mention cultural and linguistic isolation from the rest of U.S. society. 26 states have already passed laws making English the official language. Support the English Language Unity Act Now Before Congress. It declares English as the official language of the U.S. Government. Advertisement by the Coalition for One Language in the U.S. (Note: This is a non-existent organization.)

The second advertisement to both groups was a Spanish-language advertisement for Ultra Dawn dishwashing detergent that had run as a full page in a magazine. The artwork featured an upside-down bottle of Ultra Dawn. Smaller artwork at the bottom showed a bottle labeled “Dish Liquid” beside a stack of dishes next to a bottle of Ultra Dawn beside a larger stack of dishes. The ad copy reads: “Como si estuviera Ilena. Un chorrito limpia 20% mas platos grasosos que la otra marca lider, mientras dure la espuma. Dawn®. El mero Mero Del fregadero.”

The ad for the English language unity act always preceded the Spanish language ad so that the soap ad would be viewed in light of the one-language movement.

Measurement

Following each of the advertisements were a series of items asking respondents to judge the influence of each ad on themselves and selected others. Rather than testing for
general effects of influence, the items were designed to test for more specific effects, as per the Neuwirth & Frederick (2002) study which recommended “specific indicators (e.g. cognitive, affective)” (p. 132). For the Unity Act ad, the first question asked, “Overall, how much would you say that this advertisement influences you to support the English language unity act?” The same wording was utilized on probes relating to the specific others. The Dawn ad queried respondents, “Overall, what is your attitude towards the Dawn advertisement in Spanish and other Spanish-language messages.” The same wording was used in relationship to perceptions of effects on the attitudes of specific others.

The groups of “others” itemized above in H2 were all mentioned as “living in the Dallas area.”

On each of these measures respondents answered on a scale from 0 (“not at all”) to 10 (“a great deal) as used by Eveland et al. (1999).

Instruments to both ethnic groups included the item, “I am concerned that efforts such as the English Language Unity Act will cause discrimination against Hispanics.” Responses were given on a five-point scale from “strongly agree” (coded as a 5) to “strongly disagree” (coded as a 1). This item was placed in the questionnaires immediately following the two advertisements.

Preceding the advertisements on the Anglo questionnaires were three measures reflecting attitudes relating to Hispanics: “The U.S. needs to crackdown on illegal immigration from Mexico.” “The increased number of Hispanics in the U.S. has resulted in many positive influences on our culture.” “It is important that all Hispanics in the U.S. know how to speak fluent English.” Each measured on a five-point scale from “strongly agree” (coded as a 5) to “strongly disagree” (coded as a 1).

The Hispanic questionnaires included four items used to form an ethnic identification scale (Donthu & Cherian, 1992) that also preceded the two advertisements. The items included, “In general, what language do you read and speak?” The choices included “only Spanish” (coded as a 5), “Spanish better than English,” “Both equally,” “English better than Spanish,” and “Only English” (coded as a 1). The following three items were each coded on 5-point scales ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, with 5 coded for “strongly agree” and 1 coded for “strongly disagree”: “I strongly identify with the cultural group in the U.S. which has the same ethnic origin as myself.” “It is important for me to become like the Anglo culture.” (This item was reverse coded for consistency of direction among the scaled items.) Also pertaining to the same item, it was determined following pre-tests to omit the word “dominant” that preceded “Anglo culture.” “It is important for me to maintain identity with the cultural group in the U.S. which has the same ethnic origin as myself.” The four items were added together to a 20-point scale.

The Hispanic questionnaire also included an acculturation scale developed by Marin & Marin (1991) that also appeared before the ads. The items included, “In general, what language do you read and speak.” (This same item was also used in the ethnic identification scale.) “What language do you usually speak at home?” “In which language do you usually think?” “What language do you usually speak with your friends?” The choices included “only Spanish” (coded as a 5 in this study), “Spanish better than English,” “Both equally,” “English better than Spanish,” and “Only English” (coded as a 1). The four items also formed a 20-point scale.
Similar to the methodologies used in previous studies (Chapin, 2000; Driscoll & Salwen, 1997; Duck, Hogg & Terry, 1999; Gunther & Mundy, 1993; Rojas, Shah & Faber, 1996), a self-other perception scale was calculated for each respondent with each of the comparison groups for both messages. This was done by subtracting the number used by the respondent to indicate the effect of the message on others from the number the respondent used to indicate effect on self. This calculation produced a 21-point scale that ranges from −10 (the greatest possible third-person perception) to +10 (greatest first-person perception).

Respondents were debriefed after completing the questionnaire. Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS 13 for Macintosh.

Findings

The sample size was 373, 173 of Hispanic origin and 200 Anglos. The Hispanics indicated they were 87.2% Mexican descent compared to 82.9% for the city of Dallas during the 2000 census (U.S. Census, 2000), 8.7% Central and South American descent, 1.2% Puerto Rican descent, 1.2% Cuban descent, and 1.7% “other.”

The sample was 53.1% were female, 41.6% male, and 5.4% did not indicate their gender.

As found in the broader U.S. population (Sullivan, 2000), in comparison to Anglos the Hispanics were younger (Hispanic M = 30.7 years, Anglo M = 36.3 years, t = -3.9, p < .0001), reported fewer years of formal education (Hispanic M = 11.0 years, Anglo M = 15.1 years, t = -13.3, p < .0001) and lower levels of income (Hispanic M = 3.2, Anglo M = 5.8, t = -7.74, P < .0001, where 3 was coded as “$30,000 to $49,999” and 5 was coded as “$60,000 to $74,999”).

61.3% of the Hispanics took the questionnaire in Spanish.

The mean for Hispanic acculturation was 13.6 on the 20-point scale (s.d. = 4.5) and the mean for strength of ethnic identification was 14.5 on the 20-point scale (s.d. = 2.3). There were significantly higher scores on the acculturation scale among Hispanics who took the questionnaire in Spanish as opposed to English. (Acculturation scale: Spanish M = 15.3, English M = 11.1, t = 6.7, p < .0001), but there was no significant difference between language of the questionnaire and scores on the ethnic identification scale.

Among Hispanics the unity act-discrimination item was associated with age (r = .168, p< .033) but not with education or income. The acculturation scale based on four measures of language usage was positively associated with age (r = .289, p< .0001) and negatively associated with both education (r = -.493, p < .0001) and income (r = -.254, p < .002). The ethnic identification scale was positively associated with age (r = .264, p < .001) and negatively with income (r = -.181, p < .027), but education did not produce significant results.

On the other attitudinal items given to Anglo respondents (all on five-point scales), there was a mean of 4.0 (s.d. = 1.1) indicating agreement in favor of a crackdown on immigration; a mean of 3.3 (s.d. = 1.0) with the item that Hispanics make positive influences on U.S. culture, and a mean of 4.1 (s.d. = .9) on the importance of all Hispanics being fluent in English. There were no significant findings when the variables
of age, education and income were correlated with the three foregoing items or with the item relating to unity act discrimination.

As anticipated in H1 and predicted by cognitive dissonance theory, Hispanics were more apt to agree with the measure, “I am concerned that efforts such as the English Language Unity Act will cause discrimination against Hispanics” (Hispanic M = 4.0, Anglo M = 2.8 [5-point scale], t = 10.0, p < .0001). When this item was correlated with age, education and income, there were no significant relationships among Anglos and one significant correlation for age among Hispanics (r = .168, p < .033).

Partially supported was H2, which predicted Anglo-Hispanic differences in the way they perceived effects of the unity act ad on others. (See row differences in Table 1.) There were significant differences between Hispanics and Anglos in their perceptions of Hispanics, Hispanic teens, Anglos, and African-Americans. Except for the mean scores for estimated effects on self, Hispanic means were consistently higher than those of the Anglos. There were not significant differences between the two ethnic groups in their perceptions of the effects of the ad on either the very wealthy or those with low levels of education, although the latter measure bordered on significance.
TABLE 1

Hispanic and Anglo Other-Person
Perceptions of Ad Supporting the Unity Act

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Perceived</th>
<th>Hispanic Mean</th>
<th>Anglo Mean</th>
<th>Row t =</th>
<th>2-tailed p&lt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>-5.3</td>
<td>.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanics</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hisp. Teens</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglos</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afr-Amer.</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealthy</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>.137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Educ.</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>.058</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean scores are on a scale of 0 “not at all” to 10 “a great deal.”

Column differences between “self” and each comparison group are significant at p < .0001 except the Anglo comparison with African-Americans significant at p < .001. T-levels in the column comparisons:
Hispanics & other Hispanics, -4.31; Hispanic teens, -5.701; Anglos, -10.71; African-Americans, -6.52; the very wealthy, -9.96; low education, -4.24.
Anglos & Hispanics, 8.44; Hispanic teens, 7.65; other Anglos, -3.89; African-Americans, 3.33; the very wealthy, -4.09; low education, 3.81.

The data provided strong but not unanimous support for H3, the idea that based on differing attitudes toward the linkage of the unity act and discrimination, Hispanics would demonstrate third-person perceptions while Anglos would express first-person perceptions. As seen in the column differences on Table 1, the hypothesis held true for each of the comparisons in the Hispanic column. Anglos, however, had third-person perceptions of both other Anglos and the very wealthy but the hypothesized first-person perceptions of the other four groups.

To address RQ 1 regarding the relationship between Hispanic other-person perceptions of the unity act ad with the unity act ad /discrimination attitudinal measure, the acculturation scale and the ethnic identification scale, it was first necessary to determine whether demographic variables interacted with the other-person perception scale. Income did not produce significant results, but with age there were a significant relationship with perceptions of Hispanic teens (r = - .208, p < .008) and African-Americans (r = -.188, p < .019) with education there were significant correlations in
perceptions of the Anglos ($r = -.197, p < .013$), African-Americans ($r = -.191, p < .018$) and those with low levels of education ($r = .163, p < .042$). Taking these things into account along with the previously described demographic interactions for unity act/discrimination, following are the correlations between Hispanic other-person perceptions of the unity act/ad and the unity act/discrimination attitudinal measure found in the first column of Table 2.
TABLE 2

Correlational Analyses--Hispanic Perceptions of Unity Act Ad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Perceived</th>
<th>Discrimination w/Unity Act ad r</th>
<th>Anglo Cult. 2 w/ Unity Act ad r</th>
<th>Anglo Cult. 2 w/soap ad r</th>
<th>ID Cult 3 w/ soap ad r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anglos</td>
<td>-.234** c</td>
<td>.316*** e</td>
<td>.280**d</td>
<td>n.s. c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanics</td>
<td>-.195* a</td>
<td>n.s. b</td>
<td>n.s. b</td>
<td>n.s. c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hisp. Tns.</td>
<td>-.159* a</td>
<td>.167* c</td>
<td>.208*b</td>
<td>n.s. c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afr-Amer.</td>
<td>-.235** c</td>
<td>.311*** c</td>
<td>.267**c</td>
<td>.198* c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealthy</td>
<td>-.181* a</td>
<td>.306*** b</td>
<td>.256**b</td>
<td>.263** c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Ed.</td>
<td>-.168* b</td>
<td>.294*** b</td>
<td>.270** f</td>
<td>.299** c</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other-person perceptions measured on a 21-point scale calculated by perceptions of message effects on self minus perceptions on others.

*p < .05; ** p < .01; ***p< .0001
a first-order partial r controlling for age
b first-order partial r controlling for education
c second-order partial r controlling for age and education
d second order partial r controlling for age and income
e third order partial r controlling for age, education and income

1. “I am concerned that efforts such as the English Language Unity Act will cause discrimination against Hispanics.” The negative correlations indicate third-person perceptions associated with agreement to this item and first-person findings linked with disagreement.
2. “It is important for me to become like the Anglo culture.” The positive correlations indicate agreement to this item associated with first-person perceptions and disagreement with third-person perceptions.
3. “It is important for me to maintain identity with the cultural group in the U.S. which has the same ethnic origin as myself.” The positive correlations indicate agreement associated with first-person perceptions and disagreement with third-person perceptions.

All coded with 1 for “strongly disagree” to 5 for “strongly agree.”
There was one barely significant correlation produced between the acculturation scale based on language usage and the six other-person perception scales; perceptions of the very wealthy produced partial \( r = .179, p < .049 \).

Considering these surprisingly weak results with the measurements of language usage, the language item was omitted from the ethnic identification scale, and the remaining three items in the scale were analyzed separately. Demographic interactions with these three items follow: the importance of maintaining ethnic identity, none; the importance of becoming like the Anglo culture, an item originally reverse-coded for use in the scale but the reverse coding was removed for this analysis, education \( r = .187, p < .018 \); identifying with the Hispanic cultural group, age \( r = .263, p < .001 \), education \( r = -.163, p < .045 \). Along with the demographic effects on the self-other perception scales, these demographic findings were taken into account in the analyses on Table 2.

Producing five out of six significant correlations with the self-other perception scale of the unity act ad was the item from the ethnic identification scale, “It is important for me to become like the Anglo culture.” Analyses of the other perceived groups revealed third-person perceptions associated with disagreement to the item with every group but “other Hispanics.” Agreement, of course, would be linked with first-person perceptions. (See the second column on Table 2.) These findings are consistent with cognitive dissonance theory.

There was one significant correlation with the Hispanic self-other perception scale of the unity act ad and the item, “I strongly identify with the cultural group in the U.S. which has the same ethnic origin as myself.” For perceptions of the very wealthy, partial \( r = -.193, p < .024 \), revealing third-person perceptions associated with agreement to the statement.

Only in perceptions of other Hispanics was there a significant finding with the unity act ad self-other perception scale and the item, “It is important for me to maintain identity with the cultural group in the U.S. which has the same ethnic origin as myself.” \( R = -.216, p < .005 \), showing a third-person perception associated with agreement.

**Anglo Findings**

Correlations between the 21-point perception scale of the unity act ad and four attitudinal items were calculated to address RQ2 dealing with Anglo findings. With age, this self-other perception scale produced \( r = .212, p < .003 \) with Anglo perceptions of Hispanics, and with income the correlation was \( r = .165, p < .026 \) when perceiving the wealthy. As indicated on Table 3, these served as control variables where appropriate. There were no other significant findings with age, education or income.
TABLE 3  
Correlational Analyses--Anglo Perceptions of the Unity Act Ad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Perceived</th>
<th>Discrim.1 r</th>
<th>Crackdown2 r</th>
<th>Culture3 r</th>
<th>English4 r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanics</td>
<td>-.513a</td>
<td>.340a</td>
<td>-.459a</td>
<td>.386a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hisp. Teens</td>
<td>-.494</td>
<td>.340</td>
<td>-.459</td>
<td>.386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglos</td>
<td>-.488</td>
<td>.397</td>
<td>-.401</td>
<td>.441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afr-Amer.</td>
<td>-.436</td>
<td>.326</td>
<td>-.346</td>
<td>.365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealthy</td>
<td>-.495b</td>
<td>.404b</td>
<td>-.303b</td>
<td>.356b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Ed.</td>
<td>-.508</td>
<td>.384</td>
<td>-.301</td>
<td>.380</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21-point scale calculated by perceptions of message effects on self minus perceptions on others; negative correlations indicate third-person perceptions in conjunction with agreement on the attitudinal measure and positive correlations show first-person perceptions associated with agreement. All correlations on this table are significant at p < .0001.

a first order partial r controlling for age  
b first-order partial r controlling for income

The four scales below were coded with 1 for “strongly disagree” and 5 for “strongly agree.”
1 “I am concerned that efforts such as the English Language Unity Act will cause discrimination against Hispanics.”
2 “The U.S. needs to crack down on illegal immigration from Mexico.”
3 “The increased number of Hispanics in the U.S. has resulted in many positive influences on our culture.”
4 “It is important that all Hispanics in the U.S. know how to speak fluent English.”

The analyses indicated a relationship between cognitive consistency of attitudes with other-person perceptions. Agreement with two variables—the unity act/discrimination measure and Hispanics making a positive influences on U.S. culture—was associated with third-person perceptions of each group; conversely, disagreement with these two variables was linked with first-person finding. Agreement with the other two attitudinal variables administered to Anglos—cracking down on illegal immigration and the importance of all Hispanics speaking fluent English—were both associated with first-person perceptions of all groups; disagreement, then, goes hand-in-hand with third-person findings.
Differences by advertisement

Analyses for RQ3, the comparison of relationships between the ad advocating support of the English Language Unity Act and a Spanish-language ad for neutral product (dish soap), started with analyses of the Hispanic data. Controls were determined by running Pearson correlations between the calculated self-other perception scale of the soap ad with the demographic variables of age, education and income. Neither education nor income produced significant results, but there were two significant correlations in conjunction with age: Anglos (r = .160, p < .043); African-Americans (r = .173, p < .029). These controls were used in conjunction with demographic interactions of other scaled items found above.

Correlational analyses of the other-person perception scales of the soap ad with the attitudinal item linking the unity act ad to discrimination produced no significant findings. This contrasts to the same measurements for the unity act ad which yielded significant correlations with all comparison group, thus providing some support for a notion that weaker relationships would be produced with the soap ad.

However, Hispanic correlations were about the same between the unity act ad and the soap ad with the item, “It is important for me to become like the Anglo culture.” (See Table 2.)

There were three significant correlations of “I strongly identify with the cultural group in the U.S. which has the same ethnic origin as myself.” With the soap ad and Hispanic other person perceptions of three groups. (See Table 2.) In the same analysis with the unity act ad there was a single significant correlation with the very wealthy.

In the sole remaining comparison among Hispanics between the unity act ad and soap ad, the item “It is important for me to maintain identity with the cultural group in the U.S. which has the same ethnic origin as myself.” Produced one significant finding (other Hispanics) in other-person perceptions of the Unity Act ad but none with soap ad.
TABLE 4
Correlational Analyses--Anglo Perceptions of the Soap Ad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Perceived</th>
<th>Discrim.1 r</th>
<th>Crackdown2 r</th>
<th>Culture3 r</th>
<th>English4 r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanics</td>
<td>.342***a</td>
<td>-.234**a</td>
<td>.332***a</td>
<td>-.233**a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hisp. Teens</td>
<td>.328***a</td>
<td>-.238**a</td>
<td>.382***a</td>
<td>-.198**a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglos</td>
<td>.229***a</td>
<td>-.270***a</td>
<td>.315***a</td>
<td>-.177*a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afr-Amer.</td>
<td>.215**a</td>
<td>-.201**a</td>
<td>.323***a</td>
<td>-.148*a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealthy</td>
<td>.157*a</td>
<td>-.202**a</td>
<td>.199**a</td>
<td>-.199**a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Ed.</td>
<td>.245**b</td>
<td>-.239***b</td>
<td>-.284***b</td>
<td>-.247***b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21-point scale calculated by perceptions of message effects on self minus perceptions on others; negative correlations indicate third-person perceptions in conjunction with agreement on the attitudinal measure and positive correlations show first-person perceptions associated with agreement.

a first order partial r controlling for age
b Pearson r

*p< .05
**p< .01
***p < .001

In contrast to the mixed findings among Hispanics, Anglo results were consistent in the comparisons of other-person perceptions of the unity act ad compared to the soap ad. Each comparison revealed results from the soap ad producing significant correlations, each of which went in the opposite direction from the unity act correlations. (See Table 4.) In other words, a correlation indicating a first-person perception with the unity act ad always produced a third-person perception of the soap ad and vice-versa. Although the soap ad correlations were generally smaller, like the unity act ad correlations, there was generally not that much difference in the intensity of the perception from one group to the next.

Discussion and Conclusions

This study provides evidence that cognitive dissonance theory provides one piece of the puzzle in the complex process involved when people look at the same messages,
perceive them differently and have differing estimations of the way others will be affected.

In the present study Hispanics were more apt than Anglos to agree that the English Language Unity Act would cause discrimination, as cognitive dissonance theory would predict. Differences in that attitude then accounted for differences between the ethnic groups in five of seven measures as to the extent that other groups of individuals would be affected by an advertisement supporting the act.

Attitudinal differences also were reflected in the direction of the other-person perceptions, also as predicted by the theory. Since Hispanics were more apt to perceive a relationship between the unity act and discrimination, the “smart” perception for them would be an estimation that others would be more affected by the unity act ad; indeed, Hispanics registered third-person perceptions in each of the six measurements. The anticipated first-person perception among Anglos held true in four of the six comparisons.

Both similarities and differences emerged between the Hispanics and Anglos in their interactions between other-person perceptions of the unity act ad and other scaled items, including attitudes.

Similarities included the fact that both ethnic groups registered third-person perceptions of the unity act ad associated with agreement that the unity act would cause discrimination (and thus, first-person perceptions associated with disagreement) with all other comparison groups. Further, each ethnic group produced correlations that were fairly uniform regardless of the “others” in question. However, a comparison of the correlations between ethnic groups shows greater intensity of the measured relationships among Anglos.

As was true in the Anglo measure associating the discrimination measure and other-person perceptions, the strength and direction of correlations produced by the other three attitudinal items germane to the issue seemed to reflect divided attitudes about Hispanics that manifested themselves as to the direction of the “smart” perception, a phenomenon that also may be explained in terms of cognitive dissonance theory.

The target corollary (Meirick, 2005) appears to be a factor in the Hispanic results when three items used to measure ethnic identity were analyzed in conjunction with other-person perceptions of the unity act ad. First-person perceptions were registered for all groups except “other Hispanics” in agreeing with the item, “It is important for me to become like the Anglo culture.” On the other hand third-person perceptions only of “other Hispanics” were linked with the item, “It is important for me to maintain identity with the cultural group in the U.S. which has the same ethnic origin as myself.” These findings show recognition that the unity act ad is aimed at someone else other than Hispanics, and this may help to explain why there was so little interaction between the language-based acculturation scale and Hispanic self-other perception scales. With the use of the Spanish language so deeply engrained in the Hispanic subculture, the results seem to indicate that Hispanics believe the unity act message is an Anglo issue.

The fact that Hispanic other-person perceptions of Hispanic teens produced significant results with the measure of the importance of becoming like the Anglos (while perceptions of “other Hispanics” did not) is an indication of concern--or the reality of--Hispanic teens being influenced by the U.S. culture.
Analyses of Anglo-Hispanic differences in the unity act ad compared to the soap ad also provide insights. While Hispanic results revealed consistent third-person perceptions of the unity act ad associated with the unity act/discrimination attitudinal measure, there were no significant correlations produced with that same attitude in conjunction with the soap ad. On the same measure with the soap ad, Anglos produced significant correlations with each of the six comparison groups. Notably, each of these correlations went in the opposite direction as the Anglo findings with the unity act ad. The direction-flipping was consistent in correlations across all four attitudinal measures and among all of the comparison groups, although the soap ad correlations were smaller.

These differences may be explained as the Hispanics not perceiving a link between unity act ad issues and something as mundane to them as a soap ad. Anglos, on the other hand, may see any Spanish language ad that appears in the U.S. as connected to the one-language issue. The survey instrument may have served to help them make such a connection. As an intentional manipulation, the unity act ad always preceded the soap ad, creating a priming effect. The wording on the survey instrument also may have played a part. In regards to the unity act ad, respondents were asked to speculate about effects that could include attitude change, “…how much would you say that this advertisement influences … to support the English Language Unity Act.” After looking at the soap ad, respondents were asked about how much the ad and “other Spanish-language messages influence the attitude of...”

This study thus measures respondent perceptions of the attitudes of others in conjunction with their perceptions of message effects, as per the recommendations of Meirick (2005).

Returning to Hispanic results of comparisons between the two ads, other-person perceptions in conjunction with the item of the importance to “become like the Anglo culture” produced remarkably similar correlations in magnitude and direction between the unity act ad and soap ad; in both cases there were significant correlations produced in comparisons with all groups except “other Hispanics.” This is another indication of the target corollary at work.

A third-person perception of the unity act ad on the very wealthy was associated with agreeing that the respondent identifies with the Hispanic cultural group. With the very same item, the soap ad produced Hispanic first person perceptions of the very wealthy, African-Americans, and those with low levels of education. Why would other-person perceptions of Hispanics produce similar associations of the above scaled item with three those particular three groups but not Anglos?

The answer to that question is not clear, but it is yet another indication of a consistent strand in these findings: There is little indication that social distance played a role in other-person perceptions in this study. In several measurements the directions of other-person perceptions in conjunction with attitudinal or pre-dispositional measures were consistent in direction and close in size, regardless of the group in question. Non-significant Hispanic perceptions of other Hispanics were an exception to this in two cases, but as demonstrated in the same measures by significant correlations for Hispanic teens going in the same direction as Anglos, African-Americans, the very wealthy, and those with low education, cultural concerns seem to have played a major role in these findings. It is possible to attribute Anglo mean score differences in perceptions of the unity act ad to social distance, but that will be discussed further below.
Also, it is clear from the findings that the differing results between the unity act ad and soap ad have little to do with an emotional compared to a neutral message. Among Hispanics the differences were attributable to cultural concerns and the target corollary, while Anglos perceived the soap ad in Spanish as another example of a foreign language being used in the U.S.

The findings of this research also raise questions that may be addressed. For example, many of the findings in this inquiry indicated that the attitude was the dominant factor while estimates of effects on “others” in question had little or no effect on the results. Under what circumstances do measures of personal factors override estimates of effects on others? If other research efforts find results similar those in the present study, what would that imply about the phenomenon of other-person perceptions? Is it possible that they are simply extensions of the same types of attitudinal, predispositional and behavioral measures that have been utilized by social scientists for decades? What is left of this line of inquiry without mean score analyses?

Of course, the methodological decision used here to always place the soap ad after the unity act ad in the survey instruments may have affected these results. This, too, may be the subject of research scrutiny. In what way did this decision alter the results? Is it possible that this methodology magnified the intensity of the attitudes at the expense of the measurements of perceived effects on others?

Among the more surprising results of this study was the lack of significant findings with the acculturation scale that was based on Spanish language usage. Was the above speculation correct that use of the Spanish language is so deeply ingrained in the subculture that it was taken for granted and that questions concerning it are an Anglo issue?

A shortcoming of this study includes the fact that the findings are not necessarily generalizable because it is not based on a random sample. Also, ethnicity of survey administrators was not taken into account. Further, the Hispanic instrument shared only one common attitudinal item with the Anglo instrument. Other shortcomings may be viewed simultaneously as suggestions for future research.

For example, useful information would be obtained by measures designed to probe generalized attitudes of Anglos toward Hispanics, and vice-versa. Additional items could also include respondent perceptions of the attitudes of other groups. This would allow researchers to determine the extent of race bias and perceptions of race bias that enters into the debate concerning the English-only movement. An initial qualitative approach might be helpful.

Among Anglos, what would a measure of Spanish language proficiency yield? Rather than simply asking about perceptions of African-Americans, it would have been more revealing to turn this into a study of three ethnic groups by including African-American respondents.

What this article does provide is a study in the tradition of other-person perceptions that adds to an understanding of perceptions and attitudes of both Hispanics and Anglos that relate to usage of the Spanish language in the U.S.
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News Media Consumption and Political Participation in Central America: Causation and Explanation

Ryan Salzman
*University of North Texas, Denton, TX*
rws0073@unt.edu

Rosa Aloisi
*University of North Texas, Denton, TX*
ra0131@unt.edu

Abstract

The empirical study of the effects that news media consumption has on political participation has proliferated in recent years. However, these studies have not specifically anticipated the causal path that connects media consumption to political participation. In our study we test two competing models of news media effects. The direct model of media effects attempts to demonstrate the internal processes that occur given the consumption of news media where consumption leads to variation in support levels for specific forms of participation which ultimately effects a participatory action. The indirect model of media effects would find that media consumption causes an action, joining a group, which then causes a participatory action. Political participation is tested as three separate acts: voting, informal participation, and protest participation. We test news media consumption by differentiating between three different mediums: newspaper, radio and television. We create hypotheses regarding the two different models assuming that each will effect participatory action similarly. The results of the OLS regressions of our pooled sample of six Central American countries find significant support for the indirect model of media effects. Through thorough analysis we demonstrate that the indirect model offers support for theoretical causation as well as the realization of empirical causation.
News Media Consumption and Political Participation in Central America: Causation and Explanation

The link between news media consumption and citizens’ political and social behavior has been the object of several studies. In his work on America’s declining social capital, Putnam emphasized the negative effect of media on citizens’ social and political mobilization, indicating how media sources and especially television potentially increase forms of passive behavior, transforming citizens into simple spectators of political life. Many other studies have shown that the media are the ultimate source of citizens’ political activism. According to de Tocqueville’s seminal work, media can have a central role in the community. It allows citizens, who are distributed over a wide territory, to recognize themselves as members of a community in which their interests are at stake. Scholars have repeatedly underscored the importance of media consumption (Skidmore, 1993; Herman and Chomsky, 1998) and the increasing participation of citizens in the public sphere as well as the increasing importance of democratic values.

Despite the numerous studies, very little attention has been devoted to a systematic understanding of the link between news media consumption and citizens’ political behavior. In particular, two important aspects are left unresolved. First and foremost, it is not a given to know with certainty what effects media have on citizens’ perception of the public sphere and consequently on their involvement in political activities. Do news media increase citizens’ awareness of the existence of a public sphere and of the importance of their participation in the decision making process? Do media encourage citizens to actively engage in political activities or may they alienate or discourage citizens from active political behavior?

Secondly, there is an even more important question that previous studies have neglected to answer, which involves the mechanism through which media reach citizens and affect their behavior. In particular, we wonder whether media directly affect political behavior as voting or campaigning or have an indirect effect. That is to say, if media have any influence on citizens’ political behavior, is it because of other factors, such as providing an increased sense of urgency to participate in community driven activities that indirectly change the political landscape? This last point is of particular importance. In fact, although some previous studies have shown that media might affect citizens’ political behavior (Hermann and Chomsky 1988; Skidmore 1993; Nie, et al 1969), little attention has been given to the dynamics of this link between media consumption and political behavior where the process of influence can vary from direct to indirect.

We believe that part of the problem resides in the fact that scholars have neglected to disentangle the causal mechanism that leads from media consumption to citizens’ political participation. We contend that it is important, first, to theoretically understand what the potential linkage processes are that relate media to citizens’ political participation. We could simply suggest that media themselves directly encourage and thus increase political participation. However, we also contend that while media may increase the democratic values of political participation through the promotion of elections or political campaigns, there is a gap between supporting these modes of political participation and the actual citizens’ political engagement. We suggest that what media are able to do is to convert the support for the democratic values of political participation into actual political engagement by framing the issues around citizens’ political, social, and economic interests. That is to say, news media directly affect citizens’ voting behavior through affecting a dynamic internal
process; first they raise the interest of citizens in the importance of voting behavior, in particular by attaching some kind of personal value to actual political behavior, which, in turn, develops into citizens’ political engagement. Observations of newspapers, broadcast news radio and televised news, suggest that media in Central America encourage and stimulate citizens’ interest in issues that are linked to their social and political space, by providing the logistical information to develop their political agenda. The process then leads to a second stage in which citizens enact their political interests into political activities.

An alternative process of media effects is also possible. Unlike the mechanism illustrated above, news media may have an indirect effect on political participation. This indirect effect involves an intervening action. We suggest that media consumption encourages citizens to join other individuals with common interests and priorities. In particular, we contend that media increase citizens’ awareness of the existence of common problems for other citizens and of the existence of organizations working around those problems. The existence of the so called “civil society” is a particularly important phenomenon in the political arena of Central America. Scholars focusing on democratic consolidation have observed the phenomenon of the booming of civil society in Latin America as a contributor to democratic consolidation (Diamond et al. 1992; Putnam, 1993; Blaney and Pasha, 1993; Avritzer, 1997; Lynch, 1997; Olvera, 1997; Peruzzotti, 1997; Putnam, 1995). Civil society is ultimately one of the elements that support democratic political participation. What we suggest is that civil society might easily be the result of media publicity about social problems and about groups created to help citizens with specific issues. Yet, at the same time civil society may be the intervening variable that helps organize citizens’ political participation.

In the work that follows, first, we analyze the burgeoning literature on media and political behavior, focusing in particular on general arguments explaining the link between news media consumption and citizens’ political engagement. Then we will build a theoretical framework that explains how media should affect political participation in Central America. We will derive some hypotheses and develop a research design using survey data. Finally, we will analyze survey research data and evaluate what the findings reveal and what they suggest as avenues for future research.

**Media Consumption in Latin America: Prior Research**

Until recently the role of media consumption (broadly conceived as the use of broadcast news, newspapers and, more recently, internet) in shaping citizens’ political involvement has remained insufficiently explored. In particular, few systematic attempts were made to understand the causal link, if any, between media consumption and citizens’ political participation. It is only over the past two decades that studies concerned with the interaction between media consumption and citizens’ political behavior have grown conspicuously. In their seminal work on mass media, Herman and Chomsky (1988) redirect the attention on the mass media as a tool of political propaganda. Even though they do not try to specifically investigate “the effects of the media on the public,” they point out that the interest of governments in the use of media communication, resides in the fact that “the mass media serve as a system for communicating messages and symbols to the general populace. It is their function to amuse, entertain, and inform, and to inculcate individuals with the values,

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1 Herman and Chomsky, 1988. Introduction p.xii
beliefs, and codes of behavior that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society.”

A number of studies employs the same framework provided by Herman and Chomsky and develop themes that try to create some order out of the multiple interconnections between media and politics, especially with regard to citizens’ democratic participation in the political process. Some suggest that media play two essential roles in democratic politics (Skidmore, 1993); the media work to disseminate information and to mobilize opinions and actions. The outcome of this kind of mobilization, through the attention that citizens pay to mass communication, leads consequently to an increase in political participation. According to Nie et al. (1969) the mechanism that creates this increase in political participation goes through the citizens’ acquisition of some kind of knowledge and understanding of the political environment.

“Information, it is presumed, increases citizens’ sense of competence, promotes the awareness of a stake in public policies, and provides a basic interpretative resource for following and understanding public affairs.” In Nie et al.’s framework, the consumption of media enters the relationship between citizens and politics as an intervening variable; a source of citizens’ attitude modification and creation of mass participation. In fact, increased levels of information work as a tool for creating what the authors call “political attentiveness”. News about politics, in effect, politically socializes consumers by shaping their attitudes about the political environment. The interesting question about political socialization is how much it translates into political activism. Nie et al. suggest that the general attentiveness spills over into political awareness, which, in turn, provides a resource for political participation. Similarly, others found in survey studies conducted in Eastern Europe and in Latin America (McLeod, 1969; Semetko and Valkenburg, 1998) that, first, awareness about political environment is stimulated by the exposure to mass media and, second, that the attentiveness to news provide a positive influence “on internal political efficacy”. Attentiveness to political news, citizens’ increased awareness of being part of the political system, and an improved knowledge of the political environment, strengthen citizens’ “belief in being able to have some say or influence on the political system.” As pointed out by Lipset (1959), the secular evolution of a participant society and the condition for maximizing political sophistication among the electorate involves, among other prerequisites, the growth of media. In particular, by envisioning a circular relationship Lerner (1958), suggests that media help increase literacy, which, in turn, increase the consumption of media communication; it is “out of this interaction [that] develop those institutions of participation (e.g. voting) which we find in all advanced modern societies.”

However, most of the literature focusing on media consumption and citizens’ political behavior in Latin America, has been more cautious in gauging this supposedly straightforward relationship of media on political awareness and participation, mainly for reasons strictly related to the socio-economic and historical condition of this region. In particular, before delving into the effects that media have had on deepening of political participation and democratic values in Latin America, many have tried to identify the nature

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2 Id supra note 1, Chapter 1, p.1  
3 Nie et al. (1969) p. 10  
5 Id. supra note 4  
6 Lerner (1958) p. 60
and the quality of the media in Latin America, as well as, the actual accessibility of this information by citizens.

With regard to this last point, the socio-economic conditions of Latin American citizens, especially their level of wealth and education, deeply affect their ability to access various sources of information. Rockwell and Janus (2002) suggest that in Guatemala radio is the information source most accessible by citizens. We contend that radio is the preferred medium for political leaders to talk to the indigenous and campesinos. However, this is not surprising considering that television news programs have hardly any competition given that all 4 television stations are owned by one man, Remigio Angel Gonzalez, a Mexican businessman, who has monopolized the televised political news and that TV signals are very weak in some areas (countryside) of the region, to the point that rural populations have very little access to televised news. Additionally, radios may be more easily acquired by poor campesinos, than are television and newspapers. For newspapers two other factors may contribute to their low consumption: low levels of literacy and the presence of expansive rural areas where newspapers circulation might be very low. As a matter of fact, in a 1998 survey it appeared that radio had the 98% of population penetration, while newspapers circulation and televisions were more diffuse in Guatemala City.

Others report the same trend for three other countries of northern Latin America (Hallin and Paphathanassopolous, 2002; Hughes and Lawson, 2005); in 1996 UNESCO newspapers circulation showed rates of 97 per thousand in Mexico and 49 per thousand in Colombia. In Uruguay, where a newspaper can reach the price of $1 per copy, economic hardships have made it very difficult to improve newspapers circulation. This indicates that the circulation of media may vary from region to region. Scholars suggest that citizens in poorer regions may be forced to rely on radio broadcasts or on televisions strategically positioned in gathering places. In contrast, wealthier and more educated areas of Latin America may be able to easily access more sophisticated sources of information like newspapers and the internet. We suggest that this uneven accessibility to media creates different political perceptions and this is mainly for two reasons. First of all, as indicated by Perez-Linan (2002), newspaper readers are usually intellectually prepared individuals and therefore already politically active citizens, able to discern between balanced or biased information. This is particularly important when considering that newspapers tend to represent distinct political tendencies, especially when controlled by political alliances that use the media for political ends. Secondly, almost all Latin American media are governed by small oligopolies and that journalists heavily resent the pressures and threats coming from government officials. However, there is no doubt that if poor campesinos were left only with televised sources, they would be able to acquire only biased information, because, as said above, televised information is tightly controlled by concentrated political powers. This is especially true in countries or regions where illiteracy is very high and radio and television are therefore able to reduce the costs of attaining certain political information.

The question that remains unexplored is: how does the nature of Latin American media affect citizens’ political behavior? Should we expect the same trend found by previous literature in others regions of the world or should we expect a different pattern of behavior? In particular, different media have different effects on the way citizens decide to participate in the political arena (Skidmore, 1993; Newton, 1999). If true and given the way media are distributed across Latin America, this shape patterns of citizens’ political behavior according to particular news media consumed.
Less Space, More Social Integration: How Media Affect Political Participation

Several studies systematically misunderstand the relationship between media consumption and citizens’ political participation. In particular, studies have failed to isolate the effects of news media consumption on citizens’ political engagement and the mechanisms through which media reach, change, or simply reinforce citizens’ political behavior.

The effects of media on citizens’ political mobilization have been sometimes described as negative (Putman, 1995); certain media, especially television, may increase passivity, transforming citizens into simple spectators of the political life. At other times, political participation has been described as something that greatly benefits from media consumption: “information, it is presumed, increases citizens’ sense of competence, promotes the awareness of a stake in public policies, and provides a basic interpretative resource for following and understanding public affairs.” These contradictory conclusions show how studies have picked up different dynamics of the relationship between media and political participation, most likely because of the isolation of a specific and narrow understanding of the mechanisms of influence of media over citizens’ political and social behavior. Additionally, these results show the lack of understanding of the real effects of media on citizens’ behavior. That is to say, the relationship between news media consumption and political participation is not straightforward; reading newspapers, listening to radio broadcasted news, or watching television does not automatically and directly affect the political behavior of citizens. The process through which media consumption causally affect citizens’ political participation goes through a transformation of citizens’ understanding of the public sphere and of the role they may play in the political system. In this study, our main aim is trying to understand the causal link that connects news media consumption and citizens’ political behavior. Is it direct or indirect? We are interested in investigating the process through which broadcast or published political issues affect citizens’ political participation. We agree with the findings of previous authoritative literature, that media consumption, in its different forms, does positively affect citizens’ political participation, in the sense of increasing their willingness and desire of entering the public sphere and actively change the political system (de Tocqueville, 1840; McLeod, 1969; McLeod et al. 1996). Nonetheless, we are cautious in assuming that all types of media have these positive effects. This is for two main reasons. First and foremost, we contend that, the mechanisms through which media affect political behavior create a multistage process in which citizens first become aware of the importance of the public sphere and develop a heightened desire to take part in shaping public policy. While media consumption, as Nie et al. (1969) argue, increases the resources available to citizens to understand public affairs, we need to be cautious in assuming that this process will lead directly to actual political engagement. Secondly, some of the characteristics of Central American media, especially television, may negatively affect citizens’ political behavior and redirect citizens’ political attention to alternative tools of mobilization. We also suggest that while some informational tools encourage greater political participation, others may tend to depress citizens participation. In order to capture all the nuances of the link between media consumption and political participation, we contend that there are two potential mechanisms connecting news media consumption and citizens’ political behavior. The first mechanism through which

 Nie et al. (1969) p. 10
news media, in the form of newspaper reading, television, and radio consumption, could primarily affect citizens’ engagement in the public sphere is by directly stimulating increased political participation, in the form of voting, informal participation (i.e. discussing politics), or protesting. The second potential form of influence is indirect. We contend that media consumption makes citizens aware of a public sphere in which their interests may be at stake. In so doing, media encourage citizens to gather around those interests, mainly by creating or becoming involved in an intermediating structure between individuals and governments such as civil society (social groups and community organizations) that can stimulate and channel citizens’ political behavior.

Before proceeding to the development of a specific theoretical framework we need to state two essential assumptions underlying our study. First, for this study we conceptualized the news media as including television, radio and newspapers. Second, we assume that for the media to be causally linked to citizens’ political behavior some preconditions are necessary (McLeod et al. 1996). In Latin America, not all areas of countries or all populations have equal access to all three media. Problems of literacy and the remoteness of rural areas, as well as socioeconomic factors affect the personal ability and economic capacity to use media sources. Residents of remote areas use radio as the main source of information. Television sets might be a resource of the wealthy that is not available to everyone. Also, newspapers are much more available in urban areas and concentrated specifically in major cities and, ultimately, their diffusion to the most remote rural areas is limited. This is to say that, while we do agree with the assumption made by scholars of media and politics that media create opportunities for political participation for those that do not necessarily belong to some kind of elite, giving to everyone a minimum form of political information, the type of media eventually used to acquire this information might affect the degree of political activism we observe throughout the region.

Based on these premises, we will lay out a general theoretical framework of the mechanisms linking media consumption and citizens’ political behavior. Then we will briefly analyze the specific characteristic of Latin American media and derive some hypotheses on how they ultimately affect citizens’ political participation.

**General Framework**

To better explain how media consumption is linked to political participation it is necessary to recall simple basic dynamics typical of the network and communication system. Media provide *knowledge* and *information* and, ultimately, function as a source for citizens to create a political agenda which revolves around citizens’ interests. In particular, media are able to give *relevance* to specific issues over others, to *identify*, specifically, leaders responsible for the issues, and to create chances of *interpersonal discussion* (Viswanath et al. 1990; McLeod et al. 1999).

Furthermore, the diffusion of information by media creates a *social integration* (de Tocqueville, 1840), which brings together people otherwise dispersed on a wide territory and with no means to reach each other. As Alexis de Tocqueville wrote with regard to the power

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8 In mentioning the concept of knowledge we refer in this section of our work specifically to citizens’ awareness about specific issues and political events taking place. This concept is different from what we refer in the following of our work as political knowledge, which refers specifically to an individual’s understanding of politics.
of newspapers “In order that an association amongst democratic people should have any power, it must be a numerous body. The person of whom it is composed are therefore scattered over a wide extent, and each of them is detained in the place of his domicile by the narrowness of his income, or by the small unremitting extension by which he earns it. Means then must be found to converse every day without seeing each other, and to take steps in common without having met. Thus hardly any democratic association can do without newspapers.”

This mechanism described by de Tocqueville is particularly important for modes of political participation such as protests and marches, which necessarily involve the mobilization of the population around an issue and the diffusion of information about the time and modes of gathering. We find that many newspapers provide information with regard to these events. In recent days Colombian newspapers have mounted an intense campaign against President Uribe amid economic difficulties in the country. On more than one occasion, *El Espectador* and *El Centro de Medios Independientes* have diffused the location and time of political reunions and citizens’ protests. Many other Spanish language news media in Central America regularly provide information about political participation opportunities. These come in the form of general event information. For example, the lead story on April 9th, 2008, in a nationally distributed Nicaraguan newspaper, *La Prensa*, discussed security considerations for a protest march that was to take place that day. Not only did the story discuss the security issues but it also listed the time and location of the march. By providing exact time and location information, these news media stories encourage event participation.

The ability of the media to affect citizens’ political participation goes beyond diffusing information. Although it is true that the more certain events are exposed and highlighted in broadcast news and newspapers, the greater the chance that there will be citizens’ knowledge of these political events, there is no guarantee that citizens will increase their political participation. Our study of Central American information sources suggests that, like media in other parts of the world, they tend to establish a particular agenda by framing a specific issue that is of interest to the citizens, identify the political personalities responsible for the issue itself, and indicate what the solutions are that citizens may entertain to address their problems. During elections or referenda, we found that most of the newspapers, radio stations and televisions indicated the necessity to mobilize the voting behavior by framing the issue in terms of legitimacy. Indeed, we noticed that media tend to emphasize the importance of voting behavior in terms of the leaders’ legitimacy to govern. In the recent Bolivian referendum called by Morales to support his pro-indigenous politics, newspapers have claimed that the referendum was important and necessary to reinforce the idea that Bolivia is governed by a legitimate democratic government. Framing the issue around legitimacy indicates that two main political dynamics are ignited by the media. On one side media move the issue of voting and supporting a legitimate government closer to the citizens’ interests. On the other side, in so doing, media are able to promote political participation even in times during which, deadlocks in governments or apparent political apathy lower the citizens’ perception of governments’ legitimacy. Media offer the opportunity to local citizens to question, ratify, or change the political status quo. The opportunity offered by media is something more than the simple political opportunity offered by governments. That is to say, while some may suggest that if citizens are able to question public officials it is

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9 de Tocqueville, 1840, p. 135.

because the political system allows them to do so; we contend that the political opportunity offered by media coverage reshapes citizens’ interests around issues highlighted by the information. Media shape citizens’ political agenda around local specific issues by telling citizens not only “how to think”, but also “what to think”. The spiral effect that the media agenda setting has on citizens is the ultimate source of mobilization. Citizens participate more, not because media are just available, but because media are also able to set a political agenda to shape citizens’ interests.

One more mechanism that causally links media consumption and citizens’ political participation, especially modes of informal political participation, is the opportunity offered, especially newspaper and radio, to develop what some scholars have defined as “interpersonal discussion.” Studies have shown that citizens use media consumption as a way to communicate with each other. “Mass media often provide grist for the conversation mill and stimulate informal discussion that might not otherwise take place.” (Chaffee and Mutz, 1988). This effect joined with the ability of media to reduce the space among citizens, especially with regard to the knowledge of events and issues, promotes social integration that may increase political participation and citizens’ civic and political engagement.

Briefly, we suggest that the link between media consumption and political participation involves a multistage process in which media, even before affecting citizens’ political behavior, affect the way citizens gain knowledge and willingness to support certain issues and specific political activities. This is a direct effect. The lack of additional actions necessarily intervening in the news media consumption-political participation relationship makes this a process where the consumption of news media directly leads to participatory political action.

This leads to our first hypothesis:

**H1:** The higher the level of news media consumption by citizens, the higher their level of support for political participation and their subsequent actual political participation.

Since previous studies have shown that citizens’ engagement in civil society groups increases political participation, we try to investigate how civil society activism relates to media consumption and ultimately if there is an indirect link between media effects and political participation with interactions occurring among the three elements of media, civil society activism and political participation. It is our understanding that, especially at the local level, radio and newspapers focus on micro-level problems and tend to bring together citizens whose interests revolve around same issues. Additionally, we suggest that very relevant local associations such as labor unions or groups involved in the improvement of local infrastructures may be the source of news reported through local media, which in turn inform citizens about their existence. We contend that, while the presence of local civil groups might channel the attention of media on specific issues, the resonance given by the media to these specific issues informs the general public of the presence of an active civil society in which citizens can participate. So, while we have no doubt that the civil society activism increases political participation, we suggest that the consumption of media increase the knowledge that citizens have about civil society and therefore likely increases their participation in these groups, in turn increasing the level of active political participation. This indirect explanation of media effects supposes a string of actions where the action of participating in civil society
necessarily precedes the participatory action that news media consumption is assumed to effect.

Therefore we suggest that

\[ H2: \text{News media consumption increases citizens' participation in civil society, which in turn increases citizens' political participation.} \]

This hypothesis suggests that while there is a direct effect of media on some kind of citizens’ participation in the public sphere, in this case civil society, these, in turn, become the source of specific political engagement reinforcing the indirect effect that media have on citizens’ political behavior. For example those who participate in labor unions or community driven programs have higher interest to then cast their vote, campaign, and protest to protect and promote the interests for which they have joined communal groups.

**Some additional theoretical considerations**

Generally speaking we assume that the same relationship described above about media and political participation holds true in Central America. We contend that especially newspapers and radio are the major tools that enable citizens to gain information about political events and raise awareness about the importance of citizens’ engagement in the public sphere and ultimately lead to the specific political behavior as voting and campaigning. Yet we also contend that media increase citizens’ engagement because of its ability to raise citizens’ interest in participation in the public sphere. This important step in our theoretical framework calls, however, for important specifications and an additional hypothesis.

We suggest that in order for media to have a positive effect on citizens’ political behavior and especially in their willingness to actively engage in the different forms of political participation we take into consideration, citizens need to perceive the information as conducive to the improvement of their interests. That is to say, the political activities that the information tries to reinforce and the political beliefs it tries to shape need to be seen by citizens as something that would ultimately benefit their position in society.

For this reason we have attempted a careful, differentiated study of the way newspapers, radio and television work in Central America. In the following analysis we take into consideration issues that may affect the circulation of information through newspapers, as the difference in the size of the community and demographic characteristic of the population such as education and wealth that may affect the consumption of television and newspapers. Nonetheless, we think that specific characteristics of the medium itself may encourage or discourage citizens from participating in political events.

We especially contend that television could either have little or no effect on political engagement or, even more, alienate citizens from any form of political engagement. While this consideration is in line with previous literature (Putnam, 1995), the reasons for our argument derive from the function of television in Central America and to the almost monopolized ownership of the broadcasting networks.

Television in Central America is considered more as an entertainment tool more than an information tool. It has been argued that the function of television in Latin America has been shaped by a political agenda. The monopolization of television networks has created
partisan and univocal information (Sinclair, 1999), which main effect has been that of lowering political participation. Additionally, evidence suggests that the ownership of broadcasting networks is linked to major political elites and to specific political parties which may diminish the trust that citizens have in the information coming through televised news as promoting citizens’ interests over the specific advantage of the elite governing the country.

To test the actual role of TV, we therefore suggest that

H3: The greater the consumption of televised news, the lower the level of support for political participation and consequently the lower the level of political participation.

Data and Methods

We will test our hypotheses using survey data collected by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP). The data in the 2006 LAPOP report was compiled from responses to a survey was conducted during the 2004 calendar year in Panama, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, and Guatemala. Respondents exceeded 1500 in each country with the total number of respondents in the pooled cross-section sample used for this analysis well over 7500. Survey participants were selected using standard random sampling techniques and were administered the survey in face to face interviews. The survey asked questions ranging from basic demographic specifics to perceived corruption, political participation, and perceived local and regional problems.

The hypothesized relationship of our independent and dependent variables is linear. This is true for all of the hypotheses listed above. The proper test for a linear relationship is a simple Ordinary Least Squares regression analysis as discussed below. The results of this test should provide us with information concerning the direction, magnitude and level of association among the dependent and independent variables and the overall strength of each model.

The independent, intervening, and dependent variables in this study are represented by single-item measures and multi-item variable indexes. The choice between single- and multi-item measures was dictated by the available survey data. Whenever possible, an index constructed from multiple items was used to increase construct validity. In order to use the indexes with confidence, a factor analysis was conducted to compare the fit of the questions in a single measure. Each index, therefore, has been tested to ensure the appropriateness of the fit of the individual variables in the index. The questions employed from the LAPOP survey are listed in the Appendix [Appendix A]. If the variables were single-item or multi-item, they were all re-scaled onto a scale of 0 – 100. This was done to heighten the comparability of the measures for ourselves as well as the readers of this paper.

10 Before proceeding, it is important for us to address the potential shortcomings of self-reported media consumption which are consistently mentioned and supported by various authors (Bartels, 1993; Price and Zaller, 1993). Conversely, scholars who work regularly with survey data show no lack of confidence in these measures (Seligson, 2005). We agree in principle with those researchers who move forward using self-reported media consumption data. Like those researchers, we believe that our results will be as unbiased and clear as those using other measures of media consumption, of which there are few.

11 For a detailed description of the LAPOP procedures please refer to *The Political Culture of Democracy in Mexico: 2006* (Paras, Coleman, and Seligson 2006)
Variables

This section will briefly describe each variable used in this research. The first variables that we discuss here are the primary set of independent variables that are single-item measures focused on news media consumption. Newspaper news consumption, television news consumption and radio news consumption are each measured on a 4-point scale reflecting frequency of exposure. As mentioned above, they have been re-scaled on a 0-100 scale for the purposes of comparison.

Our dependent variables in this study are measures of political participation: voting, campaigning, conversing about politics, and protesting. In this study the indexed variables were created using various survey questions from the LAPOP 2006 data set. The measure for voting combines voting registration and having voted in the most recent presidential election. The measure for informal participation utilizes responses regarding the frequency that an individual participates in political discussion, attempts to persuade others, campaigns for a candidate or party, and participates in a political movement. Protest participation is measured with a single survey item about protest involvement. Each of these indexes is the summed total of the individual scores which were then rescaled.

The primary manipulation in our research is the use of two different intervening variables to explain how media effects participation. One of the models tests the idea that media can effect political participation directly through shaping support for the participatory action. These support variables are shaped to match the form of political participation that is the DV in the empirical test. A Support for Voting index is created by combining 2 questions from the LAPOP survey attempting to identify general levels of support for voting for various individuals in society. These questions were originally scaled 1-10 but have now been summed and rescaled. The second test uses a Support for Informal Participation index which employs questions about confidence in parties and approval for campaigning. Although originally scaled 1-7 and 1-10 respectively, the index has been rescaled. The Support for Protest index is employed in the third test and is comprised of three questions, scaled 1-10, concerning the various levels of support for individuals demonstrating.

The second model attempts to explain the effect of media on political participation by assuming that the effect is indirect with media consumption causing an action, joining a group, which then causes another action, political participation. Since the connection is an indirect one, there is no need to shape the intervening variable to match the dependent variable in each test. Therefore, we measure group attendance rates by looking at enrollment and involvement in parent-teacher groups, community improvement groups, professional associations, and unions as well as participating in town hall meetings. A set of control variables will also be employed to ensure the correct relationships are identified as well as to increase the robustness of our models. These variables include age, education, and gender. The inclusion of age, education and gender is derived from much research that has identified an overt relationship between these demographic features and political behavior (Almond and Verba, 1965). A measure of political knowledge is also included for reasons similar to those for education. The inclusion of a measure of wealth is

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12 The town hall meeting attendance appears to be an action that is intuitively similar to other group participation. This was confirmed by factor analysis.

13 The Wealth variable is comprised of various dummy measures of possession that have been further elaborated upon in Appendix A.
important because we believe that high level of income or well being should facilitate citizen’s political participation and make them more prone to devote their time to political engagement. Feelings of security are important to control for since people will not tend to participate in public activities if they feel that they are in danger. Partisanship is often measured as an indicator of political participation and should thus be included. The size of the community in which you live has been proven to affect differently political behavior (Booth and Seligson, 1993) as well as the reception of the media and has been included. Also, confidence in the media must be included in the research models if we are to assume that media will have an effect. Finally, because Costa Rica is the longest standing democracy, we use it as is the reference country to which all the other nations are compared. In order to identify the impact of the context on the dependent variables, we created country dummy variables (coded 0 and 1) for each of the nations in the sample.

The inclusion of these variables in both of the models tested in this research is necessary to control for possibly intervening effects and thus ensure the proper identification of the independent effect of news media consumption on political participation in Central America. For a more detailed account of the variable constructs, please refer to Appendix A.

Analysis

We test two models of media effects to answer the research question: How does media exposure effect political participation? In the direct model of media effects, “support” variables are used as the explanatory link present between media news consumption and political participation. Support for this direct model will allow us to assert that media effects individuals directly by affecting changes within a person. Although those changes occur there is only one action that takes place: political participation. Support for the indirect model, which employs “group attendance” variables, would lead us to the understanding that media news consumption affects political participation by causing an intervening action that then leads to the action of participation. Support for one of these models will be made through a comparative process. In the comparative process we will be looking at the direction and magnitude of the Beta coefficients (proportional measures of strength of association) as well as the significance of the p-values. According to our hypotheses, each model should have positive coefficients (Betas) between the key independent and dependent variables with the exception of the effect of television news media consumption on support for participation. A test of the fully restricted model\textsuperscript{14} that results in positive, significant betas confirms that there is a relationship present as hypothesized. Theoretical causality can be derived from the theory of the relationship between media news consumption and political participation. Empirical causality is much more elusive. By finding positive, significant betas present in the tests of the independent variable on the intervening variable (which is the initial dependent variable) as well as finding positive significant betas in the tests of the intervening variable (the new independent variable) on the dependent variable but with the included initial independent variable (or direct test) losing all significance, we can assert that causality is both theoretical and empirical. A result of this type would be the causal connection between the consumption of news media and political participation that we set out to explore. Findings in which all scores (including the direct test of media consumption

\textsuperscript{14} Tests of the models as both restricted and unrestricted yielded similar results to an extent that the unrestricted models are not contained in this paper.
Those findings are still important as we compare the indirect versus direct models of media effects to assess which is a better fit.

The use of separate intervening “support” variables per dependent “participation” variable (Direct Model) relative to the consistent intervening “group attendance” variable regardless of the dependent “participation” variable (Indirect Model) is theoretically important. With the intervening variable shaped to show support, we are trying to preserve the fluid process present in the purported direct effect of news media consumption. The consistent “group attendance” variable is intended to represent the intervening action, or indirect effect, inherent in the indirect news media consumption effects model. Therefore, the representations of the results in the tables below are kept separate so as to not confuse the consumer of this information.

**Observation and Comparison**

Before moving into the analysis of our statistical models it is useful to try to understand how much media is consumed in these Central American countries. For each of the types of media consumed there is significant variation per country. For television, three countries (Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Honduras) have less than 1 television receiver for every 100 people. Costa Rica and Panama have higher numbers of televisions but El Salvador grossly exceeds all other countries with almost 7 out of 10 individuals having a television. This wide discrepancy in the number of televisions can make the potential impact of television news media consumption location dependent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: User Data</th>
<th>Television Receivers (per 1000)</th>
<th>Radio Receivers (per 1000)</th>
<th>Newspapers (per 1000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>816</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: United Nations Secretariat, 2005*

---

15 Comparisons will be made visually between tables as they represent separate models.
Radio receivers are also variably owned in Central America. In Costa Rica, over 8 out of 10 people have a radio as opposed to less than 1 out of 10 in Guatemala. The other four countries tend to cluster around the region average of almost four out of 10. Again, we should expect our statistical results to vary per country given the differences in the number of radios in the country. Newspapers are the least widely dispersed news source in all Central American countries. Only in Costa Rica are newspapers received by nearly one out of ten people. The consistently low rate of newspaper dissemination should not be expected to have a strong variable effect like the other news mediums.

These country differences reinforce the need for the inclusion of the country dummy variables. As you can see in the tables below, the direction and significance of the coefficients varies greatly. We believe that this is due to the variable numbers of televisions, radios, and newspaper circulation per country.

Direct Model Results

The direct model of news media consumption effects reveals little support for the idea that news media influence political participation by influencing levels of support that citizens have for political participation. This is evidenced by the OLS regression results where news media consumption was tested against various support variables. For each news medium the results of the test found that news consumption only affected support for voting. However, the coefficients for those relationships were each negative meaning that viewing television news, listening to radio news, and reading the newspaper each caused people to have lower levels of support for voting. This is in line with our hypothesis (H3) about television but is contradictory to the other hypothesis regarding support variables (H1). The other relationships between news mediums and participation support measures were not significant. Therefore we cannot assume that media news consumption in any form affects levels of support for informal or protest participation.

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16 It is important to remember that the coefficients are created relative to the baseline reference country: Costa Rica.
Table 2A:
Direct Effect of News Media Consumption on Support for Political Participation Variables: Radio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Support Voting</th>
<th>Support Informal</th>
<th>Support Protest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constant</strong></td>
<td>59.550***</td>
<td>45.816***</td>
<td>69.517***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Radio News</strong></td>
<td>-0.012*</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>-0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>0.024**</td>
<td>-0.010</td>
<td>0.059***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence in Media</td>
<td>1.426***</td>
<td>2.412***</td>
<td>-0.069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partisanship</td>
<td>4.721***</td>
<td>6.445***</td>
<td>2.494***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel Safe?</td>
<td>0.726***</td>
<td>1.001***</td>
<td>0.159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Size</td>
<td>-0.481***</td>
<td>0.234</td>
<td>-0.548***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-0.473</td>
<td>-0.416</td>
<td>-2.344***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.383***</td>
<td>0.248***</td>
<td>0.581***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.003</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealth</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala Dummy</td>
<td>-8.596***</td>
<td>-5.379***</td>
<td>-4.112***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador Dummy</td>
<td>-6.862***</td>
<td>-4.813***</td>
<td>-9.982***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras Dummy</td>
<td>-14.33***</td>
<td>-11.83***</td>
<td>-5.034***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua Dummy</td>
<td>-6.681***</td>
<td>-7.541***</td>
<td>-2.732***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama Dummy</td>
<td>-15.87***</td>
<td>-8.063***</td>
<td>-12.68***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>7727</td>
<td>7855</td>
<td>7678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r-square</td>
<td>.110</td>
<td>.114</td>
<td>.101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Coefficients are betas derived from the simple OLS regression tests using the LAPOP 2006 survey data discussed in the body of the paper.
- p-value: *** = p<.01, ** = p<.05, * = p<.1

Table 2B:
Direct Effect of News Media Consumption on Support for Political Participation Variables: TV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Support Voting</th>
<th>Support Informal</th>
<th>Support Protest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constant</strong></td>
<td>60.200***</td>
<td>46.176***</td>
<td>70.055***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV News Consumption</td>
<td>-0.016**</td>
<td>-0.007</td>
<td>-0.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>0.025**</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
<td>0.059***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence in Media</td>
<td>1.449***</td>
<td>2.419***</td>
<td>-0.048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partisanship</td>
<td>4.658***</td>
<td>6.431***</td>
<td>2.488***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel Safe?</td>
<td>0.731***</td>
<td>0.998***</td>
<td>0.154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Size</td>
<td>-0.532***</td>
<td>0.218</td>
<td>-0.586***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-0.403</td>
<td>-0.404</td>
<td>-2.336***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.399***</td>
<td>0.254***</td>
<td>0.592***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.006</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealth</td>
<td>0.012</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>0.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala Dummy</td>
<td>-9.096***</td>
<td>-5.423***</td>
<td>-4.368***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador Dummy</td>
<td>-7.128***</td>
<td>-4.806***</td>
<td>-10.13***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras Dummy</td>
<td>-14.94***</td>
<td>-11.86***</td>
<td>-5.340***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua Dummy</td>
<td>-7.126***</td>
<td>-7.503***</td>
<td>-2.970***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama Dummy</td>
<td>-16.22***</td>
<td>-8.104***</td>
<td>-12.81***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>7728</td>
<td>7856</td>
<td>7679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r-square</td>
<td>.110</td>
<td>.114</td>
<td>.101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Coefficients are betas derived from the simple OLS regression tests using the LAPOP 2006 survey data discussed in the body of the paper.
- p-value: *** = p<.01, ** = p<.05, * = p<.1
Table 2C:
Direct Effect of News Media Consumption on Support for Political Participation Variables: Newspaper

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Voting</th>
<th>Support Informal</th>
<th>Support Protest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>59.707***</td>
<td>45.690***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper Consumption</td>
<td>-0.014*</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>0.025**</td>
<td>-0.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence in Media</td>
<td>1.426***</td>
<td>2.414***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partisanship</td>
<td>4.694***</td>
<td>6.420***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel Safe?</td>
<td>0.729***</td>
<td>1.011***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Size</td>
<td>-0.538***</td>
<td>0.233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-0.477</td>
<td>-0.372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.408***</td>
<td>0.250***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.006</td>
<td>0.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealth</td>
<td>0.011</td>
<td>0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala Dummy</td>
<td>-8.696***</td>
<td>-5.330***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador Dummy</td>
<td>-7.133***</td>
<td>-4.789***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HondurasDummy</td>
<td>-14.78***</td>
<td>-11.76***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua Dummy</td>
<td>-7.231***</td>
<td>-7.495***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama Dummy</td>
<td>-16.12***</td>
<td>-8.078***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>7718</td>
<td>7844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r-square</td>
<td>.109</td>
<td>.112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Coefficients are betas derived from the simple OLS regression tests using the LAPOP 2006 survey data discussed in the body of the paper.
- p-value: *** = p<.01, ** = p<.05, * = p<.1

In the second stage of the indirect model (Tables 3A, 3B and 3C), we found that support for informal and protest participation positively affected actual informal and protest participation. Since those support variables were not affected by news media consumption we cannot assume that the internal process that we theorized is present. However, this does not mean that there is no relationship between news media consumption and political participation.
**Table 3A:** Direct Model: Support for Participation Variables and Actual Participation: Radio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Vote</th>
<th>Informal</th>
<th>Protest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>45.854***</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td>0.295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Vote</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Informal</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.083***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Protest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.190***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio News Consumption</td>
<td>0.023***</td>
<td>0.035***</td>
<td>0.032***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>0.075***</td>
<td>0.063***</td>
<td>0.032**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence in Media</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>-0.352***</td>
<td>-0.69***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partisanship</td>
<td>7.881***</td>
<td>10.512***</td>
<td>2.807***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel Safe?</td>
<td>0.484</td>
<td>-0.459**</td>
<td>-0.412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Size</td>
<td>0.439**</td>
<td>0.205*</td>
<td>-.745***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-0.165</td>
<td>-2.291***</td>
<td>-4.05***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.517***</td>
<td>0.490***</td>
<td>0.819***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.450***</td>
<td>-0.004</td>
<td>0.084***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealth</td>
<td>0.093***</td>
<td>0.021**</td>
<td>-0.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala Dummy</td>
<td>11.04***</td>
<td>-0.203</td>
<td>-2.986**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador Dummy</td>
<td>1.047</td>
<td>0.901</td>
<td>-5.41***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras Dummy</td>
<td>8.881***</td>
<td>1.871***</td>
<td>-0.680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua Dummy</td>
<td>-4.792***</td>
<td>2.854***</td>
<td>-5.19***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama Dummy</td>
<td>8.194***</td>
<td>4.372***</td>
<td>0.949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>7617</td>
<td>7685</td>
<td>7630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r-square</td>
<td>.163</td>
<td>.180</td>
<td>.070</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Coefficients are betas derived from the simple OLS regression tests using the LAPOP 2006 survey data discussed in the body of the paper.

- p-value: *** = p<.01, ** = p<.05, * = p<.1
Table 3B: Direct Model: Support for Participation Variables and Actual Participation: TV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Vote</th>
<th>Informal</th>
<th>Protest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>45.316***</td>
<td>0.027</td>
<td>1.121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Vote</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Informal</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.084***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Protest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.188***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV News Consumption</td>
<td>0.019*</td>
<td>0.014**</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>0.075***</td>
<td>0.065***</td>
<td>0.036**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confidence in Media</td>
<td>-0.018</td>
<td>-0.376***</td>
<td>-0.79***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partisanship</td>
<td>7.987***</td>
<td>10.681***</td>
<td>2.932***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel Safe?</td>
<td>0.462</td>
<td>-0.499***</td>
<td>-0.465</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Size</td>
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<td>-0.73***</td>
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<td>-4.23***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.472***</td>
<td>0.814***</td>
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<td>0.006</td>
<td>0.095***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealth</td>
<td>0.089***</td>
<td>0.018*</td>
<td>-0.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala Dummy</td>
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<td>-2.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador Dummy</td>
<td>1.521</td>
<td>1.623**</td>
<td>-4.78***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras Dummy</td>
<td>9.964***</td>
<td>3.417***</td>
<td>0.660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua Dummy</td>
<td>-3.950***</td>
<td>4.161***</td>
<td>-3.99***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama Dummy</td>
<td>8.840***</td>
<td>5.252***</td>
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<tr>
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<td>7618</td>
<td>7687</td>
<td>7631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r-square</td>
<td>.163</td>
<td>.174</td>
<td>.068</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Coefficients are betas derived from the simple OLS regression tests using the LAPOP 2006 survey data discussed in the body of the paper.

- p-value: *** = p<.01, ** = p<.05, * = p<.1
Table 3C: Direct Model: Support for Participation Variables and Actual Participation: Newspaper

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Vote</th>
<th>Informal</th>
<th>Protest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Constant</td>
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<td>-0.850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Vote</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Informal</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.083***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Protest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.188***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>News</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumption</td>
<td>0.029***</td>
<td>0.047***</td>
<td>0.052***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>0.072***</td>
<td>0.057***</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence in Media</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>-.378***</td>
<td>-0.704***</td>
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<td>Partisanship</td>
<td>7.914***</td>
<td>10.60***</td>
<td>2.881***</td>
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<td>Feel Safe?</td>
<td>0.506</td>
<td>-0.457**</td>
<td>-0.395</td>
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<td>Community Size</td>
<td>0.590***</td>
<td>0.416***</td>
<td>-0.513**</td>
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<td>-2.20***</td>
<td>-3.885***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>0.406***</td>
<td>0.733***</td>
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<td>Age</td>
<td>0.457***</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>0.095***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealth</td>
<td>0.087***</td>
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<td>-0.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala Dummy</td>
<td>-10.82***</td>
<td>0.032</td>
<td>-2.93**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador Dummy</td>
<td>1.589</td>
<td>1.764***</td>
<td>-4.55***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras Dummy</td>
<td>9.886***</td>
<td>3.327***</td>
<td>0.715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua Dummy</td>
<td>-3.674***</td>
<td>4.504***</td>
<td>-3.62***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama Dummy</td>
<td>8.645***</td>
<td>4.977***</td>
<td>1.407</td>
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<td>7676</td>
<td>7620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r-square</td>
<td>.163</td>
<td>.181</td>
<td>.071</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Coefficients are betas derived from the simple OLS regression tests using the LAPOP 2006 survey data discussed in the body of the paper.

- p-value: *** = p<.01, ** = p<.05, * = p<.1

The inclusion of news media consumption variables in the second stage of the model helps us determine if an effect is present. Both newspaper and radio news consumption appear to significantly affect all forms of political participation. Television news consumption appears to affect voting and informal participation but in a manner much weaker than the other two. The positive relationship between television news media consumption and political participation further calls into question the potential for confirming hypothesis 3. This reality allows us to make two claims. First, media does affect participation. Second, that effect is not explained by affecting various levels of support for participation. Therefore, our direct model of media effects is not supported.
Indirect Model Results

The results of running the OLS regressions using the indirect model of news media consumption effects on political participation reveals much stronger, conclusive results. Employing “group attendance” as a single measure, the effect of radio news media consumption appears positive and significant. In the first stage of the model each form of news media consumption appears to positively and significantly affect group attendance.

Table 4: Indirect Effect: News Media Consumption on Group Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Effect of Radio Consumption on Group Attendance</th>
<th>Effect of Television Consumption on Group Attendance</th>
<th>Effect of Newspaper Consumption on Group Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-3.218***</td>
<td>-3.040***</td>
<td>-3.480***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.016***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.039***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>0.034***</td>
<td>0.038***</td>
<td>0.032***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence in Media</td>
<td>0.028</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partisanship</td>
<td>3.186***</td>
<td>3.420***</td>
<td>3.336***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel Safe?</td>
<td>-0.006</td>
<td>-0.068</td>
<td>-0.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Size</td>
<td>1.083***</td>
<td>1.158***</td>
<td>1.275***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (M=0, F=1)</td>
<td>0.218</td>
<td>-0.074</td>
<td>0.184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.144***</td>
<td>0.121***</td>
<td>0.074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.034***</td>
<td>0.050***</td>
<td>0.050***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealth</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>-0.003</td>
<td>-0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala Dummy</td>
<td>2.295***</td>
<td>4.001***</td>
<td>3.224***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador Dummy</td>
<td>2.824***</td>
<td>3.860***</td>
<td>4.024***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras Dummy</td>
<td>3.767***</td>
<td>5.978***</td>
<td>5.907***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua Dummy</td>
<td>4.932***</td>
<td>6.840***</td>
<td>7.163***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama Dummy</td>
<td>1.110*</td>
<td>2.378***</td>
<td>2.241***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>7738</td>
<td>7727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r-square</td>
<td>.070</td>
<td>.055</td>
<td>.060</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Coefficients are betas derived from the simple OLS regression tests using the LAPOP 2006 survey data discussed in the body of the paper.

p-value: *** = p<.01, ** = p<.05, * = p<.1

The results of the second stage of the model find strong, positive betas with high significance. Attendance appears to greatly affect participation at the individual level. The effects of this intervening action serve as the crux of the indirect model. Through this intervening action, we are able to see the potential of news media consumption as it effects political participation. Besides across-the-board positive and significant findings for the indirect effect of radio, the results pertaining to protest participation are especially important. The loss of significance in the direct media-participation test reinforces our theoretical assertions of causality with empirical support for causality. In that instance, then, group
attendance explains the relationship between radio news media consumption and protest participation.

**Table 5A**: Indirect Effect: Group Attendance on Political Participation: Radio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Vote</th>
<th>Informal</th>
<th>Protest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
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<td>4.941***</td>
<td>14.837***</td>
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<td>Group Attendance Independent Variable</td>
<td>0.162***</td>
<td>0.272***</td>
<td>0.353***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Radio News Consumption</td>
<td>0.019**</td>
<td>0.020***</td>
<td>0.013</td>
</tr>
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<td>Guatemala Dummy</td>
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<td>-1.317*</td>
<td>-3.974***</td>
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<tr>
<td>El Salvador Dummy</td>
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<td>-0.332</td>
<td>-8.378***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honduras Dummy</td>
<td>8.002***</td>
<td>-0.151</td>
<td>-3.304***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.940</td>
<td>-7.467***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Panama Dummy</td>
<td>8.119***</td>
<td>3.528***</td>
<td>-1.468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>0.067***</td>
<td>0.053***</td>
<td>0.038**</td>
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<td>Confidence in Media</td>
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<td>-0.187*</td>
<td>-0.701***</td>
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<td>Partisanship</td>
<td>7.225***</td>
<td>10.107***</td>
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<td>0.574*</td>
<td>-0.372**</td>
<td>-0.365</td>
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<td>-4.861***</td>
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<td>0.509***</td>
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<td>0.860***</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.074***</td>
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<tr>
<td>r-square</td>
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<td>.225</td>
<td>.088</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Coefficients are betas derived from the simple OLS regression tests using the LAPOP 2006 survey data discussed in the body of the paper.  
- p-value: *** = p<.01, ** = p<.05, * = p<.1

The indirect model test using television news media consumption as the primary independent variable finds even stronger effects than does the radio test. The effect of television news media consumption on group attendance is both positive and significant. The test of group attendance on voting finds results similar to those for radio.¹⁷ The results of the test on informal participation and protest garner extremely strong findings. The direct effect of TV on both forms of participation results in a total loss of all significance. This means that the indirect model testing the effect of television news media consumption demonstrates the existence of a relationship as well as offering empirical proof of causation to accompany the theoretical argument of causation as it relates television news media consumption to informal and protest participation.

¹⁷ Positive and Significant betas with the direct effect of media on participation having similar results.
Table 5B: Indirect Effect: Group Attendance on Political Participation: TV

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Protest</th>
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</thead>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>TV News Consumption</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Guatemala Dummy</td>
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<td>-0.681</td>
<td>-3.65***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-5.181***</td>
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<td>-7.03***</td>
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<td>Panama Dummy</td>
<td>8.698***</td>
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<td>0.053***</td>
<td>0.041***</td>
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<td>-0.055</td>
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<td>0.697***</td>
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<td>-0.396</td>
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<td>4.941***</td>
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<td>0.861***</td>
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<td>-0.009</td>
<td>0.078***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealth</td>
<td>0.088***</td>
<td>0.024**</td>
<td>-0.013</td>
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<td>7692</td>
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<tr>
<td>r-square</td>
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<td>.223</td>
<td>.088</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Coefficients are betas derived from the simple OLS regression tests using the LAPOP 2006 survey data discussed in the body of the paper.

- p-value: *** = p<.01, ** = p<.05, * = p<.1
Like the indirect model test of radio and television, the test of newspaper news media consumption finds strong and definitive results. The group attendance variable is affected by newspaper news media consumption in a manner similar to the other two media mediums, television and radio. The two-stage test finds positive, significant betas for voting, informal participation and protest. Although the relationship appears evident, empirical causal support is lacking. Instead, theory must provide the causal connection.

**Direct Effects**

The test of the direct relationship between news media consumption and political participation is important because of its ability to help us determine the true effects of the intervening variables which are the explanatory focus of each model. The presence of direct media-participation effects serves as a reminder of the intuitive assertions that began this project. By the direct effect remaining when the intervening variable lost significance reminds us that there is still work to be done. The loss of significance of the direct media-participation test scores allowed us to assert the causal potential and reality of our models. Although the direct media-participation test is another potential boon to the “direct model” idea it is too ambiguous to be specifically linked. The relationships that found positive, significant betas across the board reinforce the model from which they were derived but stop short of empirically supported causality due to the continued strength of the direct media-participation statistical results.

### Table 5C: Indirect Effect: Group Attendance on Political Participation: Newspaper

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Vote</th>
<th>Informal</th>
<th>Protest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>46.152***</td>
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<td>13.484***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Attendance</td>
<td>0.166***</td>
<td>0.273***</td>
<td>0.350***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper News Consumption</td>
<td>0.026***</td>
<td>0.035***</td>
<td>0.038***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala Dummy</td>
<td>-10.68***</td>
<td>-1.355**</td>
<td>-4.183***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador Dummy</td>
<td>0.689</td>
<td>0.168</td>
<td>-7.901***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras Dummy</td>
<td>8.756***</td>
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<td>-2.675**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua Dummy</td>
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<td>1.909***</td>
<td>-6.578***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama Dummy</td>
<td>8.455***</td>
<td>3.817***</td>
<td>-1.351</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>0.064***</td>
<td>0.048***</td>
<td>0.033**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence in Media</td>
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<td>-0.208**</td>
<td>-0.709***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partisanship</td>
<td>7.278***</td>
<td>10.164***</td>
<td>2.121***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel Safe?</td>
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<td>-0.308</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rural/Urban</td>
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<td>-4.651***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>0.797***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.446***</td>
<td>-0.009</td>
<td>0.078***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wealth</td>
<td>0.088***</td>
<td>0.021**</td>
<td>-0.019</td>
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<td>N</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>r-square</td>
<td>.168</td>
<td>.228</td>
<td>.089</td>
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</table>
Conclusive Results

The findings of the two models, direct and indirect, regarding the effects on political participation of news media consumption point to a clearly superior model: the indirect model of media effects. The contradictory and incomplete results of the direct model of media effects leave little doubt that the consumption of news media has very modest direct effect political participation by individuals through the explanatory process of change in support. For our purposes it appears appropriate, then, to assert that there is no fluid within-the-self process that occurs where news media consumption directly effects political participation.

The indirect model of media effects does exhibit a strong tendency toward explaining the relationship between news media consumption and political participation as well as asserting causation in some instances. Besides the strength of coefficients and consistent significance of the p-values (or lack of significance when testing the direct media-participation relationship), the r-square scores\(^{18}\) of each set of tests per model show that the indirect model of media effects explains a greater amount of variation than does the direct model. While both models exceeded the r-square scores that are typically considered standard for cross-section analysis\(^{19}\), the indirect model clearly explained greater variation than did the direct model of news media effects.

The results of these tests go a long way to rejecting or accepting our hypotheses. One of the hypotheses is rejected. Increased news media consumption did not result in higher support and subsequently higher actual participation (H1). The results of the first stage of the direct model test found negative signs on the significant betas. Although the relationship between increased support and increased participation was present, this does not satisfy the proposed relationship in the first hypothesis. Television news consumption led to lower levels of support for voting but the other two forms of support showed insignificant findings (H3). Also, the direct effects tests looking at the effect of news media consumption on participation directly resulted in positive and significant betas which runs counter to hypothesis 3. Although relatively incomplete, we reject the third hypothesis. The second hypothesis is affirmed. Understanding that media effects are indirect as they relate to promoting political participation at the individual level, the results of the tests show that media consumption increases citizens’ participation in civil society, which in turn increases citizens’ political participation (H2).

Comparing the alternative models for explaining media effects, it has become obvious that the media indirectly effects the political participation actions of individuals in Central America by encouraging civil society participation first. The intervention of a primary action prior to the ultimate action of participation should not be seen as an impediment to the study of media effects. Instead, it should be looked at as a strong step toward identifying causality.

Conclusion

In our work we have tried to address some of the issues left unresolved by previous studies on the link between news media consumption and political participation. In so doing, we have especially tried to answer the questions: how exactly does news media consumption

\(^{18}\) Average r-square per model: Direct Media Effects Model = .122  Indirect Media Effects Model = .136

\(^{19}\) R-square scores for cross-section analysis should exceed 0.10
affect citizens’ political behavior? Does news media consumption directly increase political participation? Or is there a more complex relationship that first and foremost modifies citizens’ perception of the importance of the public sphere as it relates to their interests?

To summarize, we have found support for the indirect model of media effects as they influence political participation. Although these findings should not minimize the impact and the importance of news media effects for Latin American citizens, they do indicate that the system of influence that is driven by news media consumption is more complex than intuitive assumptions might suggest. In particular, it is our conclusion that intermediate actions and processes function as a link between citizens and political life. Civil society has been considered the place where citizens in Latin America start to engage in the political life of the country. In testing the relationship between news media consumption and political participation, this is again found to be true. The engagement of citizens of young democracies directly within institutional channels of political participation may require assistance in the form of civil society that allow citizens to gain confidence in their community before stepping into the public sphere. While the direct effects model of news media consumption on conventional political participation is not as strong as the indirect effects model, it does increase some forms of political behavior. Generally, however, an intermediate action is required for news media consumption to significantly influence political participation.

Does the fact that media affect political participation through civil society say something about Latin American democracy? Without turning to speculations, it may indeed indicate that citizens need something more than just information in order to actively engage in political activities as we hinted above. The sense of belonging to a community that gathers common interests and protects them from possible political pressures may be indicative of the actual institutional channels of political participation which necessitates further development. If this is the case, the fact that media affect the most effective form of citizens’ engagement in the public sphere, civil society activism, which in turn increases conventional political behavior, indicates that media consumption in Central America is indeed a source of democratic participation and it develops those activities according to the political reality of the young Central American democracies.
Appendix A: Variables in the Analysis

*note* all measures rescaled 0-100 except for control variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Television News Consumption</td>
<td>Single-item: Consume TV news media how often? 0 = never, 1 = rarely, 2 = once or twice weekly, 3 = every day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodical News Consumption</td>
<td>Single-item: Consume periodical news media how often? 0 = never, 1 = rarely, 2 = once or twice weekly, 3 = every day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio News Consumption</td>
<td>Single-item: Consume radio news media how often? 0 = never, 1 = rarely, 2 = once or twice weekly, 3 = every day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voting Participation</td>
<td>Indexed dichotomous variables: Registered to vote? 0 = no, 1 = yes   Vote in the presidential election? 0 = no, 1 = yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Informal Participation    | Index: Political discussion frequency? 4 = daily, 3 = couple times weekly, 2 = couple times monthly, 1 = rarely, 0 = never. Attempt to persuade others? 4 = frequently, 2 = sometimes, 1 = rarely, 0 = never. Campaign for a party or candidate? 4 = yes, 0 = no. Attend a meeting of a party or political movement? 4 = Once weekly, 2 = once or twice a month, 1 = once or twice annually, 0 = never  
*Note – maximum values for each answer is 4 and the minimum is 0 to ensure that none are undervalued* |
<p>| Demonstration Participation | Index: How often have you participated in a demonstration? How often in the last year? 2 = sometimes, 1 = almost never, 0 = never                                                                 |
| Group Attendance          | Index: Asked about group attendance where 3 = once weekly, 2 = once or twice monthly, 1 = once or twice annually, 0 = never. Asked about parent-teacher groups, community improvement groups, professional associations, unions, and attending town hall meetings |
| Support for Voting        | Index: Measured approval positively 1-10: Approve or disapprove of others participating in a campaign. Approve or disapprove of critical individuals right to vote                                                                 |
| Support for Informal Participation | Index: Approve or disapprove of others participating in a campaign (1-10). To what extent do you have confidence in political parties (1-7)                                                                 |
| Support for Demonstration Participation | Index: Approve or disapprove of others participating in a demonstration (1-10). Approve or disapprove of laws prohibiting public demonstrations (inverted to appropriately be scaled 1-10). Approve or disapprove of people critical or the government demonstrating (1-10) |
| Confidence in the Media   | A single-item measure of people’s reported confidence in the media: Recoded 1-7 where 1 = lowest confidence, 7 = high confidence                                                                          |
| Political Knowledge       | Indexed into summed dichotomous variables where 1 = correct answer, 0 = incorrect answer: Asked to name the president of the United States, the head of the countries                                                |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>legislature</td>
<td>A dichotomous measure of whether or not someone currently identifies with a party: 1 = yes, 2 = no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety Variable</td>
<td>Single-item measure of how secure someone feels in their neighborhood: 0 = not secure, 1 = somewhat not secure, 2 = somewhat secure, 3 = secure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Size</td>
<td>A single-item measure of what type of city a respondent lives in: 1 = capital city, 2 = large city, 3 = medium city, 4 = small city, 5 = rural area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male = 1, Female = 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Continuous value in years of school completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Continuous value in years completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealth</td>
<td>Index of dichotomous variables where 1 = possess item, 0 = do not possess item: Asked about television, refrigerator, land-line telephone, cellular telephone, clothes washer, microwave, motorcycle, potable water in the house, computer and vehicle (the “vehicle” question offered 0-3): Range = 0-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Dummy –</td>
<td>Dichotomous variable: 1 = resident of Guatemala, 0 = not a resident</td>
</tr>
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<td>Guatemala</td>
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<tr>
<td>Country Dummy –</td>
<td>Dichotomous variable: 1 = resident of El Salvador, 0 = not a resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
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<tr>
<td>Country Dummy –</td>
<td>Dichotomous variable: 1 = resident of Nicaragua, 0 = not a resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
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<tr>
<td>Country Dummy –</td>
<td>Dichotomous variable: 1 = resident of Honduras, 0 = not a resident</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Dummy –</td>
<td>Dichotomous variable: 1 = resident of Panama, 0 = not a resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
References


Patricio J. Salinas
University of North Texas, Denton TX
patriciojsalinas@hotmail.com

Editor’s Note:
Patricio J. Salinas served as a research assistant at the Center for Spanish Language Media until he graduated with his MFA degree in summer 2008. A political junkie, Patricio worked on this report during the fall of 2007 and the spring of 2008 covering the election season and the impact of the Latino/Hispanic vote on the historic November 2008 Presidential election. His report concludes with the Pennsylvania primary; we’ve added a brief postscript detailing the end of the primary season and the November election.

Introduction

In 1960, not only was presidential electioneering changed with the first television debate, but it introduced one of the first attempts at reaching an electorate that spoke primarily in Spanish. The spot was one of “Jacqueline Kennedy speaking to the viewers in Spanish” (Riechers, 1999, para. 26). No retro-studies have been conducted to identify if this strategy had any effects on influencing states with large numbers of registered Hispanic voters. However, by 1984 academic scholars would begin to study the impact Spanish language or multicultural television advertising had on Hispanic voters. For instance, that year, Republicans would begin to outspend Democrats in Spanish-language television ads by directly confronting the Democratic monopoly on the Hispanic vote, as spots showed a Latino saying:

Voting around this house is almost tradition. We’re Democrats. My father started it, I picked up on it, and so did my kids. But this year, it doesn’t feel like voting only for tradition, especially now that my business is up and my wife and daughter can shop again for those little extras. That’s the kind of tradition I like. So this year, I’m starting a new tradition. I’m voting for President Reagan. (Connaughton & Jarvis, 2004, para. 47)

From 1984 to 2000, primary research in the Spanish-language and Latino political advertising imagery shows that much emphasis had been placed on content analysis rather than how Hispanic voters respond to the ads (Connaughton & Jarvis, 2004, para. 1). By 2004, tracking of political spending on Spanish-language ads by U.S. Presidential Candidates in competitive states would begin to be analyzed by journalist and scholars. Even running unopposed for the Republican nomination in 2004, President George W. Bush committed to spending millions on Spanish-language commercials during the primary season, as internet reporter Earl Ofari Hutchison stated in March of 2004:

Bush strategists figure that if they can up their total of Latino votes by as little as 5 percent, they will hammer the Democrats in Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico and Florida. In the 2000 Presidential election, Gore and Bush won razor-thin victories in those states. (para. 9)

Bush would win all four states in 2004, the victories influential in reaching the necessary 270 winning votes in the Electoral College.

According to scholar Federico Subervi, Republicans outspent Democrats in Spanish-language media in 2004. Whether or not media buys by the Bush campaign in Spanish-language television market were instrumental in winning Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico and Florida remains unknown. However, Austin-based democratic strategist James Aldrete points out that Democrats conceded the Spanish-language ad-buy race in 2004 because the party needed to spend their monies on garnering the swing vote which eluded them in the last two presidential elections. Aldrete further states that Democrats
are in a good position to lock the swing vote in 2008 and spend historic numbers to reach minority voters (J. Aldrete, Personal Communication, April 24, 2008).

**Introduction to the 2008 Presidential Election**

At the start of the Presidential primary season in early 2007, estimates show “there are 46 million Americans of Spanish-speaking descent, or 15 percent of the total U.S. population, and Hispanics are expected to grow to 102 million, or almost 25 percent of the population, by 2050” (The Latino Vote...2008, para. 10). In addition, Hispanics are not monolithic as journalist Al Giordano points out:

In the Mid-Atlantic States, much of the population is of Caribbean descent, particularly Puerto Rican and Dominican. In South Florida, Cuban-Americans are the largest and most politically influential ethnic group (and those voters may surprise the conventional wisdom tomorrow in the non-binding Democratic beauty contest on the ballot there). In the West (and increasingly nationwide) Mexican-Americans are on the rise as a blockbusting political force. For that largest group, immigration reform is the dominant issue (2008, para. 26)

Beyond the traditional Spanish-language media package, many efforts have been made to reach Hispanics. For instance, former Republican Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, Democrat New York U.S. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, former Democratic Vice-Presidential Candidate John Edwards and Democrat Illinois U.S. Senator Barack Obama offered Spanish web pages on their site, but in a limited capacity: “Lionbridge research shows that Spanish language content represents less than 9 percent of the total available English content” (Presidential Candidates…, 2008, para. 1). In addition, both Clinton and Republican Arizona U.S. Senator John McCain hired Hispanic outreach directors (As the Clinton Campaign, 2008, para 1; Wall, 2008, para. 22).

Prior to the Iowa Caucuses, politicians from both parties where positioning their campaigns to reach Hispanics voters. For instance, Democrats have an advantage this election cycle because of the anti-immigrant backlash that haunts the Republicans; the selection of Denver, Colorado as the site for their national convention (a move catered to the growing southwest Hispanic region), and “field[ing] the first serious Presidential candidate of Hispanic descent”—New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson (Rosenberg, 2008, para.8). In addition, the Democrats, last September, participated in the first ever Spanish-language debate sponsored by Univision (their answers were translated in Spanish; albeit, Richardson and Connecticut U.S. Senator Chris Dodd complained that they were not able to respond in Spanish); the debate drew a higher ratings number than previous presidential debates held in 2007 (2 US Presidential…2007, para. 1; Cancela, 2007, para. 6). The Republicans also participated in a Spanish-language debate in December, but after having rejected it months before because of the anti-immigrant rhetoric delivered by some of the candidates, like Colorado U.S. Representative Tom Tancredo, who linked undocumented immigrants with terrorists (Cancela, 2007, para 6; Joyner, 2007, para. 1). These accusations prompted Mexican President Felipe Calderon to condone the anti-immigrant rhetoric being displayed forcefully in U.S. presidential
politics (Felipe Calderon…, 2008, para. 1). The anti-immigrant rhetoric probably worked in less ethnically-diverse regions like Iowa and New-Hampshire, but beyond those two early contests, anti-immigrant talk dissipated as Hispanic Americans became an influential and, possibly, decisive voice in the nominating process and general election.

After Iowa and New Hampshire

Once Iowa and New Hampshire ended their contests, voting continued in demographically diverse states like Nevada and Florida. The Democratic National Party chose to have Nevada as one of the early nominating states. This move was aided with the support of educating Spanish-speaking voters with the caucus regulations—which included the Nevada Democratic Party having “a complete Spanish-language Web site up and running for months (Wang, 2008, para. 14). In addition, over $100,000 was spent in a Spanish-language media mix (Wang, 2008, para. 18). National Democrats effort to reach out to the Hispanic electorate apparently benefited Clinton rather than Obama, as she took “64 percent of the Hispanic vote to [his] 26 percent” (Babington, 2008, para. 8). Obama took 80% of the Black vote compared to Clinton’s 13% (Carlsen, 2008, para. 28). The apparent racial divide between Hispanics and African-Americans has been noted by many journalist based on the perception that both minority demographics compete against each other economically and politically (Kurtzman, 2008, para. 14) Caucus participant and writer Laura Carlsen elaborates:

…the tension between the mostly union African-American group for Obama and the Latinos on the other side was palpable—and voluble. No one specifically mentioned race as a factor for their preferences in the interviews but racial tensions hung in the aisle between the two starkly divided camps (2008, para. 19).

Obama’s camp responds to the criticism by stating that he has tried “to bridge the ‘so-called black-brown divide since his days as a community organizer in Chicago” (Babington, 2008, para. 21). Republicans did not actively campaign in Nevada for the Hispanic vote.

In the Florida Republican Primary, Mitt Romney issued two Spanish language ads focusing on family values, while Rudy Giuliani aired his own Spanish-language TV ad focusing on taxes (Q &A with Alex Castellanos, 2008, para. 3). Ironically, both candidates campaigned to make English the official language. Romney and Giuliani acknowledged that some of the voters they are trying to reach are not English proficient (GOP Debate Transcript Part 1, 2008, para. 8). As for other Spanish-language ads in Florida, Texas Republican Congressman Ron Paul “released his first Spanish radio ads” advocating the end of the U.S.-Cuba embargo, while John McCain invested $20,000 in Spanish-radio ads (Fiscal Conservatives…2008, para. 3; Moscoso, 2008, para. 13).

Apparently, the Republican race for Hispanic votes was centered on the South Florida Cuban vote; portions of the state show “42 percent of Central Florida’s Hispanics are registered Democrats,” with Puerto Rican ethnicity comprising roughly 40% of Florida Hispanics (Ramos, 2008, para. 11; Moore, 2008, para 7). With only a few counties having an abundance of Hispanic Republican votes, John McCain embraced an
edge in the Cuban constituency by being “endorsed by all four Cuban Americans in South Florida’s congressional delegations, including Sen. Mel Martinez” (Tayler, 2008, para. 13).

On the Democratic side, the candidates Hispanic outreach efforts in Florida was almost nonexistent because the Democratic National Committee stripped Florida of its delegates—punishment for attempting to hold their primary before Iowa and New Hampshire.

As the Florida primary came to pass, McCain garnered 54% of the Hispanic vote compared to Giuliani’s 24% and Romney’s 14%; in the overall vote, McCain beat Romney by 5 percentage points by receiving 36% (To all the haters, 2008, para. 1 & 5). Interestingly enough, McCain did not advertise on Spanish-TV, while Romney and Giuliani together spent over $200,000 in Spanish television (Fiscal Conservative…, 2008, para. 3). Giuliani’s poor showing in Florida forced him out of the race. Pundits claim that the overwhelming support McCain received from Hispanics helped him win the state. Perhaps McCain’s Hispanic support derives from his efforts to reform immigration with his proposed guest-worker program (aimed at 12 million undocumented immigrants) which failed in 2007. In a more compassionate setting, McCain embraced the civil rights demonstration that took place in 2006:

> I hope that the marches motivate us to move ahead with the legislation. I believe that these demonstrations—that any citizen has a right to demonstrate peacefully—is one of our fundamental rights in America that has a beneficial effect and that gives us a sense of urgency to approve the final legislation (as said in Wall, 2008, para. 17).

However, during the primary McCain altered his immigration rhetoric as well, such as “No one will be rewarded for illegal behavior. They’ll go to the back of the line, pay fines and learn English” (as cited in Jordan, 2008, para. 7). Comparatively, immigration in Florida is viewed in a more favorable light:

Exit polling in Florida showed that nearly 60 percent of voters in that state would allow illegal immigration to stay as temporary workers or on a path to citizenship. Among Hispanic Republicans, only 20 percent said illegal immigrants should be deported. Forty-three said they should be allowed to stay as temporary workers, and one-third said they should have a shot at citizenship (To all the haters, 2008, para.5).

Pundits do point out that McCain could loose staunch Republicans because of his moderate record on immigration (Preston, 2008, para. 24).

**Immigration**

Concerning immigration reform, the topic has become a driving wedge for rhetorically infused activists as they use it for political posturing. In 2004, George W. Bush won re-election by garnering roughly 40% of the Latino vote, including swing states like New Mexico, Florida, Nevada and Colorado (Goodspeed, 2008, para. 15 & 17). However, with the anti-immigrant rhetoric provoking some Hispanic communities to protest on the streets, the Pew Center states that “(s)ome 57% of Hispanic registered
Hispanic voters now call themselves Democrats or say they lean to the Democratic Party, while just 23% align with the Republican Party” (Goodspeed, 2008, para. 18.) There is a consensus by journalist that the Republican candidate must garner more than 30% percent of the Latino vote in order to win swing states (Goodspeed, 2008, para. 19). The poll also finds that 41 percent of Hispanics view “the policies of the Bush administration” as being “harmful to Latinos” (Aguilera, 2008, para. 12). Miami pollster Sergio Bendixen echoes that finding-- “the immigration debate has not been about immigration policy; it has been about whether Hispanics belong in America “(as said in Preston, 2008, para. 6). Scott Darnell, communications director for the Republican party of New Mexico, concede that the anti-immigrant climate has placed his party at an electoral disadvantage: “We do realize that there is a misperception by Hispanic voters toward the Republican Party that it might not have much of a care or commitment…So we are working to change that perception” (as said in Aguilera, 2008, para. 44). Furthermore, Republican strategist Lionel Sosa has “stated that if the party does not change its rhetoric on immigration, it will lose the Latino vote” (as said in Jackson, 2008, para. 11).

In addition, the immigration debate has shed light on the controversial topic of granting undocumented workers a driver’s license. This issue was perhaps the first crack at Clinton’s front-runner status when in an October 2007 debate, “in a matter of minutes,” she took “both sides of the dispute over whether undocumented immigrants should have driver license” (Chris Dodd was the only candidate to be against the driver license issue) ( Giordano, 2008, para 15). This prompted Democratic strategists to side-step the issue; for instance:

Political consultant James Carville, a Clinton supporter, …sent various memos to Democratic politicians urging them to avoid the issue of drivers licenses for undocumented immigrants, or oppose the concept altogether, citing polls that a majority of Americans do not favor them. (Giordano, 2008, para .25)

Super Tuesday: California to be decisive?

With February 5th (Super Tuesday) coming a week after Florida’s primary, pundits declared California as the defining state that would produce both nominees. On the Republican side, Romney and McCain did not court the Hispanic vote since its political trends have historically been Democratic. This led the Clinton camp to use California’s Hispanic voter as the base that would deny Obama the nomination, a base into which Obama aggressively sought to cut —in a state home to “13 million” Hispanics (Elsworth, 2008, para. 9). Beyond her Hispanic base and Spanish-language media buys, Clinton garnered the endorsement of “Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez,” as well as the United Farmer Workers union – “an iconic value” for it’s “historic symbol of the Latino civil rights movement in America”-- and Ugly Betty’s America Ferrera (Kurtzman, 2008, para. 16; La Union de Campesinos, 2008, para. 3; Ugly Betty…2008, para. 1). As for Obama, his Hispanic support in California was built around a savvy publicity campaign aimed at Spanish-language media. For example, Obama received the endorsement of La Opinion (the largest
Spanish newspaper in the U.S.); surrogate Ted Kennedy stumped for him on the “El Piolin” radio show and granted interviews to Spanish-language TV networks (Bill, Hil…., 2008, para. 2). In addition, Obama borrowed the slogan “Si, Se Puede” (Yes, We Can)—made famous by former civil rights leader Cesar Chavez. One of Chavez’s former allies, Dolores Huerta, (Clinton supporter) views the adoption of the slogan as superficial:

I think [Obama] is trying to establish a relationship with the Latino community which he does not have. And I think he was using kind of a short cut. So if he could use “si, se puede,” that might somehow identify him, but he really does not have a relationship and people really don’t know who he is. And I think that’s one of the big advantages that Hillary Clinton has, because they do know her…. (Block, 2008, para. 20).

However, Clinton also adapted the slogan at rallies, even as she mispronounced it as “Si se pueda!” (Baer & Nussbaum 2008, para. 9).

In addition to creative slogans, Obama’s camp “held a ‘Latino Town Hall’” in “Los Angeles, where the sound system’s warmup song was Ricky Martin’s ‘The Cup of Life’ rather than the usual Motown or country number” (Dollard, 2008, para. 17). However, this niche-strategy by Obama’s camp to appeal to Hispanics might have come a bit too late and cramped to overcome Clinton’s advantage with Hispanics (Dollard, 2008, para. 24). If Obama would have reached out to Hispanic voters in Florida months before that state’s primary, perhaps he might have come more equipped to cut into Clinton’s Hispanic strength.

The political consensus is that Clinton’s popularity with Hispanics voters derives from their reminiscing about the prosperous times Hispanics enjoyed in the 1990s under Bill Clinton’s presidency--through political appointments and a non-existent anti-immigration climate (Harkinson, 2008, para. 4). Clinton’s camp was able to tap into this inherent edge by hiring a Hispanic as her national campaign manager, Patti Solis Doyle, and opening a Los Angeles headquarters “five months before Obama followed suit” (Harkinson), 2008, para. 4). However, the Obama camp did see a possible opening in the Latino vote:

…north of Los Angeles, in smaller towns where the Clinton campaign lacks the support of local political machines, and in the San Francisco Bay Area, where Obama polls better among the population at large. Obama has opened six Bay Area campaign offices chock full of young Volunteers, hoping to quickly replicate his grassroots success in Iowa. Clinton has just one office in the Bay Area (Harkinson, 2008, para 8).

Beyond organization, Obama and Clinton used their campaign coffers to tap into Hispanic culture through advertising. Clinton had a Spanish-language ad titled “Lifetime” airing in 4 key primary states on Feb 5th: Connecticut, New York, Arizona and California—with a narrator stating: “Millions of Hispanics families live with the fear of not having health insurance. The economic crisis and the cost of living are of concern to all of us. Hillary is our friend and will help us”  (More CT TV from Obama, Clinton, 2008, para. 5)

Not to be outdone, Obama also released a Spanish-language television ad for the Super Tuesday states wherein a Spanish-speaking supporter praises his unique heritage:
“Hope has led me to where I am today. With a father from Kenya, a mother from Kansas—and a story that’s only possible in the United States of America” (Schmitz, 2008, para. 6).

As the California primary and Super Tuesday came to a close, Clinton won the state by 10-percentage points (52-42), and won the Hispanic vote by 69 percentage points (Cooper& Chozick, 2008, para. 26). In addition, Clinton “won more that 60% of the Latino electorate in states like New Jersey and New York” (Eegee, Man, 2008, para.2). Even though Clinton won the Latino vote 2-1 in California, Clinton dismissed her Latina Campaign Manager Doyle immediately after Super Tuesday (After losses…2008).

Obama’s camp should take comfort in two things-- he won election day votes in California, and he won the Hispanic vote in Illinois and Connecticut by an average of 53 percent; in addition, he also performed respectably among Hispanics in Arizona (Burka, 2008, para. 8; Texas Prez Race Roundup, 2008, para. 13). With signs strengthening in metropolitan areas, Obama had a month to shore up support among Hispanic voters in Texas – the last remaining state with a big Hispanic population. Prior to reaching the Texas primary in March, Obama won 11 straight contests, including winning a majority of Hispanics in Virginia, and a respectable showing with Hispanics in Maryland (Texas Prez Race Roundup, 2008, para. 13). This streak allowed Obama to establish a lead that would prove difficult for Clinton to overcome, mostly because of the proportional allocation of delegates than from the winner-take-all rules of the Republicans (which catapulted McCain to the nomination by the end of the Texas primary). In addition, Obama’s organization in caucuses was key to his primary success.

**Black-Brown Divide**

However, Obama’s camp did not take the success for granted; he knew that Texas could prove a comeback territory for Clinton because of her Hispanic base and the brown vs. black divide that exists in America. A prime example-- the mayoral, non-partisan Houston election in 1997:

…it featured Lee Brown, a well-known Democrat and former Clinton administration official who was running against Rob Mosbacher Jr., who has been active in GOP politics. Mosbacher got about 45 percent of the Hispanic vote, even though the community traditionally had supported Democrats (Houston’s chronicle..(Roth, 2008, para 20)

On the other hand, Hispanic state legislators from Texas disagreed with the racial divide assessment, as state representative, Juan Garcia from Corpus Christi (Obama’s Harvard Law classmate) states:

Not only is Barack a relatively new commodity nationally but especially in our community where so much of our population relies on Spanish-language media and has not had the introduction over the past year that the rest of the country has had (as said in Kenedeno, 2008, para. 13)
Nevertheless, there is a consensus, among journalist, that the *brown vs. black* divide does exist:

> We’re talking about two largely poor, working-class groups in a shrinking economy, unskilled and semi-skilled folks rubbing shoulders in neighborhoods that are in transition, with declining social services from health care to education. When you’ve got competing ethnic groups at the bottom level, you’re going to have friction (Goodspeed, 2008, para. 27)

In addition, “[a] Hispanic janitor at the Democratic presidential debate ‘held’ in Los Angeles stated: ‘I’m not a racist, but I’m not ready for an African-American president (Glaister, 2008, para 5). Also, blogger Matt Sanchez states that the competition between Hispanics and African-Americans can be understood using an analogy of the former group desiring the American dream, and the latter one taking it for granted (2008, para 3). These published reports do raise serious questions about Obama’s electability among Hispanics. In order to strengthen this weakness, Obama hired James Aldrete, the Austin, Texas-based democratic consultant, whose expertise includes Hispanic political marketing. Aldrete states that Obama improves his standing among Hispanics in more ethnically-diverse metropolitan areas, rather than homogeneous regions like the Texas-Mexico border and East Los Angeles, where a majority of Hispanics reside; Aldrete also points out that Obama appears to do better among under-40 Hispanics. (J.Aldrete, personal communication, April 25, 2008).

However, other elections have also shown that Hispanics are willing to back black candidates such as “U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters, New York City Mayor David Dinkins and the late Harold Washington, Chicago’s first black mayor…”, but, “they must be an ironclad, known quantity” (Arrillaga, para. 34). In addition, PEW polling has “found eight in 10 Latinos have favorable opinions of blacks and eight in 10 blacks have favorable opinions of Latinos. The polls also found that 30 percent of Latinos described relations as “not getting along to well” (Aguilera, 2008, para. 33).

**Texas Primary**

Apart from Obama’s challenge to cut into Clinton’s lead among Hispanics, Obama did enjoy an advantage in Texas because of the way the delegates are allocated. More delegates are awarded to metropolitan areas having a greater voting turnout number in November than the Democratic stronghold that dominates primary elections in March along the Texas-Mexico border but dwindles in the general election because of lack of Republican opposition in the region (Obama’s Padre vs. Hillary’s Amiga, 2008, para. 3). Interestingly enough, as the primary fight heated up in Texas, both camps diversified their Hispanic media buys, with Obama emphasizing radio (experts state that “radio is far more effective among the Spanish-speaking audience than television”) and Clinton “airing English-language ads for a Hispanic audience”. The intent is to reach 2nd and 3rd generation Hispanics in Texas who don’t speak Spanish” (Obama’s Padre vs. Hillary’s Amiga, 2008, para. 5 & 6). Research shows that two-thirds of Hispanic voters that participated in the Texas 2006 gubernatorial election received their information via a media-mix in English (Martinez, 2008, para. 10). This predicament leaves a hint of doubt
on how effective advertising with Spanish-language media can be. Clinton’s pollster Sergio Bendixen sheds light on the language issue by stating that Texas is a much more acculturated state than California as Hispanics in the Lone Star State speak more English than Hispanics in the west coast, and only 18 percent of that ethnic group are immigrants compared to the 50 percent in California (Martin, 2008, para. 9). Furthermore, Maria Teresa Petersen—Executive Director of Voto Latino—passionately states:

But what the campaigns haven’t figured out is that 79% of the 18 million eligible Latino voters consume media in English...So, it’s terrific that they’re targeting 21% of the voters with Latino messages, but when will they learn to Target us with Latino ads in English” (as said in Eegee, 2008, para 4)

Apart from multiple appearances throughout the state, both candidates participated in a debate co-sponsored by Univision, covering certain Hispanic-related issues. Both candidates agreed on a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants as they tried to explain their senatorial votes for the creation of a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. At this debate, Clinton emphasized that her first break in politics was registering voters in South Texas for the George McGovern campaign in 1972. In addition, a visual cut-away shot of comedian George Lopez attending the debate was broadcast (Lopez endorsed Obama days prior to the debate) (Jackson, 2008, para. 1).

Throughout the Texas campaign, both candidates appealed to the Hispanic culture via music, with Obama embracing an independently-produced music video entitled “Viva Obama!,” which plays like a mariachi song, and Clinton unveiling a Latino theme song entitled “Hillary, Hillary Clinton,” which had “an accordion-backed cocktail of traditional Mexican cumbia and tropical influences” (Castillo, 2008,para. 1,2 &3).

In the end, Clinton won the state with 52 percent of the vote, and a 2-1 advantage over Obama among Latino voters (Balz, 2008, para 10). The outcome was a blow for Obama, as he also lost Ohio that day. However, he could take solace in the fact that a month later Bill Richardson endorsed him. Some strategists view Richardson’s backing as a strengthening of Obama’s Hispanic “weakness”— (Balz, 2008, para. 10). However, Richardson’s endorsement was prompted after hearing Obama’s speech on racial division that was delivered because of the controversy erupting from the incendiary preaching of Obama’s former pastor, Rev. Jeremiah Wright, which included statements such as HIV being “created deliberately by the U.S. government to decimate the black population” (Beyond Black….2008, para 10).

Inching closer to a Democrat Nominee and the General Election Campaign

The next important primary state for the Democrats was Pennsylvania on April 22. At this point, researcher Adam J Segal, with John Hopkins University, reported that “the Democratic presidential candidates spent more money—at least $4 million—on Spanish-language advertising this cycle, outpacing total spending in 2000 and total primary spending in 2004” (Segal, 2008, para 1). With the Hispanic population in Pennsylvania being minor, both Clinton and Obama camps only released one Spanish-language ad each (Mosk, 2008, para 6).
As primary season ends for the Democrats with Barack Obama inching closer to the necessary delegates required to clinch the nomination, he could face a racial polling conundrum as an anonymous Latino blogger points out:

One strategist explained on Spanish TV that if Obama does not get a minimum of 39% of white votes in November, the Latino voters will not be able to offset that. We just don't have the Latinos numbers to offset that in 2008. While I've heard another Obama Latino strategist state on Spanish talk radio that 37% is the absolute rock-bottom number for white voters. Obama cannot get less than that if he is to be competitive. The Latino vote cannot counter the white vote if it goes below that. Either way, the critical question here is this: Kerry, Gore & Bill Clinton all received 40%-42% of the white vote. This was with the "white Reagan democrats" coming back home to the democratic party. As opposed to the HORRIBLE nightmare of Dukakis getting just 31% of all white voters & winning just 10 states or Mondale just getting less than 25% of all white voters & winning 1 state (Electoral Math...2008, para 10).

John McCain has begun his media Hispanic outreach effort for the fall campaign by airing his first Spanish-commercial in New Mexico (aired in April), which is a dubbed version of the English-language ad that highlights his prisoner of war heroism. To some political commentators, McCain’s Spanish-media introduction to voters has had positive reviews:

Usually a direct translation of any marketing ad from English to Spanish is awkward and ill-advised. Not this time. The McCain bio ad that touts his Vietnam experience will play extremely well with Latinos. Latinos have a deeply held commitment to military service and a highly patriotic inner chord that the McCain lobbyist/consultants strike with the ad. In fact, the ad may play better in Spanish than in English (McCain Stakes A Claim in New Mexico, 2008, para 5).

However, McCain has serious work to even reach the average 40 percent of the Hispanic vote that George W. Bush garnered in 2004- this is because of the Republican party having been branded as “anti-immigrant”, even as the U.S. Senate legislation on immigration reform failed because of bi-partisan opposition to a guest worker program characterized as amnesty (Simon, 2008, para 11; Weisman, 2007 para 1). McCain passionately embraced the immigration reform, but critics says that he “abandon[ed]” the bill because of the near-fatal collapse of his presidential primary campaign in June of 2007—effectively killing any chances of finding a breakthrough (Rosenberg, 2008, para 15) The Republican predicament of being viewed as anti-Hispanic could be due to conservative talk radio perpetuating right-wing ideology that includes deporting undocumented workers (primarily of Hispanic descent). McCain also has to cope with the discomfort that the electorate has over the Iraq War, which he strongly supports. Among health care and the economy, the Iraq war ranks as a major “importance to U.S. Hispanic voters” (Ironically, immigration ranks below these three issues) (Simon, 2008, para 15).

As for Hispanic participation in the general election, experts “estimate more than nine million Latinos could cast ballots in the general election, a 23 percent increase from
2004. They believe those numbers could increase if one million Hispanics who have applied for citizenship become naturalized and vote in the November election” (Simkins, 2008, para 10).

Apart from candidates engaging Hispanics in the electoral process there are groups such as VOTE LATINO, who have used internet ads urging the Latino youth to vote- also, the National Association of Latino Elected Officials which has spearheaded a citizenship drive backed by Univision stations (O’ Sullivan, 2008, para. 4; Escalera, 2008, para. 4 & 7)

Conclusion

As John McCain and Barack Obama accept the presidential nomination for their respective parties, expect records sums of monies to be spent on galvanizing the Hispanic vote in traditional Spanish-language media via television and radio. However, both political parties will also reach out to Hispanics through general market and grass-root voter registration. Also, both McCain and Obama must work on shoring up their weakness among the Hispanic constituencies. Obama must win over Hispanics who vote overwhelmingly for Hillary Clinton in the primary, and McCain must regain trust among Hispanic voters who feel they have been discriminated against through the anti-immigration rhetoric that transpired in the last two years.

Postscript (By the Editor)

Obama’s final primary victories in North Carolina and other remaining states, and his strong finish in Indiana secured the Democratic nomination over Hillary Clinton, setting up an Obama-McCain campaign for the Presidency that dominated the summer and fall of 2008. There were questions about Obama’s ability to appeal to Latino voters, as Hillary Clinton had scored very well in the primaries among these voters. It raised questions as to Obama’s ability to attract Latino voters.

Obama won a hard-fought campaign, becoming the first African-American President in U. S. history, but we know his victory would not have been secured without the Latino/Hispanic vote. Nationally, Obama garnered 66% of the vote compared to only 31% for McCain. In contrast, in 2004, George W. Bush captured 44% of the Latino vote. Florida was one microcosm of the national vote—Hispanic/Latino voters chose Obama over McCain 57-42%. Hispanic/Latino voters in New Mexico, Nevada and Colorado voted 2-1 in favor of Obama—all three states were won in 2004 by President Bush. Other states also contributed with high Latino/Hispanic volume including California, Illinois, and New Jersey—all won by Obama. McCain won his home state of Arizona and Texas, but lost the Hispanic/Latino vote in these states also by nearly a 2-1 margin. Obama’s victory certainly was enhanced by the turnout of Hispanic/Latino voters across the country, and these voters overwhelmingly supported the Democratic candidate.
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The Immigration Issue As Presented In the 2007 New York Times Editorials

Libia Lazcano A.
University of North Texas, Denton TX
libialazcano@yahoo.com

Editor’s Note:

The following article, by Center Research Assistant Libia Lazcano, analyzes how The New York Times, one of the most influential and highest read newspapers in the United States detailed the immigration issue during the calendar year 2007. We selected the NYT for this particular project given the paper’s high readership in Washington, and its recognition as one of the leading newspapers in the United States.
The Immigration Issue As Presented In the 2007 New York Times Editorials

Between January 1st, 2007 and February 21st, 2008, the New York Times published 60 editorials focused on immigration. In the opinion section, The Times publishes two types of editorial, first, the ones signed by the newspaper, and then “op-eds” which are signed by their authors. On the immigration topic, 36 editorials were signed by the newspaper, and 24 were signed by their authors.

The published editorials showed that TNYT has a liberal take on the topic. It supports the “amnesty” approach, calling attention to a solution that includes a path to citizenship for the estimated 12+ million illegal immigrants already in the country, in an approach that is not only humane but that would dignify the immigrants even if illegal, granting them first class citizenship after a fair and comprehensible process. To complement, the newspaper underlines the practical and economical benefits of the solution it champions.

The New York Times constantly devotes space to expose the Republican, right wing policy of attrition, since as editorial points out, it lacks logical ground and would create an underclass of impoverished workers. The Times points out that the “attrition” strategy that many Republicans back up would bring apartheid to the country, and even undermine America’s fundamental values.

1. Against the attrition strategy

The call for an integral immigration reform, one that contemplates enforcement and an inclusive path to citizenship became recurrent in the newspaper. Starting on February 18th, the editorial summarizes the situation of the immigration issue. “The country has summoned great energy to confront the immigration problem, but most of it has been misplaced, cruelly and unevenly applied” ("They Are America," Feb 18th, 2007). By this, the Times refers to an ever growing “fear strategy,” that targets illegal immigrants in order to dissuade them from coming and staying in the country. According to The Times, that situation has the following characteristics: a) border enforcement, b) federal raids, c) local crackdowns, d) gutted due process (“several of the immigration bills that Congress has considered seek to heighten the efficiency with which immigrants who run afoul of the authorities can be railroaded out of the country, a web that catches many blameless victims too”); e) the web of suspicion (“the notion that immigrants should be treated as one huge class of criminal subjects”); f) the bureaucratic trap and g) the rise of hate. This leads to an intolerable situation. In one side its inhumane since “babies are separated from their mothers, due to work place raids in a governmental attitude that traps lawful citizens too (poverty stricken patients without the right citizenship papers for example)” (“Immigration Misery”, March 15). And on the other, it creates an underground economy, “government at all levels is working to keep unwanted immigrants in their place –on the other side of the border, in detention or in fear, toiling silently in the underground economy” (“They Are America”, Feb 18th, 2007).

The editorials devoted throughout the year to the immigration problem touch one or more of these topics. To complete the picture, the newspaper also draws attention to
the bad consequences of this strategy and, when available, it points out best practices in the field, either academic proposals or actual policies from local governments. Ultimately, the goal as the Times puts it is not to cut on enforcement, but complement it fairly with a path to citizenship as “enforcement of laws cannot be ignored. Punish immigrants who enter illegally, make them pay back taxes and fines, restrict their ability to get work through deceit and false identities. But open a path to their full inclusion in the life of this country” (“They Are America”, Feb 18\textsuperscript{th}, 2007).

By June, framed by the immigration bill debate, TNYT published an article by Laurence Dawnes. Dawnes has more signed editorials than any other author in the opinion section of the newspaper, 8 in little over a year. Only other two authors follow him far behind with two editorials each, Brooks and Herbert. In “‘Silent Amnesty’ Where the Hard Right Goes Soft on Immigration,” Dawnes expressed his opinion on the “attrition strategy,” a position popular amongst hard-line Republican presidential candidates. For Dawnes, John McCain, stood as the only voice of reason against Mitt Romney and Tom Tancredo, the first being proud “of the way he tried to heap layers of misery on illegal immigrants when he was governor of Massachusetts” and the second who was running for president as an “immigration zealot.” McCain on the other side posed a valid question to the “right-wing critics who have attacked the Senate’s bill as a damnable amnesty for illegal aliens” (Downes, ‘Silent Amnesty’ Where the Hard Right Goes Soft on Immigration, June 7, 2007). The question was, if the U.S. seals the border, what to do next? What would be the solution for the 12 million illegal immigrants already in the country?

According to Downes, for the hard-liners the only solution, quoting Tancredo’s site is “a strategy of attrition, which seeks to reduce the flow of the illegal alien population over time by cutting off the incentive for coming to and staying in America – most importantly by eliminating the jobs magnet.”

The position of The Times is summarized very effectively in the following paragraphs written by Dawnes.

“Attrition is the restrictionists’ fallback plan, a wishful equation that with enough enforcement, mass deportation will happen by itself: Misery plus time equals no more illegals. Small-bore ideologues in places like Hazleton, Pa., and Suffolk County, N.Y., have bought into this approach, adding layer on layer of hostile legislation to drive people out.

The price of this strategy is high – far more government intrusion into daily lives, with exponential increases in workplace raids, detentions and deportations; continual ID checks for everyone, citizen or not; immigration police at the federal, state, county and local levels; bureaucrats and snoops keeping an eye on landlords, renters, laborers, loiterers and everyone who uses government services or gets sick. The strain on agriculture and service industries would be devastating. And all the things that everyone agrees are the perversities of the status quo – exploited workers, depressed wages, a huge undocumented population within our borders – would persist for an indefinite period until the last illegal immigrant goes home.” (Downes, ‘Silent Amnesty’ Where the Hard Right Goes Soft on Immigration, June 7, 2007).

1.1 An integral Bill

By the beginning of 2007, news circulated that Congress was working on a new immigration bill. Thus, starting in March 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 2007 editorial urges Congress to pass a comprehensive and inclusive immigration bill. According to the newspaper, the bill should solve the inefficient immigration system of the country. The flawed system caused
an especially excruciating situation for illegal immigrants but was also intolerable for legal immigrants too. The problems it cause could be summarized by lawlessness leading to abuse from employers, the creation of an underground economy, local initiatives that stepped into the toes of the federal government and overall a disenfranchised community of illegal workers with no hope in sight.

Finally a draft for the bill emerged. The bill, that included a guest worker program but no path to citizenship, was harshly criticized by the Times. “[The Republican faction] wants every door to opportunity for illegal immigrants shut and locked, except the one marked guest workers. Those they would keep because they don’t mind having an underclass of docile, ill-paid foreigners who do America’s dirtiest jobs and then go home” (“The path to Citizenship”, March 2nd, 2007). Later that month TNYT backed up its position by an opinion article written by Bob Herbert, who summarized a report entitled Close to Slavery: Guest worker Programs in the United States, released by the Southern Poverty Law Center. The report detailed “the wide spread abuse of highly vulnerable, poverty-stricken workers in programs that already exist” (Herbert, “Indentured Servants in America”, March 12, 2007).

The bill was announced in the Senate by late May 2007. TNYT recognized the importance of giving a step into solving the immigration situation, but disapproved many of the bill’s proposed actions. “Its architects seized a once-in-a-generation opportunity to overhaul a broken system and emerged with a deeply flawed compromise” (“The Immigration Deal”, May 20, 2007). The Times labeled some of the bill’s intended actions as the “good”, “the bad” and “the awful.” The “good” was that the bill offered a path to citizenship for the illegal immigrants in the country, but the conditions were “tough” (a 5,000 fine, waiting for certain trigger conditions –security on the border– and a “foolish touchback pilgrimage” for the heads of households, since they were required to apply in their home countries). The “bad” was that the bill targeted family based immigration, and impeded employers and legal residents from sponsoring immigrants. “The deal badly erodes two bedrock principles of American immigration: that employers can sponsor immigrants . . . and that citizen and legal permanent residents have the right to sponsor family members.” The awful was that the agreement, through its temporary workers program, would create a new underclass of workers that even if they play by the rules would not be allowed to stay. “It offers a way in but no way up, a shameful repudiation of American tradition that will encourage exploitation—and more illegal immigration” (“The Immigration Deal”, May 20, 2007).

To support its opposition to the guest workers program, as outlined in the bill, the Times granted space to Paul Krugman’s who wrote an article on how an underclass of immigrants would erode democracy. Krugman takes an historical example. In 1910, 14% of America’s voting age males were non-naturalized immigrants, this plus the disenfranchised blacks created a “sort of minor-key apartheid system” in America. “That dilution of democracy helped prevent any effective response to the excesses and injustices of the Gilded Age.” Krugman believes we are now living a second Gilded Age and an immigration reform should “stop our drift into a new system of de facto apartheid,” on the contrary, the path to citizenship in the bill is “so tortuous that most immigrants probably won’t even try to legalize themselves” (Krugman, “Immigrants and Politics”, May 25, 2007).

However, the newspaper also dedicated space to supporters of the bill, like David Brooks, who in “America’s Admission System,” presented the idea of America being
“the Harvard of the world” where an admission system based in “hard work, responsibility and competition” would be better that letting people in through “criminality, nepotism and luck” (Brooks, “America’s Admission System”, May 22, 2007). Also, Dani Rodrik, referring to the guest workers program expressed in “Be Our Guests” that “whatever the practical difficulties, the potential gains are too large for us not to try. A guest worker program is the most effective contribution we can make to improving the lives of the world’s working poor” (Rodrik, “Be Our Guests”, June 1, 2007).

1.2 After the bill debacle

By June 9, the bill had hit a brick wall and TNYT lamented the fact. “The bill was badly flawed but fixable, as long as there was the possibility of leadership and courage in the Congress.” But by mid June the bill was being revisited in the Senate, this time as a harsher bill. The Times reflected on this in “The Scarlet Letter.” The newspaper focused on the amendments conservatives intended to incorporate in the new piece of legislation, like Senator Lindsay Graham’s amendment which would turn “people who overstay their visas into criminals subject to minimum 60-day prison sentences” or preventing illegal immigrants who paid Social Security “from ever getting that money back” (“The Scarlet Letter”, June 16, 2007), or even sponsored amendments, like the one at behest of Home Depot, “which would prohibit state and local laws that required big home-improvement stores to provide rudimentary shelter for day laborers” (“Home Depot Amendment”, June 22, 2007).

By the time the DREAM Act revived in the Senate, at the end of October, the Times urged the legislators to support one of “the least controversial immigration proposals” by saying that the bill rejects the “unacceptable waste of young talent” (“A Chance to Dream”, October 24, 2007). However the initiative did not pass.

1.3 What’s un-American?

Since the political right shaped a bill with a “tortuous” path to citizenship based partially on nationalistic claims, TNYT counteracted these claims by pointing to pro-immigrant American values and traditions. In a way, it became a “what’s really un-American?” argument between left and right. In discussing the immigration bill, editorial writes.“ If a deal hews so closely to the new harsh line of the White House and G.O.P. that it fundamentally distorts America’s pro immigrant tradition, it would be better to ditch the whole thing and start over” (“Family Values Betrayed”, May 4, 2007).

Following this line of thinking is Laurence Dawnes’ “America the Generous: A Lost Story of Citizenship.” The author summarizes Motomura’s arguments from his book “American’s in Waiting” with the purpose of showing that the U.S. had indeed an open doors policy in the past. Dawnes refers to this as “a lost story of a confident young country that opened itself to newcomers in ways that seem unthinkably generous today.” It’s important not to romanticize that story, Dawnes says, but as does Motomura, thinks that “immigrants will cherish citizenship more if it is easier to get. Maybe that’s crazy, but it’s American, and reflects a confidence in this country that the architects of the restrictive parts of the Senate bill have lost, if they ever had it” (Downes, “America the Generous: A Lost Story of Citizenship”, May 27, 2007). In the same token was the article from Michel Lind “The Two Year Solution.” Lind proposed lowering the residency
requirement for legal immigrants from five years to two, since this would speed up their
naturalization and it would make amnesty for illegal immigrants easier down the road.

Framed by the immigration bill debate, Paul Krugman in the editorial section
writes “Everything today’s immigrant bashers say—that immigrants are insufficiently
skilled, that they are too culturally alien, and implied though rarely stated explicitly, that
they are not white enough—was said a century ago about Italians, Poles and Jews”
(Krugman, “Immigrants and Politics”, May 25 2007). Another example-from-history type
editorial is Kenneth Davis’ “The Founding Immigrants” where he establishes that
Benjamin Franklin also held negative views on immigration in regard to the German
masses. “As we celebrate another Fourth of July, this picture of American intolerance
clashes sharply with tidy schoolbook images of the great melting pot. Why has the land
of ‘all men are created equal’ forged countless ghettos and intricate networks of social
exclusion? Why the signs reading ‘No Irish Need Apply’? And why has each new
generation of immigrants had to face down a rich glossary of now unmentionable
epithets? Disdain for what is foreign is, sad to say, as American as apple pie, slavery and

After the immigration bill debacle in June, the Times centered its attention on the
individual “crackdowns” trying to address the immigration problem. Like the “No-Match
provision” that would make employers verify its workers Social Security Numbers,
which the Times labeled as “narrow,” “shortsighted,” “disruptive,” and ineffective.
“What it will do is unleash a flood of misery upon millions of illegal immigrants” (“The
Misery Strategy,” August 9, 2007). The initiative was ruled out by the beginning of
October by judge Charles Bryer, an event the newspaper lauded.

1.3.1. Intolerance

Not so common but still present were the editorials devoted to expose the anti-
immigration intolerant attitude. There was for example, one dealing with the anti-
immigrant game “Catch the Illegal Immigrant” created by an intern with the College
Republican National Committee (“Game With No Winner”, February 27, 2007.).

As the immigration bill started its collapse in Congress, the Times lent space to
David Brooks in its editorial section. Brooks attributed the chasm in the immigration
debate to a culture divide between the educated and the uneducated. “The conventional
view is that an angry band of conservative activists driven by nativism and economic
insecurity is killing the immigration reform. But this view is wrong in almost every
respect . . . These conflicts were and are primarily cultural clashes, not economic or
ideological ones. And if you want to predict which side a person is likely to be on, look at
his or her educational level. That’ll be your best clue” (Brooks, “The Next Culture War”,
June 12, 2007).

By the time the immigration bill was on its second voting round at the Senate, in
mid-June, Lou Dobbs at CNN made public some statistics that related the rise in
immigration with the rise in leprosy cases. This prompted a fast response from Downes at
TNYT referring to Dobbs as a demagogue and as someone prone to divulge tampered
statistics. On June 17, he wrote “When Demagogues Play the Leprosy Card, Watch Out”
where he offered a demystifying view of the disease and exposed Dobbs statistics as
“grossly exaggerated.” Dobbs’ “obsessive” anti-immigrant cause was the object of
another editorial in October. When the CNN anchor called New York’s Governor, Eliot
Spitzer, a “spoiled-rich brat” for trying to give illegal immigrants drivers licenses, TNYT
took the opportunity to go after the “new demagogues” who “do not discriminate between criminals and the much larger group of ambitious strivers. They champion misguided policies, like a mythically airtight border fence and a reckless campaign of home invasions. And they summon the worst of America’s past by treating a hidden group of vulnerable people as an enemy to be hated and vanquished, not as part of a problem to be managed” (“Ain’t That America”, October 22, 2007).

2. The broken immigration system

Another important theme throughout TNYT editorials is the inefficacy of the immigration system. The newspaper calls attention to the fact that immigrants that play by the rules should be welcomed (“The Citizenship Surge,” Nov 27, 2007). However, the immigration system (Citizenship and Immigration Services, CIS, specifically) delays send a message of rejection to legal immigrants, “a chronic indolence that is just another way of hostility” (“The Citizenship Blues,” Feb, 17, 2007). Later that year TNYT writes “The collapse of immigration reform in the Senate showed the world what America thinks of illegal immigrants – it wants them all to go away. But the federal government, through bureaucratic malpractice, is sending the same message to millions of legal immigrants too” (“Immigration Malpractice,” July 7, 2007).

The immigration system is referred as a “hangdog bureaucracy,” “prickly,” and of “glacial ineptitude,” its rules “stringent, arbitrary, expensive and very time-consuming” (“Immigration Malpractice,” July 7, 2007). This inefficiency is contrary to the construction and development of the nation, since the naturalization of immigrants is one of the bases of the country, “the country should summon the will, the resources and the basic administrative competence to carry out one of its most vital functions, the making of new citizens” (“The Citizenship Surge,” Nov 27, 2007).

On February 4th, an editorial opposed the rise in fees for citizenship applications claiming that since all Americans benefit from immigrant labor, all Americans, and “not just the newest, least powerful ones” should help pay for the process (“The Price of Citizenship,” Feb, 4, 2007).

By late June, several cases of abuse and negligence in the detention system were made public. This, framed by Senator Lindsey Graham’s amendment of incarcerating immigrants who overstayed their visas, prompted The Times to write the following in “Gitmos Across America.” “Sixty to immigrants have died since 2004 while being held in a secretive detention system a patchwork of federal centers, private prisons and local jails. Advocacy groups and lawyers say that the system not only denies detainees the most basic rights but also lacks the oversight and regulations that apply to federal prisons. Instead of fixing this broken system, the Senate bill that is lumbering toward final passage . . . is overloaded with provisions that will make it even harsher and more unfair” (“Gitmos Across America,” June 27, 2007).

Also of concern for TNYT were the raids performed by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The Times referred to the raids as ineffective and abusive, and based on what immigrants’ advocates had said, the Times wrote that there were several irregularities in its procedure. The agents did not show warrants and misidentified themselves, thus, leading to the conclusion that not only the raids didn’t work to catch gang members and other fugitives (the main reason of their implementation) but were prone to abuses and mistakes.
2.1. Local ordinances

As a result of an ineffective immigration system, and with no means to control or regulate the illegal immigration, the local governments have been addressing the matter with local ordinances, many of which have been controversial. Thus, one of the main subtopics in the immigration editorials is the coverage of anti-immigrant local ordinances. According to the Times these ordinances have as objective “to stifle [the immigrants] opportunities, extract [their] money, expose them to legal jeopardy and otherwise inflict suffering, in the deluded hope that piling on miseries will make them disappear” (“They Are America,” Feb 18th, 2007).

More than one ordinance was targeted at the hiring sites where immigrants look for jobs. Editorial started this topic by late march, covering the Baldwin Park crackdown in L.A. The suburb tackled the problem “with an anti-soliciting bill written broadly enough to cover cookie-selling Girl Scouts but really meant for the Latino men at Home Depot” (“In Defense of Day Laborers,” March 28, 2007). As TNYT argues “one can oppose illegal immigration and still approve of hiring sites, places where laborers can find shade, toilets and a safe place to negotiate jobs with contractors and homeowners. The most obvious reasons are crowd control and traffic safety” (“In Defense of Day Laborers,” March 28, 2007).

By the end of the year, TNYT turned its attention to Arizona and to Sheriff Joe Arpaio. Arizona planned enforcing a law that “harshly punishes business that knowingly hire undocumented immigrants,” while Arpaio “makes a show of his meanness, hounding and humiliating prisoners and forming his deputies into squads that check people’s clothes and accents before demanding their papers” (“Blazing Arizona,” December 18, 2007). As Arizona, says TNYT, exacts its punishment on the undocumented workers who have made it so prosperous, it runs the risk of proving itself tough but not smart.

3. Keeping an eye on politicians.

TNYT called attention to the gap between President Bush’s promises of immigration reform and his actual performance; at the same time the newspaper kept track of where the presidential hopefuls stood in the immigration debate. On April 11, 2007 in “Bush on the Border” editorial remarks the dissonance between Bush’s Arizona speech, in which he acknowledge the flawed immigration system and two weeks later he and a group of Senate Republicans circulated a “list of principles”, “new conditions on immigrant labor so punitive and extreme that they amounted to a radical rethinking of immigration –not as an expression of a nations ideals and an integral source of its vitality and character, but as strictly contractual phenomenon designed to extract cheap labor from an unwelcomed class” (“Bush on the Border,” April 11, 2007).

A month later, TNYT touched the issue again, reminding to the readers that President Bush said in 2000 that “family values do not stop at the Rio Grande,” and then the White House proceeded in May 2007 to pressure the Congress to put a provision on the immigration bill targeting family based immigration. This gained the criticism of the Times, “closing the door to families would be unjust and unworkable, and a mockery to the values the conservatives profess. It would only encourage illegality by forcing people to choose between their loved ones and the law” (“Family Values Betrayed,” May 4, 2007).

Of the presidential candidates, TNYT wrote that they shift positions to impress primary voters “it’s usually as measured and boring as dance instruction: O.K. everyone,
now dip to the right—or left—then back to center” (“The Amnesty Sideshow,” April 30, 2007). By the beginning of the campaigns, the newspaper mentioned how Mitt Romney had praised a bill sponsored by Senator John McCain, calling it “quite different from amnesty” and then dismissing it as amnesty in 2007. In the same editorial the paper criticizes Rudolph Giuliani who was once “defender of immigrants, [and] now talks about . . . installing heat seeking equipment at the border.” And of Senator McCain the paper wrote that in the past he had supported a promising immigration bill and now he “has been trumpeting border security on the campaign trail and letting momentum for comprehensive reform stall in Washington” (“The Amnesty Sideshow,” April 30, 2007).

The approach presidential candidates were taking in the immigration debate was the topic of “The Immigration Wilderness.” Here The Times points to Senator Hillary Clinton as the one who is closer to a realistic approach and a comprehensive reform. “Mrs. Clinton was closer to being right the first time. . . . fixing immigration is not a yes-or-no question. It’s yes and no. Or if you prefer, no and yes—to more illegal immigration, to uncontrolled borders and to a flourishing underground economy where employer greed feeds off worker desperation. Yes to extending the blanket of law over the anonymous, undocumented population—and fines and other penalties for breaking the nation’s laws and an orderly path to legal status and citizenship to those who qualify” (“The Immigration Wilderness,” November 23, 2007).

By the end of 2007, TNYT complained that the immigration topic was badly addressed by the presidential candidates. “Even by the low standards of presidential campaigns, the issue of immigration has been badly served in the 2008 race. Candidates—and by this we mean the Republicans, mostly—have been striking poses and offering prescriptions that sound tough but will solve nothing. They have distorted or disowned their pasts and attacked one another ferociously, but over appearances, not ideas—over who can claim to be the authentic scourge of illegal immigrants, and who is the Lou-Dobbs-Come-Lately.” (“Immigration and the Candidates,” December 30, 2007). For TNYT the only voice of reason amongst the Republicans was John McCain, but overall, “The Democratic candidates start in a better place, since they and their party are largely on record as firmly supporting the pillars of comprehensive reform. There are no demagogues in their ranks.” However, The Times pointed that even if standing in a better place, Democrats had “timid fumblers” amongst their lines, say Senator Hillary Clinton,” who first supported then rejected a plan by Gov. Eliot Spitzer of New York to let illegal immigrants earn driver’s licenses” (“Immigration and the Candidates,” December 30, 2007).

4. Good practices

On a lesser scale, TNYT gave examples of good practices by local governments, take for example “After an Anti-Immigrant Flare-Up, Texas gets back to Business” written by Lawrence Downes on April 2nd, 2007. The article emphasizes the practicality of the Texas legislature by not letting pass a series of anti-immigrant initiatives on the basis that it would hurt business. About this TNYT says, “The legislature took a big step back from the immigration fight, as an unusual alliance rose up in support of humane, sensible reform.” Pro-business Republicans realized that “anti-immigrant fervor threatened to purge Texas of the workers that pluck chickens, build houses, and make some people very rich” (Downes, “After an Anti-Immigrant Flare-Up, Texas gets back to Business,” April 2, 2007.) Even if the action was motivated by interest the TNYT calls
attention to the fact that Texans realized that “in attacking the immigrants. Texas is attacking itself” (Downes, “After an Anti-Immigrant Flare-Up, Texas gets back to Business,” April 2, 2007).

By the end of July Judge James Munley decided to rule out several anti-immigrant local ordinances in the town of Hazelton, PA. The Times celebrated and hoped that was a “decisive blow against a dangerous trend of freelance immigration policies by local governments” (“Humanity v. Hazelton,” July 28, 2007).

In conclusion, this analysis clearly shows the New York Times held a liberal opinion on immigration throughout 2007. Its main worries were the abuse suffered by illegal and legal immigrants, the creation of a comprehensive bill with a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants, and overall a tolerant and inclusive approach towards illegal immigrants.
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Speaking of *Maya & Miguel*: The production and representation of Spanish language in an animated series for children

Emily S. Kinsky  
*Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA*  
emily.kinsky@pepperdine.edu

**Abstract**

Scholastic Media produced *Maya & Miguel*, which airs on PBS in the United States. The original goal of the program was to help Spanish-speaking children learn English, but they discovered English-speaking children were also learning Spanish. Using qualitative methods and the cultural studies model of the *circuit of culture*, this research effort focused on the moments of production and representation of the Spanish language within this children’s animated program. Personnel from Scholastic Media involved with the show were interviewed about their intentions and hopes for the program’s use of language, and 12 of the 65 episodes they produced were examined for the representation of Spanish using textual analysis. Results show that Spanish is depicted in such a way to make it “cool” to viewers, and the ability to speak two languages is lauded. Comparisons are also made to the 1970s PBS program *Carrascolendas.*
Speaking of Maya & Miguel: The production and representation of Spanish language in an animated series for children

Maya & Miguel, a children’s program produced by Scholastic Media and broadcast on PBS in the United States, tells the stories of fictional, Hispanic1, twin 10-year-olds and their family and friends. Spanish language is a foundational element of this program and was one of the reasons for several millions of dollars in U.S. government support for the production of the series. The current article is part of a larger study examining the program Maya & Miguel in light of the circuit of culture model from cultural studies. This particular paper focuses on the representation and use of language by the characters and the production decisions related to that usage. Representation was studied through textual analysis of selected episodes from the series, while the production choices were examined through interviews with Scholastic personnel and advisors. Maya & Miguel stands out from other children’s programming because of its use of Spanish within conversation, its target audience’s age, its educational purpose, and its portrayal of the Santos family and their friends, including various minority groups.

While Maya & Miguel is my focus, it was not the first program to promote Spanish language and culture through educational children’s television. It is important to spend some time looking back at history to see that neither Maya & Miguel, nor Dora the Explorer, were the first on this scene.

Bilingual Children’s Television Programming

One of the first programs to experiment with bilingual broadcast television on PBS was Carrascolendas, which aired from 1970 to 1976. The program was originally intended for children of Mexican descent living in Central Texas. It was somewhat like Sesame Street in that it took place in a fictional neighborhood with recurring characters – some dressed as typical adults and others in costumes. The program used stories and songs to teach Spanish language and culture. According to Barrera (2001), the creator of the program, “it became the first network bilingual television program in the United States to address the needs of Hispanic children and one of the earliest programs to do so within a multicultural context” (p. 4). The program was broadcast by 82% of the PBS stations in the United States and won numerous awards (Barrera, 2001). Barrera (2001) explains her dream for Carrascolendas:

I wanted to reawaken Hispanic children to the possibilities encompassed in their dual heritage. I envisioned doing so through an artistic television creation which required their active participation. I had seen children’s responses to television and knew the kinds of connections which the medium could bring to viewers. Those connections could help to reestablish a sense of community with an identifiable language and a commonality of ideas. A television series was a way of providing a semblance of mythological instruction, a way of bringing back the group to its central, unifying core. (p. 150)

1 In general, I will use the term Hispanic to describe Spanish-speaking people; however, when sources use the term Latino, that term will be used.
With similar goals to *Maya & Miguel*, the producer of *Carrascolendas* wanted her program to encourage prosocial behavior. While her audience was more likely to have Mexican heritage, she also wanted to address and edify all Hispanic groups, which again points to a resemblance with *Maya & Miguel*. According to Barrera (2001),

we wanted the children viewers, whether they were Mexican American, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, or members of some other ethnic or racial community, to know that their larger identity included those other groups and that these relationships could be positive rather than negative. We dealt with these situations by having characters in the series that came from different countries. Their conversations explored the subject of distinct national origin, as well as what this meant in terms of vocabulary, foods, or customs. (p. 161)

While *Carrascolendas*’ live characters differ from the animated world of *Maya & Miguel*, Barrera’s hopes for the program were amazingly close to the desires of *Maya & Miguel*’s producers, which will be discussed later. Barrera (2001) said, “I was interested in teaching both Hispanic and non-Hispanic children, and I wanted the learning experience to be conducive to expanding all children’s awareness about cultural and linguistic backgrounds that were different from their own” (p. 88). *Carrascolendas* served as a forerunner to the growing number of bilingual programs now on television.

**Recent Trends**

According to Moran (2007), there is a growing trend of bilingual television, including Sorpresa!, a Spanish children’s network launched in 2003; V-me, the first Spanish equivalent of PBS that was launched in early 2007; bilingual networks SiTV and Mun2; and programs such as Nickelodeon’s *Dora the Explorer* (2000)\(^2\), *Go, Diego, Go* (2005), *El Tigre: The Adventures of Manny Rivera* (2007), and Disney’s *Handy Manny* (2006). Moran expressed her concern, however, that much of the children’s programming on V-me is imported from Canada and the UK and simply dubbed into Spanish.

One of the programs listed above is a phenomenon unlike any other. *Dora the Explorer* can be seen almost everywhere. Dora is 7 years old and bilingual (Moran, 2007). Each episode includes an adventure in which she must read a map and complete several tasks to reach a goal. *Go, Diego, Go* is a spin-off of this preschool hit, in which the 8-year-old Diego lives in a Latin American-looking country and has adventures rescuing animals (Moran, 2007). Moran (2007) points out that “although the creation of bilingual programs is market driven by the population growth of Latino children in the United States, the consequence of this diversification is significant for children of all ethnic backgrounds” (p. 297). *Maya & Miguel* is another bilingual program that has recently emerged in the U.S. children’s market and is the topic of this research effort.

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\(^2\) Years of origin for *Dora the Explorer* ([http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0235917/episodes](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0235917/episodes)) and *Go, Diego, Go* ([http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0423657/](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0423657/)) were found using the Internet Movie Database (IMDb). The other programs’ years of origin were included in Moran’s description.
Maya & Miguel

*Maya & Miguel* (Forte, 2004) debuted in fall 2004 on PBS as part of the new PBS Kids Go! list of shows, a group of programs geared toward 6- to 11-year-olds in an effort to keep the fans of *Sesame Street* watching the network as they grow older (Beth Richman, personal communication, December 9, 2005). *Maya & Miguel* is the first original series produced by Scholastic Media (Cooney, 2004) and the first animated program to focus on a Latino family (Smith, 2006). Scholastic obtained the largest grant ever given by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, $9.2 million, to produce the series (Dei, 2003). In addition, PBS and the U.S. Department of Education granted another $5 million for its production (Dei, 2003).

*Maya & Miguel* centers on the adventures of Hispanic, fraternal twins in a generic U.S. city. Maya and Miguel speak English and Spanish, as do their parents and grandmother. Most of the Spanish seems to be spoken to each other or to other family members at home. They each have two main friends of the same sex, who often play major parts in the storylines. Maya’s friends include Chrissy (Afro-Dominican descent) and Maggie (Chinese descent). Miguel’s friends include Theo (African American) and Andy (Caucasian).

Maya and Miguel’s immediate family is comprised of their parents, Santiago (born in Puerto Rico) and Rosa Santos (born in Mexico). They live with their pet parrot, Paco, in a large apartment situated above the family pet store. Rosa’s mother, Elena, lives in a separate apartment across the hall.

Their extended family includes Tito, a cousin who has recently moved from Mexico, and his parents, Ernesto and Teresa. Tito speaks Spanish often and has a more pronounced accent than Maya and Miguel. Storylines involving him generally teach about things specific to Mexican culture – from wrestling stars to mariachi bands (see Appendix A for further description of the main characters).

Univision’s top anchorman, Jorge Ramos, wrote an editorial about the show. He discussed its popularity with his son and its potential impact on the Latino community. According to Ramos (2005), “Maya and Miguel emphasize three things: the importance of family, of our Latin American culture, and of being bilingual. However, they do this in a very entertaining way, without giving us moralistic affairs and without exaggerating their Hispanic pride” (n.p.). He also pointed out the natural-sounding scripts: “I really like the realistic way that these ten year-old twins talk . . . they sprinkle their conversation with Spanish words. It is to say that they talk exactly like our second and third generation Latino youths” (Ramos, 2005, n.p.). Moran (2007) also discussed the bilingual nature of the program and the possible impacts on audience members, whether they are Spanish-speaking or not:

The increasing options for those who choose Spanish-language programming are, for some, a welcome change to the US [sic] media environment. In particular, young Latinos longing for the chance to see their reality reflected on television are finding new options. Parents who want their children to remain connected with their Latino culture and the Spanish language can encourage the viewing of Latino-themed programs. For Latino children, seeing their culture represented on television can be empowering and invigorating and they may gain more self-assurance because of the heritage they share with the characters on TV. The
programs, especially **Maya & Miguel**, make being bilingual “cool” so that children who come to the television with this experience will feel validated because of the representation of their culture. Non-Latino children who are currently exposed to **Maya & Miguel** and **Dora the Explorer** may be more accepting of and interested in the Latino culture. (p. 299)

According to Smith (2006), **Maya & Miguel** “excels in offering a guide for children’s television producers by celebrating diverse cultures and identities and, further, by having them validated due to their very existence on our most ubiquitous popular culture form – the television show” (p. 110). Because of the growth in Latino-themed or Spanish-language programming, Moran (2007) encourages media scholars to investigate this trend “in order to determine the role television may have in teaching children of all ethnicities to navigate the world in which they live” (p. 299).

Like Moran (2007) and Smith (2006), I believe television representations of people – including their language use – can influence viewers’ thoughts toward those groups. Topics such as language use in a television program are important to discuss because they often involve groups of people who are treated as “others” and their voices silenced. Television is part of our culture, and even an examination of one series can help us better understand the impact of television texts in our lives. A number of other researchers have focused on specific programs, but few have studied the use of language within a children’s television program.

**Literature Review**

The literature is limited with regard to studying the representation of language within children’s educational television. With various goals in mind, several researchers have examined **Dora the Explorer** (Linebarger & Walker, 2005; Popp, 2006; Ryan, 2007). Other researchers have looked at foreign languages learned from children’s programming (Jylha-Laide, 1994; d’Ydewalle & Van de Poel, 1999).

For Linebarger and Walker (2005), **Dora the Explorer** was only one of several programs examined in their study of young children and language development. Their focus was not on the Spanish within **Dora**, rather they examined the impact on children’s vocabulary, in general, as the participants watched such programs from age 6 months to 30 months. The researchers found an increase in vocabulary for those children who watched **Dora** (which was combined with **Blue’s Clues** in their study). According to the authors, “Programs such as **Blue’s Clues** and **Dora the Explorer**, where onscreen characters speak directly to the child, actively elicit participation, label objects, and provide opportunities to respond, were positively related to expressive language production and vocabulary in our sample” (p. 639).

Ryan (2007) examined the portrayal of power in **Dora the Explorer** through textual analysis of two episodes of this animated program. As part of that study of power, she discussed the use of Spanish instruction on the program: “Lest the audience forget Dora’s heritage, virtually every sentence is peppered with Spanish words and phrases” (p. 18). Ryan described the repetition of Spanish words that Dora encourages her viewers to do and says, “audience participation not only teaches the viewers new Spanish words, but draws continuous attention to the fact that Dora is bilingual and Latina” (p. 19). Finally,
Ryan concluded that, “Children who speak Spanish have been granted power from Dora, giving them status as bilingual citizens” (p. 21).

Popp (2006) also chose *Dora the Explorer* for his study of linguistics used in media. Popp suggested that the use of Spanish in *Dora* “lends the series a sense of educational merit and cosmopolitanism” (p. 6). Rather than looking at the language used in *Dora*, Popp’s study examined the language used in public discourse about the program. Besides *Dora*, Popp also studied the discussion of language use in *The Passion of the Christ*. He searched for magazine and newspaper articles using Lexis-Nexis and narrowed the list to 90 that spoke of the use of language in these programs. Popp (2006) concluded that:

> When language is given attention, the discourse that ensues speaks volumes about how and why language is valued in a society. Regarding *Dora*, it points to the nexus of language mastery and social mobility . . . Bilingualism can open doors and act as a symbol of one’s tolerance and refinement. (p. 17)

Popp also pointed to the way media companies seem to be using language to promote their products’ distinction in the marketplace.

Beyond the *Dora the Explorer*-related research, Jylha-Laide (1994) described a case in which a young girl from Finland learned English by repeatedly watching cartoons. Jylha-Laide (1994) said that certain aspects of cartoons may make them easier to learn language from:

1. the cartoons contain features that effectively capture the viewer-learner’s attention, 
2. they present a strong picture-word interconnection, which corresponds with the ‘here and now’ principle of ‘modified’ registers, 
3. the dialogue of the cartoons is characterised by sentences that are simple and complete, 
4. the dialogue contains very few disfluencies, 
5. repetition is used frequently, and 
6. the rate of speech is relatively low in some cartoons.

The author asserted that “Laura’s case proves that even a beginning language learner may benefit from viewing ‘ordinary’ television programmes” (n.p.).

D’Ydewalle and Van de Poel (1999) also looked at language learning from video. In their study of children’s abilities to learn foreign language incidentally from media programs, d’Ydewalle and Van de Poel (1999) found “real but limited foreign-language acquisition by children watching a subtitled movie” (p. 242). The researchers performed an experiment in which Dutch-speaking children from age 8 to 12 watched a film with either a foreign language written in the subtitles with a native soundtrack, or the reverse. Those who heard the foreign language in the soundtrack acquired more of that new language.

This is an area with limited research. There are those who have examined language use in specific programs (i.e., *Dora the Explorer*), and others who have studied the medium of television as a channel for children to learn other languages. The current study seeks to help fill this gap in the literature of children, language, and television.
Theoretical Framework

For this study, I chose to use the circuit of culture – a model from cultural studies that offers a more complete way of viewing the process of communication. In this model, du Gay et al. (1997) suggest five processes, or moments, that make a “circuit of culture – through which any analysis of a cultural text or artifact must pass if it is to be adequately studied” (p. 3, emphasis added). This circuit consists of five moments: consumption, identity, representation, regulation, and production.

The circuit of culture fits well with my study of Maya & Miguel because of the examination of the representation of people and language in the program and the production of the program by Scholastic Media. According to Acosta-Alzuru and Roushanzamir (2003), representation “is an active process through which meanings are created” (p. 47). These authors explained that research examining representation “focuses on how language, images, and signs stand for—represent—things (objects, activities)” (p. 47). Production is essential to the model and is quite connected to representation because of producers’ decisions of how to depict characters, things, and ideas.

As other researchers have done, I have used cultural studies and the circuit of culture to examine a television program (Acosta-Alzuru, 2003; Hall, 2005). Similar to Ryan (2007) and Popp (2006), I chose to focus on language in this particular article.

Method

To study the use of language and its representation in the program Maya & Miguel, I chose qualitative methods because of the exploratory nature of my questions. As I first watched the program with my son, my original research question was the most generic and common, “What’s going on here?” The use of Spanish seamlessly woven into an animated program for children caught my attention. It was like nothing I had seen or heard before. As the study developed, my questions became more refined and began to reflect the circuit of culture. They included:

RQ1: How did Scholastic staff members and advisors make production decisions related to language use in Maya & Miguel?

I wondered what the production staff’s aims were as they created these characters and included bilingual dialogue in the program. This question relates to the production moment found on the circuit of culture. This question was addressed through in-depth interviews with Scholastic staff members and advisors.

RQ2: How is the Spanish language represented on Maya & Miguel?

This question is intended to apply to the representation moment within the circuit of culture. This question was closely related to the production team’s decisions, but while the previous question was answered through interviews with them, this one was addressed through the textual analysis of selected episodes of Maya & Miguel (see Appendix B for a description of each analyzed episode).
This research furthers media analyses related to cultural studies by examining the television show _Maya & Miguel_. I used multiple qualitative methods looking at the program from different angles to achieve triangulation. I conducted a case study, which began with a purposive sample of personnel behind _Maya & Miguel_. According to Yin (2003), “case studies are the preferred strategy when ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context” (p. 1). Merriam (1998) viewed a “case as a thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries” (p. 27). Stake (2005) further explained that “the case is singular, but it has subsections (e.g., production, marketing, sales departments), groups (e.g., patients, nurses, administrators), occasions (e.g., work days, holidays, days near holidays), dimensions, and domains” (p. 449). In the current case study of _Maya & Miguel_, I have followed the suggestions of Merriam (1998) and Stake (2005) by focusing on particular subsections or boundaries: five production-related personnel and 12 episodes.

According to Greig and Taylor (1999), “Case study triangulation entails obtaining more than one, usually three, perspectives on a given phenomenon” (p. 76). My study includes the perspectives of various Scholastic staff, as well as my own. By interviewing five Scholastic staff members or advisors and analyzing the texts, the triangulation of this study should be thorough. Through in-depth interviews of Scholastic personnel, I explore the production of _Maya & Miguel_. Textual analysis permits a study of the representation of language on the show.

**Interviews**

The interviews were semi-structured in that I had an interview schedule to help me cover the important issues (Kvale, 1996), but I varied from the list of questions when an unexpected and potentially valuable topic arose. I asked them about their attitudes, the representations of the characters, and the goals and objectives of the series. Most of the interviews were arranged by e-mail and performed via telephone. Participants were found through research and contact with Scholastic Media. Informants included executives and advisors with connections to the show.

**Participants**

I conducted interviews with five people connected with the production of the program who agreed to be interviewed. The conversations with them were done by telephone and e-mail because of the distance between us. My communication with each of them spanned multiple points of contact – for example, a phone interview with a few e-mails to clarify points or to ask follow-up questions.

*Beth Richman*. When I first spoke with her, Richman served as the director of development for Scholastic Media and creative executive for _Maya & Miguel_. She now works for a research company.

*Mindy Figueroa*. Arminda “Mindy” Figueroa served as the project director for _Maya & Miguel_. Figueroa wrote that she was “responsible for development of strategic marketing and outreach plans, including all aspects of project management, from series

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3 The names of Scholastic informants have been used with their permission.
launch and promotion to supervision of synergistic consumer and trade marketing, outreach, cause-related marketing activity, partnerships with the Latino community and others” (personal communication – e-mail, Sept. 15, 2006, lines 18-21). She also mentioned that she acted “as the key liaison with the Hispanic Congressional Caucus and Capitol Hill” (lines 21-22). Figueroa maintains her title as project director and continues to work part time for Scholastic, but she has also begun her own business, Latin2Latin, a marketing and communications company focused on the Hispanic/Latino community.

**Federico Subervi.** Dr. Subervi served as the cultural advisor to *Maya & Miguel*. He was on the board of advisors during the development of the program. He currently serves as a professor at Texas State University and specializes in Latino media.

**Cheryl Gotthelf.** Gotthelf was the vice president of marketing and media relations when she responded to my questions. Gotthelf now works for Chorion Silver Lining.

**Linda Kahn.** Kahn is the senior vice president for international sales and merchandising at Scholastic Media. Kahn explained, “I take the programs that we produce like *Maya & Miguel* and sell them all over the world to broadcasters or cable networks, get them placed on television and then look at opportunities for video licensing” (personal communication – telephone, March 27, 2008, lines 41-43). Kahn said her goal for *Maya & Miguel* was “to sell it as broadly as possible so kids all over the world can enjoy it” (line 303). She has worked at Scholastic for approximately 13 years.

**Textual Analysis**

Textual analysis consists of the examination of a text – whether it be written, oral, audio-visual, or something else – by a researcher. The examination of these texts is referred to as “reading,” whether the text involves words on paper or, as in this study, characters animated on a television screen. *Maya & Miguel* may be referred to as a text because it has “literary and visual constructs, employing symbolic means, shaped by rules, conventions and traditions intrinsic to the use of language in its widest sense” (Hall, 1975, p. 17). According to Hall (1975), textual analysis looks for patterns of what is present as well as what is notably absent.

I performed a “long preliminary soak” of my text as Hall (1975) described it – “a submission by the analyst to the mass of his material” (p. 15). The duration of my soak in this particular text has exceeded three years. I completed a close reading to identify themes, then a closer reading to connect the themes together, and finally the closest reading to connect the themes to their context; in other words, at least three readings of each of the 12 selected episodes were performed.

In the spring of 2007, Mindy Figueroa arranged for all of the episodes that had aired thus far to be sent to me. Out of those 50 episodes, I selected 12 to evaluate in depth, which added up to approximately 6 hours of programming. I used a dual-column note taking process. On the left column I noted events happening on screen, and on the right side, I made notes of my reaction to those events.

**Analysis**

The purpose of this study is to shed some light on an educational children’s television program that is attempting to tackle a number of major social issues, including
language use. *Maya & Miguel* seeks to teach English to Spanish speakers and to foster positive relationships between people of different cultures through the stories of Hispanic, twin 10-year-olds and their family and friends. Two research questions, heavily influenced by the *circuit of culture*, guided the current study: (1) How did Scholastic personnel decide how to produce the program?; and (2) How is Spanish represented on *Maya & Miguel*?

These questions were investigated using in-depth interviews with personnel from Scholastic Media, the company which produced this educational, animated program. I also examined episodes of *Maya & Miguel* using textual analysis.

**Background for language decisions.** Language was a foundational production issue for *Maya & Miguel*. Beth Richman said the production team was aware that “no one’s going to become fluent watching” the show, but they wanted to provide support for English language learners and teach them usable English (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 9, 2005, line 12). In an e-mail to me, Figueroa, the show’s project director, wrote:

> Through extensive research published by many experts and the advice from our 15 own advisors, we learned that in order for English Language Learners (ELL) to learn a second language, it is important that their native/mother tongue/language is integrated and treated with dignity and respect to create a “safe” environment. Additionally, Native English Language Speakers think, speaking another language, in particular Spanish, is cool and good for them. The use of Spanish is a very deliberate formula in the show, in which English and Spanish will be used in complete sentences to avoid Spanglish. Also, most Spanish is used to reinforce a thought, to express something that is unique in the Latino/Hispanic culture, or to depict how bilingual people speak in real life and experience the best of both worlds. All of the Santos family are completely bilingual—that is, the parents, the twins and Abuela Elena. (personal communication, Sept. 15, 2006, lines 132-141)

According to Richman, they wanted the children to see that there is “value in learning more than one language,” and that it is good to have friends who speak other languages (lines 15-16).

Figueroa said that the program was “well received both by Latinos and non-Latino kids” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, line 696). She said the non-Latino participants thought “being bilingual and speaking Spanish was very cool” (lines 700-701). The research also informed the producers that “the show was not only for English language learners, but it was for English natives that . . . were learning . . . words in Spanish” (lines 703-705). Figueroa mentioned that English speakers learning Spanish “wasn’t part of the . . . initial goal” (lines 705-706), but that the production team learned that it was happening once the research was complete. According to Figueroa (personal communication – e-mail, Sept. 15, 2006):

> We wish ALL children could benefit from the moral values depicted in the show; and from the show’s fundamental curriculum goals, which are: 1) To promote the value of a culturally diverse society; 2) To support English language learners through the presentation of language in a natural context with a special emphasis on vocabulary. (lines 103-107, emphasis in original)
According to Richman, they tried to have at least three English words that were tied to the storyline in each episode, though “there is no magic formula” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 9, 2005, line 63). The connection to the storyline was made to help comprehension. Richman said they knew that the words must be functional, relevant, and used multiple times in each script in order to be successful in teaching English. Richman added that they often used cognates.

Richman said that the Spanish words used in the program were mainly used to support the English vocabulary presented in the program. According to Richman, code switching takes place in complete sentences that sometimes reinforce a request, define a word, or introduce a new topic, but they are not necessarily there to give a definition. According to Richman, the producers wanted the characters to be positive role models for other bilingual/bicultural children watching the show and for them not to lose themselves in translation (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 9, 2005, lines 72-74).

While the language in the program was not Subervi’s focus, he said there were language experts on the advisory board who monitored “the level of language, if it was right for . . . the age targeted” (personal communication – telephone, Nov. 27, 2007, lines 34-35). Subervi liked the use of Spanish and commented: “I can’t say that any and every individual Latino kid of that age would have that fluency or, or that accent, or that approach, but it’s . . . a very nice representation” (lines 149-151). Kahn believed the use of multiple languages in the U.S. version of the program is “great because it’s . . . our world” (lines 360-361).

Spanish used by particular characters. Figueroa said that Paco, the parrot, was used as a tool to repeat certain words several times within the show. She said, “we know from our educational experts that . . . if you want . . . a kid to pick up a word either in English [or] Spanish . . . it has to be repeated three times” (M. Figueroa, personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 625-627). Thus, Paco was a “vehicle” for introducing certain words while still being “entertaining and funny” (lines 628-629).

Figueroa said Tito, Maya and Miguel’s cousin, was chosen to represent the newly immigrated, second-language learner. She said that while “Maya and Miguel reflect the U.S.-born Latinos of immigrant parents” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, line 606) who are “completely bilingual” (line 607) and who speak without an accent:

we wanted to portray the second language learner . . . that is coming to this country for the first time and he has an accent or . . . he stumbles upon some words because it’s not the. . . pronunciation that he’s used to in his native language, Spanish. (lines 609-612, emphasis in original)

Figueroa explained that they wanted Tito’s portrayal to discourage “any kind of barriers of intimidation to any kids that are watching the show” (lines 612-613, emphasis in original). They wanted the children to “see that, ‘Hey, you can make mistakes because you’re learning a second language, right? You’re already good at one language.’ . . . and that’s wonderful” (lines 612-615, emphasis in original). Figueroa added that certain advisors, including Subervi, said “we must, we needed to have a character like that [pause] in the show” (lines 617-618, emphasis in original).

Representation of language. Spanish and English are used in each storyline. In a few episodes, other languages appear, such as “A Little Culture,” which has a few words
of Mandarin Chinese, and “Give me a Sign,” which features American Sign Language (ASL). Because language skills were part of the foundational reasons for the show, it makes sense that they would be apparent in each episode. Some episodes have more Spanish used than others, while some seem to focus more on English idioms than other episodes, such as being “in the dog house” or letting the “cat out of the bag” (“The Pen Pal”).

As the production team members mentioned, the language is tied closely to the storylines. In each episode, when Maya has her big idea of the show, she says “Eso es! That’s it!” Sometimes the “Eso es!” is said by itself, but often the translation is included. There are times when Maya also says she has an idea in Spanish: “Tengo una idea.”

The episode “A Rose is Still a Rose” offers a good example of how Paco is used to repeat the target words. In this story, Maya volunteers to take care of her grandmother’s prize flowers while she is gone. The words that were emphasized in English and Spanish in this episode included sun/sol, soil/tierra, and water/agua. Maya says the English form of these words, while Paco, the parrot, repeats them in Spanish.

The episode “Friends Forever?” depicts some ups and downs in the friendship of Maya, Maggie, and Chrissy and the friendship of Miguel, Theo, and Andy. This allows for the words for friends and enemies to be repeated multiple times and remain closely tied to the storyline. The girls refer to themselves as “las tres amigas.” The opposite of the female form of “friend,” enemigas, is shared through the storyline as the girls become angry with one another. The word for late, tarde, is also featured as the main reason for Chrissy and Maggie’s argument. Please/por favor is also used in this episode, and the idiom “saved by the bell.” Because the girls are presenting The Three Musketeers as their book report, the phrase “uno para todos, todos para uno” is also used, particularly as the girls reunite in friendship at the end of the episode.

As mentioned previously, in “Give me a Little Sign,” ASL is featured, but Spanish and English are also present. The term sign language itself is repeated in Spanish and English. The description of talking with hands is also said in both languages. The words for fish, dog, bird, butterfly, tiger, and shoe are expressed in both English and ASL as Tito and Marco walk around the pet store – again the words are closely related to the storyline allowing for visual aids and helpful context.

Not only does this episode cover different languages, it also addresses accents and deafness. Tito is afraid his English, particularly his pronunciation of B and D, is too bad for anyone to understand him when he presents his invention at a school contest. Marco, a deaf character, comforts Tito with regard to his pronunciation troubles by joking that he had never noticed Tito’s accent. Although Tito is a member of the dominant group in this series (Hispanics), he considers himself an “other” at the beginning of “Give me a Little Sign” because of his accent. He is extremely self-conscious. Tito even has a nightmare about “feesh” [fish].

Later, Tito notices that Abuela has an accent similar to himself when she asks him for that “jello” [yellow] cup. Tito says, “Abuelita, you talk just like me and everyone loves you!” She responds that she tries her best and that “My accent is part of who I am.” The highlight of the episode for Tito is that he is able to help Marco at the hardware store. Tito translates from Marco’s sign language into Spanish for the hardware store employee. When Marco’s mother comes in the store, she thanks Tito for helping. As they walk down the street, she tells Tito that it is great that he can speak both Spanish and
English. The text presents Tito as powerful because of his language abilities. It also presents the binary opposition of the native English speaker to the non-native English speaker.

At the presentation of his invention, Tito was finally able to say yellow clearly. In the last scene of the episode, Tito, Marco, and Veronica (a love interest for Tito) are on the stage at school after winning an award, and they say the word “friend” in all three languages. This episode especially seemed to send the message that learning other languages is desirable. By knowing another language, you can gain power and can be part of the “us” rather than “them.”

In “La Nueva Cocinita,” we hear several idioms: “let the cat out of the bag,” “it’s raining cats and dogs,” “go to the dogs,” and “doggie bag.” With each of the references to cats and dogs, the twins have to comfort Paco that “it’s just an expression!” We also hear a lot of Spanish words – at least 24 different words and phrases – perhaps more than any other episode. The words that were emphasized the most and shared in both languages were *hola/*hi, *encantadoras*/magic, *plato*/plate, *tazón*/bowl, and *las recetas*/recipes. Miguel reads names of recipes from Abuela’s recipe book in Spanish and English. A number of Spanish words were used several times without an English translation, including *gracias*, *bueno*, *vamanos*, and *adios*. There were also some English words that appeared to be repeated for educational purposes, including “restaurant,” “team,” and “umbrellas.”

Spanish words often entered the conversations throughout the series when describing native foods. In “Miguel’s Wonderful Life,” Maya makes Miguel’s favorite breakfast, *huevos rancheros*. Later Maya exclaims, “*Tamale!* My favorite!” when she comes home to find Abuela making some. Other Spanish used in this episode included greetings and holiday-related terms, such as *buenos dias*, *feliz navidad*, *parranda*, and *noche buena*.

In “Soccer Mom,” the Spanish phrase *por su puesto/*of course is used. Again, words are emphasized in connection with the storyline. The words ball/*la pelota* and soccer/*fútbol* are used as Maya and Miguel’s mother, Rosa, becomes the twin’s soccer coach.

In “The Pen Pal,” several idioms are presented in English, including “in the dog house,” which the twins explain to Paco “just means he’s in trouble.” They also use the expression “to kill two birds with one stone” and “to let the cat out of the bag.” When Paco is alarmed about a cat being let out, they explain that the statement should not be taken literally. He asks, “*no gato*?” and they confirm that there is no cat. The phrase, “*Como estas*?” is used in this episode by Miguel’s Puerto Rican pen pal, Roman, in his e-mail to Miguel. In the end, Miguel apologizes in Spanish for lying to Roman in his e-mails: “*lo siento*.”

In the holiday episode “The Perfect Thanksgiving,” Santiago’s mother, Tata, comes from Puerto Rico to visit. Her visit was announced when Rosa read a postcard from Tata in Spanish. When they pick her up at the airport, Santiago exclaims, “*Mami*!” and she says, “*Mi jito!*” When the Thanksgiving celebration is thwarted by a power outage, it is Tata who says “*Tengo una idea!*” and Maya comments, “So that’s where I get it!” Other phrases shared in both languages include, hello/*hola*, turkey/*los pavos*, football/*fútbol americano*, it’s mine/*es mio* and hug/*abrazos*. Touchdown appeared to be one of the English words taught in this episode as it was repeated several times.
Many sports terms were also shared in both languages during the episode “When Maya Met Andy,” in which Maya and Miguel notice a new neighbor. As the moving truck is unloaded, they list the sports equipment coming out in English and Spanish: bicycle, basketball, and soccer ball. Once it is obvious there is a child in the home, Maya suggests she and Miguel go to meet the new neighbor. Miguel asks in Spanish then in English, “Where am I going?” While Maya asks Abuela in English then in Spanish, “Can we go over there?” Not wanting to meet a new neighbor empty handed, Maya takes Andy some vitamins as a welcome gift because it is the best present she can come up with out of their grocery sacks – the term for vitamins is then mentioned in both languages.

After they meet Andy, Maya suggests throwing a party/fiesta for him. These terms are repeated several times. Once the community center is decorated, Chrissy says, “This place looks great – fantastico!” Several phrases related to Andy and his disability (one arm stops at the elbow) are mentioned in both Spanish and English: Tito mentions Andy’s disability when they meet, Maya discusses his disability with Miguel, and Miguel responds that “he’s fine” in Spanish then in English.

In a number of scenes across the series, a question will be asked in one language and answered in another. In this particular episode, Andy is invited for a meal at Abuela’s apartment with Maya and Miguel. Abuela asks Maya in Spanish where the silverware is (that she removed to avoid offending Andy), and Maya responds in English.

Other Spanish and English phrases in this episode relate to morning routines. Maya tells Miguel to wake up in Spanish then in English. Miguel then requests to sleep five more minutes in English then in Spanish. Other terms used in both languages include: please/por favor and eye/un ojo.

Summary of language use. Each of the 65 episodes of Maya & Miguel that were produced contains both Spanish and English words and phrases. The languages were woven together in natural sounding conversations between the characters. Most of the vocabulary can be determined relatively easily by non-native speakers because of the context cues given. As the Scholastic participants mentioned, the vocabulary words were tied closely with the storylines and repeated several times. While the original goal of the program was to teach Spanish-speaking children English, the production team indicated that the reverse was commonly happening, too.

Different levels of language mastery were portrayed in the series. Maya and Miguel served as second generation Americans, who could easily speak both Spanish and English. Their English also had no Spanish accent, while their parents’ and grandmother’s pronunciations did. The newly immigrated persona of Tito used more Spanish and demonstrated a more pronounced accent, too. Paco, the parrot, was used as a tool for repeating words for audience members to learn. With a need to repeat words and phrases three times in an episode, the idea to use a parrot fit in perfectly.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine an educational children’s animated television program, Maya & Miguel, and to see specifically how that program addresses the Spanish language. The series was studied using qualitative methods: in-depth interviews with five Scholastic personnel and textual analysis, in which 12 episodes from the series were examined in depth.
The circuit of culture and the interdependence and influence of each moment on the other can be seen in this analysis of Maya & Miguel. Two of the five moments were focused on in this study: representation and production. While each method focused on one particular moment, it is difficult to completely separate them from each other. For example, how can you pull out representation from production when it is the producers deciding on the depiction of the characters?

What do these language representations mean? The text tells us that knowing two or more languages is beneficial. In this text, those who are bilingual are admired (e.g., Tito is praised by Marco’s mom). Being bilingual is also presented as normal, and bilingual characters are certainly in the dominant group in the text.

Language training was evident throughout the series. While some episodes consisted of more Spanish words and phrases than others, each one had some Spanish. As the producers intended, the Spanish and English words that appeared to be taught in each episode were tied closely to the storylines. Either with a translation used within a conversation or by an object held or indicated by a character, one could deduce most of the words or phrases spoken.

The representation of languages in the text seems to propose that the use of Spanish and English is natural for Hispanic people. The text presents code switching between the two languages as normal. The text also clearly shows the cultural connection of language through many of the terms used, particularly in Spanish (e.g., terms of endearment, greetings, holiday related terms).

Within the series, language and culture are closely intertwined. This idea was referenced by both Richman and Figueroa. Figueroa referred to the Santos family enjoying the best of both worlds. This only appears possible by the knowledge of both languages. Their bilingual abilities also show their desire to maintain ties with their heritage rather than cutting off connections and choosing to completely assimilate, as some immigrants do. A greater maintenance of native language and culture seems to be the current trend in U.S. society as opposed to 30 or 40 years ago when children’s mouths were sometimes washed out with soap for speaking Spanish at school, as I learned from an earlier study (personal communication, R. RODRIGUEZ⁴, June 20, 2006). Many children in previous generations tried to eliminate their mother tongue and did not teach it to their children. I believe because of their regrets with the loss of language and a feeling of being in limbo between two identities, there has been a shift to the current value placed on maintaining the first language (Spanish) in addition to learning a second (English). There also appears to have been a shift in English-speaking culture so that learning Spanish is now seen as a valuable skill and “cool,” as Figueroa and Kahn mentioned.

Suggestions for Future Study

Future studies could examine how well children learn language through Maya & Miguel via an experiment. Both English learners and Spanish learners could be tested after watching perhaps a week’s worth of episodes. Other future studies could compare the representation and use of language between all of the current bilingual children’s programs, including Dora the Explorer and Handy Manny.

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⁴ Names in all capital letters have been changed to protect the identity of the informant.
Future research should examine this program focusing on other moments from the circuit of culture. For example, one could certainly investigate the consumption of the program in various markets. It could be particularly interesting to examine the consumption of the program outside the United States, especially in light of the concern about the influence of U.S. media on other nations (see Cohen 2008).

This research helps explore a children’s television show. The study adds to the literature in the areas of educational television, minority portrayals, and bilingual programming. It, therefore, expands our knowledge base in these areas.
References


Appendix A

More about *Maya & Miguel’s* Major Characters

**Maya Santos** – 10-year-old girl; twin sister of Miguel; Hispanic; mother born in Mexico; father born in Puerto Rico; loves animals; known for her big ideas that often go awry – when Maya has a big idea, she says “*Eso es!* That’s it!”; bilingual; she and her friends Maggie and Chrissy call themselves *Las Tres Amigas*

**Miguel Santos** – 10-year-old boy; twin brother of Maya; Hispanic; mother born in Mexico; father born in Puerto Rico; loves animals; bilingual; loves sports (soccer, baseball, basketball); likes to draw; likes to play drums

**Rosa Santos** – mother of Maya and Miguel; moved from Mexico at a young age; owns a pet shop; coaches Maya and Miguel’s soccer team in one episode

**Santiago Santos** – father of Maya and Miguel; moved from Puerto Rico; owns a pet shop; shown taking the kids to a movie and a museum in one episode

**Abuela Elena Chavez** (aka Abuelita) – grandmother of Maya and Miguel; moved from Mexico; widow; likes to cook; once owned a restaurant with her late husband, Ernesto; has at least two children – Rosa and Ernesto; Internet savvy; member of a book club; shown with a romantic interest in Señor Felipe, the mailman, in at least two episodes; often shown interacting with her grandchildren

**Tito** – cousin of Maya and Miguel who moves from Mexico with his parents, Teresa and Ernesto; actual name is Alberto; a fan of wrestling; has a more pronounced accent than Maya and Miguel

**Paco** – pet parrot of Maya and Miguel; used for repetition of words and humor

**Maggie** – friend of Maya; loves to dance; Chinese descent; interested in fashion; focused on good grades

**Chrissy** – friend of Maya; Afro-Dominican descent; interested in fashion; has a more pronounced accent than Maya and Miguel; laidback

**Andy** – friend of Miguel; loves sports; has a physical disability – one arm appears to end at the elbow; moved from Wisconsin; Caucasian; laidback

**Theo** – friend of Miguel; loves to read; plays sports; fascinated by sci-fi; the “brain” of the group; often shown as an inventor; African American
Appendix B

Episodes Evaluated in Textual Analysis

The episode number assigned by Scholastic is in parentheses.

When Maya Met Andy (#103)
Andy moves in across the street. Maya decides to throw a welcome party for him and does not realize he has a disability until he shows up for the party. When they see his arm, most of the children do not know how to act. Maya takes sensitivity too far and treats Andy as if he cannot do anything. Maya learns from Miguel’s treatment of Andy as a normal person.

La Nueva Cocinita (#106)
When the neighborhood is down in the dumps from a long rainy spell, Maya decides to open a restaurant in their apartment using Abuela’s old recipes from her restaurant, La Cocinita. As usual, things go awry and Abuela steps in to help.

Soccer Mom (#120)
When Maya and Miguel’s soccer coach goes pro, Maya suggests that Rosa take his place. Miguel does not like the idea of combining home and soccer and convinces Maya to help him get rid of their mom as coach. Rosa comes back to coach the last minutes of their playoff game and leads them to victory.

A Little Culture (#124)
Maya, Miguel, Theo, and Maggie set off to see the opening day of a new sci-fi movie. When they arrive, they realize Maya forgot to buy the tickets. They agree to go across the street with Mr. Santos so that he can see the exhibits on Ancient Cultures that he wanted to see. Maggie learns about Ancient China, Theo learns about West Africa, and the twins spend their time in the gift shop looking for something to make up for missing the movie.

Friends Forever? (#128)
Las tres amigas get into an argument over their book report. After mocking their friendship problems, the three boys have their own argument over Miguel secretly coaching both Andy and Theo for a particular position on the soccer team.

The Pen Pal (#132)
Miguel gets a pen pal in Puerto Rico. He makes the mistake of lying about his life trying to make it sound more exciting, and then he finds out the pen pal is coming for a visit. He asks Maya to help him and the children try to pretend all of the lies were true. In the end, Miguel and his pen pal learn that telling the truth is important.

Give me a Little Sign (#139)
A new student joins Tito’s class at school. His name is Marco, and he is deaf. A number of ASL signs are taught and repeated in English and/or Spanish. Tito is encouraged about his accent by Abuela.
Miguel’s Wonderful Life (#142)
After a day of Maya’s mistakes, Miguel wishes she were gone. He awakes to find his wish has come true, but then notices how much Maya helped the people around her.

A Rose is Still a Rose (#145)
Abuela leaves town with Maya in charge of taking care of her prize rose before the big competition. Maya expects the roses to grow quickly and ends up destroying the prize rose. Miguel wants to learn wrestling but expects Señor Lopez to teach him the fancy moves right away. Both Maya and Miguel learn more about patience.

Role Reversal (#146)
Santiago and Rosa decide their children have an easy life, while Maya and Miguel imagine the same is true about their parents. Maya suggests they change places for the day, and in the end, they appreciate one another and realize that everyone faces challenges.

After School (#147)
Maggie runs late to school. She argues for Mr. Nguyen not to spoil her perfect record with a tardy and ends up with an “after school” detention.

The Perfect Thanksgiving (#152) [online called: The Best Thanksgiving Ever]
Santiago’s mother comes from Puerto Rico to spend Thanksgiving with them. Maya and the rest of the family try to pull off a perfect holiday, but they discover that just being together is what makes the day special.

Carolyn Nielsen

Western Washington University, Department of Journalism, Bellingham, WA
carolyn.nielsen@wwu.edu

Abstract

This study draws evidence from trends in Spanish-language radio proliferation and media consolidation to examine how the nation’s fastest growing ethnic group is served by this key news and information medium.

Latinos establishing themselves in historically non-Latino urban areas are statistically likely to turn to radio for information. However, the quality of programming can vary significantly and, in many cases, is exclusively entertainment produced outside the region. Local programming has been threatened by growth and consolidation, which have led to large corporations holding most stations in urban markets. Networks that distribute canned programming to their outlets ignore listener’s need for local news and information.

A case study of Seattle’s Radio Sol KKMO-AM 1360 shows the essential role locally produced programming plays in one such emerging Latino urban area. Radio Sol is often the only comprehensive source for stories in which the Latino voice is heard. Locally produced content enfranchises listeners with information Spanish speakers need to access services and participate in democracy.

Introduction

Against the backdrop of a divisive national immigration debate, three trends emerging in parallel have the potential to shape community building and democratic participation for Latinos, the nation’s fastest growing immigrant group:

1) In the past 25 years, Spanish-language radio stations have proliferated by 1,000 percent (Schement, 1981; Arbitron, 2007).

2) The 1996 loosening of federal media ownership rules has permitted a few corporations to dominate Spanish-language broadcast markets, particularly in urban areas.

3) The consolidation of more stations in fewer hands has reduced local influence on programming at a time when Latinos are establishing new urban communities and relying on radio as a key source of news and information.

For example, broadcast giants such as Telemundo (owned by NBC/Sony) have cut local television news in some of the nation’s largest markets, filling the gap with a single TV newscast out of Fort Worth, Texas (NAHJ, 2006). In radio, consolidation has allowed large broadcast groups to feed syndicated programming stripped of local content to stations across the country. Now that radio stations are no longer required to provide non-entertainment programming (Redd, 1991) and many do not have any local news (Fox, 1993). Some stations don’t run local public service announcements (PSAs), which numerous psychology studies have shown to be effective in improving access to healthcare and spreading messages about nutrition, prenatal care and heart health (Humphries, Macus, Stewart, Oliva, 2004; Quinn, Hauser, Bell-Ellingson, Rodriguez, Frias, 2006; Alvarado, Balcazar, Huerta, 1999).

Federal Communication Commission (FCC) changes over the past three decades have prompted Latino community leaders and a former U.S. Secretary of Commerce to express concern about the decline in the diversity of radio programming (Saldivar, 2004; Mineta, 2000; FreePress, 2007).

This paper will examine these trends in contrast with a case study of Seattle’s Radio Sol, Washington State’s first 24-hour Spanish-language radio station. This station is significant because it is both representative of a national trend (a station that serves an emerging Latino market) and emblematic of a contrast to a national trend (a station that provides almost exclusively local content to a small, urban market share). The station considers itself the “Spanish town crier” for its new and growing Latino community.

This paper analyzes locally produced Spanish radio programming as a tool to mobilize the masses, to help urban Latinos build community and participate in democracy. While the scope of this study is limited to anecdotal analysis, the examples are worthy of examination under current conditions of rapid consolidation that restricts program diversity and at a crucial time in growth of Latino immigration and development of immigration policy.

This paper hypothesizes that several key FCC deregulation actions are moving the public airwaves away from serving the public good by providing access to essential
information while continuing to serve advertisers who wish to reach that public’s wallets. Further, as radio newsrooms are being shuttered, the Spanish-speaking populations that depend almost entirely on radio broadcasts as their key source of information are being disenfranchised by a lack of access of local news.

This research builds on the growth and consolidation trends examined by Paredes in 2003, who wrote that the rapid growth and consolidation of Spanish-language radio could threaten “local programming and content diversity” and was targeting a “Latin pot of gold” rather than using the public airwaves to inform (Paredes, 2003 p. 1). Paredes’ study was completed prior to Univision’s merger with Hispanic Broadcasting Corporation. This study shows that many concerns Paredes raised about consolidations’ effect on content have since come to fruition.

This study builds on Paredes’ research into those trends, adding more recent evidence. Further, this research includes a case study of a 5-year-old Spanish-language radio station serving a small but growing Latino population in a large city. This study hypothesizes that the type of locally generated programming threatened by growth and consolidation plays an essential role in building community and providing key news and information in emerging urban areas.

For the purposes of this paper, Latino and Hispanic are used interchangeably. Hispanic is the U.S. Census term. Latino is the term preferred by the author.

**Latino Radio Culture**

Latinos in the Pacific Northwest rely on radio as a trustworthy information source (Fisher, Marcoux, Miller, Sánchez, Ramírez Cunningham, 2004). Fifty-eight percent of Latinos get news by radio, as opposed to 19 percent of the overall U.S. population that gets news via radio. Fifty-six percent of foreign-born U.S. Latinos get all their news from Spanish-language radio, a larger percentage than any other medium (Suro, 2004). “Even as the English-language media purveys values and cultural expressions drawn primarily from the experience of the native born, the Spanish-language media reflects the immigrant experience and reinforces ties to the home country” (Suro, 2004 p. 1).

New immigrants rely on radio because it is free, widely accessible and familiar. Latinos are twice as likely to listen to native-language media than are Asian or Middle Eastern immigrants to the United States (Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2004). Most Latinos listen to Spanish radio at work, meaning they can consume media while doing other things (Arbitron, 2006). Also, in that context radio is passive and pervasive; Spanish speakers do not have to seek out radio at specific locations. Spanish Radio does not present literacy or language barriers, if familiar and pervasive. Radio “…tells Hispanics they are not alone…” (O’Guinn, Meyer, 1983, p. 10).

In 1983, when advertising professor Dr. Thomas O’Guinn and communications professor Dr. Timothy Meyer published, “Segmenting the Market: The Use of Spanish-Language Radio,” they found a lack of research on Spanish-language media. Twenty-four years later, subsequent research has confirmed many of O’Guinn and Meyer’s hypotheses about what was then a fledgling medium.

Research shows that Latinos fluent in English still depend on Spanish-language media for international news from Latin America and about local news of importance to the Hispanic community (Suro, 2004). Further evidence for the importance of radio is the
comparatively slow growth of Spanish-language daily newspapers, from seven in 1970 to 35 in 2002 (Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2002). Spanish-language newspapers grew by 400 percent in 32 years while radio grew by 1,000 percent in 25 years.

Most of Seattle’s Latino immigrants did not arrive in Seattle until 1990 or later and have come from Central American nations (Census, 2000) with strong traditions of radio as a tool for mobilizing the masses. In 1990, an indigenous group in Guatemala founded a Mayan-language radio program on Radio Nuevo Mundo that would begin at 4 a.m., the time when many rural workers were awakening to begin working in the fields. The program was groundbreaking in that it targeted the minority language campesinos (rural farmworkers) in a way that had not been done in that country for 50 years (Rockwell, 2001).

Radio’s power can be seen in the fact that during Guatemala’s guerilla war, army troops targeted radio stations broadcasting in Mayan dialects. Soldiers killed and arrested employees and destroyed their broadcasting equipment (Rockwell, 2001). Similarly, in Mexico in the 1980s, “feisty talk-radio shows came to dominate the airwaves in Mexico’s larger cities” and encouraged the development of a more independent media in a country used to heavy-handed censorship and where all news sounded the same (Lawson, 2002, p. 127).

At that same time in California, Dolores Huerta, co-founder of the United Farmworkers of America, turned to the power of radio for informing and mobilizing a Spanish-speaking community that was largely rural, undereducated, poor and working in the agriculture industry. In the 1980s, Huerta founded KUFW, Radio Campesina, as a means of disseminating education and information—both about access to services and political activism—to California’s migrant workers and new immigrants.

Radio Campesina now owns nine stations along the West Coast. The stations hold charity drives, urge smoking cessation, provide information about farmworker rights and where to enroll children in early childhood development programs (http://www.campesina.com, 2007). A 2004 study by the Pew Hispanic Center found: “… an overwhelming majority of all Latinos (78%) say that the Spanish-language media is very important to the economic and political development of the Hispanic population. This view of Spanish media as a valuable ethnic institution is shared by a majority (61%) of Latinos who get all their news in English. These responses suggest that the Spanish-language media play an esteemed role as spokesmen for the Latino population and that they have a significant influence in the formation of Hispanic identities. The significance of the Spanish-language media as a social and cultural institution is magnified by the widespread concern expressed by 44% of all Latinos that the English-language media contributes to a negative image of the Hispanic population in the United States” (Suro, p. 2).
Latinos Establish Communities in New Urban Areas

Southern California and the Southwest have long-established Latino communities, many rooted to the period when they were Mexican territory. The population of Los Angeles is more than half Latino.

In Seattle, Spanish speakers comprise about 5 percent of the majority Anglo population. Most of the city’s immigrants are Asian (City of Seattle, 2007). Most of Washington’s Hispanic population is concentrated in four rural counties with agriculturally based economies. In 2004, Yakima, Grant, Franklin and Adams counties had populations between 35 and 54 percent Hispanic. The number of Latinos in those four counties was 169,137. By contrast the total number of Latinos in King County, population 1.73 million and home to Seattle, was 117,890.

In the rural agricultural belt, Hispanic communities are large, concentrated and longer established (U.S. Census, 1990). In close-knit communities where immigrants live in proximity to one another, Spanish speakers can communicate more readily about where to find resources, jobs, healthcare and other information. Eastern Washington Latino communities are served mostly by small radio stations with blocks of Spanish programming, including one Radio Campesina station.

In urban Seattle, the Hispanic community is dispersed in small pockets or individually isolated (U.S. Census, 2000). Spanish speakers are less likely to come into contact with other Spanish speakers during the course of their everyday business. “…language is a major barrier for immigrant families, especially as most important documents ranging from housing to education are written in English. Thus, immigrants must find an interpreter and, as we were told, the costs often outweigh the benefits of seeking information such that immigrants do not ask for help or they just wait until someone helpful comes along. Much of what is communicated to this population by the radio is in their native language; thus, the radio is often a source of defining where immigrants will go either to secure further information or find an interpreter” (Fisher, Marcoux, Miller, Sánchez, Ramirez Cunningham, 2004).

In a community with a tiny Spanish-speaking population it is unlikely “someone helpful” will appear. This underscores the importance of local programming in an area where not only is the Latino population newly established, it is also newly urban.

A Few Hands Hold Many Stations

One media ownership group dominates Spanish broadcasting: Univision, whose slogan is “One vision, one language, one network.” In 2003, when Univision purchased Hispanic Broadcasting Corp.’s 65 radio stations in 17 of the top 25 U.S. Hispanic markets, Univision CEO A. Jerrold Perenchio said, “Univision’s entry into the $20 billion radio industry presents tremendous opportunities for our employees, advertisers and shareholders. Approximately 60 percent of all national advertisers do not yet advertise in Spanish. We expect that Univision’s new ability to offer advertisers the brand-building power of television in combination with the promotional power of radio will accelerate their development of Spanish-language marketing campaigns” (Univision, 2003). He did not address programming or local news and information.

Perenchio, who had purchased the corporation from Hallmark Cards in 1992, sold Univision in 2007 to Saban Capital Group, named after billionaire media investor Haim Saban and which includes four private equity firms: Madison Dearborn Partners, Providence Equity Partners, Texas Pacific Group and Thomas H. Lee Partners. Thomas H. Lee Partners has stakes in Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and Warner Music (Sorkin, 2006; State of the News Media, 2007). Lee is an owner in the nation’s largest radio ownership group, Clear Channel Communications. At the time this research was conducted, in spring 2007, Clear Channel Radio (a division of Clear Channel Communications) owned 1,184 radio stations and was viewed as the poster child for consolidation. Scant media attention has been paid, however, to the market penetration of Univision and #2 Telemundo, which dominate the landscape of Latino broadcasting. Univision’s market domination makes the corporation attractive to major national advertisers. And competition Telemundo is not far behind.

In 2006, NBC decided to terminate all Telemundo news programs in large markets: Houston (4), Dallas (6), San Antonio, Texas (7), San Jose, Calif. (8) and Phoenix (9), and replace them with “hubbed out” newscasts from Fort Worth (NAHJ, 2007).

A relaxation of rules under the Telecommunications Act of 1996 has led to mass consolidations as the market has grown. Until the 1980s, FCC rules prohibited companies from owning more than one radio station in the same service (AM or FM) in a market and prohibited a company from owning both a television station and a radio station in the same market. The 1996 act put ownership on a sliding scale relative to market size. In a large, urban market with between 30 and 44 stations, one company may own up to seven commercial radio stations, not more than four of which are in the same service (AM or FM); in a radio market with 45 or more radio stations, a company may own up to eight commercial stations, not more than five of which are in the same service (FCC, 1996).

Between 1996 and 2002, there was a 5.4 percent increase in the number of commercial stations, but the number of radio owners declined by 34 percent. Also, the number of radio stations in metro markets decreased by about three owners per market (Williams, 2002). A report issued by the Department of Commerce in 2000 expressed concern about mass consolidations and loss of independent stations.

“...to prevent further diminution of competition and diversity in the radio industry. It appears that while there may have been a number of salutary effects flowing from the consolidation that has taken place since 1996, largely in financial strength and enhanced efficiencies, it cannot be
said that consolidation has enhanced competition or diversity, and indeed, may be having the opposite effect. There currently are hundreds of fewer licenses than there were four years ago and, in many communities, far fewer radio licensees compete against each other” (FCC, 2000).

In February 2007, the FCC sanctioned Univision, which reaches 99 percent of Spanish-speaking homes, with a record $24 million fine for not providing the requisite three hours per week of educational programming. The fine was nearly triple the previous highest fine of $9 million. The network had been classifying television “soap operas,” or telenovelas as children’s programming, thus failing to meet its required minimum mandate of three hours per week of educational programming. The FCC found that the 24 of the network’s television stations had failed to provide the required amount of children’s programming for 116 weeks between 2004 and 2006. (Ahrens, 2007).

Univision owns 62 television stations under Univision or TeleFutura (a cable network with 5.9 million subscribers), three music labels and 72 Spanish-language radio stations in the United States (Ahrens, 2007). The record fine, the number of broadcast outlets involved and the time period of the violations demonstrate a lack of regular FCC monitoring for compliance with content rules. At a time when pop star Janet Jackson’s “wardrobe malfunction” made headlines for weeks, Univision flew under the radar screen for two years while preschoolers at a critical learning phase were expected to watch romantic melodrama instead of learning letters with Big Bird.

While this example stems from television, it shows the potential widespread damage when there is only one message being disseminated. This study further examines whether the same pattern applies to local radio. Further study is needed to determine whether dominant forces in Spanish-language broadcasting are, at minimum, abiding by the rules. The FCC in 2006 commissioned a study by researcher Tasneem Chipty using station-level data to study ownership structure’s effects on radio programming and audience (FCC, 2006). The report has not yet been published but will provide useful data for further analysis.

Examples of negative effects caused by consolidation of Spanish-language radio abound, however, still being taken at this time by the Federal Communications Commission. When Delia Saldivar, stations manager at bilingual radio station KHDC in Salinas, Calif., spoke before the FCC in 2004, she addressed the decline in programming by stations acquired by Univision. Saldivar spoke strongly saying consolidation harmed those attempting to establish themselves in the United States and failed to provide “reliable and culturally competent information.”

“Consequently, as the need for reliable information grows, so has the consolidation of the media outlets. This consolidation includes Latino Spanish-language services such as the purchase of Hispanic Broadcasting Corporation (HBC) by Univision last year and the acquisition of Telemundo (the 2nd largest Spanish-language TV network) by NBC. The Spanish language corporate media offers less information to our communities, less cultural programming,
and virtually no local informational programming. The corporate Spanish radio industry is increasing its broadcast of its own version of ‘shock radio’ and liberally broadcasts music that glamorizes drugs and violence to increase their ratings. Unfortunately, in many markets, especially urban California markets; there is no Spanish language public radio service to provide an intelligent alternative for listeners” (FCC, 2004).

**Consolidation Ends Local News Broadcasts**

Easing station ownership rules creates economic efficiency for large corporations to purchase syndicated programming in bulk and distribute it across stations. “Programming” can become a function of someone monitoring a computer screen rather than live, on-air interaction with the audience. As with NBC’s decision to cut local Telemundo television newscasts, news and information skew national rather than local.

Even stations that are primarily music format commonly feature program hosts who mention current events and give information, such as where to register to vote. At stations that depend entirely on syndicated programming, the communication is one way. There is no invitation to participate in the conversation.

The FCC manages the airwaves to ensure the public interest is being served. What is cheapest is not often what best serves the public interest. Just as newspapers attract readers and boost circulation (and thereby attract advertisers eager to reach readers) by being the only source of information about the activities of the local city council, the accident on Main Street or the hiring of the new superintendent of schools; radio stations boost listener ratings (and thereby attract advertisers eager to reach listeners) by providing content that is both entertaining and useful. Competition among radio stations spurs them to serve their listeners. When that competition disappears, so does the incentive to act in the public’s best interest.

Between 1990 and 1992, more than 300 commercial radio stations dropped their news operations entirely. Before the deregulation of 1981, every radio station carried news (Fox, 2003). Now, if a big news story breaks, the station may not have reporters to cover it. Major networks, which often rely on regional affiliates to cover big, breaking news in a particular area, now have nobody on site to send to the story (Fox, 1993, p. 9).

The Deregulation of Radio policy of 1981 lifted a previous requirement that AM radio stations devote 8 percent of airtime to non-entertainment programming, including public affairs, news, religious programming and public service announcements (PSAs) (Fox, 1992). PSAs call attention to societal problems (e.g. smoking, substance abuse) or promote resources and services (e.g. where to get free mammograms or preschool). The 1981 regulations instructed radio stations to inform their listeners of issues, but set no standards or definitions. For many radio stations, eliminating this rule meant the ability to devote unlimited airtime to advertisers (Redd, 1991).

A 1992 article in Columbia Journalism Review stated, “Deregulation left commercial radio news gasping for air. In 1981, the Federal Communications Commission lifted the requirement that stations broadcast non-entertainment programming—otherwise known as news and public affairs. Since local news is
expensive to produce and listeners to all-music stations seldom demand more than headlines, that change helped slowly strangle local radio reporting” (Fox, 1992, p. 9).

Loss of local PSAs can hurt emerging Latino communities. Social service agencies depend on radio to get the word out to potential clients and may otherwise have trouble reaching those they serve (Redd, 1991). Numerous studies have shown such announcements on Spanish-language radio to yield positive results. A 2004 study using Spanish-language radio to direct Los Angeles residents to self-help groups saw the number of Spanish-language calls about self-help groups increased 821 percent in the sixth months after the study (Humphries, Macus, Stewart, Oliva, 2004).

Stations owned by corporations thousands of miles away and fed programming out of Los Angeles may chose to run local PSAs, but the law no longer requires them to. Former United States Secretary of Commerce Norman Mineta expressed concern in the introduction to a 2002 National Telecommunications and Information Administration report in response to 1996 regulation changes:

“This changing landscape poses new challenges and opportunities for broadcasters and our Nation. As we forge new paths, we must hold fast to the values of diversity and localism that have long served our Nation well. For almost a century, we have promoted diversity of independent editorial viewpoints and guarded against undue media concentration. We have labored to prevent the potential monopolization of the marketplace of ideas, to protect the needs of local communities, and to promote the free exchange of diverse viewpoints and information” (Mineta, 2000).

Case study of Radio Sol: The Medium That Can Mobilize the Masses

Located in the heart of downtown Seattle in a modern high-rise building, Radio Sol occupies one state-of-the-art glassed-in booth among the three production rooms, two control rooms and two studios on the 15th floor in the Salem Communications office. Five of the six AM stations under the Salem roof provide politically and socially conservative, Christian-oriented news and talk-show programming. Radio Sol, KKMO 1360 AM, has no religious content or political affiliation. The Salem office is a typical maze of tidy gray cubicles for sales and support staff and the manager’s offices overlook Elliot Bay and the upscale downtown shopping district. The atmosphere is formal and corporate. Most of the staff is Anglo. Spending time on-site at Radio Sol and conducting interviews with its on-air host, staff and general manager provided essential input for this study.

Salem Communications, the nation’s seventh largest radio station ownership group, owns 106 stations, 23 of them news, one of them Spanish. By contrast, Univision, the twelfth biggest radio-station ownership group in the country owns 72 stations, all of them Spanish-language entertainment and none of them news; and Entravision, ranked seventeenth, owns 52, all of them Spanish-language music and none of them news (State of the News Media, 2007).
Salem Communications launched Radio Sol in January 2002, creating Washington State’s first 24-hour Spanish-language radio station. Unlike other Spanish-language radio stations serving urban areas with small Latino populations, Radio Sol featured local talk, news and personalities. By 2005, Seattle had two more Spanish-language radio stations, one AM and one FM, both owned by Bustos Media of California and both playing exclusively syndicated programming produced in California (Saul, 2006).

Radio Sol’s format is primarily Mexican regional music. The station has three hours of syndicated programming, which General Manager Joe Gonzalez added in January 2007 because he said he wanted the station to feel more “widespread,” but the effect was a drop in ratings. During its syndicated programming, call-in show host Jaime Mendez does traffic, weather and news updates. He then has his morning call-in show. From noon to 3 p.m. local radio personality Adriana Gonzales’ show features music, live talk, news, and entertainment news. The rest of the day, local disc jockeys interject between songs to comment about the issues of the day, be they trivial, humorous or serious. There is a local flavor and connection to Seattle.

This case study hypothesized that, as a station with local programming, Radio Sol would 1) cover certain issues in greater depth than the Anglo news media; 2) frame its content to include, rather than excluding or treating Latinos as “other;” and 3) show instances in which locally accessible programming invited two-way communication that would allow people to participate in events and connect them with essential information and services, thus helping build a sense of enfranchisement and two-way communication.

Gonzalez said local programming is more expensive to provide than syndicated material, but he sees the local approach as both a market niche and a service. “Stations that are just entertainment don’t serve…There has to be components relative to the issues in the Spanish community and that link to our broader community” (Joe Gonzalez, personal interview, March 2, 2007). Gonzalez sees radio as a way to serve the public and added that if service radio is done right, it will also be profitable, as he says Radio Sol is. Gonzalez, who has experience working in radio in Eastern Washington where nearly half the population is Latino, said Seattle Latinos are more isolated and therefore more difficult to mobilize (Joe Gonzalez, personal communication, March 2, 2007).

“While primarily a musical format broadcasting regional Mexican, Gonzalez said the station lays claim to being ‘the Spanish town crier for all Hispanics’… We live where we do our business…We have local talent living in the community” (Saul, 2006, p. f1).

Since Radio Sol hit the airwaves five years ago, the station’s disc jockeys and talk-show hosts have become community celebrities. “I used to go to a lot of events, fairs, booths, festivals,” talk-show host Jaime Mendez said. “People would just come up to me and hug me” (Mendez, personal communication, March 2, 2007). Radio Sol has built connections within the community by co-sponsoring events to inform local Latinos about jobs in Spanish broadcasting, participating in citywide diversity celebrations and working with Seattle Central Community College’s Mano a Mano, a student organization dedicated to increasing access to higher education for Latino students. Mendez became an accessible community icon—someone respected, recognized and beloved (Megan Muldary, personal interview, March 2, 2007).

Seattle’s Spanish speakers use the show as a way to talk about local politics, election issues, immigration issues and to find help with healthcare, employment, shelter
and legal problems. During a March 2, 2007 show with Mendez, “La Voz de Washington,” a woman who feared being deported to the country where she had fled an abusive husband called in. The switchboard lit up with individuals and agency workers giving advice not only to the caller but to anyone living with domestic violence. Callers provided phone numbers for services where undocumented immigrants living in domestic violence situations could go for help without threat of being arrested.

Mendez said his show is also often the only outlet for news essential to the lives of many of Seattle’s Latino immigrants. On February 14, 2007, an immigration raid on a United Parcel Service warehouse in Auburn, Wash. sent 51 people, including a nursing mother of a 4-month-old baby to a federal detention facility. The city’s largest newspaper, The Seattle Times as well as major local television and radio stations did not cover the raid. Seattle Post-Intelligencer newspaper was the only Anglo media outlet to cover the raid. The P-I ran a short item that quoted an immigration agent and a spokeswoman from the company under investigation. There was one sentence about those arrested: “The arrested workers are being held at an immigration detention facility in Tacoma pending further proceedings.” (McNerthney, 2007, p. B1).

In the heat of the immigration raid, Mendez was piecing together reports by family members of people being arrested and giving accounts of the event nearly in real time as people called in to Radio Sol via cell phone. Over the next hours and days, churches, lawyers and concerned citizens were raising funds to help the mother, whose unweaned child would not take a bottle and began to suffer from malnutrition while his mother developed a lactation-related infection because she could not feed her child (Jaime Mendez, personal interview, March 2, 2007).

“If not for Radio Sol, people would not have known about this,” Mendez said in a personal interview. Radio Sol was the only outlet for the families and friends of the 51 UPS Supply Store workers to get detailed information about the raid, how to contact lawyers, visit their loved ones in detention and navigate the legal process.

Similarly, most Anglo coverage of the biggest Latino event in the city’s history, the spring 2006 marches for immigration rights, was geared toward providing information for people not involved in the events. In the weeks before the big May 1 “Day Without An Immigrant” boycott and rally for immigrant rights, a Seattle march drew between 20,000 and 30,000 people. On the day of Seattle’s biggest rally, the Post-Intelligencer ran an article showing people where to go to avoid the “traffic snarls” caused by protestors but did not give information for people wanting to participate in the march (“Downtown Protest Today,” 2006, p. B1). Further study into the Anglo framing of Latinos as “others” rather than part of the readership being addressed in regard to this major national news event is needed.

The protest conversation at Radio Sol had been going on for weeks, with Mendez fielding calls about legal rights, taking questions about fear of deportation, airing views on the wall proposed for the Mexican border and on President George Bush’s proposal to make illegal immigration a felony (Jaime Mendez, personal interview, March 2, 2007).

The Seattle Times front-page headline was, “Stunning turnout credited to word-of-mouth network.” The story credited churches and Spanish-language radio with spreading the word about the large march (Turnbull, 2006, p. A1). Radio Sol Station Manager Joe Gonzalez credited his station with boosting the turnout. "We think when the Hispanic community needs news and information, they turn to us,” Gonzalez said (Saul, 2006, p.
Gonzalez said the station did not help organize the immigration rallies, but disseminated information about them.

Host Mendez has seen the impact of the airwaves on other occasions when listeners have responded to calls for action. Following the 2005 tsunami in Southeast Asia, Mendez invited listeners to contribute to the victims. Dozens of Latinos showed up with donations to help with relief efforts (Lindblom, 2005, p. B1). Mendez said he also uses his show to help protect those new to the area from being victimized by scam artists who prey on immigrants. Callers to his show have ended up buying cars later to find out they are being charged 29 percent interest. Other callers help those people find legal services to gain recourse (Jaime Mendez, personal interview, March 2, 2007).

Conclusion

Using Seattle’s Radio Sol as a representative example of growth and consolidation trends in Spanish-language radio, this study questioned whether local programming in a traditionally non-Latino urban market covered issues differently than (or ignored by) the Anglo media and whether interactivity such as call-in shows has helped to connect people to services and mobilize them to act. At a time when mass consolidation is leaving many urban markets with only syndicated Spanish-language radio programming, Radio Sol has shown itself to be the only immediate and readily accessible source of news and information on key issues in the Seattle Latino community.

Anecdotal evidence as seen in the record-breaking turnouts at spring 2006 immigration rights rallies, local Latinos pulling together to provide relief for tsunami victims in Southeast Asia, and the daily volume and subject matter of calls to the station from people seeking information about legal issues, job searches and social services, shows that Radio Sol is helping build a sense of community among Seattle’s Latinos.

Research cannot prove that the hours of call-in talk-show programming on Radio Sol in the days and weeks leading up the event inspired more marchers than might have participated absent that communication link. However, Radio Sol was the only Spanish-language outlet for Seattleites to discuss the event—and they embraced the opportunity (Jaime Mendez, personal interview, March 2, 2007).

This should not be construed as an argument that only Spanish-language media should cover issues important to the Latino community. The study of effects of media consolidation both on radio audience and programming deserves further examination. As the nation’s largest radio ownership group Clear Channel changes hands and considers converting some of its stations to Spanish-language broadcast, there is ample room for continued examination. When published, the studies commissioned by the FCC in 2006 to evaluate the effects of media consolidation on both programming and audience should provide detailed data for further research.

As more stations convert to Spanish formats, listeners are best served by locally produced programming. While more expensive, it is an essential way to inform and engage urban Latinos. For those isolated in a big city, locally produced Spanish radio can help replace that helpful person they hope to run into to provide information. It can be the Spanish town crier.
Ideas for future research:

When this research was conducted in spring 2007, the economy had not yet embarked on the downslide that was to hit the following year. As of fall 2008, Univision’s profit declines are making news in The New York Times business section (“Red Flags Fly After Big Buyouts, 2008, B1). A study of how Spanish-language radio stations are faring under this economic duress and an examination of whether news programs are continuing to be cut as stations try to save money would further illuminate this research and be a deeper test of the hypothesis that consolidation takes essential airwaves away from serving Spanish speakers’ need for essential news and information.
References


Do Family Television Series Travel Well?
A Spanish Case: Médico de Familia

Mónica Herrero
Università del Navarra, Spain
(moherrero@unav.es)

Patricia Diego
Università del Navarra, Spain
(pdiegon@unav.es)

Abstract

In this article, we study the economic foundations of television series as audiovisual products, and from there, the case of the Spanish dramedy Médico de Familia and its Latin American commercialization. The starting point is the consideration of television series as entertainment audiovisual products. Fiction series belong to the category of audiovisual products, and thus comprise cultural products that draw on the potential afforded by the art of communication. Moreover, these series are entertainment products. The features which define them as both audiovisual and entertainment products enable the development of adaptations and direct sales on a speculative and practical basis. The study focuses on family series, which are defined as such regarding its content and audience. Special attention is paid to the main characteristics that make television series travel beyond local frontiers, especially to regions with cultural and language similarities.
Do Family Television Series Travel Well?
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Introduction

In recent years, nationally-produced fiction series have been the most successful product in the Spanish television listings; many of these series have also been exported to other countries. The economic bases of these series as audiovisual products are analyzed in detail in this article; the case of Médico de Familia and its commercialization, especially in the Latin American market, is addressed in this context.

Fiction series belong to the category of audiovisual products, and thus comprise cultural products that draw on the potential afforded by the art of communication. Moreover, these series are entertainment products. The features which define them as both audiovisual and entertainment products enable the development of adaptations and direct sales on a speculative and practical basis.

With regard to the analysis of Médico de Familia, the literature review is carried out from the perspective of family-centered series. Television series in general are not explored; although some more general considerations may be made, the argument focuses on those series described as family-centered because of their content and their target audience(s). Particular attention is paid to those characteristics which ensure that family-centered series are attractive products for sale outside Spain, through adaptation to the needs of local markets.

The issues addressed in the first section of this article are applied to Médico de Familia as a case-study. In the second section, distinctive aspects (such as ‘dramedy’) are discussed, rounding out the more general conclusions drawn in the first section. The mode of analysis is a review of the literature on the economics of television and television series, followed by a case-study. In this latter stage, a review of the relevant literature is combined with original empirical research, primarily based on personal interviews and internal documentation.

Television series as entertainment audiovisual products

The definition of family series from the television economics perspective

In order to create the necessary framework to study television series, a broader definition of television product is required. Therefore, the television entertainment product may be defined as a unit of audiovisual content that proceeds from ideas, responds to the intention of creating an entertainment effect on the viewer, and so holds his/her attention in a pleasant activity of a discursive nature which distracts from work tasks; as a television product it responds to a particular logic and fits into the grid of a social form or time-slot appropriate to the achievement of its objective. This schema enables the analysis of the family-centered fiction series as a television entertainment product carried out below. In line with the literature on fiction products on television, two main aspects are focused on: the type of content and the relationship established with the audience.

As a starting point, that this type of product is aimed at family members, and moreover, that the stories take place in a domestic, family context, should be emphasized. There are other audiovisual products that share these characteristics to a certain extent, specifically soap operas and TV serials: the former, because of their domestic content in a family setting; the latter, due to their serial character and the resulting relationship with the viewers. A significant aspect of family series that should be mentioned is that they are broadcast in prime time on open-access television. Thus, the comments on their similarity to soap operas draw on the fact that they are prime time products, in contrast to the daytime soaps, which have lower production costs and are designed for an almost wholly female audience (Cantor, 1979).
Prime time soap operas have specific economic features which ensure they are very profitable. In this regard, they are said to be perfect television, a real commodity in the television industry (Hobson, 2003). The main reasons are their capacity to reach and hold high audience figures, to produce press coverage and loyal viewers, and the resulting appeal to advertising income (Wittebols, 2004). The extent to which family-centered series share these characteristics is now discussed.

As regards the family content, soap operas have undergone an interesting process of evolution, bringing them closer in line with the object of the present study. In the last twenty years this genre has developed in an attempt to become more attractive to a wider public, not only to women. As Geraghty has stated, in the 80’s soap operas began to interest men, teenagers and children, and the idea of a product created solely for women was set aside. Male characters were included in the storyline in order to attract this sector of the public, and at the same time teenagers and children were given more important roles in the series (Geraghty, 1991, 167).

Family-centered fiction series include the two points mentioned above in relation to soap operas: the series target the whole family and include the whole family in their storylines. The term family-centered series connotes a combination of family content and family viewing. The action occurs within an everyday domestic context, and this is precisely why they are presented as products that are especially suitable for the whole family. As Kilborn states:

what further reinforces the feeling that one is witnessing scenes of everyday life is the fact that the majority of issues or problems broached in the course of the narrative have to do with personal or domestic matters, especially those relating to family or group relationships (Kilborn, 1992, 38).

Moreover, the above-mentioned serial format benefits from the family content, which provides a stable setting for the continuing changes in storylines and characters (Geraghty, 1991, 60). Thanks to their everyday subject matter and episodic structure the series strengthen the relationship between the viewer and the audiovisual text, and the audience feels deeply involved. As Geragthy says in reference to soap operas:

This close relationship between soaps and their audiences, the intimate knowledge regular viewers have of the programmes and their identification with particular characters is still a source of puzzled dismay to those who do not watch soap operas (Geragthy, 1991, 9).

Audience commitment and involvement is strengthened by the presence of elements which give a high degree of localism. Besides, following the series is part of the routine of many people at the same time of day in the same geographical area. In line with this reasoning, the series may be regarded as the ultimate television ritual experience which defines a cultural community (Franco, 2001, 453).

In addition, although family-centered series reflect local subject matter, global aspects are also present, particularly in prime time fiction (Dunleavy, 2005, 371). In this regard, the influence of the American industry on the shaping of local production should be underlined. However, some recent examples, such as the Italian series Vivere, owe their success to their strengthening of the Italian view of the traditional family, rather than to global stereotypes.

The sense of community and the preservation of family integrity are shown to be powerful sources of programme pleasure and primary elements of the viewers’ cultural identity. This proves the efficacy of Vivere’s formula which, while assimilating the community soap model, further stresses the role of family as a structure providing nurture, support and cohesion to the whole group. If the soap’s moral condemnation of “atypical” or extramarital relationships is appreciated, it is because it provides a relief from the emotional consequences of real life, where marriages are increasingly unstable. (Giomi, 2005, 479).
The relationship with the audience and the commercial exploitation of the product

The discursive character of entertainment, which attracts rather than distracts attention, is the immediate reason for the stability of the relationship with the audience. Maintaining this relationship successfully – an achievement which is almost always reflected in audience ratings – has enabled these products to remain on air for longer than might have been foreseen originally. The content favors the stability of this relationship, as the dramatic tension is based on domestic, intimate elements. In the case of Spanish series, the comic component prompts other forms of enjoyment. In a way, the humor loaded with localisms, which is typical of the ‘dramedy’, can be seen as an important attraction for male viewers. This is also true of the involvement of well-known actors in the series.

Every work of entertainment fiction has a sub-text that invites viewers to relate what they see to their own lives. It is not so much that the products influence the decision-making and the thinking of the viewers; rather, the constant references to the real world make the series more familiar (Luhman, 2000, 61). The entertainment product is not complete, but grows in the relationship it establishes with the audience, and, in this sense, local and domestic fictions prolong the relationship through references to the everyday life of the viewer. As Ross and Nightingale state, the audience believes the stories are significant when they relate them to their own lives or those of their friends and acquaintances (Ross & Nightingale, 2003, 130). Their family, domestic character underwrites the plausibility of what happens. By placing the fiction in a real world, the possibilities of what happens there are closer to what can happen in my world; and this plausibility opens up the possibility of other similar worlds.

To return once more to the idea of the open-ended product, the series are prolonged not only in reference to the real world of the individual, but also in the relationships with other followers, and the possibility of getting more information on the series from TV magazines and, above all, from the Internet. The distinction between viewers and fans arises here, although talking about the series with other people, even members of one’s own family, may be considered part of normal consumption:

While all of us, simply by virtue of being members of audiences, work with the texts we read, watch and listen to, in order to produce meaning and pleasure, fans often take this engagement a step further. (Ross & Nightingale, 2003, 136)

Following the television schedule and new technological developments, loyal audiences have contributed to the distribution of traditional consumption to other platforms, either individually or collectively. However, the fact that this consumption spread implies a previous enjoyment of the traditional schedule, where the product has held the audience’s attention, bringing it together every week at prime time, should be underscored. In a sense, the question at issue here is based on the experience of sharing a successful program broadcast on a general-interest open-access channel:

Certain events, like sports, happen in real time, not on a consumer’s on-demand whim. Likewise, Internet video proponents who love the community aspect of the Web forget there is that same shared community experience for fans of O.C. or CSI: Crime Scene Investigation or Desperate Housewives the night those shows air. Viewers watch at the same time, react to the show in real time, and even send cell-phone text messages to each other (or to the show) in real time. They talk about what they saw the next day at work. (Stump, 2006)

Family-centered fiction series, due to their intimate, family content, create a special relationship with reality, with an undertone of comedy that enables all the members of the
family audience to follow it. This relationship frequently means significant viewer involvement and extends consumption to other platforms or media.

The intangible nature of audiovisual products reinforces their status as public goods, and thus the possibility of making maximum profit from a product which is not worn out by consumption. On this point, the exhibition strategies on various platforms, which have been applied successfully to cinema products, could also be applied to family-centered fiction series to a certain extent. These strategies allow profits to be maximized through differentiation of prices and time-slots when the same product is offered and broadcast to wide-ranging audiences in general (Herrero, 2007, 15). However, consumption may be repeated or spread in the case of series, and knowledge of the product increased in different media or platforms for the same audiences. Finally, family content, which speaks about universal realities, and the possibility of maintaining audience ratings in the long term, make family-centered series very attractive as products for sale in culturally related markets.

The case of Médico de familia and its adaptation

The consolidation of ‘dramedy’ in Spain

In this section, the genre of Médico de familia is examined as a distinctive feature which contributes to a refined understanding of this product, prompting a number of further considerations in relation to its adaptation and sale overseas. Médico de familia is defined as a ‘dramedy’ – that is, a series which combines elements of melodrama and comedy, with an episode running-time above the 40-45 minute standard of American drama series. José María Villagrasa (1995) sets out the basic features of the American ‘dramedy’:

‘Dramedy’ – a compound term, from drama and comedy – is one of the hybrid formats which has come closest to deferring to the parameters of tele-comedy (without being wholly absorbed by it): half-hour episodes, combining humorous situations and action sequences. One of the precursors of this narrative structure was Get Smart, produced by NBC in the 1960’s. (...) [It] may be regarded as a derivation of the drama series, rather than of tele-comedy: located in stable settings, the action of the story-line is not transferred to other locations (Villagrasa, 1995, 95).

As has already been outlined in the opening section, the combination of comic and dramatic elements prompts enjoyment, on the one hand, and the sense of catharsis that creates a loyal audience following, on the other. In so far as it is dramatic, the ‘dramedy’ is similar to a soap opera; the dramatic nature of serialized productions is an especially significant characteristic of such products. They are designed to have a long on-air lifespan, with open-ended episodes – that is, a format that falls somewhere between series, in which a story is brought to a close at the end of each episode, and serials, in which the story runs on indefinitely beyond the end of each episode (Creeber, 2001, 442).

A significant variation has occurred in terms of the ‘dramedy’ episode running-time in the genre’s adaptation to the Spanish context: episodes are always longer than 30 minutes; indeed, the average duration of an episode in a Spanish ‘dramedy’ is 70 minutes. Médico de familia was the first program in this genre in Spain, combining comic elements with more melodramatic storylines about personal relationships or problems arising is professional or social contexts.

García de Castro (2002) describes the genre or format of Médico de familia as follows:

On the narrative plane [Médico de familia] inaugurated a series format which draws on the formal aspects of different genres in traditional television fiction-making, such as the sitcom, the day-time soap opera or the soap opera in general. The figure of the ‘star’ character at the center of each episode’s plot and the use of comic gags are borrowed from the sitcom, while the versatility of different lines of action developing over the course of each episode is taken from the soap opera (García de Castro, 2002, 174).
Daniel Écija (2003), an executive producer and director on Médico de familia, pointed out that episode running-time requirements prompted the emergence of this Spanish genre:

While ‘dramedy’ (...) is an innovation, there was really no alternative to its production: 45 minutes of pure drama may be possible, but 65 minutes is very difficult, and one way or another we spiced it with comedy. We too have invented a genre (Saló, 2003, 220).

Like all fiction genres in the last decade, drama series have developed in terms of both narrative structure and production costs in order to a significant percentage of the available audience in a market that has become more and more competitive. This process of improvement is reflected, for example, in the increasing of number of scenes shot outside (off-set) and in more action sequences; the final seasons of Médico de familia are illustrative in this regard. Production values have unquestionably improved, and although the budget may be higher and the shooting schedule complicated, they bring an added attraction for viewers.

A synthesis of the primary production standards applied in Spanish dram series is presented in the following table:

Table 1: Production standards for Spanish drama series (‘dramedies’)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>70-95 minutes.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Video (Betacam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of episodes per season</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of episodes produced annually</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programming (serialization)</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locations</td>
<td>70%-80% on set and 20%-30% on location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sets</td>
<td>Between 5 and 10 permanent sets and one multifunctional set per episode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characters</td>
<td>Cast-based series</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Médico de familia involved the first attempt to standardize the series production process in Spain. In addition to the elements outlined in the table above, the series enabled the consolidation of different operational approaches in professional practice, which were implemented thereafter in other drama series – not only in those produced by Globomedia, but also in series produced by professionals who had worked in that company and went on to work in other firms. The following approaches may be highlighted:

1. The drafting of a set text (the Spanish word used in this regard is a “biblia”, literally a “bible”), governing the development of the series’ creative and production aspects.
2. The standard episode running-time was set at about 60 minutes. Subsequently, some series episodes were to run for as long as 90 minutes.
3. The script was structured in three acts, punctuated by two commercial breaks, with corresponding narrative ‘twists’. As episode running-time increased, the number of commercial breaks reached three or four.
4. A team of nine scriptwriters, specialized in television production and well-versed in the narrative conventions of American series, was brought together and
coordinated. They worked in groups of three, supervised by a coordinator who reported to one of the executive producers.

5. The program titles and credits appeared at the end of the episode.

6. Pretests were carried out – that is, some episodes of the series were screened for test audiences before broadcast (with the agreement of the television channel). Such audience testing is common for the opening episodes of a new season.

During its years of transmission, the growth of Golobomedia, the production company, was stimulated by Médico de familia; it was eventually to become main producer of television fiction products in Spain (Bardaji, 2003). The series was a milestone in the history of such home-grown fiction products; it also marked a decisive moment in Tele 5’s commitment to broadcasting fiction programs.

*Médico de familia: development and production*

The inspiration for Médico de familia arose from a joint project between the Globomedia production company and the Audiovisual Communication Studies Committee (Spanish acronym: GECA, Gabinete de Estudios de la Comunicación Audiovisual). The production company wanted to develop a series starring the award-winning actor Emilio Aragón and sought GECA’s advice.

The plot of the series centered on the life of Dr. Ignacio Martín, a widower who had to provide for his three children and his father. The series aimed to satisfy all the family and all the potential audience in a primetime time-slot; hence, there were characters in the series representative of all ages: children, teenagers, adults and the elderly. Thus, no matter what their age, every member of the viewing public could have his/her favorite character and identify with the events in that character’s ‘life’ (GECA, 1996, 6).

The two organizations involved in the creation of the series were agreed on a starting-point: the need to set aside the cinema production model, in which all the episodes are shot before the series is broadcast. Médico de familia did not have a closed or predetermined ending. This design approach was adopted to ensure that its contents were closely tied to contemporaneous reality. As a result, the product was more true-to-life and fresh; glitches in the script, production and acting that arose during the filming of the opening episodes could be corrected. In other words, the aim was to develop a ‘long running’ series. Globomedia and GECA adapted the production system followed in American series because they regarded it as the most effective means to achieve their ends (Mardones, 2001, interview).

The first point of agreement in the preproduction was the decision to carry out a study of the operational process followed in American and Spanish series broadcast on national channels. This study disclosed the structure(s) of successful series, the interweaving of storylines and the sequencing of different elements in order to hold the audience’s attention (GECA, 1996, 6).

The set text (Spanish: “biblia”) for the series was sent out to a number of different channels, which rejected it. Tele 5 decided to green-light the production of thirteen episodes. A joint production plan was set up between the TV channel and the production company, in which the two parties took responsibility for different aspects of production. The entire budget for the series was financed by the TV channel. Tele 5 provided the set, the technical teams and other technical staff. Globomedia and GECA were responsible for contracting and managing the artistic personnel (actors, scriptwriters and directors).

The first episode of Médico de familia was broadcast on 15th September 1995 at 21:20. (From the second episode onwards, however, it was broadcast on Tuesdays at 21:40). The series was on air for five years, until 21st December 1999. In total, 119 episodes were broadcast – 9 seasons of 13 episodes.
Reference to the average ratings or audience-share for the TV channel and universal viewer figures (in millions) during the years of broadcast enable a clearer understanding of the audience figures for *Médico de familia*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. Average audience-share for Tele 5 (1995-2002)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Original to this study, based on GECA figures

The show’s audience ratings over the course of those five years are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Audience ratings for <em>Médico de familia</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viewers (thousands)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Original to this study, based on GECA figures

In three of the five years for which it was broadcast, the series was the most popular program among viewers; moreover, it had the highest average audience numbers of any program – between seven and eight million viewers. The most popular episode, entitled *Blanca y radiante* (“White and brightly shining”) in which the protagonist married his sister-in-law, was broadcast on 23rd December 1998; and had an audience share of 60%, and a rating of 28.3% (GECA, 1999, 15).

The series also appears more often than any other television program in the list of top 50 most popular broadcasts shown during that period:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: Episodes of <em>Médico de familia</em> ranked in the top 50 most popular broadcasts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadcasts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Original to this study, based on GECA figures

According to Miguel Morant, an executive producer at Tele 5, one of the reasons for the extraordinary success of the program was the sense of identification the channel’s target audience (between 18 and 50 years old, living in urban areas, middle-class) felt with the world created by the series (Morant, 2001, interview).

The excellent audience ratings obtained for this series prompted the further development of such series production at Tele 5. In recent year, the channel has invested in the production of high-budget, homegrown fiction products.

**Format internationalization: adapting to the Latin-American and European markets.**

More often than not, the sale or commercialization of a series occurs following its first broadcast as a means of making a profit from the production investment through sales on the
national and international market; and, as has been referred to above, to make the most of the nature of the audiovisual product as a public good.

Spanish TV channels, which traditionally were importers of fiction, have recently begun to export their products. Production companies and channels are now selling formats invented in the Spanish ‘hothouse’ of fiction products. There are two ways to sell a series: sale of the format or idea for the series, or sales of the episodes already produced (“in the can”). Series distribution companies estimate that 20% of production costs may be recovered through international sales (Fernández, 2007).

The income from the sales of Médico de familia was split between the production company (30%) and Tele 5 (70%) (Medina, 2008).

The series has traveled all over the world, with the greatest success accruing from the sales of the format in Italy and Portugal. In Italy, it was sold to the Mediaset group, where the story of docttore Martini was followed by 10 million viewers, with an audience share of 34% (Capilla y Solé, 1999, 165); it ran for more episodes than the original Spanish version. In 1998, Médico de familia was sold to the private Portuguese channel SIC through the Portuguese office of GECA, the consultancy agency working in conjunction with Globomedia. The buyer was the production company Endemol. On selling the series format or idea, Globomedia authorizes the purchasing company to adapt the idea to the specificities of the new setting. The whole framework for the series is sold, including scripts, shooting documents and breakdowns, shooting schedules, work orders, set design, etc.; the package also includes a commitment to support and/or consultancy with the series producers. The executive producers usually visit the production company or channel that purchases the rights and explain how the series was produced in its country of origin. In short, by purchasing the format, the buyer acquires a license and the ‘know-how’: “a certain way of carrying out an idea that has worked in other countries” (Ecija, 2000, 48).

The adaptation of Médico de familia (all 119 episodes of the series) was sold in Italy and Portugal at an approximate price of €3,000 per episode. 26-episode packages were sold, and the price rose by between 5 and 10% for the sales of each package. The contract stated that the production company had a share in the re-transmission rights of the product in the purchasing country and a percentage of the merchandising (Méndez, 2007).

In addition to its success in Portugal and Italy, there were other significant international sales of the series. The produced series (‘in the can’, as professional jargon has it) has been sold to several European countries such as Finland, the Netherlands, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Poland, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria; and in Spain to Paramount Comedy, Vía Digital and Factoría de Ficción (Grupo Árbol, 2001, 3).

However, of all possible markets, the significance of Latin America for the sale of Spanish fiction products or series should be emphasized. There are two main reasons for this: a similarity of culture and the use of Spanish as a lingua franca. This means that both storylines and character types are easily recognized and understood by viewers in Latin-American countries. The common language means there is no need to dub, adapt or rewrite dialogue. The episodes of the series have been sold to Mexico, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, Venezuela and Chile. The Globomedia production company has broken into this market, where, as a result of the extraordinarily successful audience results for Médico de familia, it has exported many of its more recent productions: Compañeros (Antena 3, 1998) to Colombia and Costa Rica; Casi perfectos (Antena 3, 2004) to Uruguay; and Los Serrano (Tele 5, 2003) to Uruguay, Chile and Mexico.

Another reason for the increase in sales to the Latin American market generally is that the genre of ‘dramedy’, which originated in Spain as a dramatic narrative with comic elements, has had a significant influence on the timeline of stories running over several episodes, in contrast to the seriality typical of soap operas. In Médico de familia, this timeline encompasses the main storyline as a whole; the personal and romantic upheavals in the main
character’s life unfold in the purest of serial styles. A widower who finally marries his sister-in-law corresponds in every aspect to the style of a soap opera plot, with the exception that in this case the protagonist is a man, not a woman.

The sales of the series on the Latin American market was due to the efforts made by Tele 5 and Globomedia who shared the profits of the operation, approximately 30% for the production company and the remaining 70% for Tele 5 (Medina, 2008). The Latin American channels are usually sold two-year licenses, allowing for four broadcasts of the episodes purchased. The total income amounts to a profit of almost one million euros.

Chart 5: Income generated in Latin American through the sale of broadcast rights for Médico de familia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COSTA RICA</td>
<td>€33,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEXICO</td>
<td>€523,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VENEZUELA</td>
<td>€42,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URUGUAY</td>
<td>€76,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARGENTINA</td>
<td>€42,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHILE</td>
<td>€42,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOLIVIA</td>
<td>€42,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARAGUAY</td>
<td>€42,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>€844,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Original to this study, based on Globomedia figures

Commercial relations between Spanish and Latin American companies are better than ever. In recent times, one of the most successful trends in Spanish fiction comprises adapted versions of Latin American soap operas and series (Diego, 2008). The TV channels have revitalized the genre of Monday-to-Friday serials during day-time (afternoon) and primetime time-slots. Between July 2006 (when it was first broadcast) and September 2008, the Spanish version of Yo soy Bea, made by Grundy for the Tele 5 afternoon slot, ran for almost 400 episodes, with an audience share of over 30% (sometimes rising to over 40%).

The production and distribution sectors for Spanish series appear to be preparing for the current economic crisis. Some companies, such as Globomedia, have adopted the strategy of sharing and merging resources with major companies in Latin American countries; it has recently signed an agreement with Televisa for the distribution of Latin American formats in Spain. The first adaptation is of the Argentine series B&B Bella y bestia (Televisa, 2008). These joint ventures may offer Spanish production companies new opportunities at a time when, due to globalization, the Internet, etc., series are being watched more than ever all over the world.

Conclusions

On the basis of these reflections on the economics of family-centered fiction series and the analysis of Médico de Familia, a number of conclusions on the sales of this series, which may later be applied to the international sale of family-centered series in general, may be drawn. Firstly, their family content and the fact that they are designed for a family audience contribute to the international scope of the series. As has been seen, a domestic and family background has universal appeal, and so travels well in other cultural arenas.
However, the genre of ‘dramedy’ may pose a challenge to the export of the series. The comic elements draw on local references and peculiarities that may not be easily understood in other cultural contexts.

Adaptation allows for the use of pre-existing stories with universal content, and preempts the problems posed by any localism; this approach was taken in the versions for the Italian and Portuguese markets. Besides, adaptation makes the most of two important qualities in Médico de Familia, one technical, the other related to content. On the one hand, the production process was standardized in this series. On the other, the choice of an open-ended format, linking the content to current events, enables a closer connection between program and audience and may make for a more loyal following.

On the issue of direct sales to the many countries in Latin America, ‘dramedy’ facilitates integration in other national markets. The serial structure evokes genres like the soap opera, with which the Latin American viewing public are already very familiar. Besides, the fact that there is no need to either dub or re-write brings considerable savings on production costs.

Whatever may be the case, the opportunities and risks in direct sales or adaptation emerge in relation to the success of different aspects of the original series: a loyal audience following due to the program-viewer relationship that is established (and reflected in audience share and ratings figures); an on air ‘life’ of several seasons; the maximum exploitation of all age groups in the family as target audience; and finally, excellent results from the channel’s programming strategy.
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Interview with Javier Méndez (Director of Multimedia Contents and International Sales Manager, Globo media, 17/10/08, Pamplona).


